

THE OFFICES OF CHRIST

Introduction

Soteriology deals with the work of the God-man, and the application of that work to the individual by the Holy Spirit. Regarding then the work of the God-man, Scripture refers to Him as a Mediator, *For there is but one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.* 1Tim 2: 5. But how are we to interpret the term man in this passage? Is the apostle referring here solely to His humanity? Paul does not use the term to refer to His human nature, but to the Theanthropic Person, Jesus Christ. In 1 Cor 15: 47, we have a similar meaning attached to the use of, man. *The first man is of the earth earthy, and the second man is the Lord from heaven.* In the Old Testament the incarnate Word is called Messiah, and the Anointed One, in passages such as Ps 2: 2, *The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed.....*Ps 45: 7, *Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows....*Daniel 9: 25, *Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the streets shall be built again, and the wall even in troublous times.*

The Mediator between God and man could not be God only or man only, Gal 3: 20, *Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one.* A mediator supposes more than one party, and in this instance two parties namely God and elect sinners. But this Mediator must be related to both parties to be competent for the task. As the second Person of the Godhead He is coequal with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit; and regarding His humanity, He came as close to fallen mankind, sin excepted, as one possibly could for He took on Him.... *bone of our bones and flesh of our flesh,* and...*tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin.* He assumed fallen nature with all its infirmities though He remained *holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners.* Therefore in possessing both a divine and a human nature He was competent to be a Mediator between God and men.

The office of a Mediator was one of condescension and humility. Supposing in taking humanity into union with Himself he had never suffered or died it would still have been condescension and humiliation. The Westminster Shorter Catechism defines the humiliation of Christ as, *In being born and that in a low condition made under the law, undergoing the miseries of this life, the wrath of God and the cursed death of the cross, in being buried and continuing under the power of death for a time:* and, Phil 2: 5-8, *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*

In willingly accepting to take the place of a Mediator, He agreed to being sent, and hence this implied a condition of dependence which was yet another aspect of His

condescension and humiliation. The mission He agreed to be sent on would be a most humiliating one, and end in the cursed death of the cross – it was to be one of the deepest of sorrows which would also include His body being under the power of death for a time. Passages referring to being sent are Matt 11: 27, *All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him:* and, John 17: 2, *As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.* These are only some passages, but they do not describe the Logos prior to the incarnation but subsequent to it. But He refers to His pre-existent state in passages such as, John 8: 58, *Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was I am:* John 10: 30, *I and my Father are one:* and John 17: 5, *And now, Father, glorify me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was:* and finally passages which refer to His incarnate and mediatorial position, *For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me:* John 10: 36, *Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God:* and finally, John 14: 28, *Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go into the Father: for the Father is greater than I.* He did not take this office unto Himself, but was called to it, Westminster Confession of Faith Chapter 8 section 3: *The Lord Jesus in his human nature thus united to the divine, was sanctified and anointed with the Holy Spirit above measure (Ps 45:7; John 3:34); having in him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Colossians 1: 19); in whom it pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell (Colossians 1:19):to the end, that being holy, harmless, undefiled, and full of grace and truth (Hebrew 7:26; John 1: 14), he might be thoroughly furnished to execute the office of a Mediator and Surety (Acts 10: 38; Hebrews 12: 24; 7: 22). Which office He took not unto himself, but was thereunto called by his Father (Hebrews 5:4, 5); who put all power and judgment into his hand and gave him commandment to execute the same (John 5: 22, 27; Matthew 28:18; Acts 2:36).*

Was the Logos a Mediator before He assumed human nature? Strictly speaking He was not. How could He when the apostle states very clearly that *...the only mediator between God and men is the man Christ Jesus?* Does this mean that there was no mediation in the Old Testament period? No it does not. There was mediation by anticipation. Although the sins of all those pardoned before Christ came were completely pardoned, indeed as equally pardoned as they are now, the debt however was not wiped out until Christ gave Himself a ransom for many. Therefore the types and symbols were in place of the incarnate Word, but when Christ cried, *It is finished*, the veil was rent from the top to the bottom indicating among other things that the incarnate Word now replaced all the types and symbols.

THE THREEFOLD OFFICE

Some of the Lutherans restricted the offices to two, for they combined the priestly with the prophetic. This view was opposed on the ground that the division was an artificial one, and that it is impossible to discriminate one function from the other. But in the Old Testament these offices did typify Christ. However, what must not be

overlooked is that the Mediatorial work is the work of the Person. The distinction between the offices is an important one which should be retained, but it does involve difficulties, especially so in applying the distinction consistently in both the state of humiliation and exaltation. It is claimed that Christ's threefold office can be argued from the creation of Adam who was endowed with knowledge, understanding, righteousness, holiness, and with dominion over everything else on earth. Therefore as the last Adam and Mediator Christ should be prophet priest and king, He indeed as Prophet represents God with man and none other could have done so; as Priest He represents man in the presence of God and brought not the blood of a beast but His own; and as King He exercises dominion and restores the original dominion of man. Regarding the latter, Adam had no opposition in a sinless state; but the powers of darkness, the world and the flesh are all in united in their vehement opposition to Christ and His Church .

Office of Prophet

The office of a prophet is a lot more than predicting future events, and this is borne out by the definition of this office in the Westminster Shorter Catechism Q/A 24, *Christ executeth the office of a prophet, in revealing to us, by his word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation.* This is also revealed by many passages from Scripture: Isaiah 9: 6, He is called Counselor, *For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulders: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace....* Isaiah 55: 4, He is a witness, *Behold I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people...* John 1: 4 He is the light of men, *In him was life; and the life was the light of men...* John 9: 5 He is the light of the world *As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world...* and in Luke 2: 32 He is light to the Gentiles, *A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.*

There are three Hebrew words for prophet, *nabhi*, *ro'eh* and *chozeh*. There is uncertainty about the meaning of *nabhi*, but according to Deut 18: 18, *I will raise up a prophet from among their brethern like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him;* the implication is that it means a messenger. The other two words stress that the messages are received from God. However in the Old Testament these very men who received messages from God were also called watchmen. In the New Testament the word, prophet, just means, to speak forth. It was the duty of prophets to reveal to the people what God had conveyed to them. There was therefore great difficulties to contend with in being faithful, especially so when people were told what they did not want to hear. This is what made Jeremiah's ministry so difficult and lonely. Because of the people's unfaithfulness to God, the messages were frequently those of woe, which made God's servant the object of hatred. In some ways nothing has changed, because in our day the masses do not want to know the truth, and hence unfaithful preachers provide them with the messages they want to hear. But prophecies also consisted of promises and exhortations. All the true prophets were pointing the people to Him who was to come.

What was the distinction if any between the prophetic office of Christ before, and after the incarnation? Before His incarnation, Christ was active as prophet in the Old Testament dispensation by the messages given. In Proverbs 8 He is there represented

as a wise teacher. All this was through the Holy Spirit from heaven. His office was executed as the Angel of the Covenant in the Old Testament, and as the incarnate Lord in the New Testament. It is carried out mediately by the Holy Spirit, through the prophets of the Old Testament, and the apostles in the New, and to the present time by all those who preach the Word.

In the execution of the office of a prophet whilst in the state of humiliation, he was fully conscious of His infallibility. He never said like the prophets did, *The word of the Lord came unto me*, but instead *I say unto you.....* W.G.T Shedd says that *...he speaks with the fulness of his own intuition*. It is obvious that this office was executed in all the theophanies of the Old Testament. In His state of humiliation He spoke like none other; even the common people observed that He spoke with authority. This office continues to be discharged personally by the incarnate Word in His state of exaltation, and regarding the kingdom of glory, the Lamb is said to be its light.

He exercises the office of a prophet mediately through the Holy Spirit in all His communications, and instrumentally by the Christian ministry and the Church. This is even seen in the persecution that followed the death of Stephen and consequently the scattering of Christians, that instead of being silenced the Word was rapidly spread abroad. The Church is represented as a chosen generation and a royal priesthood.

According to Liberalism it is the unique personality of Jesus that gave weight to His teaching. In Barthian theology there is a similar tendency that the Mediator is the revealer. To both Barth and Brunner the revelation is the reconciliation; *Jesus Christ is the revelation because in His existence He is the reconciliation*. W Lowrie *Theology of Crisis*.

Office of Priest

The Westminster Larger Catechism, Q/A 44 states, *Christ executeth the office of a priest, in his once offering himself a sacrifice without spot to God, to be a reconciliation for the sins of his people; and in making continual intercession:* and Heb 5: 1, *For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sin*. A priest then is appointed to officiate in religious matters which are mainly of an expiatory and propitiatory nature, and in bringing about reconciliation between an offended God and a sinful people. This role took place long before the Mosaic period. One of the first offerings on record is that of Abel's sacrifice. Cain and Abel brought their offerings to what appears to have been a place set aside for such a duty: Gen 4: 3 – 4, *And in the process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and his offering...* and in Gen 4: 14 it appears that there was definitely a locality for this purpose, because rejection of Cain's sacrifice met with the complaint, *Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me*. This seems to have been a sacred place appointed for sacrifices. It appears, although it preceded by many centuries, the official appointing of the head of

the house as priest, that both Adam and Noah exercised this role.. There is also proof

of officiating priests in the days of Abraham. He met Melchizedek who was a priest of the most high God, and although there is much mystery surrounding him, it is also stated that he was he king of Salem.

The term for priest in the Old Testament is *kohen*. But it is the term *chemarim* that is employed for idolatrous priests in passages such as 2 Kings 23: 5; *And he put down the idolatrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem; them also that burned incense to Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets, and to the host of heaven:* Hos 10: 5; *The inhabitants of Samaria shall fear because of the calves of Bethaven: for the people thereof shall mourn over it, and the priests thereof that rejoiced on it, for the glory thereof, because it is departed from it:* and Zep 1: 4, *I will also stretch out mine hand upon Judah, and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and I will cut off the remnant of Baal from his place, and the name of the Chemarims with the priests....* The correct meaning of *kohen* is not known, but it is generally agreed that responsibility is associated with it. In the New Testament *hierus* is the word for priest and has a twofold meaning - a mighty one, and a sacred person. The priest's function is clearly stated in Heb 5: 1 *For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins.* He was representative of men, was appointed by God, and acted in religious matters. His special work was to offer sacrifices and gifts, make intercession and bless the people.

The Scriptural proofs for Christ's priesthood are, Ps 110:4, *The Lord has sworn and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek:* Heb 3: 1, *Wherefore holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus:* and Heb 5: 5, *So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, today have I begotten thee.* The priestly office of the Mediator is not administered mediately but directly. And because His priestly office is constantly discharged it can never be delegated to another. His work consisted of the offering up of Himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice on behalf of all those given to Him by the Father, and reconcile them to God and continue to intercede on their behalf.

There are a number of theories about the priesthood. According to **The Gift Theory** consists of establishing a good relationship with the offering of gifts, but fails to explain why the gift had to be in the form of a slain beast. The **Sacramental Communion Theory** involved giving reverence to the animal to be slain because it shared in the divine nature. On solemn occasions the animal was eaten in the belief that the divine qualities were assimilated. **The Homage Theory stated that the** sacrifice was an expression of homage and dependence, but also fails to explain why it had to be a slain beast. **The Symbol Theory** viewed the sacrifices as symbols of restored communion. The killing of the animal was to secure the blood, the symbol of life, and the bringing of it to the altar signified communion of life with God. **The Piacular Theory** regards sacrifices as being originally expiatory. The reason for slaying animals was to make vicarious atonement for the sins of the offerer, and whatever other element was present, this was regarded as the principal one. This is the theory that fits best with Scripture. It is believed by some that God by direct command instituted the sacrifices. Berkhof says, *And it is not impossible that man expressed His gratitude and devotion*

in sacrifices even before the fall led by the promptings of his nature. We beg to disagree with Berkhof on this matter. The first allusion to a bloody sacrifice is when God clothed Adam and Eve with skins. It would be inconceivable to think that man initiated, albeit in a state of innocence, what was acceptable to God. We believe that God by example to Adam initiated this system of worship. At this juncture there is no need to go into the expiatory and vicarious nature of Christ's sacrifice, because all that and a lot more will be dealt with in the lecture on the atonement. In modern theology Christ is not regarded as a real prophet and priest. To them the three offices are to be understood figuratively.

CONCEPT OF ATONEMENT

The Atonement is a doctrine of fundamental importance, and is the principal element in the doctrine of Justification by Faith, which Martin Luther affirmed to be the article of a standing or falling church. This doctrine has attracted much attention down through the centuries. From the first promise given to Adam, Gen 3: 15, besides the sacrifices and many prophecies, all pointed to the atonement, for without it redemption would not have been possible. It is obvious from Scripture, and from the nature of sin, that saving knowledge of God rests on the atonement, for until sin was expiated and God was propitiated reconciliation would be impossible. Heretical views on sin, and on the person of Christ, have corresponding views about His work.

The word atonement is often used to designate the priestly work of Christ. With the exception of two passages in Romans where the word is translated atonement, the word nowhere else appears in the New Testament. It appears sixty five times in the Old Testament. In Romans *katallaga* which is translated atonement in the AV, is exchanged for reconciliation. Bishop Burgess remarks, *The alteration of the word reconciliation (Rom 5: 11) makes no difference to the signification of the passage, since the reconciliation obtained by Christ's death is the consequence of the atonement and expiation made by him, as is obvious from various passages in the Scriptures.* (Greek NT Vol 2 S. T. Bloomfield). It seems that atonement is the correct translation of Rom 5: 11, because in that context Paul is stressing what was done by Christ.

In turning now to the Old Testament it is readily agreed that this word is widely used. There are those who object to its use regarding the work of Christ because of its ambiguity. The Hebrew word *kipper* means to cover by making expiation, and hence the word atone properly means, to be, or cause to be at one. By considering this aspect of it, the affect rather than the nature of Christ's work is expressed. It is also applied to express that by which the reconciliation is affected, and when used in this capacity, satisfaction or compensation is foremost. Another objection raised by theologians is its insufficient comprehensiveness, because in its common usage it is His sacrifice rather than His vicarious obedience to the divine law that is emphasized, and subsequently many view Christ's atonement to consist only of His sufferings and death. The salvation wrought by Him is more comprehensive than that. Therefore in our handling of the word we are including the necessity, extent, satisfaction and efficacy of the atonement.

The entrance of sin into the experience of the human race through the guilt of Adam's first sin, was the cause of God's anger with fallen man. Until the cause was dealt with the effects would go on indefinitely unabated. According to the Scriptures, to propitiate God, His Son's perfect obedience, sufferings and death were necessary - nothing less would suffice. Being made sin (though He remained sinless) marked that God's curse was in evidence in every area of His life in the state of humiliation, and yet He never faltered in obeying the Father. Hugh Martin says: *He is not only the Lamb but the High Priest also whose duty it is to present the Lamb, to present Himself an atonement and a sacrifice, to go forward not merely in uncomplaining submission, but in the active discharge of duty learning not only to suffer meekly, but learning obedience in His sufferings: Himself in unutterable majesty even in the midst of all His shame, conducting the glorious service at the unseen altar of God, and positively there offering up Himself by His intensely active will and deed.* (Shadow of Calvary).

Redemption

The name redeemer rightly belongs to Christ. The Hebrew *gaal* means to redeem, from which comes *goel* the kinsman redeemer. By this redemption is meant that it can be by vengeance or by price, and a passage that combines both is Ex 6: 6. Before the children of Israel were delivered from their bondage, the Egyptians were afflicted with the plagues. The principal event in their release was the life substituted- the lamb which was symbolic of Christ's death. It was the sprinkled blood on the lintel and door posts that protected them from the avenging angel because it was symbolic of the blood of Christ. When the role of a kinsman redeemer is considered it could not function apart from a price being paid. The Hebrew *paddh* also includes a price as was the case in the redemption of the firstborn. Ex 13:15. The firstborn males were redeemed at a price, because they were priests to God. However God eventually set aside the Levites to be His priests continually.

Redemption in both the Old Testament and the New Testament presupposes a state of bondage on account of sin, so that redemption is liberation from the reigning power of sin, and its evil consequences. Although redemption from the bondage of sin, was symbolically declared by the sacrifices, the Jews however expected the Messiah when He came to redeem them from the yoke of Rome, and that He would be a conquering warrior who would subdue all their foes. But His mission was to redeem sinners from the most crushing of all bondages, and to conquer foes far more formidable than the sanguinary enemies of the Jews. It is amazing how readily they acknowledged Him symbolically in the sacrifices, but when He came, they failed to acknowledge Him and grasp the nature of His ministry.

In the New Testament the word *exagorazo* which is a strengthened form of *agorazo*, to buy out, was normally applied to the purchasing of a slave with a view to his freedom, for which a price was paid. Christ is said in the following passages to have bought His people, and thereby making them His property at a price and setting them free: 1 Cor 6:20; 2 Pet 2:1; Rev 5: 9; Rev 14: 4.

There is also another word of significance, *lutroo*, to release on receipt of a ransom, which is akin to *lutron*, a ransom, and is used in the middle voice signifying to release by paying a ransom price. Although *exagorazo* does not signify the actual redemption, but the ransom price with a view to it, *lutroo* signifies the actual deliverance from bondage.

Finally, there is *apolutrosis*. The meaning of this word varies from deliverance from physical torture, Heb 11:32, to the deliverance of God's people at the Parousia, Lu 21: 28. In this passage it marks the consummation of Christ's redemptive work. This is the *kaina krisis* which begins in this life and shall never end.

The majority of the early Church Fathers (Irenaeus, Gregory of Nyssa, Ambrose, Augustine etc) treated redemption as a judicial transaction, in which Christ gave up His life as a payment for mankind. This conception was opposed by Gregory of Nazianzen. To him it was a conflict between Christ and Satan for the possession of man. Athanasius viewed the Logos as assuming humanity, and giving Himself up to death all because the justice and veracity of God demanded the death of mankind, on account of

sin. He was getting close to the real meaning of redemption, and his position was adopted and held by Basil the Great, Cyril of Alexandria, Cyril of Jerusalem, Hilary and John of Damascus. It was Anselm who laid most stress on man's guilt and worked out his doctrine in his treatise, *Cur Deus Homo*. Men like Hugo of St Victor, Alexander of Hales, Albertus Magus, Bonaventura, Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus just worked around what Anselm produced. The Reformers accepted and further developed his work.

Vicarious Sufferings

Horace Bushnell said of the word, vicarious, that it is nowhere in the Scriptures. This can also be said of the word Trinity, but the latter is in evidence throughout the Scriptures. Paradoxically, he quoted a few passages and allowed the use of vicarious in them. It is indeed amazing how he failed to see the reality of it in passages such as Is 53: 4-6. His response to such passages, which cannot possibly be understood but as referring to vicarious suffering, is that, *.....the word vicarious is chosen to represent and gather up into itself all these varieties of expression. It is the same root as the word vice in vicegerent, viceroy, vicar.....(The Vicarious Sacrifice)*. If it meant nothing more than *varieties of expression* then God's infinite justice and holiness would be rendered meaningless. To him they were meaningless - the only attribute of God in the salvation of man that mattered was love. His view is contrary to the substitutionary work and vicarious suffering typified by the sacrifices. Vicarious suffering is the suffering of one person for another. In the case of Christ it is sufficiently clear from the teaching of the Scriptures that the work which includes His suffering, was for His people so that they could be precluded from the demands of the law and its curse, and be reconciled to God and made partakers of everlasting life.

At this juncture it is appropriate to return to the subject of guilt. It can be viewed as the relation which sin bears to justice, therefore pardon itself could never remove guilt. The sinner is a debtor to the law and how could pardon alone absolve him from the debt owed to the law. This could only be done by transferring the guilt to a competent innocent party in human nature who voluntarily undertook the role of a sin-bearer. It logically follows that immediately the debt was paid the creditor could not any longer hold the debtor responsible, for he ceased to be a debtor.

Those who are in favour of a subjective theory of the atonement appear to abhor the doctrine of a vicarious atonement. To them it is totally unjust that guilt should be imputed to One who was innocent, and that He should be dealt with judicially as if actually guilty, although voluntarily undertaking to suffer in the room of the unjust. The most impartial of interpreters find it amazing that the above position is so abhorrent to them, whilst according to them, pardoning sin at the expense of infinite justice is acceptable. It is completely overlooked that in the work of redemption the principal end was the glory of God. Until God was glorified there could be no redemption - this Christ did.

Expiation and Propitiation

These are correlative terms which could be summed up as the sinner or his guilt being expiated and God propitiated. Both these words represent the same Greek word, *hilaskesthai*, which in the Classics 'is construed with *ton Theon* or *tous Theous* and means to propitiate by sacrificial expiation.' The guilt of sin is removed by expiation, and this

propitiates the judicial displeasure of God. According to Old Testament usage, God is *hilaskos* only to those whose sins have been covered - for that is the meaning of *kipper*. To cover sins always implies expiation, and never moral perfection or sanctification. It is for this reason that the cover of the Ark of the Covenant is called in the Septuagint, *hilastarion* - that which protected the law against the sins of the people, and thus rendered God propitious, through the blood of the sacrifice. *Sacrificial expiation among heathen, Jews and Christians has always been regarded as a true poena vicaria it is of the genus penalty: its specific difference is vicariousness.* (A. A. Hodge The Atonement).

Imputation

Imputation is a difficult subject. In order that Christ could act as Head on behalf of His people, He had both to bear the sins of His people so that they would be justly punished, and also work out a righteousness on their behalf. It seems preposterous that Almighty God could not have been able to save sinners some other way than having His only begotten Son subjected to all the ignominy to which He was subjected during the state of humiliation. Words of this strain have frequently been heard down through the centuries. Had the law been given with an oath, there would not have been a way open by which redemption could have been possible. What God did give with an oath was the Great High Priest: *The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.* Ps 110: 4.

Christendom has been divided not only on the necessity of an atonement, but also its extent. The main camps regarding the latter were Calvinism and Arminianism. It was the view of Arminians that Christ died for mankind, but Calvinists regarded His atonement as for a fixed number. The former take all and everyone literally to mean every human being - Adam's posterity in its entirety. The Calvinists are not denying that there was any insufficiency in Christ's atonement, but that it was sufficient to save the whole of Adam's posterity in so far as its value was concerned. However, God in His sovereignty in electing some to everlasting life restricted its application to that number of people, and that number is inextricably connected to His vicarious sufferings. It has to be emphasized that those who perish do so because of their guilt, and not because they are not elected to eternal life. To deny that there is an insurmountable difficulty in attempting to explain the mystery of man's responsibility, when it is not in his fallen nature to listen to God never mind do His will, would be betraying one's ignorance. The fact remains that through the message of the Gospel sinners everywhere are commanded to repent and believe, and He who does will be saved. If Christ had atoned for the sins of mankind, and some are lost - for on the Day of Judgment there will be two parties before Christ - then it would imply that He died in vain for some. The all Christ died for are sinners from many nations and not every individual member of mankind. However, the Gospel must be preached with equal zeal to every sinner in the world, and all who will believe are the all given to Christ from eternity. Great care has to be taken in handling this subject. Bengel says, *Predestination overcomes everything that obstructs the salvation of believers, and changes adversity into prosperity..... For this plan of salvation advancing from the prothesis to the plasis, leads the Christian safely and surely to the doxa.* (Gnomon of the New Testament).

Voluntary Sacrifice

It is objected to that Christ's sacrifice was not entirely voluntary because He was put to death by others. No one can deny the instrumentality of human beings in the death

of Christ. But it was Christ who voluntarily allowed Himself to be arrested because He knew it was the Father's will that it should be so. When they came to arrest Him he could still have escaped according to John's account of His arrest: *As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward and fell to the ground.* John 18: 6. Christ, in referring earlier on to His approaching in the same Gospel said: *No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself, I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it up again, this commandment have I received of my Father.* John 10: 18. Although then He was willing to lay down His life, it was necessary that there be cruel instruments who of their own volition and out of the wickedness of their heart would take Him and crucify Him, and thus unwittingly fulfil the purpose of God.

Satisfaction

Satisfaction is a word that has been accepted by many as sufficiently suitable to designate Christ's work, because of its conciseness and comprehensiveness. The difference between pecuniary and forensic satisfaction is that in the former the debtor is immediately discharged from his debt: but Christ's satisfaction was not pecuniary but legal. When a thief is caught with the stolen goods, their recovery does not discharge him from the guilt of his crime. He is tried for that crime. So then it differs from a pecuniary satisfaction. God is the Lawgiver, who is infinitely above His creatures, and is the One who provided a Substitute for sinners who could answer to all the demands of a Holy and offended God, and acquit the offenders on the ground of satisfaction being rendered. In brief then, it can be said that in His capacity as their substitute, His sufferings, perfect obedience and death, were sufficient for the penalty to be remitted, and the blessings, privileges, and benefits conferred. It was the Lord's death - although only His humanity was capable of suffering and death - and this is what gave his sufferings and death infinite worth.

The cardinal point is that His sufferings and death were consistent with the justice of God, for if this had not been so, then no sinner could have been justified. When therefore pardon is granted, there is nothing marginal about it. Rendering satisfaction to justice does not merely imply rightness of character and action. 'The Hebrew word *tsadaq* and the Greek word *dikaios*, besides the English word justice, all embrace rightness of character, rectoral justice.....' But these terms also express the idea of retributive or vindicatory justice. If therefore justice is accepted as the perfection of the divine nature necessitating the unrighteous being punished, and the rewarding of the righteous, then indeed the work of Christ must be accepted as the satisfaction of justice in that sense considered. It also includes satisfaction to the demands of the law. Why is this satisfaction separate from satisfying justice only? Some are of the view that in the ordinary use of the term, the word law is more comprehensive than justice, because in satisfying justice the demand for the punishment of sin is fully met: but the law demands more than punishment so that satisfying vindicatory justice does not in itself satisfy the law. God's law is unchangeable, and that applies to both its precept and punishment which cannot be attenuated in the least by the process of time, and the progression of knowledge in the various fields of learning, nor by the changing trends in morals, social values and religion. Christ then satisfied justice in that He bore the punishment sin deserved; and satisfied the law in rendering perfect obedience to it.

The redemption Christ has purchased is such that they who believe are delivered from the curse of the law, from the reigning power of sin and from the power of Satan: and by the imputation of Christ's righteousness, the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in them thus precluding all human merit. Every sinner by nature is in bondage and in subjection to Satan. The strength of sin is the law, but what satisfies the law deprives sin of its power, and subsequently Satan also. By this is not meant that they are delivered from the assaults of the devil – indeed no one knows that there is a devil until they are brought to a saving knowledge of Christ.

The Atonement in Patristic Theology

The grasp Patristic Theology had of fundamental truths in the Christian System, if taken as a whole, was imperfect. Because of this there was exposure to many errors. This explains why many fundamental issues had to be afterward debated at length and amongst them their treatment of the death of Christ, which was represented to a great extent as ransom paid to Satan. The passages of Scripture appealed to for their warrant were Col 2: 15 and Heb 2: 14.

Irenaeus

Irenaeus brings out very clearly what has been said above: *The word of God (the Logos) omnipotent and not wanting in essential justice, proceeded with strict justice even against the apostasy or kingdom of evil itself (apostasiam) redressing from it (ab ea) that which was his own originally, not by using violence as did the devil in the beginning but by persuasion (secundum suadalam) as it became God, so that neither justice should be fringed upon, nor the original creation of God perish.* (Adversus Haereses, Irenaeus) Shedd regards the use of "persuasion" to refer either to the devil or man, and the "claims" alluded to could be regarded as those of the devil or of the law or justice. This exposed Irenaeus to elements of Gnosticism, though he was a staunch opposer of it. He appears to be substituting the devil for the Demiurge. Baur maintained that this view of the conflict between the Redeemer and the Demiurge marked the laying of the foundation for at least the first attempt of the Orthodox theory of the atonement, and that it would be an exaggeration to say that there was at this period a disproportionate concentration on the connection between apostate man to Satan, and that of redemption and the kingdom of darkness. The problem being that issues of this nature were being concentrated on to the detriment of other fundamental matters, and among them, the justice of God. To have overlooked the effects of Satan by the mediatorial work of Christ, would have also been wrong. The fundamental flaw in their Soteriology could be identified as their irresistible tendency to regard the subordinate part of the atonement as the major issue. However, they did recognize the peculiar and judicial nature of Christ's work.

It would be wrong to regard the position of Irenaeus on the atonement 'as a contradiction of an intrinsic nature of Anselm's statement.' It would be fair to say that the former came short, some would say far short, of the latter's understanding of it. The fact is that Irenaeus taught that the Deity persuaded the devil to relax his grasp upon a creature who originally belonged to God, and who by deception became the devil's victim. This however is not the same as attributing dualism to his theology, which was the case with Gnosticism. He did not fail, despite his shortcomings, to emphasize the supremacy of God over evil.

Origen

Historians acknowledge that Origen was influenced by Irenaeus, but stop short of stating to what extent this was done. It is not unfair to say that his view of the doctrine of the atonement, and other doctrines associated with it, was further removed from the Scriptural position than any other doctrine. According to Shedd, *This was the weak point at which the latitudinarians tendencies of this remarkable man showed themselves with most distinction and energy - as indeed the doctrine of the atonement was not the strongest side of the Patristic system generally.* (History of Christian Doctrine Vol 2). According to Origen, the efficacy of Christ's death extended to the entire apostate world. For this view he appeals for his authority to such passages as, Col 1: 20 and Heb 2: 9. Discipline was another aspect of his view on the atonement. Punishment was rejected as being judicial, and accepted by him as disciplinary: *If it had not been conducive to the conversion of sinners to employ suffering, never would a compassionate and benevolent God have inflicted punishment on wickedness.* (Origenus - Thomasius). The death of Christ is understood by him as breaking the power of sin over sinners, because of its magical effects on demons and evil. In the application of redemption sinners are justified by being sanctified, and sin is pardoned without reference to retributive justice. He did not regard the punishment of sin as endless. This is consistent with what has already been mentioned that he did not see punishment as judicial but disciplinary. He viewed the death of Christ as the manifestation of love alone, and not love and justice. All these positions taken by him are at variance with the teaching of Scripture.

Clement of Alexandria

Clement who was Origen's teacher held similar views, and Berkhof says that in all probability the latter imbibed the views of his teacher. Clement regarded the deep corruption of man as filling God with the tenderest of love. This is utterly contrary to what the Scriptures teach on God's relation to sin. If indeed the moral corruption of mankind evokes this tender spirit towards sin, it renders the sacrifices and all that they symbolized and the sufferings of Christ as unnecessary.

Athanasius

Athanasius's *De Incarnatione*, is regarded as the first treatise on the work of the atonement. According to him the Logos became incarnate so that man who was lost on account of sin, could be restored to the true knowledge of God. This was done by the incarnate Logos being man's substitute, who paid the debt sin owed by enduring the penalty of sin. However, this satisfaction is based on the veracity rather than the justice of God. He does not state that it was to Satan the price was paid. Irenaeus's idea that the Logos assumed humanity in order that it would be deified and immortalized, is beyond question most conspicuous in his position.

Augustine

Augustine was such a tremendous thinker that whatever subject he dealt with deserves to be scrutinized, yet ironically such an able thinker made very little contribution to an

important doctrine as the atonement, and the little said is not commendable. The explanation for this is the attention given to anthropology at the expense of soteriology. According to him, *They are foolish who say that the wisdom of God could not liberate men otherwise than God assuming humanity, being born of a woman and suffering at the hands of sinners.* (Calvin's Institutes Book 2). *When the question is asked whether there was no other way whereby God could liberate man, than by His Son's becoming incarnate and undergoing the sufferings of death, it is not enough merely to say that this is a good way, but also to show, not that no other mode was in the power of Him who can subject all things to His control, but that no more suitable mode could have been adopted.* (Luther's Table Talks - Bell's Translation). The apparent weakness regarding the atonement was to exalt God's omnipotence above His justice, or at least by his comments he exposes himself to that interpretation. There are things God cannot do, and amongst them, using His power to get round His justice and holiness. He appears to view the necessity of the atonement as resting on the Divine option. But if satisfaction was necessary was there an option? It is true that there was an option to save or not to save. Having decreed to save some, was God then to set aside His justice and holiness and use his omnipotence? This God could not do – all His attributes had to be in perfect harmony. In fairness to him, the hesitation to insist on the necessity to render satisfaction to the justice of God appears to have been, partly at least, the guarding of the infinite power of God, lest limitations to that power would be implied by restricting salvation to a vicarious atonement.

Gregory the Great

Gregory was a powerful figure. His representation of the doctrine of the atonement is very much in keeping with the Pauline concept of it. He begins his work with the absolute necessity of a Theanthropic sacrifice. He stated that only a penal offering to justice can remove guilt, and although he does not mention satisfaction it is tacitly referred to. The only suitable person for this sacrifice was the Son of God, born of the Virgin Mary and became man for sinners. *He assumed our nature without corruption (culpa). He made himself a sacrifice for us, and set forth (exhibit) for sinners his own body, a victim without sin, and able both to die by virtue of its humanity, and to cleanse the guilty upon the grounds of justice.* (Ersolmungaehre - F.C.Baur) To whom was the sacrifice offered - to God or to Satan? The thrust of what he has said appears that he had God in view.

This period had failed to produce a formula on this subject that was thorough, and able to withstand the test of time. Gregory's treatment of the doctrine of the atonement was to a great extent free from the speculative theories of the Fathers of the second and third centuries, when Satan, in terms of a ransom supposedly paid to him, was given the place that belongs exclusively to God. The doctrine of a vicarious satisfaction was more gradual in acquiring its scientific form than other doctrines of the Christian faith. It is obvious from history that its full development was not to be until a later period.

Latin Patristic Theology

Tertullian

Tertullian is hailed as the author of what is called 'Distinctive Latin type of theology.'

He adopted Irenaeus's recapitulation theory: and also maintained that the incarnation affected mankind principally through example and precept. He lays more emphasis on the death of Christ than Irenaeus, and saw it as the principal end of his mission. Although he did not add anything to the doctrine of the death of Christ, he did introduce into his theology a number of legal terms which have since dominated theology such as guilt, satisfaction and merit.

Ambrose

Ambrose held similar views to Irenaeus on Christ paying a ransom to Satan, and thus deceiving him. He did stress that the death of Christ was a sacrifice to God, and regarded the sacrifice as a satisfaction of the divine sentence passed on humanity. This does reveal that they were not clear in their thinking on this doctrine, and indeed an element of confusion is very prominent.

SCHOLASTIC PERIOD

Anselm

The beginning of the Scholastic age can be traced to Anselm who became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1093. Until now there had been stagnation in the Church for a long period which was terminated by this remarkable thinker. His *Cur Deus Homo* which was written during his period in Rome from 1098 until the death of William Rufus in 1100, was the first serious attempt to prove that the atonement was necessary. This he did with clarity and depth of thought. It is not uncommon to have the former at the expense of the latter, but his dexterity ensured that the necessary balance was maintained.

What is remarkable about this period is the stark contrast between it, and the stagnation of the centuries preceding it: whilst on the other hand, from its inception, its soteriology was to a great extent in agreement with that of the Reformation. Berkhof calls his *Cur Deus Homo*,an epoch making book, a masterpiece of theological learning in which the author combines metaphysical depth with clearness of presentation. His approach to this subject is generally from the Christological aspect of that which necessitated the incarnation. Athanasius did state the necessity of an expiation in order that sin could be forgiven, and based that approach on the attribute of God's justice. However the credit must go to Anselm for handling this in a systematic and scientific manner, and was by far less guilty of the inaccuracies that characterized all previous attempts.

The title he gave to his book was most appropriate, because there were serious questions to be answered. Some of these were, that since God is omnipotent could He not have exercised His power and saved sinners without needing an atonement? And, if an atonement was necessary could some other victim have sufficed? These questions are effectively dealt with in the book. He rejected the Recapitulation Theory, and the Ransom to Satan Theory, and the view that the death of Christ was to be regarded as only a demonstration of love. He based his case on the honour of God being the ultimate ground for the atonement. *This fundamental position of the Cur Deus Homo is that the atonement of the Son of God is absolutely or metaphysically necessary in order to the remission of sins. (History of Christian Doctrine - W. G. T. Shedd).*

He has a clear understanding of the doctrine of sin, and the absolute importance of rendering

satisfaction, which are vital to a correct understanding of this subject. Man sinned and incurred a debt he was incapable of repaying, and through his sin God was dishonoured. To him reparation was not possible any other way but for God to make it through His Son. The willing obedience which man had failed to render to God, it was necessary that it be now rendered by the God/man. But this in itself would not be sufficient to maintain the honour of God, because that would not have taken it beyond man's duty to His God, and hence would not constitute merit. Being sinless he owed nothing and was not therefore under obligation to suffer and die - it was voluntary. Therefore in being subjected to the ignominy that His sufferings and death involved, He brought infinite glory to God. This was now to the benefit of mankind because of its superogatory nature, which would tilt the scales and compensate for the demerits of sin. The doctrine of merit, and especially the meritoriousness of virtue as expressed in good works, seemed to have gone unopposed by the Scholastic theologians. Thomas Aquinas distinguished between two kinds of merits, such as 'merit of condignity' and 'merit of congruity' - the former was strictly confined to Christ for strict justice deserves reward; and the latter restricted to humans, and can be acquired by them. Returning to Anselm, since the Son was in need of nothing, justice required that the free gift be rewarded, but how? This reward was to accrue to the benefit of man, and took upon it the form of forgiveness of sins, and all future blessedness in time and eternity, for all who would be obedient to the Gospel. Anselm said that,*greater than all that is not God* was necessary, and that satisfaction hence satisfaction could be rendered by none but One who was Theanthropic. Baur objected that the attribute of justice suppresses that of love in Anselm's theory regarding the claim of legal justice, in the exactness that characterized his treatment of it. He claims that it lacks tender and merciful features, all because he had nothing in view but God being satisfied. Whilst it is true that the theory has this strain throughout, Baur overlooked the fact that in choosing this course God did so to save some of the human race. He could have insisted on every individual of mankind rendering perfect personal obedience to the law, which they could not do and hence all would be lost, and yet He would not have been in the least unjust if He had done so. Anselm however does take the compassion of God into consideration,*the compassion of God, which appeared to be lost entirely when we were considering the justice of God and the sin of man, we have now found to be so great and so consistent with justice that nothing greater or more just can be conceived of.* (Cur Deus Homo p 20).

Although he made an outstanding contribution to theology, and in particular to the doctrine of satisfaction in the atonement, yet it has its shortcomings. Shedd, though an outstanding theologian appears to be oblivious of the shortcomings, and speaks with uninhibited exuberance of his contribution. The weaknesses are his representation of punishment and satisfaction as alternatives from which God can choose. He also fails to regard the sufferings of Christ as enduring the penalty of sin and regards them instead as a voluntary tribute to the honour of God, and this resulted in surplus merits, which were able to compensate for the sins of others. In this the Roman Catholic idea of merit is applied to the work of Christ. He also fails to make any mention of the mystical union between Christ and His people, because he stresses the external character of Christ's merits.

Thomas Aquinas

Thomas Aquinas is regarded as the ablest of the Schoolmen, because of his enormous capacity to digest the thoughts of his predecessors, and thus surpassed the rest of the Mediaeval theologians. According to him, in the human nature of Christ resided the

fulness of all grace. And because He was the head of the human race, the members of His body are made partakers of His virtue and perfections, if they are willing to belong to the Head. He as the new man is the principle and leader of those who are members of His body. Regarding the work of redemption, He is the instructor and example of the human race, by His teaching, acts, and sufferings. These sufferings reveal in a special manner the love of God which is the cause of that love which emanates from the hearts of all who trust Him. He did not regard redemption as something that was necessary, because God could have passed by mankind and left them to perish; but in view of God's attributes he regarded it as most appropriate. He did consider redemption possible without insisting on sufficient satisfaction. His reason was, that since God is the source of justice, and the One to be offered to, it was within His power to do without satisfaction, since this would have wronged no one. It was because God insisted on satisfaction that the incarnation of His Son was unavoidable, because there was no one among human beings capable of atonement. However, it was His humiliation coupled with all His actions that contributed to the atonement. He also viewed the passion of Christ as affecting sinners in a fourfold sense: (a) it merited the blessings of salvation which sinners are made partakers of; (b) as a satisfaction which is pleasing to God, the benefits are theirs through the mystical union; (c) as a voluntary sacrifice God was well pleased with Him; (d) by redeeming sinners from slavery and punishment. However, the sacrifice of Christ cannot save a sinner without baptism and penance. Whilst the Scholastics accepted Augustine's position that faith is presupposed in adult baptism, they gradually began to perceive the sacrament as effective, *ex opere operato*. This is seen as the beginning of the Roman Catholic conception of baptism as the sacrament of regeneration, and of the initiation into the Church. It contains the grace it signifies and confers it *ex opera operato, on all who do not obstruct it by placing obstacles in the way*. This is extremely important to the Roman Catholic church and is regarded as including: (a) the *character indelibilis* which brings the person under the jurisdiction of the church; (b) deliverance from the guilt of original sin, and sins committed until baptism, from the pollution of sin and from eternal punishment and temporal punishment; (c) spiritual renewal by the infusion of sanctifying grace, and being included in the communion of saints, and visible church of believers.

Duns Scotus

He regarded the atonement as unnecessary - it rested on the arbitrary will of God, and of course there was no necessity for satisfaction. Its necessity was only because God willed it. He went as far as to say that supposing it had been necessary it did not have to take the form it did; that even a pious act by Adam after he sinned could have been enough to atone for his first sin. He did not even dismiss the possibility that an angel could have rendered satisfaction if God had willed it. A lot of emphasis was placed on Christ's passion as having particular efficacy because God had foreordained it as a means of grace. He denied the infinite value of Christ's merits because he saw them as the merits of the human nature and not those of the Person. The atonement then was only necessary because God willed it. This theory became known as the Acceptilation Theory. The word acceptilation is taken from *acceptilatio* which is borrowed from Roman law and has been defined as:an acquittance by a creditor of a debtor from obligation by bond of mouth. Every created offering is worth what God is pleased to accept it for, and no more: and on this he based his theory. Therefore God accepted Christ's sacrifice

not because there was any infinite value in it, which he denies, but accepted it as satisfactory though it was not infinite.

The Reformation

Although Anselm's theory was adopted by the Reformers, they took it a stage further and united with it the subjective element of faith. This was a dimension that was not foremost in Anselm's thinking. The reason may have been a reaction to the misplaced emphasis on the subjective side by those who preceded him, or due to his consummate zeal for the sovereignty of God. The Reformers concentrated their attention on the part played by faith in the subjective aspect of the atonement, for to them faith was that which appropriated to the person what Christ had done. Further, they rejected Anselm's view that the number saved equalled the number of angels fallen, which was purely speculative. The other point dealt with was to distinguish between passive and active righteousness. By the former is meant His expiatory sufferings by which the claims of justice were satisfied, and the latter the obedience rendered to the law. Christ thus acted as a vicarious substitute regarding the precept and the penalty, and this is how his vicarious work is complete.

The Belgic Confession 1561 under Article 20 states: *We believe that God who is perfectly merciful and just, sent His Son to assume that nature in which the disobedience was committed, to make satisfaction in the same, and to bear the punishment of sin by His most bitter passion and death. God therefore manifested His justice against His Son when He laid our iniquities upon Him, and poured forth His mercy and goodness on us, who were guilty and worthy of damnation, out of a mere and perfect love, giving His Son unto death for us, and raising Him for our justification, that through Him we might obtain immortality and life eternal.* The Canons of Dort 1619 Head 11 Article 2 says: *Since we are unable to make that satisfaction in our own persons or deliver ourselves from the wrath of God, He hath been pleased in His infinite mercy to give His only begotten Son, for our Surety, who was made sin, and became a curse for us and in our stead, that He might make satisfaction to divine justice on our behalf.* In both these articles there appears more emphasis on His passive obedience.

Turretin distinguishes between the active and passive righteousness of Christ, and regards the former along with the latter in constituting the entire work of satisfaction. Hence the Reformers acknowledged that the atonement was solely to the divine attribute of justice, and was held to be indispensably necessary. The Tridentine Soteriology - combining human works with Christ's was completely driven out. It was now made absolutely clear that the sinner was delivered from condemnation by the perfect obedience, suffering and death of Christ, and in no other way.

The Groatian Theory

According to Hugo Grotius law is a positive statute, and since it is God's own work, it is His prerogative to alter or abrogate it, if He so desires. The penalty of the law is merely attached to it, and not something that is inherent in the law, and this also God

can, if He pleases, set aside or abolish. The reason he gives is that law is not internal in God, and that God can insist on it being observed or else to have it relaxed. Grotius draws a parallel between earthly law-making and God the law-maker; and since the former can exercise their prerogative and alter or relax the demands of the law they have enacted, then the same applies to God. The root of the problem with this thinking is in attributing the law to the arbitrary will of God and thus making its demands optional. This is a problem that has emerged repeatedly in the theories that have been examined. - the will and the nature of God are put in conflict with each other. The same immutable qualities that belong to the divine essence, of necessity belong to the law: if therefore the divine essence cannot be changed how can the law be subject to any change? Grotius did not see the sufferings of Christ as atoning for past sins but the preventing of future sins, because the guilt of past sins can be abolished without satisfaction, and therefore only an exemplary expression of God's hatred of sin was necessary. This meant that past sins did not require expiation which was contrary to the position held by Anselm and the Reformers.

The Theory of Vicarious Repentance

MacLeod Campbell was the advocate of this theory. His theory was that Christ offered to God on behalf of mankind the requisite repentance, and thereby fully met the condition of pardon. The work of Christ consisted of a vicarious confession of sins on behalf of man. He also could see Christ by His sufferings and death being able to enter sympathetically into the Father's condemnation of sin, and sin itself seen in its heinous nature and condemned.

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THE INTERCESSORY WORK OF CHRIST

In John 14: 16, Christ reminds the disciples of the importance of the Holy Spirit's ministry. *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he*

may abide with you forever: But the Comforter which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you: John 15: 26, But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: And in 1 John 2: 1 we are reminded of the Spirit's ongoing ministry, and the comfort that ministry brings to His struggling saints in this world; My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

The Nature of the Intercession

This is the continuation of His priestly work in heaven on behalf of His people. Although His intercession in the state of humiliation was equally as effectual as it is in glory, it is not now one of 'strong crying and tears.' It is difficult for us to be certain and say that there is no longer any verbal intercession. We do know that the God-man at the right hand of God is indeed a perpetual intercession, because He could not be in a glorified state until the work given to Him by the Father had been completed. The High Priest on the day of atonement went into the most holy place with the completed sacrifice, so Christ also when He had finished the work given to Him in the state of humiliation, culminating in the offering up of Himself, entered heaven and appeared there as the representative of His people. We also know with absolute certainty that His intercession never fails - there is no dross in His intercession like we have in our prayers - it is all the purest gold. John 17: 9, 20, *I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine: Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.* - Rom 8: 34, *Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us:* and Heb 7: 25, *Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them:* Heb 9: 24, *For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.*

There is a judicial element in the intercession, because Satan never ceases to accuse His people. But there is also their sanctification to be prayed for, and this includes their life, worship and duties. Indeed His intercession extends to the unregenerate life of those elected from eternity, to keep them from dangers that would bring death, and to bring them eventually to a saving knowledge of the truth.

Luther was of the view that there was both a general and a special intercession, and he appealed to Lu 23: 34 for his warrant, *Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment and cast lots.* Dabney was of the same view, and that those He prayed for were afterwards converted. It could be argued that if this is correct then every one present there was saved because they did not know what they were doing. Indeed one could carry this point to the world at large and claim that those who reject the gospel don't know what they are doing, and therefore Christ's general intercession reaches them. The logic of this kind of view is that you end up with universal salvation. On the other hand could His cry from the

cross *Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do* be understood as the fulfilling of what He had taught His disciples, to love them that hated them and used them despitefully and persecuted them? In response to the lawyer's question, as to which was the great commandment, He responded: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.* Matt 22: 36 – 40. He came to fulfil the law and make it honourable.

His intercession is constant. He is before God as the authorized intercessor for His people, yet on equal terms with the Father. His prayers can never fail: *And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.* John 11: 42.

The Kingly Office

The Kingship of Christ is defined in the Westminster Larger Catechism Q/A 45: *Christ executeth the office of a king, in calling out of the world a people to himself, and*

giving them officers, laws and censures, by which he visibly governs them; in bestowing saving grace upon the elect, rewarding their obedience, and correcting them for their sins, preserving and supporting them under all their temptations and sufferings, restraining and overcoming all their enemies, and powerfully ordering all things for his own glory, and their good; and also in taking vengeance on the rest, who know not God, and obey not the gospel. Christ's kingly office extends to three spheres, namely, the visible church, the invisible church and the world. The most important is the sphere of the invisible church, because for such He suffered and died. It is for their benefit that He exercises His kingly office in the visible church and the world. The elements included in His kingly rule are, the effectual calling of sinners who are to be members of the invisible church; giving them officers as appointed in the Scriptures, and laws and censures by which He visibly governs them; and supporting His elect under all temptations and trials, and sanctifying to them their providences, and not allowing trouble to overwhelm them.

His kingly rule in the world consists of restraining and overcoming all the enemies of the elect; powerfully ordering all things to His glory, and the good of His people, and overruling the evil done to them by the wicked. It also includes the final judgment on the Last Day.

This aspect of His kingship belongs to the God-man. This was not His by original right, but one with which He was invested. Dick said of the kingship that '*...it was invested with new form, wearing a new aspect, administered for new ends...* His spiritual Kingship is a mediatorial rule established in the hearts and lives of His people, and administered by the Word and Spirit. This is seen as already stated in the effectual calling of His people, the government of the Church and the protection given to them: Ps 2: 6, *Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion:* Ps 132: 11, *The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne:* Luke 1: 33, *And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end:* Luke 22: 29, *And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me:* John 18: 36, 37, *Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I unto the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.* There are also references to His headship over the Church in Eph 1: 22, *...And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church:* Col 1: 18, *And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence:* Col 2: 19, *And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints*

and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.

This kingdom is at times called the kingdom of God, and on other occasions it is called the kingdom of heaven - these are simply used interchangeably and mean the

same. It is not a natural or an external kingdom. Christ reminded Nicodemus that unless he was born again he could not enter into it because it is a spiritual kingdom. Regeneration is indispensably necessary to entering into it. There is the modern idea that it is a new social order established by human endeavour in which education and social reform play a major role. This kingdom is present and future, and is always developing in the heart. Regarding its future, it shall be glorious when Christ shall return and bring His people to glory with Him. We here below have a foretaste of the kingdom of glory.

The citizens of this kingdom are co-existent with the membership of the visible Church. This has to be qualified. It does not follow that every member of the visible Church is a citizen of this kingdom, but those who are, form the external organization of the kingdom. The Church on earth is also the means God has provided. The Premillinarians regard the kingdom as essentially Israel, and the Church the body of Christ gathered from Jews and Gentiles. This distinction is incorrect.

Duration of the Kingship

It is correct to say that a people was given to Christ from eternity, and therefore He received His appointment as Mediatorial King in the depth of eternity, but did not function as such until after the fall. In the Old Testament it was carried out through the judges and the typical kings. Although His mediation by anticipation preceded the incarnation, He did not formally assume His throne until His ascension. How long will His Kingship continue? The prevailing view is that the spiritual Kingship of Christ over His Church, as to its essential character, will continue eternally although there will be a change once the world ends, and the Church is in glory with Him, for among other things there will be no enemies to contend with, and no dangers to guard from. According to the following passages His Kingship will last forever. Ps 72: 17, *His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed:* Ps 89: 36, 37, *His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven.* This position is opposed by others who claim that it shall end when all things have been fulfilled, and for their warrant they appeal to 1 Cor 15: 24 – 28, *Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.*

Kingship over the Universe

The dominion of the God-man extends over the universe. Whilst His rule extends to all, yet He rules His own with special care, and will eventually destroy all His and their enemies forever. He directs all things for the good of His Church. It is comforting to

know that we belong to a cause which cannot fail. However His Kingship over the Universe is subservient to His spiritual Kingship. The former is part of His exaltation and promised reward: Ps 2: 9 – 11, *Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling:* Matt 28: 18, *And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth:* Phil 2: 9 – 1, *Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.* He was not given any more power than He already had, neither was there any increase in territory, but as God/man Mediator He was made the possessor of this authority. The government of the world was made subservient to the interests of His Church. This kingship will last until all things are put under Him. At the consummation of all things, the God-man will give up to God the authority conferred on Him to rule the universe. This is how that passage from 1 Cor 15 : 24 should be understood, that God may be all in all. However, His spiritual kingship will be forever.

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