

# Medieval Theology

## ANSELM OF CANTERBURY (1033-1109)

### Cur Deus Homo?

We were created to honor God: We refused

- God was not given his due
- God cannot be dishonored: sin must be corrected
- Punishment follows sin

We cannot repay God for our sin; we need to give God more than is demanded

- God must take not only our life but our well-being for eternity
- The only satisfaction for sin is the repayment by one who is not subject to death
- This person must be able to offer an infinite satisfaction
- The God-Man alone makes satisfaction for sin

The magnitude of sin

- What is God's honor?
- How can the honor be restored?
- The meaning of the wrath of God
- Desire for just punishment
- Why couldn't he just desire not to punish?

Was there not some other way?

- Can God merely forget sin?
- Does not the mercy of God mitigate punishment?
- What if the creature is not punished? What happens to justice?
- Punishment as the restoration of God's honor.

What sin is

- How satisfaction is made for sin
- Why Jesus had to die
- Necessity for personal salvation

### Methodological issues

- Legal context
- Punishment due to sin
- Restitution
- Ontological perspective

## EXULTET

... O truly necessary sin of Adam, destroyed completely by the Death of Christ!

O happy fault that earned so great, so glorious a Redeemer! ...

## BONAVENTURE

- Joining our sufferings with Christ
- Value of suffering

## CATHERINE OF SIENA

- Taking the place of Christ
- Encountering Christ in the poor and afflicted

# The Protestant Reformation

## LIVING THE CROSS: THE POWER OF THE BLOOD

### Martin Luther (1483-1546)

- Righteousness of faith
  - Righteousness of the law = conviction of the law
  - Imputation by Christ = passive righteousness
- Saved and sinner at the same time
- Christ's death covers our sins (substitutionary redemption)
- God is hidden in Christ's suffering
  - The glory of the cross

### John Calvin (1509-1564)

- Justification by Christ alone
- Christ was punished for us (radicalizing of Anselm)
- We were enslaved to sin, now we are enslaved to Christ

### Exultet

Rejoice, heavenly powers! Sing choirs of angels!  
Exult, all creation around God's throne!  
Jesus Christ, our King is risen!  
Sound the trumpet of salvation!  
Rejoice, O earth, in shining splendor, radiant in the brightness of your King!  
Christ has conquered! Glory fills you!  
Darkness vanishes for ever!  
Rejoice, O Mother Church! Exult in glory!  
The risen Savior shines upon you!

Let this place resound with joy, echoing the mighty song of all God's people!

...

It is truly right that with full hearts and minds and voices we should praise the unseen God, the all-powerful Father, and his only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

For Christ has ransomed us with his blood, and paid for us the price of Adam's sin to our eternal Father!

This is our passover feast,  
When Christ, the true Lamb, is slain, whose blood consecrates the homes of all believers.

This is the night, when first you saved our fathers: you freed the people of Israel from their slav'ry, and led them dry-shod through the sea.

This is the night, when the pillar of fire destroyed the darkness of sin.  
This is night, when Christians ev'rywhere, washed clean of sin and freed from all defilement, are restored to grace and grow together in holiness.  
This is the night, when Jesus broke the chains of death and rose triumphant from the grave.

What good would life have been to us, had Christ not come as our Redeemer? Father, how wonderful your care for us!  
How boundless your merciful love!

To ransom a slave you gave away your Son.  
O happy fault, O necessary sin of Adam, which gained for us so great a Redeemer! Most blessed of all nights, chosen by God to see Christ rising from the dead!

Of this night scripture says:  
"The night will be as clear as day:  
it will become my light, my joy."  
The power of this holy night dispels all evil, washes guilt away, restores lost innocence, brings mourners joy ;  
it casts out hatred, brings us peace,  
and humbles earthly pride.

Night truly blessed, when heaven is wedded to earth and we are reconciled to God!

Therefore, heavenly Father, in the joy of this night, receive our evening sacrifice of praise,  
your Church's solemn offering.  
Accept this Easter candle,  
a flame divided but undimmed,  
a pillar of fire that glows to the honor of God.

Let it mingle with the lights of heaven and continue bravely burning to dispel the darkness of this night!

May the Morning Star which never sets find this flame still burning: Christ, that Morning Star, who came back from the dead, and shed his peaceful light on all mankind, your Son, who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

- Radical discipleship
- Social Christology (*ordo salutis*)

## Radical Reformation

### Anabaptists

Menno Simons, 1496-1561, see Schlectheim Catechism, 1527

- Radical democratic movement
- Baptism of adults (those who are repentant)
- Public accusation of sin (after private admonition)
- Eucharist as contingent upon communion and baptism
- Separation from the world (including “Catholic and Protestant works and church services”)
- Pacifist
- Pastors recognized by the community

### Spiritualists

Kaspar von Schwenckfeld (1489-1561)

- Interior spiritual experience
- Less emphasis or no emphasis on baptism and eucharist (von Schwenckfeld rejected them)

### Evangelical Rationalists

Michael Servetus, 1511-1553

- Reason interprets the scriptures
- Rejection of the Trinity

## General Christological Consequences

- Tendency to create a gap between the divinity and humanity of Jesus
- Personal Jesus
- Seeking a timeless Jesus through the gospel portraits (see Wright, Jesus, 13-16)
- Following of Jesus as different from ordinary humanity
- Fallibility of reason

# The Council of Trent

## 1545-1563

### Decree on Justification

- Living the life of Christ: cooperation in justification
- Effectiveness of Christ's sacrifice and our response
- Necessity that faith be manifest in love

### Sacrifice of the Mass

- The Mass brings us closer to Christ
- It manifests Christ in the Eucharist
- It is truly propitiatory

- Offered for sins, punishments, satisfactions, and other necessities for the living as well as for the purification of the dead

# The Counter Reformation

## IGNATIUS LOYOLA

- Making Christ's sufferings your own
- Making your suffering Christ's own
- The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola
  - Importance of feelings: discernment of spirits
  - Engagement of the will
  - Personalization of spiritual progress
- Anamnesis and commemoration
  - The difference between participation and theater
  - The iconic representation of the liturgy
  - Difference from a passion play
- Feeling with Christ
- Feeling with the Church
- Being the Body of Christ – Imaging Christ
- The truth of Christ – restatement of authority

# Protestant and Catholic Distinctions

- Importance of a relationship with Jesus
- Importance of a relationship with the Church, the Body of Christ
- Hearing the voice of Jesus
- Role of culture
- Means of salvation
- Boundaries of salvation

## See also

Aulen, Gustaf, *Christus Victor* (London: SPCK, 1965).