

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php

ARTICLE II.

THE GROTIAN THEORY OF THE ATONEMENT.

Translated from the German of Dr. Ferdinand Christian Baur, Professor ordinarius of Evangelical Theology in the University of Tübingen, by Rev. Leonard Swain, Nashua, N. H.

[THE work from which the following extract is taken, is entitled : *Die christliche Lehre von der Versöhnung ; in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung von der älteste Zeit bis auf die neueste.*]

It was a natural and almost necessary result, that two such opposite views as that of Socinus on the one hand, and that of the church on the other, should call forth a third one of intermediate character. And in this remark is indicated the place which Hugo Grotius and his well known treatise holds in the history of our doctrine ; since, although it was his design in taking ground against the Socinian view, merely to defend the satisfaction-theory which was held by the church,¹ the actual result was, that, instead of defending that theory, he substituted an entirely different one in its place.

The fundamental error of the Socinian view was found by Grotius to be this : that Socinus regarded God in the work of redemption as holding the place merely of a creditor, or master, whose simple will was a sufficient discharge from the existing obligation.² But as we have in the subject before us to deal with punishment and the remission of punishment, God cannot be looked upon as a creditor, or an injured party, since the act of inflicting punishment does not belong to an injured party as such. The right to punish is not one of the rights of an absolute master or of a creditor, these being merely personal in their character ; it is the right of a ruler only. Hence God must be considered as a ruler, and the right to punish belongs to the ruler as such, since it exists not for the punisher's sake but for the sake of the commonwealth, to maintain its order and to promote the

¹ Hence the title of the work : *Defensio fidei catholice de satisfactione Christi.*

² *De satisf. c. 2. § 3. p. 36.* Vult Socinus partem omnem offensam esse poenae creditorem, atque in ea tale habere jus, quale alii creditores in rebus sibi debitis, quod jus saepe etiam domini voce appellat, ideoque saepissime repetit, Deum hic spectandum ut partem offensam, ut creditorem, ut dominum, tria haec ponens tanquam tantundem valentia. Hic error Socini, per totam ipsius tractationem latissime diffusus — τὸ πρῶτον ψευδός.

public good.¹ The act of atonement itself is defined in general as a judicial act, in accordance with which, one person is punished in order that another may be freed from punishment, or as an act of dispensation, by which the binding force of an existing law is suspended in respect to certain persons or things. The first question to be asked, therefore, is, whether such a dispensation or relaxing is possible in respect to the law of punishment. Grotius does not hesitate to answer this question in the affirmative, on the ground that all positive laws are relaxable. The threat of punishment in Gen. 2: 17, contains in itself, therefore, the implied right to dispense with the infliction of that punishment, and that too without supposing any essential change in God himself, since a law in relation to God and the divine will, is not something having an internal force and authority of its own (*nichts Inneres*) but is merely an operation or effect of the divine will. The objection that none but the guilty person himself can receive the punishment which is due to his crime, is answered by the distinction, that although every sinner as such, does, in accordance with the very idea of sin, deserve punishment, still, it is not a matter of absolute necessity that this punishment should be actually inflicted. As therefore the remission of punishment is a thing which is not in its own nature impossible, it must be left to the circumstances of each particular case to decide how far such remission shall really be admitted. If the authority of law is not to be dangerously weakened, it should be admitted only in cases of the greatest exigency. Such a case clearly, is that which is offered in the very instance which we are now contemplating, where, by the actual infliction of the punishment the entire race of man becomes devoted to death.² And, as on the one side, the possibility of the remission of punishment cannot be denied, so on the other it cannot be shown to be absolutely unjust that one person should be punished for another's sin. The essential thing in punishment is that it should be inflicted in

¹ Cap. 2. § 1. p. 34. *Poenas infligere, aut a poenis aliquem liberare, quem punire possis, quod justificare vocat scriptura, non est nisi rectoris, qua talis, primo et per se, ut puta in familia patris, in republica regis, in universo Dei. — Unde sequitur, omnino hic Deum considerandum ut rectorem. — Cap. 2. § 9. p. 41. At jus puniendi non punientis causa, existit, sed causa communis alicujus. Poena enim omnis propositum habet bonum commune, ordinis nimirum conservationem et exemplum, ita quidem ut rationem expetibilis non habeat nisi ab hoc fine, cum jus domini et crediti per se sint expetibilia.*

² Cap. 3. § 6. p. 51. *Quia, si omnes peccatores morti eternae mancipandi fuissent, periissent funditus ex rerum natura daae res pulcherrimae, ex parte hominum, religio in Deum, ex parte Dei, praecipuae in homines beneficentiae testatio.*

consequence of sin, not that it should be inflicted upon the person who committed the sin. If now it admits of no doubt that a superior may properly inflict upon a subject, as the punishment of another's sin, whatever he might properly inflict upon him irrespectively of another's sin, then may God, without incurring the charge of injustice, permit Christ to suffer and die for the sins of men.¹ This course, then, being in itself a permissible one, the only question is, why God actually determined to adopt it. As the Scripture says that Christ suffered and died for our sins, we are to infer that God purposed not to forgive sins so numerous and so great, without a striking penal example, in order to show his displeasure at sin by some act which should in strictest propriety be termed a penal act. And besides this inward reason, lying in the very nature of the Deity, and called in Scripture the wrath of God, there was the additional consideration that the less sin is punished, the more lightly it will be regarded. Prudence itself, therefore, must lead the Deity to exact the punishment, especially where such punishment has been expressly threatened beforehand. Thus in the penal example furnished by the death of Christ, there is exhibited at once the divine grace and the divine severity, the hatred of God against sin and his care for the maintenance of the law.² And this is the mode of relaxing the laws which

¹ Cap. 4. § 18. p. 63. Hoc proprie quaeritur: an actus, qui sit in potestate superioris, etiam citra considerationem delicti alieni possit ab ipso superiore ordinari in poenam alieni delicti. Hoc injustum esse negat scriptura, quae Deum hoc saepius fecisse ostendit, negat natura, quia vetare non probatur, negat aperte consensus gentium. . . . Nihil ergo iniquitatis in eo est, quod Deus, cujus est summa potestas, ad omnia per se non injusta, nulli ipse legi obnoxius cruciatibus et morte Christi uti voluit, ad statuendum exemplum grave adversus culpas immensas nostrum omnium, quibus Christus erat conjunctissimus natura, regno, vadimonio.

² Cap. 5. § 8. p. 69. Hoc ipso Deus non tantum suum adversus peccata odium testatum fecit, ac proinde nos hoc facto a peccatis deterruit (facilis enim est collectio, si Deus ne respicientibus quidem peccata remittere voluit nisi Christo in poenas succedente, multo minus inultos sine contumaces), verum insigni modo insuper patefecit summum erga nos amorem ac benevolentiam, quod ille scilicet nos peperit cui non erat ἀδιάφορον (*indifferens*), punire peccata, sed qui tanti id faciebat, ut potius quam impunite omnino dimitteret, filium suum unigenitum ob illa peccata poenis tradiderit. Cap. 5. § 11. p. 71. Justitiae rectoris pars est, servare leges, etiam positivas et a se latas, quod verum esse tam in universitate libera, quam in rege summo probant Jurisconsulti: cui illud est consequens, ut rectori relaxare legem talem non liceat nisi causa aliqua accedat si non necessaria, certe sufficiens: quae eidem recepta est a Jurisconsultis sententia. Ratio utriusque est, quod actus ferendi aut relaxandi legem, non sit actus absoluti domini, sed actus imperii, qui tendere debeat ad boni ordinis conservationem.

jurists themselves pronounce the best, viz. by commutation or compensation; because thereby the least injury is done to the authority of the law, and the design with which the law was made is effectually secured, as when one who is charged with the delivery of a thing is free from his liability on paying its full value. For, the same thing, and the same value, are terms very nearly related.¹ Such a commutation may take place not only with respect to things, but also with respect to persons, where it can be done without injury to another.

In these few statements is contained the entire theory of Hugo Grotius. What is essential to it lies in this main proposition: God neither would nor could forgive the sins of men without the setting up of a penal example. This is done by the death of Christ. Hence the death of Christ is the necessary condition of the forgiveness of sin, and what it always actually presupposes. The theory, therefore, hangs upon the idea of a penal example, and of its presupposed necessity, and the question for us now to consider, is, how, by means of that idea, it stands related on the one hand to the theory of the church which it would defend, and on the other, to the Socinian theory which it would confute.

As to its relation to the satisfaction-theory held by the church, it will be seen at once, that it asserts the necessity of the death of Christ in order to the forgiveness of sin, in a sense wholly different from that which the church intends. If the death of Christ is necessary only as a penal example, then its necessity is grounded, not in the very nature of God himself, not in the idea of absolute justice, by which sin, guilt, and punishment are inseparably bound together, but merely in that outward relation which God holds to men as a ruler. The real object of consideration is not past sin, but future. The guilt of past sin may be removed immediately, for God has the absolute right to remit punishment; and a penal example is necessary only for the purpose of maintaining the honor of the law, and guarding against sin in time to come. The connection, therefore, between sin and punishment is not an inherent, internal connection, founded in the very nature of sin; the design of punishment is merely to prevent sin; or, in other words, it is connected with sin only in consequence of a positive law emanating from God as the supreme Ruler. Hence the final ground upon which Grotius goes back to prove the necessity of instituting a penal example, is merely the penal sanction contained in Gen. 2:17. The advocates of the satisfaction-theory indeed go back to the same sentence, but only to remark in it a ne-

¹ P. 68. *Proxima enim sunt idem et tantundem.*

ecessary outflowing of the divine justice. Grotius, on the contrary, takes the absolute idea of divine justice entirely away; for, if he affirms, in opposition to Socinus, that justice is an attribute which belongs of itself to the very nature of God, but at the same time asserts that the actual exercise of the attribute depends on the will of God,¹ it is precisely the same as the assertion of Socinus himself, that penal justice is the effect of the divine will; and if he further says that God does what he does, not without a cause, still, the ultimate ground is not God's absolute nature, but his absolute will, which is, in itself, equally competent to punish or not to punish.

Here, then, is an important distinction between the theory of Grotius and that of the church. The best scale for the measurement of their mutual relations is furnished by the idea of satisfaction. The main point in the church's theory of satisfaction is this, that what Christ did was precisely the same thing which men themselves were to have done. If Christ had not made a strict and perfect satisfaction for men, they could not have been released from sin. Socinus objected to this, that satisfaction and forgiveness were contradictory ideas. This assertion, Grotius, as the defender of the church's doctrine of satisfaction, could not admit. He therefore replied that satisfaction and forgiveness were not strictly simultaneous; that according to the conditions established by God, the latter then first follows the former, when a man by faith in Christ turns to God and prays him for the forgiveness of his sins.² This distinction must certainly be made if the objection of Socinus is to be successfully met, and the two ideas are to be permitted to stand side by side. But Grotius could not stop here. If it is only a penal example that is furnished by the death of Christ, then the idea of satisfaction strictly speaking, has no further relevancy. As, however, Grotius wished to retain this idea, he brought to his assistance a peculiar distinction, which is

¹ Cap. 5. § 9. p. 70. *Justitia illa, sive rectitudo, ex qua nascuntur tum alia, tum poenarum retributio, proprietas est in Deo residents. Sed in hunc errorem inductus videtur Socinus, quod Dei proprietatum effectus quoevis esse credit necessarios omnino, cum multi sint liberi, intercedente scilicet inter proprietatem et effectum actu libero voluntatis. Neque ideo, quia liber est Deo proprietatum istarum usus, dici potest, cum iis utitur, sine causa facere quod facit.*

² Cap. 6. § 8. p. 81. *Fuit et Christi satisfaciens, et Dei satisfactionem admittentis, hic animus ac voluntas, hoc denique pactum et foedus, non ut Deus statim ipso perpassione Christi tempore poenas remitteret, sed ut tum demum id fieret, cum homo vera in Christum fide ad Deum conversus, supplex veniam precaretur. Non obstat hic ergo satisfactio, quo minus sequi possit remissio. Satisfactio enim non jam sustulerat debitum, sed hoc egerat, ut propter ipsam debitum aliquando tolleretur.*

made in law between the two ideas denoted respectively by the terms *solutio* and *satisfactio*. If, said Grotius, the very thing which is owed, be paid either by the debtor himself, or, which is in this case the same thing, by another in the debtor's name, then the discharge of the debt takes place by that very act, but it is to be called a discharge, not a remission (*remissio*). Not so, however, when something else is paid than the specific thing which was due. In this case, there must be added, on the part of the creditor or ruler, an act of remission, as a personal act; and it is this kind of payment, that may be either accepted or refused by the creditor, which is properly called, in the technical language of the law, satisfaction. While, therefore, it was the original design of Grotius in all this, merely to prove, in opposition to Socinus, that the idea of satisfaction did not exclude that of remission, what he really did was to substitute in place of the common idea of satisfaction a totally different one.¹ For the common idea of satisfaction rests essentially on the supposition that Christ has rendered precisely the same thing which men themselves were to have rendered. If now such a payment (*solutio*) be, as Grotius asserts, no remission (*remissio*), but only a discharge (*liberatio*), then it must be conceded to Socinus, which was the thing contested by Grotius, that the ideas of satisfaction and remission mutually contradict and exclude each other, or in other words, that

¹ The principal passage which belongs here reads thus: Cap. 6. § 6. p. 78. *Alia solutio ipso facto liberat, alia non ipso facto. Ipso facto liberat solutio rei plane ejusdem, quae erat in obligatione. Perinde autem est utrum ipse reus solvat, an aliud pro eo, hoc animo, ut ipse liberetur. Ubi ergo idem solvitur aut a debitore, aut ab alio nomine debitoris, nulla contingit remissio. Nihil enim citra debitum agit creditor aut rector. Quare si quis poenam pertulerit, quam debet, liberatio hic erit, remissio non erit. Ac talis liberationis professionem in jure crediti proprie ac stricte ἀποχή, apocham (quittance), vocant Jurisconsulti. Alia vero quaevis solutio ipso facto non liberat, puta, si aliud quam quod erat in obligatione, solvatur. Sed necesse est, actum aliquem accedere, creditoris aut rectoris, qui actus recte et usitate remissio appellatur. Talis autem solutio quae aut admitti aut recusari potest, admissa in jure, speciale habet nomen satisfactionis quae interdum solutioni opponitur. Compare Cap. 6. § 8. p. 80, where he remarks in opposition to Socinus: Illud vero, quod dicit, satisfactione omnino et statim tolli debitum, ad rem quidem pertinet, sed verum non est, nisi satisfactio contra juris usum sumatur pro ipsius rei, quae debetur, ab ipso qui debet, facta solutione, de qua nos non agimus. In an essay in the *Evangel. Kirchenzeitung* for 1834, p. 606, a doubt is very justly expressed whether Grotius was quite honest on this point, and a document is brought forward from the *Corpus Juris* to show that the distinction which Grotius assumed to exist between the terms *satisfactio*, and *apocha*, or *solutio*, as used in the technical language of law, is by no means of such a character as he has represented it.*

the satisfaction which was made by Christ does not, deserve the name of satisfaction in the sense which the common theory of the church connected with that expression. But if Christ has not made satisfaction in this sense, if he has not truly and perfectly rendered for men what they were to have rendered for themselves, then the idea of satisfaction can be applied to him only so far as he has given to God something, whatever that something may be, in place of that which was to have been rendered by men themselves in their relation to God. This then is the precise meaning of the theory of Grotius, and the difference between it and the satisfaction-theory of the church. The idea of satisfaction is let down from its full and real import to the idea of a mere rendering of something (einer irgendwie geschehener Leistung); Christ has made satisfaction so far as he has fulfilled a condition, of whatever kind it may be, upon which God has suspended the forgiveness of the sins of men; so far as he has given to God a something with reference to that end.¹ This *something* is that penal example, without the setting forth of which, God could not have forgiven the sins of men.

If it appears from what has been said, that this theory has no right to give itself out as the theory of the church, the following points will show also how little it differs in essence from that of Socinus himself:

1. Even supposing that in the language of law there is such a distinction to be made between payment (solutio) and satisfaction, as Grotius alleges, still he has by no means shown that the idea of satisfaction as held by the church is in itself untenable, and that it is in the nature of the case impossible to hold the legal idea of satisfaction

¹ Though Grotius is very careful not to bring forward this point into any position in which he could be expected to go into a formal defence of it, still it lies very clearly in his definition of satisfaction. See for instance how he expresses himself in reference to certain passages of Scripture. That we are according to 1 Cor. 6: 20. 7: 23, *bought with a price*, means merely, *solutione aliqua liberati sumus*. The expression ἀντίλυτρον 1 Tim. 2: 6, whose real meaning he proposed to maintain against the Socinian explanation of *impedium qualecunque*, he nevertheless himself thus explains: Est tale λύτρον (*pretium*), in quo liberator simile quiddam subit ei malo, quod ei imminebat, qui liberatur. In explanation of the words ἀντι πολλῶν he remarks p. 114, Erasmus mortis debitores. Ab hoc debito liberationem nobis Christus impetravit aliquid dando. Dare autem aliquid ut per id ipsam alter a debito liberetur, est solvere aut satisfacere. It is always of a mere *aliquid* that he speaks, never of an *equivalent*. Hence such expressions as, that in the death of Christ there was no solutio rei ipsius debitæ, quæ ipso facto liberet: nostra enim mors et quidem eterna erat in obligatione, can be regarded only as a direct contradiction of the theory of the church, it being an essential part of that theory that Christ has endured eternal death for men.

at the same time with the church idea of it. It is rather the definitions of Grotius himself which appear capricious and self-contradictory. The idea of satisfaction, according to him, does not rest upon the fact that another has made payment, but upon the fact that he has paid something else than the precise thing itself which was due. If now it be said in further explanation of this *something else*, that the obligation requires the punishment of the person himself who has incurred the guilt, according to the principle that guilt attaches to the person,¹ then it is clear that the second definition becomes identical with the first again, that he who pays for another, pays something else than the precise thing which was due, for the very reason that he is another, and not the person himself who was bound to pay. And still, in giving the definition of the term *solutio*, Grotius declares it to be indifferent whether the debtor himself pays, or another pays for him, if it only be done in his name. Either, therefore, one man can never pay another's debt without the payment (*solutio*) immediately becoming a satisfaction (*satisfactio*) because it is made by another, or else, if the possibility that one man should pay for another is not to be denied, the essential thing in satisfaction must be this, that one man pays for another, irrespective of the question whether what he pays is the same thing that the debtor himself was to have paid, or something different. The legal possibility, however, that one person should pay or be punished for another, cannot be denied by Grotius, since the essential thing in punishment, in his view, is, not that the sinner himself should be punished, but only that there should be in general a connection between punishment and sin. It is therefore an entirely wilful substitution of one thing for another, in which Grotius has here allowed himself. Instead of proving what was the main point, and what did not admit of being approached in any such stealthy and sidelong manner, viz. that Christ not only paid as *another*, but also paid an *other thing* (nicht bloß als *alius solvit*, sondern auch *aliud solvit*), Grotius merely proved that, according to the common language of law, that which takes place in an instance of

¹ On p. 78, Grotius assigns as the reason *cur poenae corporalis vicarius ipso facto reum, solvendo poenam, nequeat liberare . . . non quia alius solvit, sed quia solvit aliud quam quod est in obligatione. Est enim in obligatione afflictio ipsius qui deliquit, unde dici solet, noxam caput sequi. Quod in aliis quoque obligationibus factum mere personalibus videre est. In his enim omnibus, si alius solvat, ipso facto liberatio non sequetur quia simul aliud solvitur. Quare ut ex poena unius alteri liberatio contingat, actus quidem rectoris debet intercedere. Lex enim, ipsum qui deliquit puniri imperat. Hic actus respectu legis est relaxatio, respectu debitoris, remissio.*

satisfaction, is not so much the payment by another (*das alius solvit*), as it is the payment of another thing (*das aliud solvit*). The real thing in question, therefore, is not proved; all that has been done is merely to assume the thing itself as already granted and apply to it a legal definition. But if Grotius thought himself compelled absolutely to assume the thing itself, can he have done it for any other reason than because he himself could not withhold his assent from the arguments which were urged by Socinus against the idea of a satisfaction in the strict sense of the word and as held by the church?

2. As Grotius rejected the common idea of satisfaction as held by the church, so also he declared himself against the idea of Acceptilation.¹ He objects to Socinus that he has applied this idea to the act of God in forgiving sin, an idea which can have no pertinence whatever in the case of a penal relation.² But here again he has entirely changed the point of view, and the legal definitions to which he once more resorts, are only a weak device to conceal the real state of the case. The idea of acceptilation can mean nothing to Socinus, for he holds that nothing was actually given to God by the death of Christ, but that Christ was only a promulgator of that which God, of his own good will, has imparted to men. On the contrary, there is no other theory to which the idea of acceptilation can be applied with so

¹ Acceptilation, according to the definition of Bretschneider (*Dogmat. II. pp. 338, 341*), is that which takes place when one consents to accept a thing as an equivalent, although it is not in itself really equal to that in place of which it is received; its sufficiency for the given purpose being constituted not by its own inherent worth, but by the receiver's determination to accept it. — Tr.

² P. 79. *Nam accepto fertur ea res, quae accipi potest. At poenam corporalem rector revera exigit, sed non accipit, quia nihil ex poena ad ipsum proprie pervenit.* So little had Socinus to do with the idea of Acceptilation, that he never deals with it as Crellius properly observes in his Reply to Grotius: *Videre jam potest Grotius, etiamsi Socinus dixisset, ngi hic de acceptilatione, seu actum hunc Dei esse acceptilationem, eam tamen sententiam isto quo hic utitur, argumento, utpote invalido, non everti.* Sed unde constat Grotio, ita sentire Socinum? Quod idem de ipso affirmat (cap. 6) nec scripsit id Socinus uspiam, nec cogitavit, sed tantum alicubi reprehendens doctos quosdam viros (in margine autem libri sui Bezam notat), qui vocem imputandi apud Paulum exponentes dicunt, id nobis acceptum ferri, quod non ipsi exsolvimus, sed alius pro nobis, ostendit, illos non recte locutos: siquidem actus quo quippiam acceptum fertur alteri, qui acceptilatio dicitur, sit per sola verba obligationis liberatio, ita ut acceptum non possit ferri illud quod revera solutum est. Quod si ob haec verba (alia enim non reperio) Socinum et hic et infra reprehendit Grotius, ipsemet cernere jam potest vel Socini verba se non considerasse, vel inique reprehendisse. This remark also, to which Crellius is fairly entitled, is another testimony to the equivocal dealing of Grotius.

much right as the very theory of Grotius himself. When he says, in explanation of that term, that it stands opposed to actual payment, that it is only figurative, a payment merely conceived to have taken place, it is obvious that there is a play upon the double meaning of the term payment (*solutio*); for the opposite of acceptation can be only that particular kind of payment in which is rendered the very thing that was due, or else its perfect equivalent.¹ That acceptation presupposes something which can be accepted, is what Grotius himself alleges as a proof that something must really be given. If, therefore, it is called an imaginary payment, it is imaginary only so far as that which is given is imperfect, so as to require that what is lacking, whether more or less, should be regarded as if it were received. Moreover, this is the very thing which Grotius repeatedly puts forward as the peculiar point of his theory, that something was offered to God by Christ, through which satisfaction was rendered, and without which satisfaction, God could not have forgiven the sins of men. On this very ground it is obviously incorrect to say that the idea of acceptation has no pertinence in the case of punishment. When Grotius himself, in speaking of Christ's death, says there was in it a giving of something (*einem dare aliquid*), he reduces the penal relation to the relation of the debtor and creditor, and with obvious propriety too, since punishment even may be regarded in the light of a debt which must in some way be removed before a man can come into favor with God.

The more undeniably the theory of Grotius is seen to agree fundamentally with that of Socinus in the two points abovementioned, the more necessary becomes the inquiry: in what then does the peculiarity of the Grotian theory consist? It can be found only in that idea of penal example, which Grotius transferred to the death of Christ; though even in this respect it cannot be concealed that there is a close affinity between the two theories. Although Grotius chooses to hold fast the idea of satisfaction in a certain sense, it nevertheless amounts to nothing else at last, but the idea of a penal example,

¹ With equal ambiguity Grotius expresses himself when he says, p. 107, *Est pretii natura, ut sui valore aut aestimatione alterum moveat ad concedendam rem, aut jus aliquod, puta, impunitatem.* If estimation is to be distinguished from worth in the objective sense, from equivalency, then it can be only the subjective estimate of a thing, that is declared to be sufficient, without reference to its objective value. But why did not Grotius explain himself more definitely on this point, and why does he to the last persist in using, as if it were the most appropriate expression, that most indeterminate of all formulas: *dare aliquid propter aliquid*?

through which, God, for the purpose of maintaining the authority of his law, declares, in the language of palpable fact, his hatred and abhorrence of sin.¹ For what other purpose, however, should the authority of the law be maintained, than that sin may be prevented at the same time that the pardon of sin is bestowed? The principal thing insisted on, then, both by Grotius and Socinus, is, the moral impression which is produced by the death of Christ; with only this difference, that this moral element is taken by Grotius in a negative sense, by Socinus in a positive sense; since, according to Grotius, the moral effect of Christ's death consists in the fact that it is a setting forth of the punishment which is connected with sin, while ac-

¹ This is especially evident from the following passage, in which Grotius maintains against Socinus, p. 86, *Duplicem Dei non liberalitatem (ea enim vox ab hoc argumento aliena et Scripturæ innsitata est) sed beneficentiam nostram quoque sententia agnoscit, et quidem majorem multo, quam ista nupernata Socini opinio. Prior est beneficentia, quod cum Deus magno odio contra peccatum incitaretur, possetque tam nobis parcere omnino nolle, quam peccatoribus angelis parcere omnino noluit, tamen ut nobis parceret, non modo solutionem talem, quam admittere non tenebatur, admiserit, sed ipse quoque ultro eam repperit. Hoc certe beneficium multo est majus atque illustrius, quam si Deus plane iudicans nihil referre, exemplum statueretur aliquod nec ne, peccata nostra reliquisset impunita, quod vult Socinus. Non ergo clementia Dei poenae solutione evertitur, cum talem solutionem admittere multoque magis invenire (the *solutio*, therefore, is only the setting forth of the penal example) ex sola clementia processerit. The second proof of the divine goodness is that God gave his Son to die ut eam solutionem, sive satisfactionem perageret poenas peccatorum nostrorum ferendo, to which Grotius adds still farther against Socinus, Dei caritatem a nobis majorem predicari vel hoc evincat, quod beneficia non ex solo impendio, sed pricepue ex utilitate, quae ex impendio ad beneficio affectum manat, par est aestimari. Nos autem praeter utilitatis, quas nobiscum Socinus confitetur, unam eximiam, quam ille abnegat, grato animo agnoscimus. Neque dicimus a Deo impensum esse filium, ut ipse Deus suum receperet (Grotius finds fault with this accordingly in the theory of the church) ac si Deum sordidum facimus, quod nobis exprobat Socinus, sed ideo id factum a Deo dicimus, ut peccati meritum suumque adversus peccata odium palam testata faceret, et simul quantum ejus nobis parcendo fieri poterat, rerum ordini legisque suae auctoritati consuleret. All this again is only the idea of penal example, and yet it is called by Grotius immediately afterward a *finis superadditus satisfactionis*. Even the idea of active obedience Grotius cannot wholly relinquish. P. 87, *Negare nolumus vim satisfactionis esse etiam in ipsa Christi actione (obsequiosa)*. Solet enim saepe etiam actio grata admitti velut in poenae compensationem. Quamvis beneficium accipere Deus non potest, ipsius tamen summa bonitas quaecunque obsequium quasi pro beneficio accipit. Is this *actio obsequiosa* anything else than the moral disposition which was manifested by Christ in his death, and which, even the Socinian doctrine makes a condition (*Voraussetzung*) of the forgiveness of sin? The instrumental agency (*das Vermittelnde*) in either case, is the moral impression which is produced by the death of Christ.*

According to Socinus, it consists in the moral disposition which was exhibited by Christ in his death. Even by Socinus himself, therefore, the bestowment of pardon is made dependent upon a moral condition which is connected with the death of Christ.

Although it is obvious that, if the death of Christ is once put under the moral point of view, and in accordance therewith, the attention be directed not so much to past as to future sin, it is not necessary to confine ourselves exclusively to any one mode of explaining its moral action, still it is just as undeniably obvious that, viewing the two theories of Grotius and Socinus from their common point of opposition to that of the church, we must regard the Grotian idea of a penal example as an essential improvement of the Socinian theory. Not only is the idea of punishment in itself a very essential element of every theory of atonement and redemption,¹ and, as such, unjustifiably omitted by Socinus, but there results from the fact the not inconsiderable advantage, that so many passages of the New Testament, in the explanation of which, the Socinian exegesis cannot escape the charge of caprice and violence, fall into easy and natural accordance with the idea of Grotius.² This, however, is the only advantage of which this theory can boast; in other respects, so far as it differs from the main points of the Socinian scheme, it is obnoxious to the same charge of incompleteness which is so seldom to be escaped by those theories which affect an intermediate position between two points of view that are essentially divergent. The Socinian system is at least entirely consistent, in this respect, that, as it takes a much lower view of the work of Christ than was taken by the church, so also it takes an equally low view of the person of Christ; while in the theory of Grotius, there is this marked disproportion, that, occupying the same position with the Socinian scheme, in its view of the work of Christ, it at the same time regards, as does the church, the person of Christ not as a mere man, but as the incarnate Son of God, and hence fails to explain in any satisfactory manner why the sufferings of such a God-man should have been necessary, if they were designed to be only a penal example. This defect, however, is only of a piece with the entire character of the Grotian theory, so far as it is distinguished

¹ P. 87. *Finis hæc satisfactionis, sive poenae ferendæ, multo apertius, immo multo etiam certiore nexu cum morte Christi cohaeret, quam illi fines quos agnoscit Socinus. Nam testimonium doctrinae satis atque abunde præbere poterant miracula: gloria quoque coelestis conferri Christo, non interveniente morte, facile potuit: at poenae luendæ mors, talis præsertim, proprie accommodata est et poena ipsa pendendæ liberationi.*

² See on this point cap. 7—10 of the work of Grotius.

from the other two theories to which it is opposed. While they start from the *idea*, the church theory from the idea of the absolute Justice, the Socinian from the idea of the absolute Goodness, of God, or at least, put the historical fact, the death of Christ, into such relation to these respective ideas, as that our whole mode of conceiving that fact is to be determined by them, the theory of Grotius is founded upon exactly the opposite view. This theory cannot rightly be said to start from an *idea*; since, in the penal example which it beholds in the death of Christ, absolute Justice and absolute Goodness neutralize each other in such a way that the theory hardly has a definite principle left; except as we must confess that the idea of a penal example, of which it makes so much, distinguishes it from the Socinian, though even that distinction is rather formal than material. The more, however, the theory assumes the appearance of having for its only starting point, the historical fact, in its pure objectivity, in connection with the already existing idea of satisfaction, so much the more does it take its position over against that fact, with the confidence of being able so to explain it by means of the judicial definitions and distinctions to which it resorts, that there shall be as little necessity of endorsing whatever is harsh and inconceivable in the theory of the church, on the one hand, as of agreeing in full with that exact contradiction of this theory which is set up by Socinus, on the other. If, therefore, all that one has to do, is, to hold in this manner upon the mere historical fact, it is difficult to conceive how he can have any further interest in defending a theory which starts from a determinate idea. He has to do only with the fact itself, and he is to treat it exactly after the manner of a process in law, in which one understands himself as bound to nothing but that to which he is held by the existing legal forms, taken in their closest construction.

So also with the person of Christ. That the divine human dignity of the Redeemer is as necessary a presupposition for the theory of the church, as it is superfluous to that of Socinus, is obvious at first sight. The theory of Grotius, on the contrary, although it recognizes that dignity in form, really nullifies it in fact; since it is unable to explain what is the precise importance of that dignity in the work of redemption. How Christ should have been peculiarly fitted to stand as a penal example on account of the dignity of his person as God-man, it is not easy to see.¹ If he became incarnate for this end only,

¹ P. 72. Quod poena in Christum collata fuerit, hoc ita ad Dei et Christi voluntatem referimus, ut ea quoque voluntas causas suas habeat, non in merito Christi (qui peccatum cum non nosset, a Deo peccatum factus est), sed in sum-

which could with equal ease have been secured by him as a mere man, as the Socinians hold, and so includes in himself nothing which is in its own nature necessary, then there is, and will always remain, an irreducible disproportion between the means and the end. Instead of falling back upon the internal necessity of things, and drawing an argument from thence, as was done in the theory of the church, and instead of entirely renouncing an idea whose rational necessity cannot be acknowledged, as was avowedly done by Socinus, Grotius has given us a mere vindication, flattering himself that it has done all that can be justly demanded of it, when by suggesting some plausible end to be accomplished, it has relieved the presupposed fact from the charge of being absolutely inconceivable. Such is the difference between the formal, judicial point of view, having as its outward standard of reference, a given case in law, and the speculative, which goes back to the internal idea of things, or to the absolute nature of God.¹

ma Christi aptitudine ad statuendum insigne exemplum, quae tum in maxima ipsius nobiscum conjunctione tum in incomparabili personae dignitate consistit. This is all that Grotius can say on this subject.

¹ The externality and want of firmness which marks the Grotian theory, is very justly and strikingly indicated in the essay already referred to in the *Evang. Kirchzeitung* for 1834, p. 539: "The judicial mode of conception adopted by Grotius, is merely formal; i. e. those forms and conceptions which have their origin in mere positive laws, are transferred unchanged to the divine relations; or rather, the latter are subjected to the former, and fashioned and determined by them; a procedure which makes it appear very much as if the doctrine laid down by him in the first chapter, and the doctrine of the Scripture and the church which he defends, were two very different doctrines, or as if, in other words, his system led to a very different doctrine from that which he proposes and professes to defend." P. 595: "The partial and distorted character of this theory betrays itself first and most clearly in the fact that Grotius is not able, in consistency with himself, to point out any necessity (not even a moral one) for the satisfaction made by Christ." "Without satisfaction there is no forgiveness; was the fundamental maxim in the orthodox doctrine of redemption, first distinctly expressed by Anselm, but held by the church in all ages. So long as the adverse party opposed to this the mere proposition that forgiveness was possible even without satisfaction, no ground was gained against the actually existing, and therefore divinely appointed satisfaction, as a condition of forgiveness. They must go further, and prove that forgiveness was not possible *with* satisfaction. This was precisely what the everywhere-consistent Socinus attempted to do. Of course, the only thing which was now left to the defender of the church theory who would not accept the direct antithesis (without satisfaction there is no forgiveness), was, negatively, to prove that forgiveness was not impossible without satisfaction; i. e. that the satisfaction made by Christ, and planned by God, was entirely consistent with that forgiveness which might have taken place without it; or, to express it somewhat paradoxically, that God can forgive sin in spite of that satisfaction. This, and in fact nothing more, Grotius has proved by his