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Is the God of Anselm unloving? A response to Eleonore Stump

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Abstract: **In her recent book *Atonement*, Eleonore Stump objects to the Anselmian theory of atonement, claiming it is not consistent with God's love. I argue that her objection mischaracterizes Anselmian theories. First, Stump equivocates on the concept of forgiveness, conflating personal forgiveness with divine pardon, and second, Stump misrepresents the God of Anselm as unwilling to reconcile with sinners prior to receiving satisfaction. I suggest that Stump's real objection should be to the Anselmian view of divine justice as retributive, not to his conception of divine love. I suggest a model of an all-loving God acting as a retributive judge.**

Introduction

A predominant thesis underlying atonement theories throughout history has been that Christ's death satisfies God's justice, thereby bringing about reconciliation between God and humanity. In the third chapter of her book *Atonement*, Eleonore Stump presents an objection to this thesis, an objection she thinks draws out a 'central and irremediable' (Stump (2018), 79) problem with such theories, namely that this view of Christ's death is not consistent with divine love. In particular, she objects to what she calls 'Anselmian' theories of the atonement, so named presumably because their theoretical structure follows that of Anselm's own satisfaction theory. Within the Anselmian theoretical family, Stump means to include not only Anselm's satisfaction theory but also all versions of penal substitution. I aim to show where Stump's objection goes wrong. I argue that this objection errs by turning on a fundamental mischaracterization of Anselmian theories. First, Stump equivocates on the concept of forgiveness, conflating personal forgiveness with divine pardon, and second, Stump misconstrues the Anselmian conception of God, thinking that on the Anselmian conception, God is unwilling to reconcile with sinners prior to receiving satisfaction. I suggest that Stump's real

problem with the Anselmian conception of God is with his conception of divine justice as retributive, not his conception of divine love.[1] Then I suggest a model by which the Anselmian can make sense of how an all-loving God can be a retributive judge.[2]

Stump's objection

Stump endorses Thomas Aquinas' account of love, according to which love is constituted by two desires: (i) a desire for the good of the beloved and (ii) a desire for union with the beloved. The good of the beloved is 'that which is truly in the interest of the beloved and which truly does conduce to the beloved's flourishing' (*ibid.*, 40),[3] and union with the beloved, though not strictly analysed by Stump, is a matter of presence between lover and beloved.[4] In the Christian tradition, the greatest good is union with God, and so 'full or complete union with God is an intrinsic upper limit on human flourishing' (*ibid.*, 41). Thus, in God the two desires of love converge; God's love for a person is to be understood as his desire for union with that person, which is their highest good.

Stump's view of forgiveness is that forgiveness somehow involves loving the wrongdoer despite his wrongdoing. She writes: '[W]hatever exactly is required for morally appropriate forgiveness, it must involve some species of love for the person in need of forgiveness . . . [I]t seems to include a kind of love of someone who has done one an injury or committed an injustice against one' (*ibid.*, 81). Note that Stump does not mean to suggest that forgiveness itself is a species of love or is somehow reducible to love – in fact, she outright denies that forgiveness reduces to love. In an important endnote, Stump clarifies that she believes that love is necessary and sufficient for forgiveness.[5] Further, because 'on Aquinas' account, love is obligatory', it follows that 'forgiveness is also obligatory in the same way and to the same extent' (*ibid.*, 81). Finally, because love for the wrongdoer despite his wrongdoing is sufficient for forgiveness, and because an agent's love is constituted solely by the desires of the agent, Stump's account implies that love and forgiveness are both extended unilaterally and can be offered unconditionally, requiring nothing on the part of the person being forgiven.

Stump then applies her account of love to the case of divine forgiveness, explaining that 'God also actually forgives every wrongdoer, whether or not she accepts either God's love or God's forgiveness' and that 'in desiring union with every person, God is also accepting reconciliation with every wrongdoer, whether or not she (or anyone acting on her behalf) makes amends for her wrongdoing' (*ibid.*, 84). Additionally, because God's love is unconditional, so too must God's forgiveness be unconditional, for love is sufficient for forgiveness.

But Stump claims that Anselmian atonement theories deny this connection between divine love and divine forgiveness, rendering them 'unworkable' (*ibid.*, 80). Here is how she depicts the Anselmian theory:

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> In all its varieties, the Anselmian kind of interpretation of the doctrine of the atonement supposes that God is somehow required by his honor or goodness or justice or some other element of his goodness to receive reparation, penance, satisfaction, or penalty to make up for human wrongdoing as a condition for forgiving sinful human beings and accepting reconciliation with them. On the Anselmian kind of interpretation, God does forgive human beings and does accept reconciliation with them – but only because Christ makes amends to God for human sin. God's forgiveness and reconciliation with human beings are therefore dependent on God's receiving reparation for human wrongdoing. Without such reparation being made to God, God's honor or goodness or justice or some other divine attribute would preclude God's forgiveness and reconciliation. Just as some philosophers of law suppose that it can be morally impermissible for a victim to forgive someone who has wronged her without the wrongdoer's having made amends to her, so the Anselmian kind of interpretation supposes that it is incompatible with God's nature to forgive human beings unless amends have been made to God for human wrongdoing. (*ibid.*, 71)

The upshot is that Anselmian theories (at least on her understanding of them) make divine forgiveness of sinners conditional on satisfaction. But if her understanding of Anselmian theories is right, then they stand in flat contradiction to the idea that divine forgiveness is unconditional. Stump puts the point this way:

> God's forgiveness, like God's love, is unilateral and unconditional. It does not depend on anything; rather, it is a function of God's nature, which is perfectly good and therefore also perfectly loving. God's love and forgiveness, and God's acceptance of reconciliation with human wrongdoers, are there for every human person, even those who are unrepentant wrongdoers. And so the Anselmian kind of interpretation of the doctrine of the atonement, in all its variants, is wrong. (*ibid.*, 70)

Stump's objection thereby challenges any atonement scheme where divine forgiveness is achieved through the satisfaction of some condition, such as the satisfaction of divine justice. We can formulate her objection in the following way:

(1) God is perfectly loving.
(2) If God is perfectly loving, then God's love for sinners is unconditional.
(3) If God's love for sinners is unconditional, then God's forgiveness of sinners is unconditional.
(4) According to Anselmian theories, God's forgiveness of sinners is conditional.
(5) Therefore, Anselmian theories are false.

Critique

If Stump's objection is right, then the many atonement theories on the market are rendered incompatible with Judaeo-Christian orthodoxy. But is it really true that all Anselmian theories deny that God unconditionally forgives sinners in the sense in which Stump understands forgiveness? I contend this is clearly not the case. Stump has misrepresented the Anselmian view and thereby objects to a straw man. Anselm himself does not deny that God unconditionally forgives

sinners, if divine forgiveness is to be understood as Stump characterizes it. In *Cur Deus Homo*, while addressing the question of whether Christ died voluntarily, Anselm writes:

> [Christ] prefers to suffer rather than allow the human race not to be saved. It is as if he were saying, 'Since you [The Father] do not wish the reconciliation of the world to take place in any other way, I say that you are, in this way, willing my death. Let this will of yours come to pass, that is, let my death come to pass, so that the world may be reconciled to you.' . . . The Father, then, wished the death of the Son in the sense that it was not his will that the world should be saved by any means, as I have said, other than that a man should perform an action of this magnitude. Since no one else could perform the deed, this consideration was as weighty, from the point of view of the Son, in his desire for the salvation of mankind, as if the Father were instructing him to die. Hence he acted 'in accordance with the command that the Father gave' him, and 'he drank the cup which the Father gave' him, 'obedient even to death'. (Davies & Evans (1998), 279)

In this passage, we see Anselm affirming that both the Father and the Son desire Christ's death in order to bring about reconciliation between God and humanity, what Anselm calls 'the salvation of mankind'. Moreover, God's desire for reconciliation with humanity occurs explanatorily prior to Christ's death; bringing about reconciliation is the reason why God sent Christ to die.

Now if we assume Stump's account of love and forgiveness, this is just to say that God loves and forgives sinners prior to receiving satisfaction through Christ's death. When God desires reconciliation with sinners, as he evidently does according to Anselm, he desires union with them. Since union with God is the ultimate good for human beings, God's desire for union with sinners is identical to his desire for their ultimate good. But on Stump's account of love, God's having a desire for the good of and union with the sinner is sufficient for God's loving the sinner! And if God loves the sinner, then God loves the sinner despite her sin. Thus, God also counts as forgiving the sinner, for, on Stump's definition of forgiveness, love for a wrongdoer is sufficient for forgiving the wrongdoer. So it turns out that on Anselm's theory, God's love and forgiveness towards sinners are not really conditional on satisfaction, allowing Anselm to escape Stump's objection.

Consider another important figure from church history: John Calvin, foremost figure of the Protestant Reformation and ardent defender of penal substitution (which Stump (2018, 73) regards as Anselmian), who in his *Institutes* writes:

> But as the Lord wills not to destroy in us that which is his own, he still finds something in us which in kindness he can love. For though it is by our own fault that we are sinners, we are still his creatures; though we have brought death upon ourselves he had created us for life. Thus, mere gratuitous love prompts him to receive us into favour. . . . God the Father, by his love, prevents and anticipates our reconciliation in Christ. Nay, it is because he first loves us, that he afterwards reconciles us to himself. But because the iniquity, which deserves the indignation of God, remains in us until the death of Christ comes to our aid . . . we are not admitted to full and sure communion with God, unless, in so far as Christ unites us. (Calvin (1957), 383)

Like Anselm, Calvin also propounds a scheme of atonement according to which God loves and desires reconciliation with the sinner prior to the unifying work

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of Christ. Calvin says that even though we are condemned sinners who have brought death upon ourselves, deserving the full indignation of God, the Father nevertheless wishes to be reunited with us, and He accomplishes this through Christ's death. In other words, God desires union with us before applying Christ's saving work. On Stump's view of love and forgiveness, Calvin's God therefore counts as loving and forgiving the sinner prior to making satisfaction. Thus, Calvin's penal substitutionary theory is also unaffected by Stump's objection.

A final example is provided by the present-day atonement theorist Richard Swinburne. In the context of expounding his penitential theory of the atonement (which Stump (2018, 73) regards as Anselmian) he writes:

> [God] became incarnate in Christ who was both God and man, lived a perfect human life, foreseeing correctly that such perfection would have the consequence that he would be crucified, intended that that life and death should be available to us to offer to God in full atonement for our sins, rose from the dead, founded a church to carry on his work and seeks our eternal well-being in friendship with himself. (Swinburne (1988), 25)

Now 'seeking our eternal well-being in friendship with Himself' sounds just like Aquinas' two desires of love, and according to Swinburne, reconciliation is something God wanted prior to the Incarnation, which is itself prior to His receiving satisfaction. On Stump's account of love and forgiveness, Swinburne's God therefore counts as loving and forgiving the sinner unconditionally and unilaterally. Hence, Swinburne's view is also vindicated from Stump's charge of incoherence.

Now Anselm, Calvin, and Swinburne might not use the word 'forgiveness' in the way Stump does, and that fact may cause confusion when evaluating Stump's objection. But what is clear is that all these Anselmian theories affirm that God loves the sinner despite her sin and prior to receiving satisfaction. If we intend to speak only in terms of Stump's weak notion of forgiveness, we should affirm that on these theories, God forgives the sinner prior to satisfaction. So, as I said at the outset, Stump's objection rests on an equivocation of the concept of forgiveness.[6]

Stump's argument is therefore invalid because the relevant concept (and thus the meaning) of forgiveness has shifted between (3) and (4). In (3), the operative concept of forgiveness is weak; forgiveness of a sinner is sufficiently determined by God's loving the sinner. But in (4), the operative concept of forgiveness is stronger, involving something more than God's merely loving the sinner.

When Stump depicts the Anselmian view as driving a wedge between love and forgiveness where the logical ordering of atonement is love–satisfaction–forgiveness, she obscures the fact that there are really two operative concepts of forgiveness at play, one concept where forgiveness is entailed by God's love for the sinner, and another where forgiveness need not be so entailed. If we consider the passages quoted above from Anselm, Calvin, and Swinburne, a more transparent logical ordering of the Anselmian scheme of atonement looks like this: love, 'weak' forgiveness (where God's forgiveness of a sinner is entailed by God's loving the sinner despite his wrongdoing), satisfaction, and 'strong' forgiveness (a concept

of forgiveness to be filled in by the relevant Anselmian theory). But this scheme does not drive a wedge between God's love and 'weak' forgiveness.

If I am right that Stump equivocates on the concept of forgiveness, then perhaps a more charitable way of construing Stump's objection is by articulating it in terms of God's willingness to reconcile[7] with sinners rather than divine forgiveness. Stump's objection can be restated accordingly:

(1) God is perfectly loving.
(2) If God is perfectly loving, then God's love for sinners is unconditional.
(3′) If God's love for sinners is unconditional, then God's willingness to be reconciled to sinners is unconditional.
(4′) According to Anselmian theories, God's willingness to be reconciled to sinners is conditional.
(5) Therefore, Anselmian theories are false.

Premises (1) and (2) are required by classical theism. Premise (3′) follows from Stump's own account of love as a desire for the good of and union with the beloved, and it is plausible in its own right. Premise (4′) remains the crucial premise. I will now argue that it is false.

First and foremost, it should be clear by this point that Anselmians evidently do not make an explicit commitment to (4′). As can be seen in the block quotations above, they typically assert the opposite! Anselm, Calvin, and Swinburne assert that it is because God wants to reconcile with human beings that he provides Christ's death as satisfaction. God's love for sinners is the reason He provides satisfaction for their salvation. God sends Christ not because He *wants* to love sinners, but because He already *does* love sinners. Now, one might think that on each of these Anselmian views, reconciliation is conditional on Christ's death on the cross, and for this reason, one might think that Anselmians are explicitly committed to (4′). But notice that there is a clear distinction to be made between God's willingness to be reconciled to sinners and reconciliation itself. The former is a disposition in the divine psychology, if you will, and the latter is an event that occurs at some point in time. Although reconciliation is clearly conditional on these Anselmian theories, that does not imply (or does not obviously imply) that God's willingness to be reconciled to sinners is also conditional.

Even though Stump repeatedly claims that Anselmian theories hold that God is willing to be reconciled to sinners only after receiving satisfaction, she offers no justification for this claim. Curiously, however, she acknowledges that on Anselmian theories, God's willingness to reconcile may be *temporally* prior to satisfaction; but for some reason she still maintains that Anselmian theories commit themselves to thinking that satisfaction is *logically* prior to God's willingness to reconcile. She writes:

> At least for those varieties of the Anselmian interpretation that accept the doctrine of God's eternity, God's forgiveness of human wrongdoers and God's acceptance of reconciliation with them is not later in time than Christ's atonement. Or, to put the same point the other way

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> around, Christ's making amends to God is not *temporally* prior to God's acceptance of reconciliation with wrongdoers, because, on the doctrine of God's eternity, *nothing* in time is temporally prior to anything in the life of God. But, on all variants on the Anselmian kind of interpretation, Christ's making amends to God is *logically* prior to God's forgiveness of sinners and God's acceptance of reconciliation with them. Christ's atonement is requisite for both. It is true that, on the Anselmian kind of interpretation, God arranges for Christ's incarnation and Christ's making amends to God. So, on the Anselmian interpretation, God is never *unwilling* to forgive wrongdoers. But God's *actual* forgiveness of sinners and *actual* acceptance of reconciliation with them is dependent on Christ's making amends. The fact that God arranges the condition for his forgiveness of human beings does not make that condition any less necessary for God's forgiveness and acceptance of reconciliation. (Stump (2018), 73–74)

Unfortunately, the characterization of Anselmian theories as putting satisfaction logically prior to God's willingness to reconcile is nothing but a caricature. As we saw, Anselm, Calvin, and Swinburne do not merely say that God's willingness to reconcile precedes satisfaction *in time*; they quite clearly assert that God's willingness to reconcile serves as the *explanation* or *reason* God provided satisfaction through Christ. Indeed, a theory that would make satisfaction a condition of God's willingness to reconcile would look so strange and unorthodox that one should wonder whether Stump has misinterpreted these texts. Is it the case that the best read of Anselmian theories is that God the Father was unwilling to reconcile with humanity before Christ inserted himself into the situation to persuade him? What would motivate the Father to send Christ in the first place?

Stump's characterization of Anselmian theories on this score is thus flatly incorrect. Now, perhaps the best way she can proceed is by arguing that even though Anselmian theorists explicitly reject (4′), for some reason they must be committed to (4′). She must demonstrate that even if Anselmian theorists do not assert (4′), what they do assert must entail (4′). Because the burden of proof lies on Stump to provide such a demonstration, until she does so, the Anselmian should feel unthreatened by her 'central and devastating' objection.

But I have space to address a possible reason Stump may think (4′) is true. She seems to think that divine pardon on the Anselmian view is equivalent to God's willingness to reconcile. Stump claims that according to Anselmian theories:

> [T]he main (or only) point of Christ's atonement is to satisfy a condition needed for God's forgiveness and reconciliation. Oliver Crisp, who is in this tradition of interpretation, likens God's acceptance of reconciliation with human beings to the pardon of a monarch. [(Crisp, (2016), 170)] On the Anselmian kind of interpretation, it is a pardon that is won for human beings by the atonement of Christ and that would not be given without that atonement. God's forgiveness and reconciliation with human beings, God's granting the pardon, is conditional on God's receiving what human sin owes God in the atonement of Christ. (Stump (2018), 74)

From this paragraph, it seems that Stump thinks that for Anselmian theories, divine pardon just is the same thing as his willingness to reconcile. An argument for (4′) can then be formulated as follows:

(6) According to Anselmian theories, God's pardon of sinners is conditional.

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(7) If God's pardon of sinners is conditional, then God's willingness to be reconciled to sinners is conditional.

Therefore, it follows from (6) and (7):

(4′) According to Anselmian theories, God's willingness to be reconciled to sinners is conditional.

Notice that the inference from (6) and (7) to (4′) would be valid even if divine pardon were not identical to God's willingness to reconcile but merely a necessary condition. That point aside, it seems to me that this argument is flawed on multiple counts. First, Stump once again errs in her characterization of Anselmian theories. Whatever Crisp's particular theory may say, it is generally not true that Anselmian theories of atonement identify God's pardon of sinners with his willingness to reconcile with them. Nor do they affirm that God's pardon of sinners is even a prerequisite to his willingness to reconcile to them. For example, Anselm claims that God's forgiveness of sins is 'nothing other than to refrain from inflicting punishment' (Davies & Evans (1998), 284). Nowhere does Anselm say or imply that this 'refraining to punish' is identical to or even a prerequisite of God's willingness to reconcile. And it is not obvious that penal substitution theorists would also need to make such an identification. Perhaps there is room in logical space to identify God's pardon with God's willingness to reconcile, but there does not seem to be any reason why the Anselmian must make such an identification. The fact remains that major Anselmian theories do not explicitly commit themselves to (7).

Moreover, there is good reason to think that (7) would be denied outright by some Anselmians, particularly by penal substitutionary theorists.[8] One must understand how the Anselmian can construe divine pardon to see why divine pardon is logically independent of God's willingness to reconcile. The Anselmian need not think of divine pardon as a psychological attitude or disposition towards persons. Pardon can be characterized as a legal act enacted by a judge, ruler, or monarch. This is quite unlike a 'willingness to reconcile', which is just a psychological attitude or disposition towards persons, a kind of personal forgiveness. Personal forgiveness and pardon are categorically distinct and should not be conflated, and nothing about retributive justice, according to which the guilty deserve punishment, requires that they be identical. This logical distinction between personal forgiveness and pardon is nicely articulated by Kathleen Dean Moore, a retributive justice theorist who, thinking of forgiveness as 'an attitude of one who has been injured toward the one who has inflicted the injury' (K. Moore (1989), 184), writes:

> [A]n act may be characterized as a pardon if it has the following characteristics. A pardon is an act by the executive . . . that lessens or eliminates a punishment determined by a court of law . . . A pardon is an act one can perform only in a social or legal role. This characteristic distinguishes it from forgiveness and mercy, which are virtues that persons exhibit as individuals [footnote omitted]. Anyone who has been injured can forgive, but only one formally constituted within a

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> legal system is qualified to pardon a violation of the norms of that system [footnote omitted]. (*ibid.*, 193)

Considering that Anselmians, especially penal substitutionary theorists, usually accept a view of God who plays the dual roles of offended party and cosmic judge, the Anselmian can claim that although God as the offended party is willing to reconcile with human beings, God as cosmic judge punishes or pardons them. On the type of retributive justice typically presupposed by Anselmian theories, there is no logical connection between one's pardoning a wrongdoer and one's being willing to reconcile with him. Such theories are in agreement with Moore, who illustrates the idea:

> Forgiveness and pardon are logically independent. A person may forgive a wrongdoer and punish her all the same. For example, if a teenager injures her parents by lying to them and stealing their paychecks to support her drug habit, their resentment may quickly give way to sympathy and concern. They can forgive her, because they love her. Nevertheless, they may bring in the police and have their own daughter prosecuted for theft, in a desperate attempt to change her behavior. Conversely, it is possible to prevent a person's punishment without forgiving the offender. A fearful and abused wife may decline to press charges against her husband while at the same time harboring resentment against him. Likewise, a Governor may grant a full pardon to a rapist without forgiving him, primarily because the governor does not have standing to forgive, not having been raped. (*ibid.*, 185)

Along the same lines, the Anselmian can see God as an impartial cosmic judge who requires the satisfaction of justice, and just as a human judge can be personally forgiving of a criminal (i.e. willing to reconcile with him) without pardoning him, so too can God be unconditionally willing to reconcile with sinners while simultaneously issuing punishment, even punishment that creates eternal separation between God and the sinner. If this conception of God's justice is coherent, as it seems to be, then the idea that God issues pardons conditionally while remaining unconditionally willing to reconcile with sinners also seems coherent.[9]

Now, the reader might at this point feel free to quit the article, satisfied with the Anselmian's answer that God's love of sinners is unconditional while his pardon of them is not. But the reader might wonder whether such an answer really is coherent, especially if they, like Stump, have certain other assumptions about the nature of God. I bring to light these assumptions in the next section and defend the coherence of the idea that a perfectly loving God can be a retributive judge.

Divine love and divine retributive justice

Defenders of the Anselmian view that God can love a sinner without pardoning them typically endorse the idea that God's justice is retributive. To say that God's justice is retributive is to say, roughly, that the justification and purpose of God's punishment of sinners in hell is retributive in nature. On this conception of divine justice, the punishment of sinners in hell is exacted only because it satisfies the demands of justice. There is a felt tension between the

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notion of divine justice as retributive and the Judaeo-Christian conception of God's love, especially when hell is taken to be a kind of ultimate, irredeemable suffering for the person punished. In this section, I shall attempt to put some flesh on this tension by considering an argument that attempts to show that if God is all-loving, then He does not exact retributive punishment. Then I suggest a model of divine love and divine retributive justice that the Anselmian might adopt to explain how a perfectly loving God can be a retributive judge (and thereby providing the grounds for thinking a perfectly loving God can issue a conditional pardon).

Note, however, that in considering this argument against divine retributive justice, I shall bracket certain related issues, such as whether an eternal punishment in hell can be just (i.e. whether the punishment of hell 'fits the crime'), whether God's justice requires him to punish, or whether God can sometimes punish for non-retributive purposes (i.e. to reveal his hatred of sin, or to incite an attitude of repentance in a sinner), or whether God is essentially or accidentally retributively just. Although most of the literature on hell has focused on the justice of hell as an eternal punishment, the question I am interested in is whether or not a loving God can exact retributive justice in the first place, whether or not the punishment is eternal or infinite in intensity. Perhaps this issue has implications for those debates, but I will not address them in this article. Similarly, I set aside the question of how conclusions reached in those debates may impact our present concern.

I shall build to my argument by first considering the salient features of divine love and divine retributive justice. Recall Stump's exposition of divine love. Let us grant the Thomistic theory of love that love is a desire for the good of and union with the beloved. Because God is all-loving, the following proposition is true:

(8) God wills the good of and union with all persons.

Now consider divine retributive justice. What might be required by the claim that God is a retributive judge, or, differently put, that divine justice is retributive? It will help to consider what is involved with retributive justice in general. Michael Moore takes himself to identify the essential core of all retributivist theories of justice. He writes:

> *Retributivism* is the view that punishment is justified by the moral culpability of those who receive it. A retributivist punishes because, and only because, the offender deserves it. Retributivism thus stands in stark contrast to utilitarian views that justify punishment of past offenses by the greater good of preventing future offenses. It also contrasts sharply with rehabilitative views, according to which punishment is justified by the reforming good it does the criminal.
>
> Less clearly, retributivism also differs from a variety of views that are often paraded as retributivist, but that in fact are not. Such views are typically put forward by people who cannot understand how anyone could think that moral desert by itself could justify punishment. Such persons scramble about for other goods that punishment achieves and label these, quite misleadingly, 'retributivism.' (M. Moore (1987), 179)

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Moore makes two separate claims here. First, Moore is identifying what makes a particular act of punishment an act of *retributive* punishment. This is an assertion of the definition of retributive punishment. Second, Moore is identifying what *justifies* an act of retributive punishment. But we shall set this second claim about the justification of punishment aside; it will turn out to be irrelevant to the upcoming argument. Moore's first claim concerning the definition of retributive punishment suggests the following proposition:

(9) A person S exacts retributive punishment on a person T iff (a) the reason S punishes T is that T deserves it, and (b) there is no other reason for S's punishing T.

Now, one might complain that Moore is not correct that a theory of punishment needs to endorse (9) to count as a retributive theory. For instance, there might exist a consequentialist–retributivist hybrid theory that combines consequentialist grounds for justification with so-called 'negative retributivism', a constraint on a theory which entails that guilt is necessary but not sufficient for justification. Such a theory might involve a denial that the element (b) in the analysans of (9) is a necessary condition for a punishment to count as retributive. Would such a hybrid theory be a counterexample to Moore's idea that (9) is essential to retributivism? And if so, does a construal of God's retributive justice in terms of a hybrid theory allow one to escape easily the tension between divine love and divine retributive justice? Perhaps to both these questions. And perhaps the whole issue of whether a loving God could exact retributive justice can be resolved by maintaining that God exacts retributive punishment out of a motivation of love – that is, God gives sinners the punishment they deserve because he sees it as a kind of good for them.[10]

Let that pass, however. I am interested in the question of whether a construal of God's justice along the lines of so-called 'strong retributivism' – a thesis like the one Moore expressed, and which does involve commitment to the element (b) in the analysans of (9) – is coherent. So I shall simply assume retributivism includes a commitment to (9). From (9) it can be inferred:

(10) God exacts the retributive punishment of hell on a person S iff (a) the reason God punishes S is that S deserves it, and (b) there is no other reason for God's punishing S.

Now suppose the Anselmian is correct that in the actual world, God sends sinners to hell. That is, suppose:

(11) God exacts the retributive punishment of hell on some person S.

Finally, suppose, as is commonly held, that the retributive punishment of hell is ultimately bad for the person punished. A full analysis of what makes something ultimately bad for someone is not necessary for my purposes; I think it will be

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sufficient for my purposes to say that an ultimate bad is something that is an 'overall' bad for the person. It is not something that is temporarily bad or painful that is woven into a redeeming narrative and unfolds into something ultimately good.[11] For a depiction of hell as retributive punishment, consider Calvin:

> We ought especially to fix our thoughts upon this: how wretched it is to be cut off from all fellowship with God. And not that only but so to feel his sovereign power against you that you cannot escape being pressed by it. For first, his displeasure is like a raging fire, devouring and engulfing everything it touches. Secondly, all creatures so serve him in the execution of his judgment that they to whom the Lord will openly show his wrath will feel heaven, earth, sea, living beings, and all that exists aflame, as it were, with dire anger against them, and armed to destroy them. (Calvin (1960), 1007–1008)

Let us suppose Calvin is correct here that hell is not merely separation from God, but also suffering which is wrought upon the sinner by God directly. That is, suppose hell is not merely God's allowing the sinner to suffer the natural fruit of their sins, but rather that hell involves some additional suffering inflicted by God, suffering which the sinner deserves. God is, to use Aristotelian terminology, the *efficient cause* of a sinner's going to hell.

On the basis of all of the above, I put forward the following argument for consideration:

(12) God is all-loving.
(13) If God is all-loving, then God does not will something that is ultimately bad for any person.
(14) If God retributively punishes some person, God wills something that is ultimately bad for that person.
(15) Therefore, God does not retributively punish any person.

The argument is valid, (12) is true on orthodox Judaeo-Christian theism, and let us grant (14) for the sake of argument. The crucial premise, then, is (13). Let us turn to an evaluation of this argument.

At first blush, one might think (13) is entailed by the nature of love. That is, one might think it is an essential feature of love for a person that it is incompatible with a desire for something ultimately bad for that person. But on reflection, this inference seems unwarranted. Consider the case of a father who wants the best for his child, but thinks that the way to give his child the best is to force the child to play rough sports, resulting in the child's objective detriment. Such a case shows how one can love another yet desire something that is objectively bad for them. Hence, (13) is not entailed by the nature of love alone.

But would (13) be entailed by the nature of divine love? What divine love would require is perhaps the following proposition:

(16) If God is all-loving, then God does not will something that is ultimately bad for S for the reason that it is ultimately bad for S.

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Wishing something ultimately bad for someone because it is ultimately bad is undeniably a vengeful, spiteful, and hateful thing to wish for. This kind of divine vengeance is arguably incompatible with divine love, for it would entail a kind of schizophrenic, Jekyll–Hyde God who loves and loathes those whom He punishes. But divine retributive justice seems perfectly compatible with the truth of (16). Recall that for God to exercise retributive justice is for God to punish *because the punishee deserves it and for no other reason*. Thus, it is not true that God punishes because it is ultimately bad for the punishee, nor is it even the case that God punishes because it results in eternal separation between the punishee and God. If anything, what would be ruled out by the nature of divine love is merely the following proposition:

(17) God wills something that is ultimately bad for a person S for the reason that it is ultimately bad for S.

But, as is hopefully made plain by this point, the Anselmian need not commit himself to (17).[12]

More can be said. For not only does belief in (14) seem unwarranted; arguably, Anselmians can reject it outright. That is, arguably, Anselmians can coherently assert the following proposition:

(18) There is a person S such that God desires the good of S and God desires something that is ultimately bad for S.

To garner plausibility, such an assertion may be situated within a larger account of the connection between God's love and God's justice. I put forward for the reader's consideration the theory of divine love and divine justice expounded by the Protestant Reformer (and no doubt 'Anselmian') Francis Turretin. According to Turretin, God does not always act out of his love, nor does he act exclusively from his goodness. Explaining the connection between God's justice, goodness, and love, Turretin maintained that the divine will consists of

> two principal virtues which embrace the others under them: justice and goodness. The former is that by which God is in himself holy and just and has the constant will of giving to each his due. The latter is that by which he is conceived as the supreme good and the giver of all good (Turretin (1994), 235)

and that

> From goodness flows love by which he communicates himself to the creature and (as it were) wills to unite himself with and do good to it. (*ibid.*, 241)

There are three key elements to highlight from the passage above. (i) Turretin's claim that justice and goodness are *principal* virtues is perhaps best understood as the claim that divine justice and goodness are non-identical foundational features of God's will and, as foundational, cannot be reduced to any other feature of God's will or to each other.[13] Moreover, love 'flows' from goodness. By this,

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I take it that Turretin means to say, roughly, that the principal virtue of goodness somehow includes or grounds the derivative virtue of love under it. Whatever Turretin exactly means here, it follows that whatever divine love is, it is not derived from divine justice, and neither is divine justice derived from divine love. (ii) Turretin's characterization of God's justice as God's having 'the constant will of giving each his due' is in accord with a construal of God's justice along the lines of strong retributivism. God punishes the guilty because and only because they deserve it. (Indeed, elsewhere Turretin states that God's justice 'is nothing else than the constant will of punishing sinners' (*ibid.*, 422).) Thus, Turretin's theory includes an endorsement of divine retributive justice as I described it. (iii) Turretin espouses a view of God's love according to which God desires the good of and union with the creature. Turretin's theory thereby includes commitment to divine love as well. Turretin's theory of divine goodness, love, and justice looks coherent, and if it is, it represents a model of the divine nature which makes sense of the truth of divine love and divine retributive justice without requiring commitment to (14). God desires to punish out of a desire to satisfy the demands of his retributive justice, but this is not incompatible with his unconditional love for all persons. I therefore recommend that the Anselmian appeals to a model of the divine nature of the sort enunciated by Turretin if he wants to make sense of how an all-loving God can exact retributive justice.

Conclusion

Stump's 'central and devastating' objection thus begs the question against the Anselmian by presupposing that the nature of disunion between God and humanity is one of personal love and forgiveness rather than a legal matter. I suspect Stump's real objection to the Anselmian should not really be against his view of divine love but rather against his view that divine retributive punishment is not motivated by love for sinners but a desire to meet the demands of justice by giving sinners their just deserts. I pointed to Turretin's model of love and justice, suggesting that the Anselmian employ it in explaining how an all-loving God can issue the punishment of hell, something that is ultimately bad for them. If such a model is coherent, then Stump's argument that the God of Anselm is unloving misses its mark.

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Notes

1. A reviewer adds that there is an asymmetry to be kept in mind between human–human justice and human–divine justice in Aquinas, by whom Stump is of course inspired. This distinction should be kept in mind when evaluating whether Stump thinks divine justice is retributive. For instance, in chapter 10 of *Atonement*, which deals with the problems of guilt and shame, she offers sympathy to the place of retributive punishment in human society, stating that it can play a role in restoring justice to society and restoring what is owed to the victims of wrongdoing. She commends Murphy (2003) in Stump (2018), 000 n. 7. In this work, Murphy argues that retributive punishment includes a good for the victims of injustice.
2. I thank Eleonore Stump for her seminars on forgiveness, punishment, and atonement, and for several rounds of comments on this article as it developed.
3. See Stump (2018), 40–44 for a brief presentation of Aquinas' account of love.
4. Stump offers a rich account of union in Stump (2018), ch. 4, and throughout Stump (2010). I take it that although Stump is offering an account of union, exploring what union between two persons involves, she is not quite offering an *analysis*, a hard definition of what union ultimately is.
5. I quote her endnote in almost its entirety below. She clarifies that love is both necessary and sufficient for forgiveness by comparing the connection between love and forgiveness to the connection between risibility and humanity:

> In fact, on my view, love is necessary and sufficient for forgiveness. But it is not the case that forgiveness is nothing but love or that forgiveness reduces to love, or that the definition of forgiveness is love. Analogously, being risible (having the capacity for laughter in response to rational assessment of a situation or story) is necessary and sufficient for being human – anything that is risible is human and anything that is not risible is not human – but being human is not reducible to being risible. Risibility picks out human beings by an accident which is had by all and only human beings, but the nature of human beings is not nothing but risibility. Analogously, forgiveness does not reduce to love, although love is necessary and sufficient for forgiveness. It is not part of my purposes here to define forgiveness, and so I leave to one side what else might need to be added to love for a definition of forgiveness. (Stump (2018), 81 n. 47; endnote is on p. 438)

6. Further, although I am content to grant to Stump that love is necessary and sufficient for forgiveness for the sake of argument, others have objected to Stump on this point. For example, see Warmke (2019).
7. In early versions of her manuscript, Stump used the phrase 'God's willingness to reconcile' where she now uses 'God's acceptance of reconciliation'. But she does not explain what is involved in God's 'acceptance of reconciliation', so I have decided to continue using the original phrase 'willingness to reconcile'. If the

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two phrases are equivalent, my critique of Stump is entirely unaffected. If there is some difference between the phrases, Stumps needs to tell us what that is. Further, if it should turn out that God's 'acceptance of reconciliation' is a notion like pardon of a sinner on the occasion of the sinner's repentance, then it is far from obvious that God's unconditional love would entail God's 'acceptance of reconciliation' with unrepentant sinners. Stump would need to argue why this entailment should hold; indeed, as I shall argue, for the Anselmian, it does *not* hold.

8. I thank William Lane Craig for sharing an early version of his own defence of the penal substitution theory of atonement against Stump's objection (Craig (forthcoming)), from which I learned the distinction between personal forgiveness and legal pardon.
9. For more on the relationship between punishment, pardon, and forgiveness, see Warmke (2011), *Idem* (2013), *Idem* (2017).
10. Alternatively, one might question whether (b) is necessary for punishment to be retributive. A reviewer asks, 'Could one unknowingly exact punishment that happens to be retributive?' Although it is an interesting question, I do not think answering this question one way or the other has much bearing, if any, on what a construal of divine justice as retributive entails. First, it is broadly logically impossible for God, as omniscient, unknowingly to exact punishment that happens to be retributive. Second, as we shall see, what demarcates divine justice as strongly retributive is not the fact that a punisher has knowledge of the punishee's deserts but that the punisher issues punishment because of these deserts.
11. I thank a reviewer for this rough description of what I called an 'ultimate' bad.
12. A reviewer points out an ambiguity in (16): is this 'for the reason that' a 'for the reason that' of explanation or a 'for the reason that' of motivation? The latter is the intended reading. (16) says that if God is all-loving, he is never motivated to will something ultimately bad for someone by the fact that it is ultimately bad for them.
13. The exact senses of 'derived' and 'reduced' here are surely disputable, but I do not think it is necessary for my purposes to try to identify exactly what sense Turretin means to employ. Perhaps the following sense is sufficient: divine love is derivative from divine goodness just in case all the propositions about divine goodness entail all the propositions about divine love.

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