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CHRISTIAN ATONEMENT AND KANTIAN JUSTIFICATION

Philip L. Quinn

Why did God become man? The soteriological question is distinctively Christian, and answers to it are central to Christian theology. A traditional answer has it that atonement was one thing God accomplished by becoming man; Christ's incarnation, suffering, death and resurrection are supposed to have effected, or at least to have played an important part in effecting, the reconciliation of sinful humanity with God. But why is vicarious atonement necessary? It may be that God will forgive our sins only if we repent of them; however, it does not seem obvious that divine mercy is so constrained that God can forgive our sins only if Christ's suffering and death substitute for or supplement our own efforts toward reconciliation. And how is vicarious atonement possible? Sin appears to be a personal failure that creates a non-transferable liability, and so it is hard to see how one person's atonement could stand in or go proxy for another's. Theories of vicarious atonement should contain the resources to answer questions like these in a coherent and plausible fashion.

It is noteworthy that Christianity has not been forced by struggles over orthodoxy to give a dogmatic formulation or sharp definition of the idea of vicarious atonement. Such motifs as sacrifice, ransom and satisfaction co-exist within orthodox thought from the patristic period through the Reformation. Yet theologians and philosophers have constructed theories of atonement for the purpose of showing that the doctrine is rationally defensible and explicable. Philosophically speaking, the most interesting of these attempts to rationalize the doctrine of vicarious atonement are the so-called 'satisfaction theories' whose primary explanatory concept is the notion of rendering to God satisfaction for sin. This, of course, is not surprising, since Anselm was the first great satisfaction theorist, and Aquinas too, though he refined, developed and clarified Anselm's position, was a satisfaction theorist. Even Kant's theory of the justification of sinners in God's eyes, though it differs radically from medieval satisfaction theories and may also depart from Christian orthodoxy, makes essential use of the concept of satisfaction and exhibits important theoretical connections between satisfaction and vicarious atonement.

This paper is devoted to an examination of the theories of atonement of Anselm and Kant. It compares the answers they give to the question of how satisfaction



for sins can be rendered to God. The first section gives a brief account of Anselm's satisfaction theory of vicarious atonement in his *Why God Became Man*, and the second section lays out some of the more penetrating among the common objections to that theory. In the third section, I present a somewhat detailed exposition of Kant's theory of justification in his *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*, show how that theory avoids some of the difficulties that confront Anselm's theory, and argue that it contains as an essential part the claim that vicarious atonement is possible. The fourth section explores some serious objections to Kant's theory. In the fifth and final section, I conclude by elaborating the suggestion that these objections reveal something important about how limited the prospects are for rationalizing the doctrine of vicarious atonement.

Anselmian Satisfaction

According to Anselm, to sin is not to render to God what is due to him. What is due to God from his rational creatures is perfect obedience or subjection to the will of God. Hence, to sin is to fail to obey perfectly God's will. Anselm thinks of such obedience as honor which we owe to God. And so "a person who does not render God this honor due Him, takes from God what is His and dishonors God, and this is to commit sin."¹ Sinners thus have defaulted on a debt they owe to God; they have failed to pay God honor owing to him. By way of restitution for this fault, they owe God recompense. It is as if sinners had stolen something belonging to God; as long as they do not return what was taken away, they remain at fault. Hence, "everyone who sins must pay to God the honor he has taken away, and this is satisfaction, which every sinner must make to God" (I, 11; p. 85). It is a demand of divine justice that satisfaction for sin be made to God.

Anselm holds that punishment must ensue if satisfaction is not made. He says that "it is necessary either that the honor taken away be restored, or that punishment follow" (I, 13; pp. 88-89). *Aut satisfactio aut poena!* For Anselm, punishment is an alternative to satisfaction consistent with divine justice, because he thinks of suffering punishment as a way in which sinners can pay back, albeit unwillingly, what they have stolen out of what belongs to them. Since happiness belongs to sinners in the sense that they could have possessed it if they had not sinned, sinners are to be thought of as unwillingly making recompense for their faults when they are deprived of happiness by being punished on account of their sins. God, so to speak, vindicates his honor by depriving the sinner of happiness, for "by taking it away, He shows that the sinner and the things that belong to him are subject to Himself" (I, 14; p. 90).

Anselm asks himself whether it would be fitting for God to forgive the debt on which the sinner has defaulted, out of mercy alone, without any repayment.

He argues that it would not; his view is that “to deal justly with sin, without satisfaction, is the same as to punish it” (I, 12; p. 85). The injustice involved in not punishing a sinner for whom satisfaction has not been made has two aspects. One has to do with broadly distributive considerations of fairness. If sinners for whom satisfaction has not been made are allowed to go unpunished, those who sin and those who do not will be equally favored in God’s eye. But, according to Anselm, it is unseemly if “one who sins and one who does not sin will be in the same position before God” (I, 12; p. 86). A man who had paid a very large debt would seem to have some reason for complaint on grounds of unfairness if another man, who owed a debt of the same size to the same person, were let off scot-free when he defaulted, though equally able to pay. The second aspect has to do with more metaphysical considerations of cosmic order. If sinners for whom satisfaction has not been made are allowed to go unpunished, God will allow something inordinate to pass in his kingdom. But, according to Anselm, it is an intolerable disruption of the proper order of things “for a creature to take away the honor due to the Creator and not make recompense for what he takes away” (I, 13; p. 88). A cosmic polity in which subjects could default on debts owed to their almighty ruler without making recompense or suffering punishment would appear to be a very poorly arranged kingdom. Hence, Anselm concludes, and not without some reason, that punishment is the only alternative to satisfaction consistent with divine justice. And so, God being perfectly just in his dealings with his rational creatures, the sinner’s only escape from punishment is if satisfaction is made for his or her sins.

Justice, then, requires that humanity recompense God for the fault of sin, either by making satisfaction to God for the default or by suffering punishment at God’s hands. But no mere human can discharge this obligation by making satisfaction. All mere humans owe God perfect obedience; if one who has sinned is subsequently completely obedient to God, such a sinner renders to God no more than what is due to God. Hence, no merely human sinner can, as it were, accumulate the surplus capital or extra merit to pay back to God the debt on which he or she has defaulted by sinning. As Anselm has Boso put it, “if even when I am not in the state of sin, I owe Him myself and whatever I can do, in order to avoid sinning, I have nothing to offer Him in compensation for sin” (I, 20; p. 107). Moreover, recompense is to be made in proportion to the gravity of sin, and even the slightest sin, such as casting a glance in opposition to the will of God, is so grave that Boso is constrained to acknowledge that “I should do nothing against the will of God, to preserve the whole of creation” (I, 21; p. 109). Hence, the burden of even the slightest sin is so great that the proportionate satisfaction owing to God by way of recompense is too large for any mere human to have it within his or her power to make, even if mere humans could, contrary to fact, do anything beyond what is already due to God to gain surplus merit.

Fortunately, the debt of honor on which human sinners have defaulted can be repaid to God by God himself, but only God can make satisfaction for human sinners. Debts of honor like pecuniary debts are transferable, and so one person may make recompense for another's default. Hence, satisfaction can be vicarious; one person can make satisfaction to God for the sins of another. Yet God himself is the only person who is in a position to make satisfaction for human sinners. God does not owe himself obedience to his own will, and so he can have something to give himself that he does not already owe himself because he is not indebted to himself. A sacrifice that God made to himself on behalf of sinful humans would not be payment of a debt, since God owes no debts to himself; nor would such a sacrifice be recompense for a debt on which God had defaulted, since God, being without sin, is without any fault. Hence, such a sacrifice would be supererogatory and could count as making vicarious satisfaction for the faults of human sinners. So God is in a position to make satisfaction on behalf of human sinners. However, on account of the gravity of sin, satisfaction cannot be made "unless there is someone to render to God, for the sin of man, something greater than everything that exists outside of God" (II, 6; p. 124). But only someone who surpassed everything other than God could be able to give God something greater than everything that exists outside of God, and "there is nothing that surpasses everything that is not God but God Himself" (II, 6; p. 124). So only God is in a position to make satisfaction on behalf of human sinners. Hence, if not all human sinners are to be punished for their sins and God is to allow no injustice, God must make satisfaction to God for human sins and thereby atone vicariously for such sins.

So Anselm concludes that, unless satisfaction for human sins is made to God, all human sinners will be punished for their sins with a severity proportionate to the extreme gravity of even the slightest among them. And, since Anselm denies that all human sinners will be so punished, he further concludes that the requisite satisfaction is to be made. But, Anselm supposes, the human default for which satisfaction must be made cannot be transferred outside humanity; a man must make good on the debts humans owe. Thus, "if no one but God can make that satisfaction and no one but man is obliged to make it, then it is necessary that a God-Man make it" (II, 6; p. 124). If the divine decision to spare at least some sinners the punishment that is the only just alternative to satisfaction is gracious rather than logically necessary, then presumably the kind of necessity in question is conditional moral necessity.

Having presented in outline Anselm's by now classic answer to the soteriological question, I next turn my attention to some of the objections that have been raised against it.

Dissatisfactions With Satisfaction

Over the years Anselm's satisfaction theory has been subjected to much criticism from within Christian traditions. Some of this criticism is not very impressive. For example, G. C. Foley alleges that Anselm's picture of a conflict between divine justice and mercy, portraying justice as demanding what mercy does not, amounts to "a practical revival of the Gnosticism of Marcion."² Presumably the reference is to Marcion's view that justice and mercy toward sinners are so radically opposed that the being who justly punishes sinners cannot be the same as the being who mercifully forgives them. If so, it is unfair to Anselm to accuse him of reviving such a dualistic view. Anselm's endeavor is to show how it is possible for God to treat sinners with both justice and mercy. To be sure, he thinks divine justice requires recompense from sinners for their faults by way either of punishment or of satisfaction. But he also thinks that divine mercy operates to fulfill the demands of divine justice by graciously making vicarious satisfaction for human sins so that recompense may be made without sinners having to suffer punishment.

However, other objections to Anselm's theory are more serious. Three among them are of particular importance in the context of the present investigation.

The first is a worry about Anselm's view that divine justice does indeed require full payment of the debt of honor on which sinners have defaulted. If we go along with Anselm in conceiving of sin as default on a debt owed to God, then it seems natural to suppose that God has a right to recompense. But it also seems plausible to claim that God could waive that right without doing or permitting any injustice. Since the original debt is owed to God alone, it appears that he could mercifully waive his claim to full recompense without wronging anyone else or violating another person's rights. Hence, it appears that full satisfaction is not the only alternative to punishment consistent with divine justice. Presumably this is why Aquinas holds that God would not be unjust if he forgave the debt without receiving full recompense and that the death of Christ is necessary for our salvation only on the supposition that God requires satisfaction proportionate to the gravity of sin.³ If God were thus mercifully to waive his right to full recompense for the default of sin, it would not necessarily be the case that one who sins and one who does not are in the same position before God. God might make such an exercise of mercy conditional upon sincere repentance on the part of the sinner, and so require some compensation from one who sins that he does not require from one who does not sin if both are to be saved. Doubtless sincere repentance is a satisfaction less than proportionate to the gravity of sin, but it is nonetheless painful enough to make it difficult for most sinners to manage. And one could respond to Anselm's concern that exercises of saving mercy in the absence of full recompense for the default of sin would introduce something inordinate into God's kingdom by noting that the political analogy is apt to be

misleading in the context of discussions of mercy. Christians think of God not only as Sovereign Lord but also as Loving Father, and there seems to be nothing inordinate or improper in a loving parent mercifully forgiving even uncompensated defaults on debts by his or her children. A cosmic family in which parents could forgive their repentant children defaults on debts without having received recompense or inflicting punishment would appear to be a morally admirable arrangement without being unjust.

The second objection to Anselm's satisfaction theory cuts deeper into its foundations, for it challenges the moral appropriateness of conceiving of what we owe God by analogy with pecuniary debts and of sin by analogy with default on a debt. A crude way of putting the objection is that Anselm thinks of making satisfaction as like paying the German *Wergeld*, or blood money, by which the murderer or his representative paid compensation for the crime to the victim's kin. A more refined formulation of the underlying point begins by noting a salient disanalogy between pecuniary and moral debts. It seems that moral debts are not transferable or transmissible in the way that pecuniary debts are. If one person owes another money, the debt can be transferred to and paid by a third party, and if one person defaults on a pecuniary debt to another, recompense can be made to the person to whom the debt is owed by a third party. Hence, it is easy to see how vicarious satisfaction for pecuniary debts can be made. But things are different for other kinds of debts. If one person murders another, we sometimes say that the murderer owes a debt to society which is to be paid by suffering punishment. But this is not a transferable debt that could be paid by the murderer's friends or relatives. Even if the murderer's aged aunt willingly agreed to serve his whole prison term, that would not pay his debt to society. And if the murderer were to default on his debt to society by fleeing into exile before his prison term began, this default could not be compensated for by having his elderly uncle voluntarily serve a prison term in his stead. Hence, it is difficult, if not impossible, to see how vicarious satisfaction for the debt a murderer owes society could be made.

It seems that, even if it is appropriate to think of what we owe God as a debt, the analogy with the case of the debt a murderer owes society under criminal law is better than the analogy with pecuniary debt under civil law. If what we owe God is to be subsumed under the category of debt at all, some of our debts to God at least appear to be moral debts, and it seems that they are too personal to be transferable. If I owe it to God to love my neighbor, it does not seem that this debt is paid if another loves my neighbor a little extra but I do not love my neighbor at all. Moreover, if sin is to be subsumed under the category of default on debt, some of our defaults on debts to God at least appear to be moral failings for which no one other than we ourselves can make recompense. If I owe it to God to give part of my fortune to feed the hungry and fail to contribute to famine

relief, it does not seem that my rich brother could make recompense for my default by donating twice as much of his fortune to famine relief. As G. C. Foley notes, a moral default is “a *personal* failure whose liability cannot be transferred.”⁴ The moral liability to punishment that comes in the wake of sin does not appear to be transferable, and if recompense for the default of sin can be made so as to justify the remission of punishment, it seems that each sinner must make such recompense for himself or herself. Hence, it is doubtful that, for at least those sins which are moral offenses against God, vicarious satisfaction is possible, even if such sins may be thought of as failures to pay debts we owe to God. And so it is doubtful that Christ’s vicarious atonement for our sins can be explained in terms of Christ making vicarious satisfaction for debts on which we sinners have defaulted.

The third objection to Anselm’s satisfaction theory amounts to an attack from a slightly different angle on the correctness of conceiving of atonement as satisfaction for debts on which sinners have defaulted. If Christ has made full satisfaction for our sins, he has made full recompense to God by paying not only all the original debts on which we sinners defaulted but also whatever penalties are needed to compensate God for the insult or inconvenience of our defaults. If Christ has made full recompense to God in this way, then the debts in connection with which we have sinned have been fully cleared from our accounts. If those debts have been fully cleared from our accounts, then divine justice is constrained to acknowledge that we are free of those debts. And if divine justice is constrained to acknowledge that we are free of those debts, then we have no need of additional divine mercy to forgive our sins. Hence, if Christ has made full satisfaction for our sins, we have no need of additional divine mercy to forgive our sins. In short, there is no need for God mercifully to forgive us for failing to satisfy a legitimate claim he has on us if Christ has already paid that claim in full by means of his vicarious satisfaction. As Foley quaintly puts it, “there can be no compassion or generosity in foregoing a claim which has been paid to the uttermost farthing.”⁵ Yet Christians who are quite sure that Christ has atoned for their sins nevertheless think it incumbent on them to pray to God to forgive their sins. If what we owe God has been amply paid, why then do we pray to God to pardon us? Or, as Boso asks Anselm, “Is God unjust, that He demands, a second time, what has already been paid?” (I, 19; p. 105). Moreover, if Christ has in this way made full recompense to God for all human sins, then no one is ever justly punished in hell. This suggests that, whatever may be going on when Christ vicariously atones for our sins through his suffering and death, it is not rendered fully intelligible if thought of in terms of Christ making vicarious satisfaction for our sins by paying our debts together with penalties accrued on account of our defaults.

Though Anselm’s theory could be criticized in other ways, perhaps the objec-

tions I have raised will suffice to show that it confronts serious difficulties. But what conclusions should we draw from these difficulties? Is Anselm's fatal flaw the excessive legalism of his theory, as some of his critics have charged?⁶ Should we abandon the attempt to make sense of the atonement in terms of the categories of debt and default? In trying to answer these questions, we will find it helpful to compare Anselm with Kant. Though their views differ in many ways, Kant and Anselm share the legalistic cast of mind. Kant's text contains two footnote references to Anselm's views. Kant's theory of justification makes use of the concepts of debt and satisfaction and contains a place for vicarious atonement. Yet Kant's theory of justification has within it the resources to give a plausible response to each of the three objections I have directed against Anselm's satisfaction theory. For this reason, it may be thought of as making progress beyond Anselm's theory in some respects, though, as we shall eventually see, it faces some difficulties of its own.

Kantian Justification

Kant begins Section One of Book Two of *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone* by telling us that "it is our universal duty as men to *elevate* ourselves" to the ideal of "*mankind* (rational earthly existence in general) *in its complete moral perfection.*"⁷ Human moral perfection includes two components. The first is moral goodness of disposition. To attain moral goodness of disposition one must make the moral law the supreme ground of one's maxims, "whereby it is not merely associated with other incentives, and certainly not subordinated to any such (to inclinations) as its conditions, but instead must be adopted, in its entire purity, as an incentive *adequate* in itself for the determination of the will" (p. 42). A person with a morally good disposition is a person of good moral character, that is, "a man endowed with virtue in its intelligible character (*virtus noumenon*) and one who, knowing something to be his duty, requires no incentive other than this representation of duty itself" (pp. 42-43). The second component of human moral perfection is moral goodness of deed. Kant tells us that "it would have to consist of a course of life completely and faultlessly harmonious with that perfect disposition" (p. 59). So complete moral perfection is constituted of both a morally good disposition to act purely on the incentives provided by the moral law and a morally good course of life full of deeds in harmony with that disposition.

Kant holds that each of us has a duty to conform to this ideal of moral perfection. And, "we *ought* to conform to it; consequently we must *be able* to do so" (p. 55). So it must be within our power to conform to the ideal of moral perfection. But how is this possible?

After all, if we are honest with ourselves, we must acknowledge that we have

performed evil actions which are now past and unalterable. Hence we have already fallen far short of perfection in deed. Worse still, there is in each of us, according to Kant, a morally evil propensity to moral evil, which is “the subjective ground of the possibility of the deviation of the maxims from the moral law” (p. 24). As ground of the possibility of deviation of the maxims of particular actions from the moral law, this propensity must be operative in the agent antecedent to the adoption of the maxims of particular evil actions and so must be represented as innate in the agent. As morally evil, it must be a product of the agent’s freedom and so must be represented as brought by the agent upon himself or herself. It can be represented in both these ways if we think of it as “an underlying common ground, itself a maxim, of all particular morally evil maxims” (p. 16), whose free adoption is “intelligible action, cognizable by means of pure reason alone, apart from every temporal condition” (pp. 26-27). Such an evil supreme maxim is, according to Kant, “inextirpable by human powers, since extirpation could occur only through good maxims, and cannot take place when the ultimate subjective ground of all maxims is postulated as corrupt” (p. 32). Since each of us has brought upon himself or herself in this way an inextirpable morally evil disposition, we have also forfeited perfection of disposition. Being by our own choice evil in both disposition and deed, we cannot now elevate ourselves to the ideal of complete moral perfection.

It is, perhaps, a tribute to Kant’s moral optimism that he refuses to accept this grim assessment as the whole story about human moral destiny. We can, he thinks, overcome the propensity to moral evil. But, if this overcoming is to transform the moral character from evil to good, it “cannot be brought about through gradual *reformation* so long as the basis of the maxims remains impure, but must be effected through a *revolution* in the man’s disposition (a going over to the maxim of holiness of the disposition)” (p. 43). Yet one must wonder whether such a moral revolution in the disposition is even possible if the evil disposition is to be represented as both innate and inextirpable. Kant concedes that it must seem to us that “this restoration through one’s own exertions directly contradict[s] the postulate of the innate corruption of man which unfits him for all good” (p.46). But he thinks there will be such apparent contradictions in all cases in which something “is to be regarded as an event in time (as change), and to that extent as necessary under laws of nature, while at the same time its opposite is to be represented as possible through freedom under moral laws” (p. 46). So Kant is convinced that the contradiction is merely apparent. He thinks we may rest assured that moral revolution is possible, because “duty bids us to do this, and duty demands nothing of us which we cannot do” (p.43), though we cannot conceive how it is possible. Transformation of the moral disposition, though mysterious, is for Kant no more mysterious than any other genuinely free action.⁸

But a switch of supreme maxims from evil to good is bound to leave a gap between noumenal disposition and phenomenal deeds. Since we begin from evil, the good disposition manifests itself in time as unending progress from bad to better. Hence, “the distance separating the good which we ought to effect in ourselves from the evil whence we advance is infinite, and the act itself, of conforming our course of life to the holiness of the law, is impossible of execution in any given time” (p. 60). So even if an evil person can acquire a morally good disposition by the free exercise of his or her own powers, it looks as if the ideal of complete moral perfection remains elusive for such a person, since such a person will not lead a life completely and faultlessly in harmony with the good disposition he or she has acquired by virtue of carrying out a moral revolution. How, then, are we humans to attain complete moral perfection? Or, as Kant puts it, “How can a disposition count for the act itself, when the act is *always* (not eternally [*überhaupt*], but at each instant of time) defective?” (p. 60). How, in other words, are we to be morally justified in the eyes of God?

The answers Kant gives to these questions make up his theory of atonement. It is a theoretically subtle and complex piece of philosophy, and it merits careful and detailed exegesis.

Kant begins by specifying a sense in which having acquired a good disposition can compensate for defects of conduct. God, who knows the human heart through an atemporal intellectual intuition, will judge the progress derived from the good disposition as a completed whole, though it is temporally unending, and will thus regard the man of good disposition as “being actually a good man (pleasing to Him)” (p. 43). Apparently this is because God’s atemporal judgment attends to the man’s atemporal moral character which is constituted by the good disposition. From this atemporal perspective, the temporal progress that derives from a good character can correctly be seen as a completed whole. Thus one who has acquired a good disposition that is stable may, despite his unending deficiency in deed, hope “to be *essentially* [*überhaupt*] well-pleasing to God, at whatever instant his existence be terminated” (p. 61). If there is a divine decree justifying those who have acquired a stable good disposition, it will be in accord with God’s justice, for it will be “based upon a giving of satisfaction (a satisfaction which consists for us only in the idea of an improved disposition known only to God)” (p. 70). But this is satisfaction we make out of our own resources by freely acquiring a good disposition. It is not vicarious. Nor does it exhaust the full range of things for which satisfaction must be made. As Kant explicitly tells us, “the disposition, which stands in the place of the totality of this series of approximations carried on without end, makes up for only that failure which is inseparable from the existence of a temporal being as such, the failure, namely, ever wholly to be what we have in mind to become” (p. 61). But this is not our only failure; we have also performed evil actions. And Kant also tells us he does

not hold that “the disposition shall serve to *compensate* for failure in allegiance to duty, or consequently, for the actual evil in this endless course of progress” (p. 61). So the good disposition cannot make satisfaction for the evil in our particular actions which are defaults from duty. What, if anything, is to compensate for these evils?

Kant thinks of the evil deeds a man has done and of the propensity to moral evil in which they are rooted as “a debt he can by no possibility wipe out” (p. 66).⁹ His reasons for so thinking echo Anselm’s. The man cannot reasonably regard future good conduct as making recompense for past evil conduct. He cannot, “through future good conduct, produce a surplus over and above what he is under obligation to perform at every instant, for it is always his duty to do all the good that lies in his power” (p. 66). Moreover, the burden of debt a man acquires in virtue of having done evil is very heavy. Moral evil “brings with it endless violations of the law and so *infinite* guilt” because it “lies in the *disposition* and the maxims in general, in *universal basic principles* rather than in particular transgressions” (p. 66). But Kant also agrees with critics of Anselm who insist that this debt is not transferable. He says that “this is no *transmissible* liability which can be made over to another like a financial indebtedness (where it is all one to the creditor whether the debtor himself pays the debt or whether some one else pays it for him); rather it is *the most personal of all debts*, namely a debt of sins, which only the culprit can bear and which no innocent person can assume even though he be magnanimous enough to wish to take it upon himself for the sake of another” (p. 66). It is worth emphasizing, however, that Kant carefully qualifies this claim about the non-transmissibility of the debt of sin by telling us explicitly that the debt “can never be discharged by another person, so far as we can judge according to the justice of our human reason” (p. 66, my italics). So it would seem that, from the point of view of human reason, all of us who are sinners “must look forward to *endless punishment* and exclusion from the kingdom of God” (p.66).

As Kant sees it, it is only because the moral revolution, whereby one replaces the propensity to moral evil with the good moral disposition as the highest subjective ground of one’s maxims, is a discontinuity in moral character so radical that it is tantamount to a lack of moral identity between the pre-revolutionary and post-revolutionary persons that the new moral person who emerges from the revolution may rationally hope to be spared endless punishment for the sins of the old moral person. Suppose the old, pre-revolutionary moral person has not been punished for his sins. Shall such deserved punishments for those sins be inflicted on the new, post-revolutionary moral person? Kant thinks it would not comport well with divine justice to inflict these punishments on the new moral person. After the revolution, “the penalty cannot be considered appropriate to his new quality (of a man well-pleasing to God), for he is now leading

a new life and is morally another person" (p. 67). But Kant also thinks divine justice would be flouted if the sins of the old moral person were not punished at all. He insists that "satisfaction must be rendered to Supreme Justice, in whose sight no one who is blameworthy can ever be guiltless" (p. 67).¹⁰ But if punishment has not been inflicted before the revolution, cannot properly be inflicted after the revolution and yet must be inflicted, the only remaining alternative is to "think of it as carried out *during* the change of heart itself, and adapted thereto" (p. 67). So Kant suggests that we try to find, in the very act of moral revolution itself, "such ills as the new man, whose disposition is now good, may regard as incurred by himself (in another state) and, therefore, as constituting *punishments* whereby satisfaction is rendered to divine justice" (p. 67). Such ills are not hard to find. Carrying out a moral revolution in one's innermost disposition is painfully difficult, and this merely sets one on the path of painful moral struggle upward from bad to better. Hence, "the coming forth from the corrupted into the good disposition is, in itself (as 'the death of the old man,' 'the crucifying of the flesh'), a sacrifice and an entrance upon a long train of life's ills" (p. 68). But the new man voluntarily undertakes to suffer these ills for the sake of the moral good he is engaged in pursuing by means of his struggle, "though really they are due as *punishments* to another, namely to the old man (for the old man is indeed morally another)" (p. 68). And presumably, though Kant is not explicit about this, these ills suffice as punishments for the lapses of the new man in the course of his upward struggle. Since it is the old man's fault that a struggle upward from evil must be undertaken, these lapses too belong to him in some extended sense.

To make sense of all this, we must, I think, appeal to two rather different conceptions of personal identity. On the one hand, there is what Kant thinks of as physical personal identity, which is determined by one's empirical nature as a sentient being. On the other hand, there is what Kant thinks of as moral personal identity, which is determined by one's moral character in accord with the principle that no moral person of an evil disposition is identical with any moral person of a good disposition. The two identity relations do not coincide. It is one and the same physical person who persists through a moral revolution. As Kant puts it, "the man (regarded from the point of view of his empirical nature as a sentient being) is *physically* the self-same guilty person as before and must be judged as such before a moral tribunal and hence by himself" (p. 68). Satisfaction is rendered to divine justice because the physical person suffers punishment for his sins. But, during a moral revolution, one moral person ceases to be and another begins to be, though both are tied to the same physical person. The new, post-revolutionary man, because of his good disposition, "is (regarded as an intelligible being) *morally* another in the eyes of a divine judge for whom this disposition takes the place of action" (p. 68). The new man suffers a full measure of life's

ills for the sake of the good he pursues by his course of arduous upward progress. These sufferings, voluntarily endured, cannot be regarded as punishments for his sins, since he has incurred no penalties, but they may be regarded as making vicarious satisfaction to God for the sins of the old man whom he replaced, or, what amounts to the same thing, vicarious satisfaction to God for the sins of the physical man with whom he is so intimately associated. Kant summarizes the view in this memorable sentence: "And this moral disposition which in all its purity (like unto the purity of the Son of God) the man has made his own—or, (if we personify this idea) this Son of God, Himself—bears as *vicarious substitute* the guilt of sin for him, and indeed for all who believe (practically) in Him; as *savior* He renders satisfaction to supreme justice by His sufferings and death; and as *advocate* He makes it possible for men to hope to appear before their judge as justified" (p. 69). But we must not allow ourselves to be misled by Kant's use of figurative language. It is not that one physical person, say, Christ, makes vicarious satisfaction for the sins of other physical persons; the debt of sin is not transmissible from one physical person to another. Rather, a moral person makes vicarious satisfaction for the physical person to whom he or she is tied, or if literal talk of moral persons strikes one as philosophically disreputable, an acquired characteristic of a physical person, his or her good moral disposition, is taken by God to have rendered satisfaction for the sins of the whole physical person. So Kant's doctrine of atonement is a doctrine of vicarious satisfaction, not in the full-blooded sense in which one person bears as vicarious substitute the burden of sin for another, but only in the somewhat attenuated sense in which one part of a person, as it were, bears the entire burden of the person's sins.

Yet a major puzzle remains. We were assured that it is within our power to carry out a moral revolution in disposition because the moral law requires us to do this. So, though we start from a propensity to moral evil, it is no more than our duty to acquire a good moral disposition. But then it would seem that acquisition of a good disposition could not produce a surplus of good over and above what is morally obligatory sufficient to pay the debt of sin. How is it possible for the good disposition to make satisfaction for sin if in acquiring it one is doing no more than the moral law demands?

Kant's answer to this question must be that the good disposition does not suffice to pay the debt of sin. The debt can literally never be paid in full, since the sinner cannot pay it and no one else can pay it for the sinner. But the debt can mercifully be forgiven provided the sinner does what he can by way of making satisfaction and acquires a good disposition. But what every sinner can and must do is to acquire a good disposition; desert of mercy is conditional upon a moral revolution in the basic disposition. The good disposition can serve as a basis of desert of mercy because it is "something *real* which of itself is well-

pleasing to God" (p. 161), but even the good disposition cannot establish a legal claim in strict justice to God's justifying verdict. Only if we had never sinned, either in disposition or in deed, would we have a legal claim based in justice alone to God's justifying decree, for only then would we have satisfied every demand the moral law makes upon us. Given that we have sinned, the good disposition we acquire through moral revolution establishes in us no more than "a *capability of receiving*, which is all that we, for our part, can credit to ourselves" (p. 70). Since "a superior's decree conferring a good for which the subordinate possesses nothing but the (moral) receptivity is called *grace*," God's justifying decree "is always one of grace alone" (p. 70). Hence, the surplus of good needed to pay the debt of sin cannot be something of our own which we have acquired and can credit to ourselves but must be "a profit which is reckoned to us by *grace*" (p. 70). If "what in our earthly life (and possibly at all future times and in all worlds) is ever only a *becoming* (namely, becoming a man well-pleasing to God) should be credited to us exactly as if we were already in full possession of it" (p. 70), this would not be because God owes it to us in justice to credit us with being well-pleasing to him, for we are not well-pleasing to him and he knows it, even if we have acquired a disposition to be well-pleasing to Him, which is itself something well-pleasing to him. Rather, it would be because God mercifully credits to us some moral goodness not our own by forgiving us the debt of our sins and absolving us from guilt in his gracious justifying decree. So Kant must hold that the righteousness imputed to us by the divine justifying decree "will ever remain a righteousness not our own" (p. 59) because we have not earned it by perfect obedience to the moral law, and he must also maintain that "an appropriation of this righteousness for the sake of our own must be possible" (p. 60) if God's justifying decree is not to be based on an inaccurate assessment of our ultimate moral status. In short, we do not even have the capability of receiving this gift of grace unless we have acquired the good disposition, and we must freely accept this grace when it has been offered if there is to be a divine justifying decree. But God does not make us be more righteous than we formerly were; it is open to us to decline rather than to appropriate the alien righteousness we are offered.

But whence comes this surplus goodness, which is a profit reckoned to us by grace, and how can it be imputed to us as our goodness? And how can there be a righteousness not our own that we can appropriate for the sake of our own righteousness? Moral goodness and righteousness appear to our reason to be every bit as non-transferable as moral debt and guilt. Here we reach the limits of philosophical rationalization, the outer bounds of religion within the limits of reason alone. We confront what Kant calls the mystery of atonement, a mystery "revealed to us through our reason" (p. 133). God, commanding through the moral law, has made it our duty to elevate ourselves to the ideal of complete

moral perfection in both disposition and deed in order that we might be members of the kingdom of Heaven, and yet we have sinned by disobeying the moral law and made ourselves unworthy to be members of the kingdom of Heaven. This is man's moral predicament. But "if the goodness of God has called him, as it were, into being, i.e., to exist in a particular manner (as a member of the kingdom of Heaven), He must also have a means of supplementing, out of the fullness of His own holiness, man's lack of requisite qualifications therefore" (p. 134). So God must be able to atone vicariously for man's sins, to make man a gracious gift of a righteousness not man's own. Yet this seems to be quite impossible, for it appears to reason that any moral quality a man may have must be imputable to him and, hence, must arise from some exercise of his own freedom. In other words, it seems that "this contradicts spontaneity (which is assumed in all the moral good or evil which a man can have within himself), according to which such a good cannot come from another but must arise from man himself, if it is to be imputable to him" (p. 134). Hence, as far as reason can see, God cannot atone vicariously for man's sins or bestow upon him a righteousness not his own, for "so far as reason can see, no one can, by virtue of the superabundance of his own good conduct and through his own merit, take another's place" (p. 134). So if we propose to accept vicarious atonement, as Kant pretty clearly does, we must, Kant admonishes us, "*assume it* only from the moral point of view, since for the ratiocination it is an unfathomable mystery" (p. 134). But it is, according to Kant, only a mystery and not an out and out impossibility. Like a moral revolution in the ultimate ground of one's maxims and, indeed, in the last resort, everything connected with the spontaneity of freedom, its impossibility "cannot really be proved, because freedom itself, though containing nothing supernatural in its conception, remains, as regards its possibility, just as incomprehensible to us as is the supernatural factor which we would like to regard as a supplement to the spontaneous but deficient determination of freedom" (p. 179). And so, Kant seems to be saying, the bottom line is that we may assume from the moral point of view that a righteousness not the product of our own freedom can be transmitted to us, though how this is possible is completely inexplicable to human reason.

By way of summary, then, we may say that Kant's theory of atonement has two main parts. The first has to do with what one must do on one's own to make satisfaction for one's sins. One must carry out a moral revolution in the highest ground of one's maxims and acquire a good disposition in place of the propensity to evil one has brought upon oneself. This is a necessary condition of being justified in the eyes of God. As Kant tells us, "only the supposition of a complete change of heart allows us to think of the absolution, at the bar of heavenly justice, of the man burdened with guilt" (p. 71). But it is not a sufficient condition of being justified in God's eyes; nothing one can do suffices fully to pay the

debt of sin. The second part of Kant's theory has to do with what one may hope God will do to supplement one's efforts. One may hope that God will graciously bestow upon one a righteousness not one's own on account of the moral receptivity to grace one has in virtue of having acquired a good disposition. This merciful gift of grace of also a necessary condition of being justified in the eyes of God. The two conditions together are sufficient for being justified in God's eyes. In short, justification in the eyes of God requires the cooperation of freedom and grace.

Among the merits of Kant's theory is its ability to go a long way toward meeting objections to Anselm's theory of the sort I have laid out above. In response to my second objection, Kant would insist, along with Anselm's critics, that moral debts and credits are not transferable, so far as it is permissible to judge of the matter according to our reason. But he goes on to say that it cannot be proved that something like the transmission of moral goodness from one person to another is impossible, though such a transmission is bound always to be an unfathomable mystery for reason. Hence, we may do no more than assume vicarious atonement from the moral point of view, and we may "hope to partake in the appropriation of another's atoning merit, and so of salvation, only by qualifying for it through our own efforts to fulfill every human duty" (p. 108). In response to my third objection, Kant would agree with Anselm's critics that it is a mistake to think of atonement as a satisfaction made to God which pays the debts on which we have defaulted in full, together with accrued penalties, and thereby justifies us in the sight of God. The satisfaction we render to God by acquiring the good disposition through moral revolution and enduring consequent ills as punishments for past particular sins is necessary but insufficient to justify us in God's eyes. We must also appropriate a righteousness not our own, which is offered to us as a gift of grace, if we are to be justified. Although this merciful gift is in accord with divine justice, since we have done what we can to deserve it by making the satisfaction it is within our power to make, it is not a demand of strict justice that we be given this gift, and it is not owed to us by right. Hence, it is appropriate for us to pray for this gift, even after we have rendered to God all the satisfaction we can, in order that we may be fully absolved from our sins and justified in the eyes of God. And finally, in response to my first objection, Kant would agree with Anselm's critics that God can waive his claim to full recompense for sin without doing anything unjust, provided the sinner makes the satisfaction that is within his power by acquiring a good disposition. Since such satisfaction as sinners can make is insufficient to justify them in the sight of God, God's decree of justification is bound to be one of grace and to be based, on God's part, on mercifully waiving the claim to full recompense for sin. Yet such a justifying decree would not place one who sins and one who does not in the same position before God, for one who sins would, as a prerequisite

for being justified in the sight of God, have made a satisfaction to God that one who does not would not have made. Nor, Kant thinks, would there be anything inordinate about such a decree, since it would be in accord with divine justice on account of being based upon a giving of satisfaction.

So there are respects in which Kant's theory of atonement is a clear improvement upon Anselm's. But there are also objections to be made to Kant's theory. I next turn to an examination of some of them.

Unjustified Justification?

At the heart of Kant's practical philosophy lies the conviction that whatever one may do by way of moral good or moral evil must be imputable to him or her and so must be a product of some exercise of his or her own freedom. The propensity to moral evil, which is a supreme maxim governing the whole use of freedom, is itself morally evil just because it is freely adopted and so imputable to one who has it. The good disposition is itself morally good precisely because one is responsible for having it on account of having freely acquired it. And particular temporal actions are good or evil, morally speaking, just because their maxims are freely adopted. As Kant puts it, "man *himself* must make or have made himself into whatever, in a moral sense, whether good or evil, he is or is to become" (p. 40). It is this conviction that underlies Kant's insistence that, as far as human reason can judge, neither moral merit nor moral demerit is transferable or transmissible. But if Kant is right on this score, then the very possibility of vicarious atonement is precluded, as far as human reason can tell. Even if there were a surplus of goodness in the universe, it could never be reckoned to us as our own moral goodness because it would not be imputable to us. Since it would not be a product of the exercise of our freedom, we would not be responsible for it, and so it would forever remain a goodness that was not our own moral goodness. A righteousness not our own could never become our righteousness, for our righteousness is something we must earn by our own efforts to obey the moral law. And so even if Christ, who is without sin, has accumulated in heaven's treasury a surplus of moral merit by voluntarily submitting to his passion and death, this can be of no help to human sinners, for it must forever remain his moral merit and can never become ours. Or so it must seem to human reason if one shares Kant's conviction about the impossibility of transferring or transmitting moral goodness from one person to another.

And so one objection to Kant is that he misstates the case when he describes vicarious atonement as a mystery revealed to us through our reason. What our reason reveals to us is that there can be no vicarious atonement. Perhaps there is some way in which God can bring sinners to salvation through his mercy. If there is, it will not involve a divine decree justifying sinners in the sight of God.

According to human reason, an omniscient God would not issue such a decree, for he would know that human sinners are not righteous by their own efforts and cannot acquire righteousness by transfer. So sinners must remain unjustified in the eyes of God even if they are also saved by his mercy. Hence, as far as human reason can judge, Kantian justification is not merely mysterious; it is, on Kantian principles, utterly unjustified.

Of course, it is only proper to share Kant's modesty about the powers of human reason in the present context. Despite the difficulties, perhaps there is some way of reconciling vicarious atonement with the non-transferability of moral qualities in the ordinary course of things. But even if there were, Kant's account of the justification of sinners in the sight of God would still be open to two other rather serious objections.

According to the first, even if vicarious atonement were possible and were to occur, it would not suffice to justify sinners in the sight of God and so would not warrant a decree of justification by God. We must, Kant supposes, think of God "(1) as the omnipotent Creator of heaven and earth, i.e., as *holy* Legislator, (2) as Preserver of the human race, its *benevolent* Ruler and moral Guardian, (3) as Administrator of His own holy laws, i.e., as *righteous* Judge" (p. 131). As holy legislator, God is author of the moral law. The moral law commands us to elevate ourselves to the ideal of complete moral perfection. Since it is our duty to do this, we must be able to do it. As righteous judge, God will find us justified in his eyes only if we have done all that it is our duty to do. But complete moral perfection requires both that we acquire a good disposition and that we not bring upon ourselves a morally evil propensity to evil. Yet, though we could have done otherwise, we have brought upon ourselves a morally evil propensity to evil. Thus we have disobeyed the moral law's command concerning our disposition. And complete moral perfection also requires both that we perform morally good deeds in time and that we not perform morally evil deeds in time. Yet, though we could have refrained from doing so, we have done morally evil deeds. Thus we have disobeyed the moral law's command concerning our deeds. Having failed to elevate ourselves to the ideal of complete moral perfection, we have not done all that it is our duty to do, and so God will not find us justified in his eyes. Even if a vicarious atonement should allow us to appropriate a righteousness not our own, this would not undo or wipe out the evils we have done, for the propensity to moral evil is inextirpable by human powers and our evil deeds are past and unalterable. Hence, we would not by such an appropriation elevate ourselves to the ideal of complete moral perfection, since such an elevation consists in achieving a perfect righteousness of our own and not in appropriating some alien righteousness. Therefore, even if a vicarious atonement were to occur, it would not justify us in God's sight; only elevating ourselves to the ideal of complete moral perfection could justify us in God's eyes. God, being omniscient,

knows all this as well as we do. As a righteous judge, God will not issue a decree of justification for us, since he knows that we sinners are not justified in his sight, though it was within our power to be so justified and we alone are responsible for not being so justified. Perhaps God will graciously save us, though we remain unjustified in his sight, if we do all we can to make satisfaction for the evils we have done. But if God does this, we do not thereby become justified in God's eyes. In such circumstances, a divine decree of justification would be quite inappropriate, and so Kantian justification is unjustified. Vicarious atonement simply is not good enough to warrant a verdict of justification from a righteous judge; only the individual achievement of complete moral perfection could suffice for that purpose.

The second objection resembles one formulated by John Silber.¹¹ Even if a righteousness not our own were made available to us by grace and we were able to appropriate it, a decree of justification based on such an appropriation would be a moral outrage. A person who has never disobeyed the moral law has no need of grace in order to be justified in the sight of God; such a person has acquired his or her own righteousness by his or her own efforts and has earned God's justifying decree. The moral law demands that each of us acquire such a perfect righteousness of our own, and so every one of us is able to acquire such righteousness. Hence, anyone who does not acquire such perfect righteousness but instead disobeys the moral law becomes a sinner by free choice. But a sinner by free choice stands condemned in the sight of God and has earned a divine decree of condemnation. Even if such a sinner manages to appropriate an alien righteousness, it remains the case that the sinner has not done what he or she was obliged to do and could have done, and so such a sinner continues to deserve a decree of condemnation rather than a decree of justification from a righteous judge. To issue a decree of justification for such a sinner on account of an appropriated righteousness not his or her own, when what he or she has earned by his or her own efforts and therefore deserves is a decree of condemnation, would be to comprise the strictness of the moral law. Such laxness would be a moral outrage; a righteous judge would never behave in this indulgent fashion. For this reason too, then, Kantian justification is unjustified. Possession of a righteousness not one's own is not so much as relevant to what one deserves at the hands of a righteous moral judge; all that is relevant is whatever righteousness of one's own one has acquired through one's obedience to the moral law.

Conclusions

Our reflections upon Kant and Anselm point to one major conclusion. It is that any doctrine of vicarious atonement will be difficult, if not impossible, to square with a conviction that is central to the conceptual scheme of common

sense morality.

According to common sense moral thinking, moral credits and debits are neither transferable nor transmissible. Kant's doctrine that moral worth, since it must be imputable, has to be the product of an exercise of free will and can only be imputed to the person whose free will produced it goes some way toward explaining this intuitive conviction about morality. Sin, which consists of disobedience to the will of God, is a moral evil. Hence, if sin is a moral debt on which the sinner has defaulted, it is not a transferable debt which another could pay for the sinner, thereby clearing the sinner's accounts with God. Righteousness, which consists of obedience to the will of God, is a moral good. Hence, if anyone can accumulate an excess of righteousness over what morality requires, it is not a transmissible surplus which could be credited to another's account, thereby clearing a sinner's accounts with God. Though I would not presume to claim that these intuitions are cultural invariants, I dare say they are widely shared in our culture. They are my considered opinions. They also underlie some of the more cogent objections to Anselm's and Kant's theories of atonement.

In these theories, it is the element of vicariousness that is the source of difficulties. Anselm requires that Christ vicariously substitute for the sinner in bearing the burden of the debt of sin, and this can be done only if the burden of the debt of sin can be transferred from the sinner to Christ. Kant requires that the sinner vicariously appropriate another's righteousness in order to be justified in the sight of God, and this can be done only if another's righteousness can be transmitted to the sinner. Such transfers or transmissions would be possible only if moral merit and demerit were alienable from those who acquire them through their own efforts. But moral merit and demerit are inalienable. To suppose otherwise is to imagine that they are extrinsic to their possessors. It is to imagine that the moral economy could, as it were, be adequately represented by some sort of system of double-entry bookkeeping which kept track of transfers of moral credits and debits from one person to another. This is the thought that clashes with moral convictions. And so it seems that we are driven to jettison the traditional picture according to which atonement is a matter of the moral arithmetic of exchange.

If we do take the radical step of abandoning this picture, we are not driven to say that God cannot save sinners. Surely we may continue to hold that God's mercy extends to forgiving sins and to remitting the full temporal punishment due for sins, even if we insist that the forgiven sinner continues to lack righteousness and thus to be unjustified in the sight of God. If such an exercise of mercy is also to be just, perhaps we must insist that the sinners have done something by way of repentance in order to deserve mercy. As Kant's theory shows us, the notion of satisfaction might be of some use to us in this connection. Maybe divine justice requires that such an exercise of mercy be conditional upon

the repentent sinner having done all that lies within his or her power to make satisfaction to God for sin, both in terms of improving his or her moral character and by way of gladly enduring the ills attendant upon the struggle upward to a better course of life. But such satisfaction would not, as even Kant admits, suffice to justify the sinner in the eyes of God; only a life entirely free from sin would suffice for that purpose. So even a sinner who had made satisfaction would remain unjustified, and a divine decree of condemnation of such a sinner could not be replaced by a decree of justification. But because the sinner had done what was required to become worthy of mercy, God could graciously exercise clemency in remitting some of the punishment he would have inflicted upon the sinner if the sinner had not made satisfaction. And God could reconcile the sinner to himself by forgiving the offense to himself in the sin if the sinner had made satisfaction. Hence, God could grant salvation to the repentent sinner who had made satisfaction to the extent within his or her power without either the sinner's debt having been transferred to and fully paid by another or another's righteousness having been transmitted to and appropriated by the sinner. So it seems that vicarious satisfaction for sins is unnecessary for salvation, which is a good thing if vicarious satisfaction for sins is, as it appears to be, impossible.

But there is a price to be paid for taking this line. If we rule out the possibility of transferring or transmitting to us the merits of Christ's sacrifice for our justification, the merits of Christ's sacrifice cannot be necessary for our salvation. If we can be saved and yet Christ's sacrifice cannot pay in full our debt of sin, then vicarious satisfaction by Christ for us is not, contrary to Anselm, necessary for our salvation and is not, contrary to Aquinas, necessary for our salvation upon the condition that God demands satisfaction proportionate to the gravity of our sins. Indeed, if the merits of Christ's sacrifice are not transferable to us for our justification and God does demand satisfaction proportionate to the gravity of our sins, then we sinners cannot be saved. But if Christ's sacrifice was not even conditionally necessary for our salvation, what then was its purpose? It is sometimes said that Christ's sacrifice, though not necessary for our salvation, was a fitting way of atoning for our sins. However, it would seem that Christ's sacrifice could not even make a contribution to atoning for our sins if the debts of our sins are not transferable to him and the merits of his sacrifice are not transmissible to us. So one is left wondering whether philosophy can make any sense at all of the claim that Christ, by his incarnation, passion, death and resurrection, atoned for our sins.

If this is the situation in which Christian philosophers find themselves, they should find atonement a problematic and puzzling answer to the original soteriological question. And so we have returned to the point from which we began. The soteriological question has merely become more perplexing under philosophical examination of the traditional answer offered by the doctrine of

vicarious atonement. Why, then, did God become man?¹²

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NOTES

1. Anselm of Canterbury, *Why God Became Man and The Virgin Conception and Original Sin*, translated, with an introduction and notes, by Joseph M. Colleran (Magi Books: Albany, 1969) p. 84. The quotation is from Chapter 11 of Book I of the *Cur Deus Homo*. Henceforth references to book and chapter of this work and to pages of this English translation will be made parenthetically in the body of the paper.

2. George Cadwalader Foley, *Anselm's Theory of the Atonement* (Longman's Green, and Co.: New York, 1909) p. 173.

3. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, III, 46.

4. Foley, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 164-65.

6. An example is Gustaf Aulén, *Christus Victor*, translated by A. G. Herbert with a foreward by Jaroslav Pelikan (Macmillan: New York, 1969) pp. 84-92.

7. Immanuel Kant, *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*, translated by Theodore M. Greene and Hoyt H. Hudson with introductory essays by Theodore M. Greene and John R. Silber (Harper & Row: New York, 1960) p. 54. Henceforth page references to this work will be made parenthetically in the body of the paper.

8. I have elsewhere argued that such a transformation is not so much mysterious as downright impossible, given certain other Kantian doctrines. See Philip L. Quinn, "Original Sin, Radical Evil and Moral Identity," *Faith and Philosophy* 1, pp. 188-202.

9. Kant's translators remark in a footnote that 'Verschuldung,' which they translate as 'debt,' might as well have been translated by 'offense' or 'guilt.' They consider 'debt' suitable to express Kant's legalistic cast of mind.

10. Perhaps the thought would be clearer at this point if we replaced the phrase 'no one who is blameworthy can ever be guiltless' in the standard translation with 'no one who is deserving of punishment may ever go unpunished.' This alternative translation is adopted in Allen W. Wood, *Kant's Moral Religion* (Cornell University Press: Ithaca, 1970) p. 235.

11. John R. Silber, "The Ethical Significance of Kant's *Religion*," *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone* (Harper & Row: New York, 1960) pp. cxxxi-cxxxiii. But the objection I state only resembles Silber's because Silber's criticism is based on the mistaken assumption that Kant flatly rejects the doctrine of vicarious atonement. Allen Wood challenges Silber's interpretation of Kant on this point (Wood, *op. cit.*, p. 237). Because I side with Wood in this dispute, I have tried to extract from Silber's objection what remains of value after the mistaken assumption is corrected and to reformulate this point in my own words.

12. Earlier versions of this paper were read at the 1986 Pacific Regional Meeting of the Society of Christian Philosophers, where Richard Purtill and Charles Taliaferro were my commentators, and

at the University of Notre Dame, where David Burrell was my commentator. I am grateful to my commentators and others in the audiences on those occasions for helpful discussion. I am also grateful to Eleonore Stump for detailed written comments.