

Abstract

This dissertation examines the theological foundation for the necessity of Christ's vicarious satisfaction within the framework of classical Trinitarian doctrine, with a particular focus on the holistic concept of the Father's eternal generation of the Son in the writings of Augustine, Calvin, and Turretin. Recent Trinitarian atonement models have frequently failed to respond adequately to anti-Trinitarian critiques, particularly those posed by Servetus and Socinus, due to these models' insufficient historical and theological engagement with Servetus's and Socinus's understanding of the doctrines of eternal generation and the distinct personality of the Son. This study argues that the holistic Trinitarian perspectives in the writings of Augustine, Calvin, and Turretin provide a necessary theological basis for defending both the consubstantiality of the Son and His incommunicable personality, which in turn grounds the hypothetical necessity of Christ's vicarious satisfaction.

Chapter 1 investigates Augustine's Trinitarian theology, demonstrating how his notions of the Father's natural and volitional generation of the Son establish the Son's consubstantiality and distinct personality, effectively countering both Arian subordinationism and Sabellian modalism. Chapters 2 show how Calvin uphold and develop Augustine's framework in their own historical contexts. Calvin counters Servetus and Gentile by maintaining the Son's aseity and the Father's personal generation of the Son. Chapter 3 shows how Socinus's rejection of Augustine's concept of the Father's natural generation of the Son influences his denial of the doctrine of the necessity of Christ's vicarious satisfaction. In Chapter 4, Turretin's holistic view of the Father's natural and volitional generation of the Son is shown to provide a coherent doctrinal response to Socinus's denial of Christ's aseity, unique personality, and satisfaction, thereby clarifying and strengthening Calvin's position. Chapter 5 extends this argument by connecting Turretin's idea of the Father's natural and volitional generation of the Son to his holistic concept of the distinction between God's essential attributes and the personal attributes of the Son and the Holy Spirit, thereby defending the necessity of Christ's personal vindictory justice. Chapter 6 further examines how both Calvin and Turretin explain the twofold humiliation of the Son—from the Immanent Logos to the Logos Brought Forth, and from the Logos Brought Forth to the Incarnate Logos—as the necessary means to fulfill the Trinity's eternal decree, conditioned upon Adam's sin.

The dissertation concludes that Calvin's and Turretin's Trinitarian theology, grounded in the holistic idea of the Father's eternal generation of the Son and the Son's aseity, provides a robust theological framework for refuting the anti-Trinitarian positions of Servetus and Socinus. Their approach affirms both the consubstantiality and distinction of the three persons within the Godhead, upholds the mediatorial office of Christ, and defends the hypothetical necessity of His vicarious satisfaction in accordance with the eternal decree of the Trinity.