

Sungkyu Joo

# Atonement in the Trinitarian Theology of Augustine, Calvin, and Turretin



# Reformed Historical Theology

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## Preface

The subject of Christ's vicarious satisfaction has long stood at the heart of Christian theology, yet its interpretation remains complex and contested in contemporary scholarship. During my years of study in systematic, historical, and biblical theology – first in Korea, then over eight years at Calvin Theological Seminary in the United States, and subsequently throughout my doctoral work at the Theological University of Apeldoorn – I encountered a wide range of atonement theories and the diverse Trinitarian frameworks in which they have been interpreted. As a pastor responsible for preaching and teaching the Gospel faithfully, I felt a growing need to understand which theological account best reflects the biblical witness and the classical Christian tradition. This pastoral concern slowly developed into the academic motivation that shaped the present study.

My interest in the Trinitarian foundations of atonement began as I observed how several contemporary theologians – such as Gunton, Sherman, Johnson, Stump, Crisp, and Van Asselt – have attempted to integrate different models of atonement under a broader Trinitarian vision. Their constructive efforts were inspiring, yet I increasingly recognized that many of these models inadequately addressed the historical and theological critiques raised by anti-Trinitarian thinkers such as Servetus and Socinus. My research therefore turned toward examining how the doctrinal structures of eternal generation, personal distinctions within the Godhead, and the Son's aseity relate to the necessity of Christ's vicarious satisfaction.

This investigation led me to Augustine, Calvin, and Turretin – three theologians who, though writing in different eras, share a deeply coherent Trinitarian framework. I discovered that each of them upholds two fundamental Trinitarian principles: the one consubstantial essence of the three persons and their distinct personalities. Calvin emphasizes the absolute aseity and the personal generation of the Son, while Turretin recovers Augustine's notion of the Father's natural and personal generation of the Son. Together, their perspectives form a holistic Trinitarian theology in which eternal generation and the Son's aseity are not competing concepts but mutually illuminating doctrines. This holistic Trinitarian perspective provides a compelling basis for defending the hypothetical necessity – not the absolute or accidental necessity – of Christ's vicarious satisfaction.

In contrast, I found that Servetus and Socinus develop markedly different and internally hierarchical conceptions of the divine essence and of the Son – whether the twofold Logos in Servetus's case or the eternal Son in Socinus's.

Servetus's confusion between the eternal and temporal Logos results in a composite view of God, while Socinus's separation of the Father's essence from His internal wills and attributes leads to a similarly hierarchical structure. Both deny Augustine's understanding of the Father's natural generation of the Son. Consequently, they undermine the personal distinctions and free, spontaneous wills of the divine persons – precisely the doctrinal foundations upon which the hypothetical necessity of Christ's vicarious satisfaction rests. These findings were among the most surprising and illuminating aspects of my study, revealing why recent Trinitarian atonement models often fail to answer anti-Trinitarian critiques adequately.

The present thesis therefore argues that a proper defense of Christ's vicarious satisfaction requires not only engagement with biblical and historical theology but also a renewed appreciation for the holistic Trinitarian concept of Augustine, Calvin, and Turretin. By examining their holistic doctrines of eternal generation and the Son's aseity – and by contrasting these with the anti-Trinitarian views of Socinus and Servetus – this study aims to contribute to ongoing discussions on the Trinitarian foundations of atonement and to clarify why Christ's vicarious satisfaction remains theologically necessary within the classical Christian tradition.

## Introduction: Recent Trinitarian Atonement Models

### I.1 Recent Discussions on Trinitarian Atonement Models

Some recent scholars, including Oliver D. Crisp, Colin E. Gunton, Adam J. Johnson, Robert Sherman, Eleonore Stump, Willem J. van Asselt, Joshua R. Farris, and S. Mark Hamilton, have either overlooked or reinterpreted the historical and theological concept of Christ's vicarious satisfaction in their development of Trinitarian atonement models.<sup>1</sup> In their formulations, they have generally avoided discussing the theological relationship between their Trinitarian perspectives and the concept of Christ's vicarious satisfaction. Instead, they have focused on defending one of the various theories of atonement or integrating these theories with their own Trinitarian views.<sup>2</sup>

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1 For more details on the unified model of atonement, see John McIntyre, *The Shape of Soteriology: Studies in the Doctrine of the Death of Christ* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1992); Colin E. Gunton, *The Actuality of Atonement: A Study of Metaphor, Rationality and the Christian Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; T&T Clark, 1989); Robert J. Sherman, *King, Priest, and Prophet: A Trinitarian Theology of Atonement* (New York: T&T Clark, 2004); Adam J. Johnson, *Atonement: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: T&T Clark, 2015); Willem J. van Asselt, "Christ's Atonement: A Multi-Dimensional Approach," *Calvin Theological Journal* 38, no. 1 (April 2003): 52–67; Adam J. Johnson, ed., *T&T Clark Companion to Atonement* (London: T&T Clark, 2017); Oliver D. Crisp, *Approaching the Atonement* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2020); Idem, *The Word Enfleshed: Exploring the Person and Work of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016). For further discussion on the model of atonement based on Christ's vicarious satisfaction, see Joshua R. Farris and S. Mark Hamilton, "Reparative Substitution and the 'Efficacy Objection': Toward a Modified Satisfaction Theory of Atonement," *Perichoresis* 15, no. 3 (October 2017): 97–110; idem, "The Logic of Reparative Substitution: Contemporary Restitution Models of Atonement, Divine Justice, and Somatic Death," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 83, no. 1 (2018): 62–77; Van Asselt, "Christ's Atonement," 52–67; Louis Berkhof, *Vicarious Atonement through Christ* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1936). According to Oliver D. Crisp, Kant, Schleiermacher, and Rashdall may be regarded as predecessors of exemplarism. For more details on exemplarism, see John Hick, *The Metaphor of God Incarnate: Christology in a Pluralistic Age* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993); Hastings Rashdall, *The Idea of the Atonement in Christian Theology* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1919); Oliver D. Crisp, "Moral Exemplarism and Atonement," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 73, no. 2 (2020): 137–49; Stephen J. Pope, "Christocentric Exemplarism and the Imitation of Jesus," *New Blackfriars* 101, no. 1093 (2020): 301–10.

2 Many eminent modern scholars effectively summarize various models of atonement in their works, and numerous renowned academics defend their perspectives in their published writings. However, due to space constraints, the scope of this study is limited to Trinitarian atonement models that synthesize distinct atonement theories with their respective Trinitarian theological structures. I do not aim to evaluate the authors' entire views on atonement. In analyzing these

The definition of atonement in the Trinitarian atonement model has been broadened and obscured due to the neglect of both the historical and theological concept of Christ's vicarious satisfaction and the relationship between Trinitar-

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Trinitarian atonement models, I will briefly incorporate evaluations from other scholars to support my analysis and ensure fairness. First, Oliver D. Crisp questions the necessity of Christ's vicarious satisfaction by affirming Aquinas's interpretation of Phil 2:6–7. According to Cornelis P. Venema, Crisp rejects “the prevalent covenantal representation view of Reformed theology” in favor of “the Eastern Orthodox view of participation in the divine nature (*‘theosis’* or *‘divinization’*).” Cornelis P. Venema, “The Word Enfleshed: Exploring the Person and Work of Christ,” *Mid-America Journal of Theology* 29 (2018): 231; Idem, “Approaching the Atonement: The Reconciling Work of Christ,” *Mid-America Journal of Theology* 32 (2021): 196. Also, see Oliver D. Crisp, *The Word Enfleshed*, 6, 130–40. Second, according to Alexander Jeffrey McKelway, Colin Gunton emphasizes that the “sacrifice of Christ” in time is “an eternal activity within the divine life, in which the Father and the Son reciprocally give themselves to each other and to the world.” Similarly, Andrew C. Picard contends that Gunton views the sacrifice of Jesus Christ in time as a manifestation of “the [internal] actions of the self-giving God, who acts to restore humanity and creation to relationship with himself by means of himself.” These perspectives contrast with understanding Christ's distinct and mediatorial act as being rooted in the eternal decree of the Trinity. McKelway thus concludes that Gunton aligns with “Barth's substitutionary grace,” a position that does not affirm the eternal decree of the Trinity or the covenantal representation view of Reformed theology. Alexander Jeffrey McKelway, “The Actuality of Atonement: A Study of Metaphor, Rationality and the Christian Tradition,” *Theology Today* 48, no. 4 (January 1992): 478; Andrew Picard, “Colin Gunton,” in *T&T Clark Companion to Atonement* (London: T&T Clark, 2017), 528; Colin Gunton, *The Actuality of Atonement*, (London: T&T Clark, 1988), 126. Third, Johnson's monotheistic Trinitarian atonement model appears incompatible with the doctrine of the Trinity's eternal decree, which – on a hypothetical level – necessitates Christ's vicarious satisfaction. Johnson recognizes that Barth's perspective conflicts with the views of Turretin and other theologians who uphold the traditional distinctions between the communicable and incommunicable attributes of the three persons. Johnson considers Turretin's emphasis on the necessity of satisfaction to be an extreme and illogical position. Johnson's attempt to construct a comprehensive Trinitarian atonement model prompts a critical inquiry into Whether Calvin's Trinitarian model of atonement – which appears to maintain the classical distinctions between the communicable and incommunicable attributes of the three divine persons – corresponds more closely with Turretin's Trinitarian framework or with Barth's model of atonement. Johnson, *Atonement*, 17–18, 76, 81–83, 97–101, 119, 129–30. Jane Barter characterizes Johnson's defense of “monotheistic Trinitarianism” as being “rather Docetic.” For more details on this issue, see Jane Barter Moulaison, “Atonement: A Guide for the Perplexed,” *Theology Today* 73, no. 4 (2017): 409–10. Fourth, Sherman, building on Gunton's argument, contends that the glory of the only begotten Son mentioned in John 1:14 is not the glory associated with the eternal generation of the Son. Rather, it refers to the glory of Jesus manifested during His death and humiliation – the same Jesus whom the Father glorifies and exalts through His death. Sherman, *King, Priest and Prophet*, 148; Gunton, *A Brief Theology of Revelation: Warfield Lectures 1993* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995), 121. Sherman confines the Father's appointment of the Son as Christ to the moment of Jesus's baptism, aiming to affirm the three distinct wills of the three persons within God's economy without appealing to the concept of the Father's eternal generation of the Son. In other words, Sherman rejects the idea that the Father appointed the eternal

ian perspectives and the concept of Christ's vicarious satisfaction. In discussing the conflicts over the doctrine of limited atonement in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, Muller highlights the consensus on the definition of atonement, noting both "the objective sacrificial death of Christ, considered as the atonement or *expiatio* offered to God as the price for sin, upon which all parties in the debate were agreed," and "the unlimited value, worth, merit, power, or 'sufficiency' of the *satisfactio*, upon which all parties were also in agreement."<sup>3</sup> The terms "*satisfactio*" or "*expiatio*" can be understood as "atonement" when they refer to the infinite worthiness of Christ's perfect sacrifice as full payment for sin.<sup>4</sup>

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Son as Christ on the basis of the Trinity's eternal decree. Sherman, "Toward a Trinitarian Theology of the Atonement," 350. Fifth, Eleonore Stump contends, "In His passion and death, Christ brings about a metaphysical alteration in Himself and in every person of grace that enables a metaphysical condition of mutual indwelling between God and human persons." She further argues that "to achieve this mutual indwelling, Christ needs to open Himself to receive the psyches of all human beings, as He does when He bears all human sin on the cross." These arguments implicitly reject the necessity of the Trinity's eternal decree and Christ's vicarious satisfaction. Eleonore Stump, *Atonement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 342–43. Stump interprets "all human sin" as a metaphysical concept that can be quantified and inflicted upon Jesus's psyche. She conceives of sin primarily as a psychological reality rather than as a legal category grounded in the eternal decrees of the Trinity. Consequently, she argues that Christ's cry and death on the cross – arising from the Father's abandonment – enabled the mutual indwelling of God and humanity in Christ. Stump contends that a genuine change occurred in the mind and will of Jesus, who is both God and man. She posits that Christ's divine mind and will could be altered and appeased through His divine nature and human works, based on her belief in a perichoretic communion of the three persons within Christ. This perspective implies that her Trinitarian atonement model does not necessitate the inclusion of the eternal and immutable decree of the Trinity or Christ's vicarious satisfaction. Stump, *Atonement*, 380. Sixth, Willem J. van Asselt argues that Calvin's and Luther's concepts of Christ's punitive and vicarious satisfaction are integrated with a meritorious model by incorporating Anselm's framework of merit. See Van Asselt, "Christ's Atonement: A Multi-Dimensional Approach," *Calvin Theological Journal* 38, no. 1 (April 2003): 59–62. Recent Trinitarian atonement models that fail to provide a comprehensive framework affirming both the eternal Son's consubstantiality with the Father and His distinct personality fall short of adequately addressing the Trinity's eternal decrees and the necessity of Christ's vicarious satisfaction. Notably, Faustus Socinus critiques the necessity of Christ's vicarious satisfaction based on his anti-Trinitarian perspective and his rejection of the Trinity's eternal decrees, a topic that will be examined in greater detail in Chapter 3.

3 Richard A. Muller, *Calvin and the Reformed Tradition: On the Work of Christ and the Order of Salvation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 76.

4 For more details on the English term "atonement", see Richard A. Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms: Drawn Principally from Protestant Scholastic Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 116, 149, 321–23, 307; Muller, *Calvin and the Reformed Tradition*, 74–78. Cf. Sherman, *King, Priest and Prophet*, 10 n. 20. For more details on the Latin term "satisfaction," refer to Turretini, *De Satisfactionis Christi Necessitate*, in *Opera*, vol. 4



The aforementioned scholars do not address Faustus Socinus's critique of the historical and theological doctrine concerning the necessity of Christ's vicarious satisfaction.<sup>5</sup> Some agree with Socinus's critique, asserting that the doctrine of the necessity of Christ's vicarious satisfaction is unwarranted.<sup>6</sup> Others respond to Socinus's criticisms by offering an alternative perspective on Christ's vicarious satisfaction, acknowledging that the value of Christ's sacrificial death, as criticized by Socinus, might be perceived as imperfect or unnecessary.<sup>7</sup> As we will explore below, the rejection or modification of the historical and theological significance of Christ's vicarious satisfaction appears to be significantly influenced by the specific Trinitarian perspective a theologian holds.

The debate over the necessity of Christ's vicarious satisfaction has historically been spurred by anti-Trinitarians like Michael Servetus (1511–1553) and Faustus Socinus (1539–1604).<sup>8</sup> As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, Servetus and Soci-

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(New York: Robert Carter, 1848), 388: Secundo vero sensu, cum satisfactio pro solutione sumitur, non est cuiusquam peccatoris Deo satisfacere; solius Christi hoc est proprium, qui pro peccatis nostris ab initio usque in crucem persolvit, et obedientia usque ad mortem Dei iustitiae plene satisfecit. Et haec est significatio huius loci propria, cum de satisfactione Christi disputamus. Per eam quippe nihil aliud intelligimus quam voluntariam Christi perfectam obedientiam et passionem, qua se ipsum obtulit Deo per Spiritum aeternum in sacrificium immaculatum, ut pro nobis implemet omne legis postulatum et omnes poenas ex ordine divinae iustitiae nobis debitas in se transumpsit, tamquam fideiussor noster luens. Atque ita propitiatione perfectissima pro peccatis nostris praestita, liberationem a morte et maledictione, simulque ius ad vitam aeternam absolutissima iustitia sua nobis acquisivit. Unde constat ad hanc satisfactionem tum actiones tum passiones Christi concurrere, quibus plenissime legem implevit, tum faciendo quae iubebat, tum patiendi quae interminabatur. Cum enim utrumque ab homine peccatore lex requireret et utrumque ad perfectam salutem necessarium esset, utrumque etiam pro nobis solvi ab ipso debuit, ut in eo perfectum habemus, quo non modo impunitatem respectu poenarum a sanctione legis denunciatarum consequeremur, sed et positive ius vitae aeternae, quam facientibus lex promittit, adipisceremur. Licet autem haec Christi satisfactio in morte potissimum eminuerit, unde illi in scriptura saepe salus et redemptio tribuitur, quia fuit cumulus et corona eius obedientiae, ad totam tamen vitam extendenda est, in qua Christus iustitiam omnem implevit, et sic merendo satisfecit et satisfaciendo meruit.

5 For more details on Sherman's avoidance of Socinus's criticisms, see Sherman, *King, Priest and Prophet*, 197 n. 32.

6 For instance, see Crisp's acceptance of Socinus's critiques, see Crisp, *Approaching the Atonement*, 109–12.

7 For instance, see Joshua R. Farris and S. Mark Hamilton, "Reparative Substitution and the 'Efficacy Objection': Toward a Modified Satisfaction Theory of Atonement," 97–110; Idem, "The Logic of Reparative Substitution: Contemporary Restitution Models of Atonement, Divine Justice, and Somatic Death," 62–77; Van Asselt, "Christ's Atonement," 52–67.

8 For a brief overview of the historical background on how Faustus Socinus doctrinally opposed the necessity of Christ's vicarious satisfaction, Alan W. Gomes, "De Jesu Christo Servatore: Faustus Socinus on the Satisfaction of Christ," *The Westminster Theological Journal* 55, no. 2 (1993): 209–31. It is widely recognized that Faustus Socinus (1539–1604) was influenced by his uncle,

nus either distorted or rejected Augustine's notions of the Father's eternal generation of the Son and their shared aseity, as well as Calvin's clarification of these concepts.<sup>9</sup> Since Augustine's teachings on the Father's eternal generation of the Son and their shared aseity provide a comprehensive framework that affirms both the essential unity and the distinct, incommunicable identities of the three persons of the Trinity, rejecting these doctrines results in the denial of the

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Laelius Socinus (1525–1562), who critically engaged with and rejected several of Calvin's doctrines. Hillar Marian, "Laelius and Faustus Socini: Founders of Socinianism, Their Lives and Theology," *The Journal from the Radical Reformation*, no. 10 (2002): 1–30; Alan W. Gomes, "Faustus Socinus and John Calvin on the Merits of Christ," *Reformation & Renaissance Review* 12, no. 2–3 (August 2010): 189–205; Earl Morse Wilbur, *A History of Unitarianism: Socinianism and Its Antecedents* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1945), 239–257, 384–407. However, there remains ongoing debate over whether Socinus – Laelius and Faustus – explicitly rejected Calvin's views on the Trinity, Christology, and the so-called *extra calvinisticum*, or whether they aligned more closely with the ideas of Michael Servetus (1511–1553). Several theologians, such as Ludwig Oeder and Herbert John McLachlan, affirm and further develop Calvin's claim that there exists a significant affinity between Servetus and the Italian reformers – such as Laelius Socinus – in their rejection of Calvin's doctrinal positions. Herbert John McLachlan broadly assesses that Socinianism represents a combination of Italian rationalism and Polish Anabaptist thought, with its origins traceable to Michael Servetus of Spain. For more details on this topic, see Jerome Friedman, "Servetus and Antitrinitarianism: A' Propos Antonio Rotondo," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 35, no. 3 (1973): 543–45; Idem, "The Reformation Merry-Go-Round: The Servetian Glossary of Heresy," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 7, no. 1 (1976): 73–80; Antonio Rotondo, "Calvin and the Italian Anti-Trinitarians," trans. John & Anne Tedeschi, *The Foundation for Reformation Research*, Reformation Essays and Studies, no. 2 (1968): 1–28; Herbert John McLachlan, *Socinianism in Seventeenth-Century England* (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), 5. For instance, in his commentary on John 1:1, Calvin accuses Servetus of falling into the Arian error of subordinationism. John Calvin, *Commentarius in Evangelium Ioannis*, in *Ioannis Calvini Opera quae supersunt omnia*, vol. 47, ed. Wilhelm Baum, Eduard Cunitz, and Eduard Reuss (Brunswick: Schwetschke, 1891), col. 2; CO 47:2. Also, in his *Defensio Orthodoxae Fidei de Sacra Trinitate* (1554), Calvin argues that "the Italians [the Socinians] were automatically repeating the teachings of the Spanish heretic [Servetus]." John Calvin, *Defensio doctrinae de trinitate*, CO 8:459; Rotondo, "Calvin and the Italian Anti-Trinitarians," 11. Turretin argues that the Socinians, who aligned themselves with the views of the ancient Arians, denies the notion that "the Son received from the Father, through ineffable generation, the same numerical essence as the Father, not in time, but from eternity." Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, III.xviii.3. Given Calvin's and Turretin's assertion that the views of the Italians [Laelius Socinus and his followers] are essentially aligned with Servetus's anti-Trinitarian perspective, it seems reasonable to presuppose that Socinus's critique of the historical and theological concept of Christ's vicarious satisfaction, though Socinus and Servetus may appear different in methodology or form, are essentially aligned with that of Servetus.

9 For further details on the terms "the Father's eternal generation of the Son" and "their shared aseity," see I.4.

Trinity's shared essence and distinct wills. This, in turn, results in either a monotheistic or a tritheistic model of atonement. Denying the shared essence and distinct wills within the Trinity in the Trinitarian atonement model undermines the necessity of Christ's vicarious satisfaction. Without a comprehensive theological framework, it becomes challenging to simultaneously maintain and vindicate two key presuppositions: first, that the only begotten Son of God is both fully God and Mediator; and second, that the three distinct persons of the Trinity fulfill different roles and wills – the Father as the originator, the Son as the executor, and the Holy Spirit as the applier.<sup>10</sup> In other words, the debate over the necessity of Christ's vicarious satisfaction is theologically connected to Augustine's understanding and Calvin's clarification of the Father's eternal begetting of the Son and their shared aseity.<sup>11</sup>

Recent scholarly disregard for the theological debate concerning the necessity of "the objective sacrificial death of Christ" during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries has resulted in insufficient exploration of how the Trinitarian views of those times relate to the doctrine of Christ's vicarious satisfaction.<sup>12</sup> On the one hand, recent scholars who attempt to ignore or revise the historical

10 Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, ed. Anthony Uyl (Ingersoll: Devoted Publishing, 2019), 266. For more details on the discussions of this topic, see Brannon Ellis, *Calvin, Classical Trinitarianism, and the Aseity of the Son* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 244–45 nn. 66–70; R. Scott Clark and David VanDrunen, "Covenant before the Covenants," in *Covenant, Justification, and Pastoral Ministry: Essays by the Faculty of Westminster Seminary California*, ed. R. Scott Clark (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing, 2007), 167–69.

11 For example, Oliver D. Crisp overlooks Calvin's clarification of the Nicene concept of God's eternal generation. This oversight leads Crisp to imply that the second person of the Trinity lacks a distinct personality and will. Crisp does not adopt Calvin's view that Christ, as God, humbled Himself by assuming the form of a servant in eternity, in accordance with the eternal decrees of the Trinity. Instead, Crisp denies the necessity of Christ's vicarious satisfaction and rejects the distinct personality and will of the eternal Son, favoring Aquinas's interpretation of Phil 2:6–7. Willem J. van Asselt's idealistic Trinitarian atonement model diverges not only from the Nicene concept of the Father's eternal generation of the Son but also from Calvin's interpretation of it. Van Asselt argues that the Reformed understanding of satisfaction evolved into a meritorious and punitive model by combining Anselm's concept of merit with an early Reformed notion of penal substitution. For further discussion, see Crisp, *The Word Enfleshed*, 6. Also, see Johnson, *Atonement*, 17–18, 76, 81–83, 119, 129–30. Also, see Van Asselt, "Christ's Atonement," 59–62. Chapter 6 will demonstrate that Calvin's concept of the Father's eternal generation of the Son coheres with his understanding of Christ's self-humiliation as the eternal God who assumed the form of a servant, as articulated in John 6:33, 38, and 51. For more details on the term "eternal generation," see I.4.

12 The classic Reformed theologians distinguish between several forms of necessity, including absolute necessity (*necessitas absoluta*), hypothetical or consequential necessity (*necessitas consequentiae*), and the necessity of the consequent (*necessitas consequentis*), among others. In this study, I refer specifically to the Trinity's eternal decrees and promises as constituting a form of

and theological concept of Christ's vicarious satisfaction in their Trinitarian atonement models do not explain how their underlying Trinitarian perspectives differ substantially from the anti-Trinitarian views of Servetus and Socinus.<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, contemporary Trinitarian atonement models that present Christ's vicarious satisfaction as the complete and necessary fulfillment of God's righteousness do not address the theological distortions and denials of Augustine's concept of eternal generation, as advanced by Servetus and Socinus, along with their critiques of the doctrine of Christ's vicarious satisfaction.<sup>14</sup> Due to the theological difficulty and complexity of analyzing the relationship between sixteenth and seventeenth-century Trinitarian (or anti-Trinitarian) perspectives and the doctrine of Christ's vicarious satisfaction, recent scholars often refrain from addressing both Servetus's distortion and Socinus's denial of Augustine's concepts of eternal generation and aseity, as well as their corresponding critiques of Christ's vicarious satisfaction.

One group aims to uphold the historical and theological importance of the necessity of Christ's vicarious satisfaction without challenging Socinus's and Servetus's denials of it. However, if this group intends to support this notion, they need to confront Socinus's criticisms and Servetus's misrepresentations of Augustine's concepts concerning the Father's eternal generation of the Son and their shared aseity, or they should consider Calvin's interpretations of Augustine's doctrine of the Trinity. The other group accepts Socinus's and Servetus's objections to the ne-

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hypothetical necessity. For further details, see Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms*, 229–31.

13 For those theologians in this group who tend to overlook or reinterpret the historical and theological concept of Christ's vicarious satisfaction in their Trinitarian atonement models, see Gunton, *The Actuality of Atonement*; Sherman, King, *Priest and Prophet*; Johnson, *Atonement*; Johnson, *T&T Clark Companion to Atonement*; Crisp, *Approaching the Atonement*; Idem, *The Word Enfleshed*; Idem, "Moral Exemplarism and Atonement," 34–46; Hick, *The Metaphor of God Incarnate*; Rashdall, *The Idea of the Atonement in Christian Theology*; Farris and Hamilton, "Reparative Substitution and the 'Efficacy Objection': Toward a Modified Satisfaction Theory of Atonement," 140–57; Idem, "The Logic of Reparative Substitution," 427–44; Van Asselt, "Christ's Atonement," 52–67; Kyle C. Pope, "Christocentric Exemplarism and the Imitation of Jesus," *Restoration Quarterly* 62, no. 3 (2020): 125–39.

14 For an example of certain theologians within this group who do not address how their own – or the Reformed – Trinitarian view, as implied in such a Trinitarian atonement model, can counter the anti-Trinitarian arguments of Servetus and Socinus, see Carl R. Trueman, "The Necessity of the Atonement," in *Drawn into Controversie: Reformed Theological Diversity and Debates within Seventeenth-Century British Puritanism*, ed. Michael A. G. Haykin and Mark Jones (Oakville: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), 204–22; J. I. Packer, "The Necessity of the Atonement," in *Atonement* (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2010); Berkhof, *Vicarious Atonement through Christ*, 69–78; Richard A. Muller, *Christ and the Decree: Christology and Predestination in Reformed Theology from Calvin to Perkins* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008).

cessity of Christ's vicarious satisfaction but does not explain how their Trinitarian perspectives, as embedded in their Trinitarian atonement models, can avoid the same fallacies found in the anti-Trinitarian views of Servetus and Socinus.

## 1.2 Theological Prologue

The doctrines of the Trinity and Christ's mediatorship were affirmed as orthodox by authoritative church councils.<sup>15</sup> The two presuppositions concerning the Trinity, upheld by church councils, are: 1) the *consubstantiality* of the three persons, and 2) the distinct personalities of the three persons. Both Trinitarian presuppositions are openly acknowledged. Nonetheless, since the relationship between Christ's divine nature and mediatorship hangs on the relationship between the first and second presuppositions of the Trinity, the relationship between these two Trinitarian presuppositions have been consistently sought to clarify: 1) how to uphold the consubstantial essence (essential aseity) of the three persons, as Augustine emphasized, "through the Father's naturally voluntary generation of the Son";<sup>16</sup> and 2) how to maintain the distinction of the three persons, as Calvin emphasized "through the Father's personally

15 The doctrines of the Trinity and the necessity of the incarnation and death of Christ were progressively clarified and affirmed over time, beginning with the First Council of Nicaea in 325 and culminating, at least doctrinally, with the Fourth Council of Chalcedon in 451. For further details on this topic, see J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, rev. ed. (New York: HarperOne, 1978), 233; Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*, vol. 1, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100–600)* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 206; Justo L. González, *A History of Christian Thought*, vol. 1, *From the Beginnings to the Council of Chalcedon*, rev. ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1987), 284.

16 For a more detailed discussion of the term "Augustine's emphasis on the Father's naturally voluntary generation of the Son," see I.4 of this study. It may be debatable whether Augustine's concept of the Father's eternal and natural generation of the Son suggests that the eternal Son of God received the same substance or essence through the Father's eternal generation of the Son. There may be two schools of thought. One understands Augustine's concept of the Father's eternal generation of the Son as mainly emphasizing the eternal Son's consubstantiality with the Father through eternal generation. Another understands it as primarily emphasizing the Son's distinct personality from the Father via eternal generation. On the one hand, Benjamin B. Warfield understands Augustine's concept as prioritizing the eternal Son's consubstantiality with the Father rather than the eternal Son's distinct personality from the Father. Benjamin B. Warfield, "Calvin's Doctrine of the Trinity," in Calvin and Augustine, ed. Samuel Craig (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publication Company, 1956), 279. On the other hand, Brannon Ellis understands it as the prioritization of the eternal Son's distinct personality from the Father over the eternal Son's consubstantiality with the Father. See Ellis, *Calvin, Classical Trinitarianism, and the Aseity of the Son*, 70–78. Especially, see Ellis, *Calvin, Classical Trinitarianism, and the Aseity of the Son*, 90 n. 86.

voluntary generation of the Son,”<sup>17</sup> namely, through which God the Son, who is the Immanent Logos (the Logos *endiathetos*), hypothetically and voluntarily veiled himself to be Christ the Son, who is the Logos Brought Forth (the Logos *prophorikos*) in the constitution of the Trinity’s eternal decree.<sup>18</sup>

The crux of the Trinitarian issue is whether there exists a theological manner by which two presuppositions may coexist without giving rise to any logical conflict. Significant conflicts between these two Trinitarian presuppositions may occur unless one offers a holistic idea to reconcile them. If any Trinitarian atonement model is obliquely grounded on the first Trinitarian presupposition, it must conflict with a Trinitarian atonement model based mainly on the second trinitarin presupposition, which stresses the three person’s distinct personalities (the unbegotten, the begotten, and the proceeded), offices (the originator, the executor, and the applier), and wills (the Father’s giving or sending, the Son’s redeeming, the Spirit’s applying).<sup>19</sup> If any Trinitarian atone-

17 For further details on the term “Calvin’s emphasis on the Father’s personally voluntary generation of the Son,” see I.4 of this study.

18 Regarding terminology, I will endeavor to use historical terms wherever possible. However, for the sake of convenience and to enhance clarity in the discussion of historical concepts, I have chosen to substitute certain terms with expressions such as “the Father’s natural and volitional generation of the Son,” “the Immanent Logos,” and “the Logos Brought Forth.” As we will see, especially in Chapters 1, 2, and 6, Augustine’s and Calvin’s interpretations of Phil 2:6–7, John 3:13, and 6:33 provide an important theological foundation for the immanent Logos’s voluntary humiliation to be the Logos Brought Forth in the constitution of the Trinity’s decree. In this thesis, I use the term “voluntary emptying” as meaning “voluntary veiling” or “voluntary humiliation.” According to Richard A. Muller, the relationship between the Immanent Logos (the Logos *endiathetos*) and the Logos Brought Forth (the Logos *prophorikos*) signifies “the distinction between the Word, or Logos, as eternally immanent in the Godhead and the Word Brought Forth as the firstborn of all creation (cf. Col. 1:15).” The term “the Trinity’s decrees” in this thesis may be replaced with the theological term *pactum salutis*, which, according to Muller, refers to “the pretemporal, intra-Trinitarian agreement between the Father and the Son concerning the covenant of grace and its ratification in and through the work of the incarnate Son.” For further details on the terms “*pactum salutis*,” “*Logos asarkos*,” “*Logos ensarkos*,” “Immanent Logos (*endiathetos*),” and “Logos Brought Forth (*prophorikos*),” see Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms*, 205, 252. For more details on the difference between absolute necessity and voluntary necessity, see Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms*, 229–31. Also, refer to 6.2 of this study.

19 We will observe in Chapters 1, 2, and 6, that Augustine and Calvin employ the concept of the Father’s eternal and personal generation of the Son in the same way as the Father’s eternal sending of the Son. Therefore, the eternal and distinct personalities of the three individuals – the unbegotten, the begotten, and the proceeded – figuratively represent the distinct offices (originator, executor, and applier) or wills (the Father’s sending, the Son’s redeeming, the Spirit’s applying). For instance, according to Calvin, John 6:33 confirms that “he [Christ] is sent by the Father, in order that he may feed men in a manner far more excellent than Moses.” His statement “He was sent by the Father” can be interpreted as meaning that He, who was in heaven (namely, God),

ment model falls into a tritheistic fallacy, it cannot be compatible with the first Trinitarian presupposition, which guarantees the same essence of the three persons (*homoousios*).

Servetus's modalistic Trinitarian perspective, which conflates the eternal Logos, as preformed by the Father's contemplative reasoning of the eternal Logos, with the temporal Logos, as emanated by the Father's temporal utterance of that eternal Logos,<sup>20</sup> results in a monotheistic understanding of Trini-

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was personally generated or eternally sent by the Father to be the author of eternal life (since the heavenly bread (namely, the mediator) must come down from heaven (namely, God)). In other words, Christ's descending from heaven (specifically, God) as heavenly bread (namely, mediator) is interpreted metaphorically as the Father's eternal and personal generation of the Son or the Father's eternal sending of the Son. Furthermore, Calvin's comments on John 17:3 confirm that "the Father of Christ is the only true God; that is, he is the one God, who formerly promised a Redeemer to the world; but in Christ the oneness and truth of Godhead will be found, because Christ was humbled, in order that he might raise us on high. When we have arrived at this point, then his Divine majesty displays itself; then we perceive that he is wholly in the Father, and that the Father is wholly in him." The following three things are clear: The first is the two persons' distinct personalities, offices, and wills, such as the Father's promising and the Son's redeeming. The second is that Christ possesses both the Godhead and a unique personality (specifically, as mediator), since Christ, who is the Godhead, humbled himself. The third is the communication of the Godhead among the three persons, since, as God, Christ is wholly in the Father and the Father is wholly in him. Calvin, *Commentarius in Evangelium Ioannis*, CO 47:143, on John 6:33: "Interea vero confirmat quod prius dixit, nempe se a patre missum esse, ut longe exoellentius homines pascat quam Moses." Calvin, *Commentarius in Evangelium Ioannis*, CO 47:377, on John 17:3: "Unus ergo verus est Deus, Christi pater: hoc est, Deus ille, qui pridem mundo redemptorem promiserat, unus est: sed in Christo reperietur deitatis unitas et Veritas, quia ideo humiliatus fuit Christus, ut nos in altum eveheret. Ubi eo perventum est, tunc divina eius maiestas se profert: tunc ipse totus in patre, et totus in eo pater agnoscitur." English translation in Calvin, *Commentaries on the Gospel According to John*, CO 17:3, on John 6:33. Cf. See Augustine, *De Trinitate Libri Quindecim*, IV.xx.29, in *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 42, col. 908; PL 42:908: "non tamen dixit: 'Quem mittet Pater a me', quemadmodum dixit: Quem ego mittam vobis a Patre, videlicet ostendens quod totius divinitatis, vel si melius dicitur deitatis, principium Pater est. Qui ergo ex Patre procedit et Filio, ad eum refertur a quo natus est Filius." For more details on this topic, see Clark and David, "Covenant before the Covenants," 172.

- 20 A close examination of his writings reveals that Servetus employs nature and will with dual meanings. He uses nature both as the essence in eternity and as a form or appearance in time, while will is used to refer both to the eternal willing in essence and to a volitional dispensation in time. First, regarding nature as the essence in eternity, Servetus argues, "Either CHRIST is not God by Nature, or he did not reply to the point; for the question there was concerning his deity. ... Thus no plurality is shown as they suppose, for he is God, a kind of deity being shared by him with the Father." Michael Servetus, *De Trinitatis Erroribus Libri Septem* (Haguenau, 1531), 15b; Michael Servetus, *The Two Treatises of Servetus on the Trinity*, trans. Earl Morse Wilbur (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1932), 26. Here, Servetus is clearly using "nature" to mean "essence." Second, regarding nature as the form of God or the appearance of God, he argues, "And if we are called sons (that is, by the gift and grace given us through him), the

author of this sonship is therefore called a Son in a far higher sense. ... For he is a son *by nature* [by form of essence or by appearance of essence], while others are not sons originally: they become sons of God, they are not born sons of God. We are made sons of God, through faith, in JESUS CHRIST. Hence we are called sons by adoption." Servetus, *De Trinitatis Erroribus Libri Septem*, 9a; Servetus, *The Two Treatises of Servetus on the Trinity*, 16. Here, Servetus is clearly using "nature" to mean "form of the essence" or "appearance of the essence." Based on the following evidence, it can be observed that, overall, he tends to reject the use of "nature" or "substance" as synonymous with "essence." He contends, "In the first place, some interpret it as meaning that the second Person, apart from robbery, thought itself to be equal with the first. And again, they warp this ignorant explanation and make it refer to philosophical Natures, saying that he did not think that to be a matter of robbery which belonged to his Nature." Servetus, *De Trinitatis Erroribus Libri Septem*, 17b; Servetus, *The Two Treatises of Servetus on the Trinity*, 28. When examining his interpretation of Phil 2:6, it is evident that Servetus clearly recognizes that "nature" is being mistakenly translated or misunderstood in the sense of "essence." Third, regarding "willing" as an act of essence in eternity, Servetus argues, "Reasoning is natural as is cognition, will, and knowledge in God. According to these, He decided naturally and willfully." Servetus, *Christianismi Restitutio*, (1553), 207; Servetus, *The Restoration of Christianity: An English Translation of Christianismi Restitutio*, trans. Christopher A. Hoffman and Marian Hillar (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 2007), 297. Elsewhere, Servetus's book states, "Peter: How is it possible that Christ is eternal and always new? Michael: The spirit is called new because of the invocation of creation and because of the new glory, and it [the Spirit] exists eternally in God's substance." Servetus, *Christianismi Restitutio*, 209–10; Servetus, *The Restoration of Christianity*, 300–301. Fourth, regarding will as an external act of God in time, Servetus argues, "Therefore, naturally and willfully there was Logos, the ideal faculty of reasoning, and the utterance, Christ's shining with God, his light with God." Here, "naturally" indicates the ideal faculty of reasoning, while "willfully" signifies that eternal reasoning becomes the temporal utterance – Christ's shining with God in time, His light with God in time. In summary, Servetus clearly argues that just as the Spirit is eternal will in eternity and temporal will within God's substance, so Christ is eternal Logos in eternity and the temporal utterance (Elohim) in God's substance. Here, I am not evaluating the accuracy of Servetus's understanding of either the eternal Son, as begotten by Augustine's understanding of the Father's natural generation, or the eternal Son, as begotten by Eunomius's understanding of the Father's willful generation. Instead, I am simply pointing out that he acknowledges a distinction between the Father's naturally voluntary act of generation of the Son and the Father's volitionally voluntary act of generation in the historical debates around the Trinity. Servetus, *Christianismi Restitutio*, 207–8; Servetus, *The Restoration of Christianity*, 296–98. Berkhof's assessment indicates that during the period of Origen, Athanasius, and Augustine, the concept of God's will was split into two categories: the necessary and natural will, and the dependant and optional will. He argues, "Origen, one of the very first to speak of the generation of the Son, regarded it as an act dependent on the Father's will and therefore free. Others at various times expressed the same opinion. But it was clearly seen by Athanasius and others that a generation dependent on the optional will of the Father would make the existence of the Son *contingent* and thus rob Him of His deity. Then the Son would not be equal to and *homoousios* with the Father, for the Father exists necessarily, and cannot be conceived of as



tarian atonement. This perspective especially rejects the distinction between their personalities, offices, and wills.<sup>21</sup> The monotheistic Trinitarian atonement model that does not hold a holistic approach to counter Servetus's modalism cannot be compatible with the second Trinitarian presupposition: that the Immanent Logos, who is God, must humble (or veil) Himself to be the Logos Brought Forth, possessing a distinct personality within the constitution of the Trinity's eternal decree. According to the second Trinitarian presupposition, it is specifically the second person of the Trinity, rather than the first or third, who must satisfy God's eternal wrath and righteousness through His obedience and objective sacrificial death, in accordance with the Trinity's eternal decree. Rejecting this second presupposition entails denying the theological framework that upholds the hypothetical necessity of Christ's vicarious satisfaction.

Calvin's Trinitarian perspective, shaped by his concepts of the Father's personally voluntary generation of the Son and their aseity, appears tritheistic and seems to emphasize the distinct personalities, offices, and wills of the three persons. According to Calvin, these distinct personalities in eternity rest upon the second Trinitarian presupposition, namely, that the distinct personalities of the three persons – defined by eternal generation and procession (the unbegotten, the begotten, and the proceeding) – should not be communicated.<sup>22</sup> However, this type of Trinitarian perspective must explain how the essential aseity of the three persons can be communicated among them if it is to avoid the accusation of a tritheistic fallacy and maintain the consubstantial essence of the three persons. Therefore, the second Trinitarian presupposition is incompatible with the first Trinitarian presupposition unless it incorporates a comprehensive concept of eternal generation that overcomes the tritheistic error, or unless it upholds a holistic framework that integrates both the first and second Trinitarian presuppositions.

No recent Trinitarian atonement model can maintain a comprehensive framework that simultaneously upholds the one consubstantial essence of the

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non-existent. The generation of the Son must be regarded as a necessary and perfectly natural act of God. This does not mean that it is not related to the Father's will in any sense of the word. It is an act of the Father's necessary will, which merely means that His concomitant will takes perfect delight in it." Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 63–64.

21 For further details on the term "Servetus's modalistic concept of the Father's eternal generation of the Son," see 2.2.1 of this study.

22 I am not asserting in this statement that Calvin's trinitarian atonement model is entangled in a tritheistic error, but rather that it may give the impression of being so. Calvin's commentaries on John 1:1 show the following points: As to the nature of order, the Father occupies the first order by eternal generation, while the Son occupies the second. This indicates that the Father and the Son have their own distinct personalities. Calvin, *Commentarius in Evangelium Ioannis*, CO 47:2, on John 1:1.

three persons and their distinct properties, offices, and wills unless it maintains a holistic concept within its Trinitarian perspective that embraces both presuppositions at once. Consequently, any contemporary model of Trinitarian atonement that lacks a comprehensive framework to uphold both Trinitarian presuppositions implicitly denies either the consubstantiality of the second person with the Father or the necessity of the second person's vicarious satisfaction and office in relation to divine wrath and righteousness.

### 1.3 Current Status of the Problem

The recent Trinitarian atonement models, which either overlook or alter the historical concept of the necessity of Christ's vicarious satisfaction, fail to provide a compelling refutation of the anti-Trinitarian views of Servetus and Socinus. These models implicitly distort or reject Augustine's ideas of the Father's naturally voluntary generation of the Son and their shared aseity, as well as Calvin's clarification of these concepts.<sup>23</sup> Before evaluating the validity of recent scholars' dismissal or revision of the concept of Christ's vicarious satisfaction, it is important to examine how Calvin and his successors, whose Trinitarian formulations were influenced by Augustine's doctrine of the Trinity, responded to the anti-Trinitarian perspectives of Servetus and Socinus, which strongly opposed the notion of Christ's vicarious satisfaction. One should note that the relationship between Augustine's and Calvin's Trinitarian perspectives on key points remains a subject of debate. I will provide a concise overview of the theological issues related to the fundamental continuity and discontinuity between Augustine's and Calvin's views on the Trinity, as emphasized in recent academic studies, in order to clarify the current status of the issues concerning their Trinitarian perspectives.

First, Warfield demonstrates that although Augustine's emphasis on equalization in his construction of the Trinitarian relations significantly weakens the Nicene phraseology, elements of that phraseology still persist in his writings.<sup>24</sup> He asserts:

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23 In this study, the "anti-Trinitarian atonement model" is defined as either a monotheistic or tritheistic model that does not fully grasp the Father's eternal generation of the Son and their shared aseity, thereby failing to provide a theological method capable of sustaining the two key Trinitarian presuppositions simultaneously. For more details on the term "the Father's naturally voluntary generation of the Son," see I.4 of this chapter. Cf. Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms*, 138.

24 Warfield, *Calvin and Augustine*, 279. The following statements illustrate Augustine's use of Nicene phraseology: *Quid ergo mirum si mittitur, non quia inaequalis est Patri, sed quia est mana-*