2025 TheoLogica
An International Journal for Philosophy of Religion and Philosophical Theology
VARIA
DOI: https://doi.org/10.14428/thl.v9i1.78863

An Atonement Problem for Contradictory Christology

DREW SMITH
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
william.andrew.smith@me.com

Abstract: Recently, Jc Beall has advanced a model of the incarnation according to which one can reconcile the apparently incompatible attributes attributed to Christ by taking them as true contradictions. In this paper, I argue that Contradictory Christology proves incompatible with a central class of atonement theories. I begin by expositing Beall's model in contrast to two models operating upon the assumption of classical logic. Next, I demonstrate the incompatibility between Beall's theory and theories of the atonement on which Christ's suffering was a necessary condition of salvation. Finally, provide a brief survey of three prominent atonement theories, highlighting their endorsement of this principle.

Keywords: Contradictory Christology, Atonement, Salvation, FDE, Classical Logic

Introduction

Recently, Jc Beall has advanced a model of the incarnation according to which one can reconcile the apparently incompatible attributes attributed to Christ by taking them as true contradictions. In advancing his view, Beall abandons the *de facto* use of classical logic one most often finds in theological discourse. Instead, he deploys a subclassical logic, FDE, which accommodates contradictory claims. Beall terms this Christological model "Contradictory Christology."

In this paper, I argue that Contradictory Christology (CC) proves incompatible with a central class of atonement theories on which Christ's suffering on the cross is a necessary condition of salvation. I begin by expositing Beall's model in contrast to two models operating upon the assumption of classical logic. Next, I demonstrate the incompatibility between Beall's theory and theories of the atonement on which Christ's suffering was a necessary condition of salvation. Finally, I provide a brief

survey of three prominent atonement theories, highlighting their endorsement of this principle.

1. Contradictory Christology

1.1. The Classical Picture

Models of the incarnation emerge out of attempts to make sense of the dogma that Christ possesses both a human and divine nature (i.e., the hypostatic union). Charles Hodge explicates the point well, writing:

> He was a true man,—not a phantom, not an abstraction,—not the complex of properties without the substance of humanity, but a true or real man, like other men, yet without sin. In like manner when He is declared to be God over all, to be omniscient, almighty, and eternal, it is no less evident that He has a truly divine nature; that the substance of God in Him is the subject in which these divine attributes inhere. This being so, we are taught that the elements combined in the constitution of his person, namely, humanity and divinity, are two distinct natures, or substances. Such has been the faith of the Church universal. (Hodge 2003, 2: 388)

In short, the hypostatic union teaches that Christ, the person, is both fully God and fully man. Thus, he possesses all those properties properly belonging to both the nature of deity and the nature of humanity.

One need not contemplate the dogma long before a myriad of problems rushes to mind. Most of these involve one or more sets of apparently incompatible properties the God-man would need to instantiate. For example, consider the following claims:

(1) All divine beings are omniscient.
(2) Christ is a divine being.

None within the orthodox camp would deny (1) holds at least prior to the incarnation. Indeed, Hodge sites omniscience as a paradigmatic property of divinity in his above exposition. Likewise, (2) merely states one of the hypostatic union's core postulates. Moreover, from these two assertions one can additionally derive:

(3) Christ is omniscient.

However benign (3) might appear at first glance, the conclusion quickly runs into trouble. For the gospels—and incidentally intuition—attest that in his humanity Christ was also limited with respect to knowledge.[1] Thus we add:

(4) Christ is not omniscient.

Operating within the bounds of classical logic, (3) and (4) are mutually exclusive options. On this picture, Christ cannot be both omniscient and non-omniscient at the same time and in the same way.

To cope with the incompatibility, theologians beholden to classical logic have developed several ingenious ways to escape the dangling threat of contradiction. Consider, as an example, the compositional approach to the incarnation.[2] On this picture, the incarnate Christ contains a number of parts, including both a divine and human nature. Consequently, one must index predicates regarding Christ to one or more of his natures. Applying this principle to our discordant propositions yields the following modifications:

(3*) Christ *qua* his divinity is omniscient.
(4*) Christ *qua* his humanity is not omniscient.

Unlike the original statements, (3*) and (4*) are fully compatible.[3]

We can illustrate the difference with a simple bodily analogy. Claiming that I both do and do not have a scar clearly yields a contradiction. Claiming I have a scar on my right hand but not my left poses no such problem. Likewise, provided that one can sensibly consider the dual natures of Christ as parts, the same solution applies.

An alternative proposal proceeds not by modification but rejection. According to kenotic models of the incarnation, Christ in some sense "gives up" certain properties he possessed prior to taking on human nature.[4] Thus, on a kenotic model, one would accept (4) while rejecting (3). During the period of his humiliation, Christ simply lacked the property of omniscience. Since a contradiction only arises from the conjunction of (3) and (4), the kenotic model avoids the paradox by denying (3)—consequently kenotic theologians must also deny either (1) or (2).

---

[1] See for example Mk. 13:32 and Lk. 2:52. For a helpful discussion of these passages and their bearing on models of the incarnation see Swinburne (1994, 199-209).

[2] For accounts along these lines, see Leftow (2002) and Stump (2002).

[3] For a discussion of the various *qua* approaches see part II in Pawl (2016).

[4] For accounts along these lines, see Evans (2006) Forrest (2000).

On one level, these two models attempt to escape the threat of contradiction in distinctly different ways. The compositional approach proceeds by modifying the propositions at issue thereby writing out the original contradiction. Kenotic models, by contrast, leave the propositions as stated and instead opt to deny one of the affirmations. Despite these differences in approach, both models consent to the unacceptable conjunction of (3) and (4). Underlying this repulsion stands a commitment—tacit or explicit—to the strictures of classical logic. Beall's Christology, by contrast, gets started by rejecting this previously held point of commonality.

1.2. Beall's Subclassical Approach

Beall stands within a cohort of distinguished philosophical logicians aiming to displace classical logic as the *de facto* arbiter of inferential reasoning.[5] Before turning to Beall's preferred alternative, a brief explanation of classical logic's distinctives will prove beneficial. Among the commitments of classical logic stand two central contentions:

> **Completeness**: Every sentence is *either* true or false.
> **Consistency**: No sentence is *both* true and false.

Often the completeness property finds expression in the so called "law of the excluded middle," and the consistency property in the famous "law of non-contradiction."

The incompatibility between (3) and (4) arises on classical logic principally due to these two properties. Taken together, these principles entail that all sentences are either true or false, never neither and never both. Consequently, sentences and their negations can never share the same truth value(s). Since (4) is the negation of (3), classical logic forbids their joint affirmation. Avoiding the contradiction at the level of one's logic, then, requires dropping at least one of these properties. Happily, Beall opts to deny them both.

Beall endorses an account of logic termed 'first-degree entailment' (FDE). Because FDE rejects both principles, the logic allows for sentences that are neither true nor false—"gaps"—along with sentences that are both true and false—"gluts." Beall makes particular use of the latter category in developing his Christology. If a

[5] For Beall's book length contributions to this topic see Beall and Restall (2006) Beall (2009). For a helpful survey of the recent literature on this topic see chapters 3 and 7 in Cohnitz Estrada-Gonzalez (2019).

sentence can be both true and false, then contradictions are no longer off the table. Thus, one can accept both (3) and (4) provided one understands these statements as gluts. Christ both is and is not omniscient. Moreover, the proposed solution to the incommensurability of (3) and (4) generalizes to any contradictory conjunction of properties that arise in one's exploration of the hypostatic union.

2. The Incompatibility of SAM Theories & Contradictory Christology

Having exposited Beall's model, we turn now to consider the ramifications of his views on other areas of theology, specifically the atonement. Below, we begin by defining a class of atonement theories on which Christ's suffering on the cross was a necessary condition for salvation. We will then consider how best to express this view within Beall's preferred formal language: FDE. Finally, we shall see that once rendered appropriately within FDE, the CC theory proves incompatible with atonement theories of this ilk.

2.1. SAM Theories of the Atonement

Recall that according to the CC model, one ought to understand the apparently incompatible properties instantiated by Christ as gluts. Applied to omniscience, this entailed that Christ both is and is not all-knowing. The application of the principle, however, extends far beyond this one property. Among the various other paradoxical properties Beall considers lies the problem of Christ's suffering on the cross:

> On the Christology being proposed Christ plays the foundational role of both having the features required to fully experience suffering as we experience it while at the same time being worthy of worship and incapable—not capable—of such suffering or imperfect understanding of such suffering. (Beall, 2019, 416)[6]

On Beall's view, then, one should understand the following proposition as a glut:

(5) Christ suffered on the Cross.

Taking (5) as a glut, however, carries consequences for any sentence of which (5) is a component. Of particular concern for the present discussion are statements in

[6] For Beall's book-length treatment of the model see Beall (2021).

which (5) serves as a necessary condition for some other theological claim. Specifically, we are concerned with the following proposition:

> (6) "Some people possess salvation" only if "Christ suffered on the Cross."[7]

Taken as an expression of a necessary condition, (6) contends that the absence of Christ's suffering on the Cross—i.e., the falsity of (5)—entails that no person possesses salvation. Here we pause to note the inherently counterfactual nature of necessary conditions. The theorist committed to (6) need not hold any particular views regarding the truth value of (5) or the claim that some people possess salvation. Rather, affirming (6) merely commits one to the view that if it were false that Christ suffered on the cross, the falsity of some possessing salvation follows.

In addition, one should not mistake (6) as affirming that the punishment of Christ is a necessary condition of salvation. As William Lane Craig has helpfully observed, one can maintain that salvation depends upon Christ's *suffering* on the Cross without thereby committing oneself to the position that Christ was *punished* on the Cross (Craig 2018, 3.1.1). (6), therefore, remains neutral regarding the nature of Christ's suffering.

The content of (6) pertains to the conditions—and possibly mechanisms—of redemption. Surveying the landscape of traditional theological *loci*, therefore, one ought to place (6) within the territory of atonement theories. Call any theory of the atonement that endorses the truth of (6) a Suffering-Affirmative Model (SAM).

2.2. Expressing SAM in FDE

Imagine the following dialogical scenario between a SAM theorist, Devante, and an advocate of CC, Sarah. On one particular occasion, Devante hears about Sarah's CC model and wonders if his own atonement theory is compatible. But how can the duo reach a determination on this point? Provided they are concerned with determining the logical compatibility of SAM with CC, they first must agree to "speak" or reason within the same formal language. Since Sarah's theory utilizes gluts, Devante agrees to adopt her logic of FDE to express his views. Once Devante is able to express his views in FDE, the two can then consider whether the conjunction of Devante's SAM theory with the commitments of Sarah's CC theory entail any contradictions (of the unacceptable sort) or untenable theological claims.

[7] Here I add the quotation marks to clarify that the existential quantifier in the first proposition rangers only over that proposition. My thanks to the anonymous review for suggestion this addition.

But how *does* one express SAM within FDE? Recall that a SAM theorist's sole distinguishing commitment is to the following claim:

(6) "Some people possess salvation" only if "Christ suffered on the Cross."

As noted above, "only if" is taken to express the notion of a necessary condition. In classical logic, one typically expresses a necessary condition using the material conditional. Thus, letting A stand for "some people possess salvation" and B for "Christ suffered on the Cross," the classical logician would render (6) as follows:

(C-6) $A \rightarrow B$

FDE, however, has no native conditional—material or otherwise. While one can augment the language to include such an operator, doing so would take us away from the canonical version of the language advanced by Beall and—within our present dialogical musings—utilized by Sarah.

How, then, ought one to express (6) within FDE if the standard formalization is unavailable? I propose that the best route lies in using an equivalent form to the material conditional expressed with the disjunction:

(F-6) $\sim A \vee B$

Within classical logic, (F-6) and (C-6) express equivalent propositions meaning that the truth value of one is equivalent to the other under every valuation. Moreover, since FDE includes a disjunction relation within its vocabulary, (F-6) is available to Devante as a means of articulating his position. Finally, provided that (F-6) is understood as true (only), the sentence does express the idea that B is a necessary condition of A in that given B is false (only) it follows within FDE that A is false (only).

While (F-6) gives the most straightforward rendering of Devante's views, we can additionally argue that it constitutes the only plausible representation of SAM within FDE as well. If one considers just the available dyadic operators of FDE—conjunction and disjunction—operating on literals for A and B along with the negations of the expressions, sixteen possible combinations emerge. Of these sixteen, only four have the feature that one can assign a truth value to the expression which allows one to hold that A is false when B is false: AvB, ~AvB, ~(A^~B), ~(~A^~B).[8]

[8] For the truth tables that define these operators in FDE see Priest (2008, 146-147).

When one eliminates equivalencies, only two results remain: ~AvB and ~(~A^~B). The former is (F-6). The latter, however, fails as an expression of a necessary condition because it cannot capture the inherent counterfactual nature of that relationship.

As noted above, when the SAM theorist states that Christ's suffering on the cross is a necessary condition of salvation, they are not committing themselves in that claim to any views on whether Christ did or did not suffer on the cross or whether people do or do not possess salvation. If they hold views on those questions—as they most surely will—those constitute additional assertions within their theory. Claiming Christ's suffering is a necessary condition of salvation merely commits one to the view that if the claim that Christ suffered on the cross were false, the claim that some possess salvation would be false as well. (F-6)—when taken as true (only)—captures that counterfactual dimension of the relation. Technically, if one takes ~(~A^~B) as false (only), that entails that both A and B are false. However, taking the expression in that way amounts to nothing more than claiming that A and B are both false, not that if B were false the falsity of A would follow. For these reasons, we shall use (F-6)—taken as true (only)—as the appropriate rendering of the SAM theorist's views in FDE.

Before leaving our—perhaps pedantic—discussion of necessary conditions, we ought to consider one alternative approach to expressing a necessary condition. Instead of attempting to capture the notion as a statement *within* a language, one could instead take it as a claim *about* a formal theory.[9] More specifically, one could say that B is a necessary condition of A within a particular formal language—call it L—just in case A entails B relative to the consequent relation of L. To give a simple illustration of this approach within classical logic, let Φ be the conjunction of two claims:

Φ-1: A→B
Φ-2: A

Using the consequent relation for classical logic, Φ then entails:

(7) B

Thus, in the present approach, (7) is a necessary condition of Φ.

[9] My thanks to Jc Beall for pointing out this option to me.

While this view of necessary conditions certainly captures one usage of the concept, it proves ill-suited for present purposes. We can make at least two points in defense of this claim. First, on this approach, Devante has no way to express his SAM theory within FDE for the simple reason that "some people possess salvation" does not entail "Christ suffered on the cross." Indeed, a prerequisite of all logical entailment is the commonality of vocabulary. For one sentence—or set of sentences—to entail another requires that the two share overlapping terminology. Clearly enough, that does not hold in the case of the two statements that make up the core proposition of SAM.

Second, this approach clashes with the parameters of the dialogical scenario presented above. Sarah and Devante were searching for an appropriate formal language within which to carry out their theological discussion. Since Sarah's CC theory requires a glutty-language, Devante agreed to utilize her preferred FDE as the language of disputation. In other words, what we are seeking at present is the appropriate language within which to have theological discussions. If the concept of a necessary condition occurs within one's theological commitments, therefore, one must find a means of expressing that view within the language of discussion. Therefore, we leave (F-6) as the appropriate expression of Devante's views and move on to consider its possible marriage with Sarah's CC theory.

2.3. The Incompatibility Demonstrated

With the endorsement of (F-6) the incompatibility between SAMs and CC begins to surface. All SAM theories, by definition, embrace (F-6) as true (only). Further, CC understands B ("Christ suffered on the cross") as a glut. But suppose one attempts to embrace both positions concurrently. What follows if (F-6) is true and B a glut? Looking at the truth tables for FDE in the envisioned scenario, the left disjunct of (F-6)—"¬ A"—must either be true or a gap. In other words, the claim that "no one possesses salvation" must either be true (only) or neither true nor false.

Neither option presents a welcomed picture on the Christian worldview. Consider, first, the position that "¬ A" is true (only). On this picture, the world suffers from the affliction of universal non-salvation. Not one person can lay claim to the saving work of Christ. All lost souls lie forever lost. The offer of salvation, however, resides at the heart of the Christian worldview and the gospel message. Indeed, provide we accept the historicity of the evangelist's record, Jesus himself assures us of the salvation of at least one soul: the reverent thief on the cross (Lk.

23:39-43).[10] Affirming the universal condemnation of humanity, therefore, runs counter to the very foundations of the Christian faith.

What about the alternative option? How does the picture fare provided one understands "¬ A" as a gap? Admittedly, this approach stretches the bounds of conceivability. What would it mean to say "someone lacks salvation" is neither true nor false? Completeness may not hold across the board, but surely it holds in matters of salvation and eternal destiny.

Beyond the intuitive problems with this view, we can once again turn to the thief on the cross to deal decisively with this option. When dealing with gaps, the claim that "some people possess salvation" and its negation are equivalent. Both, in turn, hold provided two conditions are met. To understand these conditions, one first needs an introduction to the concepts of a predicate's extension and anti-extension. Intuitively, the extension of a predicate is the collection of objects that instantiate the corresponding property. Conversely, the anti-extension is the collection of objects that do not instantiate the corresponding property. Having defined those terms, a statement in FDE involving a predicate is taken as a gap provided that:

> (A) Every object is either in its anti-extension or neither in its extension nor anti-extension.
> (B) At least one object is neither in the predicate's extension or anti-extension.[11]

In other words, "¬ A" comes out as a gap just in case every object either lacks salvation or neither has nor does not have salvation and at least one object in the world neither has nor lacks salvation. Therefore, if even a single object possesses salvation—i.e., falls within the extension of the predicate—"A" is not a gap. As noted above, the thief on the cross decidedly does fall within the extension of "possesses salvation." Thus, "A"/ "¬ A" cannot be a gap.

What follows from the inability of "¬ A" to be either true (only) or a gap? The incompatibility of SAM with CC. According to SAM, (F-6) is true (only) since Christ's suffering on the cross is a necessary condition of at least some people's salvation. CC, however, requires that "B"—Christ suffering on the cross—is a glut. At this point, one could reconcile the two so long as the SAM theorist was willing to accept "¬ A" as true (only) or a gap. Other doctrinal commitments, specifically the situation of the thief on the cross, render both options untenable. As such, on

[10] For a defense and elaboration of the interpretation that Jesus here ensures the thief's salvation see Nolland (1993, 1152-1153) and Garland (2012, 926).

[11] For a discussion of the semantics for quantified FDE see Priest (2008, 476-479).

minimal auxiliary doctrinal commitments, SAM proves fundamentally at odds with CC.[12]

The severity of these results for proponents of CC hinges upon two factors: (i) the strength of arguments in favor of SAM theories, (ii) how prevalent SAM theories are across the ecclesiastical tradition. With respect to the first, if good arguments exist in support of SAM theories, the present incompatibility threatens to congeal into a full fledge defeater for CC.[13] With respect to the second, significant endorsement of SAM across the theological tradition—even if poorly motivated—renders CC non-viable for a swath of the theological landscape. I leave the former for theologians to consider. Below, the latter is explored in demonstration of the present incompatibility's significance.

3. SAM Across the Ages

One can trace the presence of SAMs throughout the Christian tradition in a wide range of theories and authors. However, limitations of scope, prohibit an extensive diachronic analysis of SAM models across ecclesiastical history. Instead, we examine only a sampling of authors, each representative of a distinctive atonement theory. The sampling, though brief, suffices to demonstrate that SAMs are well represented within the tradition from at least the medieval period onward.

3.1. Anselm's Satisfaction Theory

Anselm famously characterized Christ's salvific work as an act of appeasement towards an offended God. Indeed, in Anselm's view, the sins of humanity form so weighty a debt that only the incarnate God-man stands able to pay our due. Wrapped up in Christ's salvific work, for Anselm, includes the necessity of his suffering:

> Moreover, he said that the cup must not pass from him, except he drank it, not because he could not have escaped death had he chosen to; but because, as has been

[12] The advocate of CC could argue that while their theory requires gluts, it need not include gaps. In this case, the appropriate language for theological disputes turns out to be LP rather than FDE. Unfortunately, rendering SAM and CC in LP does nothing to mitigate the incompatibility between the two theories. If one takes (F-6) as true (only) and B as a glut, LP demands that ¬ A is true. Taking ¬ A as true, however, drives us back to the error of universal condemnation discussed above. See Priest (2008, 122-125) for a discussion of propositional LP and its truth tables. (These results also hold for LP's near cousin RM3).

[13] For a robust defense of a SAM theory see Craig (2020).

> said, the world could not otherwise be saved; and it was his fixed choice to suffer death, rather than that the world should not be saved. (Anselm 1939, 199)

According to Anselm, Christ suffered the pain of death not due to domination by man nor sin, but willingly to accomplish the salvation of the world. Moreover, Christ endures the pangs of death, in part, because no other avenue of salvation exists by which humanity can be saved.

Later in *Cur Deus Homo*, he takes up the point again:

> By this subsequent and imperative necessity, was it necessary (since the belief and prophecy concerning Christ were true, that he would die of his own free will), that it should be so. For this he became man; for this he did and suffered all things undertaken by him; for this he chose as he did. For therefore were they necessary, because they were to be, and they were to be because they were, and they were because they were; and, if you wish to know the real necessity of all things which he did and suffered, know that they were of necessity, because he wished them to be. But no necessity preceded his will. (Anselm 1939, 277)

As before, Anselm stresses the absolute necessity of Christ's atoning work for the salvation of humanity. Here, however, Anselm stresses more than before the requisite suffering that attends to Christ's atoning work. For Anselm, salvation comes not *via* Christ's death only but through his suffering as well.

3.2. Calvin's Penal Substitution Theory

Some 400 years later, the Protestant reformers would lay still greater emphasis on the role of Christ's suffering in salvation. John Calvin stands as a premier representative of this position. According to Calvin, to affect our redemption, Christ first endures the agonies of divine punishment owed to humanity:

> If Christ had died only a bodily death, it would have been ineffectual. No—it was expedient at the same time for him to undergo the severity of God's vengeance, to appease his wrath and satisfy his just judgment. For this reason, he must also grapple hand to hand with the armies of hell and the dread of everlasting death. A little while ago we referred to the prophet's statement that "the chastisement of our peace was laid upon him," "he was wounded for our transgressions" by the Father, "he was bruised for our infirmities" [Isa. 53: 5]. By these words he means that Christ was put in place of evildoers as surety and pledge—submitting himself even as the accused—to bear and suffer all the punishments that they ought to have sustained. (Calvin 2011, 1: 515-516)

Appealing in part to Isaiah's depiction of the suffering servant, Calvin concludes that Christ became humanity's punitive replacement. On the cross, Christ took upon himself the punishment and suffering due our transgressions against God's law.

Elsewhere, Calvin emphasizes the necessity of Christ's substitutionary atonement for redemption. Commenting on Luke 24:26, he remarks:

> The sum of what is stated is, that the disciples are wrong in distressing their minds about their Master's death, (without which he could not discharge what belonged to Christ; because his sacrifice was the most important part of redemption) for in this way they shut the gate, that he might not enter into his kingdom. This ought to be carefully observed; for since Christ is deprived of the honour due to him, if he is not reckoned to be a sacrifice for sins, the only way by which he could enter into his glory was that humiliation or emptying (Philip. 2:7), out of which the Redeemer had arisen. (Calvin 2010, 3: 359)

Like Anselm, Calvin does not understand Christ's suffering on the Cross as an optional route to redemption. Rather, he understands the road to Calvary as the sole route by which God could effect the desired restoration of fallen human beings. Consequently, for both thinkers, Christ's suffering on the cross is a necessary condition for our salvation. Had Christ not suffered on the cross, none would possess salvation.

3.3. Grotius's Governmental View

Closely related to, though notably distinct from, the view of Calvin stands the theorizing of the seventeenth-century jurist Hugo Grotius. Like Calvin, Grotius understands Christ to have suffered the punishment due to humanity on the cross:

> To sum up what has been already said: since the Scripture says that Christ was chastised by God, i.e. punished; that Christ bore our sins, i.e., the punishment of sins; was made sin, i.e. was subjected to the penalty of sins; was made a curse with God, or was exposed to the curse, that is, the penalty of the law; since, moreover, the very suffering of Christ, full of tortures, bloody, ignominious, is most appropriate matter of punishment; since again, the Scriptures says that these were inflicted on him by God on account of our sins, i.e. our sins so deserving; since death itself is said to be the wages, i.e. the punishment of sin; certainly it can by no means be doubted that with reference to God the suffering and death of Christ had the character of a punishment. (Grotius 1889, I)

In strikingly graphic detail, Grotius leaves no question of his understanding that atonement was accomplished by Christ's suffering taken as a form of punishment from God. On this much, Calvin and Grotius agree. Division arises, however, as Grotius turns to the necessity of Christ's suffering to effect divine redemption. In Grotius' view, God could have chosen to remit sins without any exercise of punishment on either Christ or human beings.[14] Christ's suffering and death, then, emerge as a possible but not a necessary route to salvation.

One might think that Grotius here departs from the parameters of a SAM model. After all, SAM models hold that Christ's suffering was a necessary condition of human salvation. Grotius, by contrast, held that God could have effected salvation by other means. Such an objection, however, confuses (6) with (6)'s necessitated form:

> (8) Necessarily ["some people possess salvation" only if "Christ suffered on the Cross"].

According to (6), Christ's suffering was a necessary condition of salvation for some. (8), on the other hand, makes the stronger claim that Christ's suffering was *necessarily* a necessary condition for said salvation.

One can illustrate the difference between a necessary and a necessarily-necessary condition by considering the modern use of passports. Presently, in order to travel internationally, Americans must possess a passport. Thus, we can assert the following:

> (9) Americans can travel internationally only if they possess a passport.

Per (9), the possession of a passport is a necessary condition for any American traveling internationally. If I am an American and it is false that I possess a passport, one can infer it is false I can travel internationally. Clearly, however, the employment of a passport in this role is not an essential feature of our world. In other versions of reality, the government could have required an alternative form of documentation for international travel. Likewise, the global community could have chosen to allow international travel without any additional documentation at all. Thus, while (9) holds true in the actual world~~s~~, the necessitated form of (9) is false. Put another way, the possession of a passport is a necessary but not a necessarily-necessary condition for Americans to travel internationally.

[14] William Lane Craig (2018, 52).

Returning to the case of Christ's suffering on the cross, to claim that Christ's suffering was a necessary condition for salvation demands only that God's chosen method of redemption depends upon Christ's suffering. Such a claim, however, does not entail that alternative avenues were unavailable to God. That God could have effected redemption without recourse to Christ's suffering in no way undermines the claim that God has, in the actual world, brought about salvation through the agonies of Christ.

With these distinctions in hand, one can best understand Grotius as endorsing (6) without committing himself to (8). God has, in the actual world, chosen a mechanism of salvation that depends upon Christ's suffering. Nevertheless, other avenues were available to God to obtain the same result. By contrast, Anselm and Calvin appear to accept both (6) and (8). Since SAMs require only an endorsement of (6), however, all the theologians surveyed above fall within this category.

In summary, SAMs emerge as neither an aberrant nor idiosyncratic class of atonement theories. As such, to the extent that CC proves incompatible with SAMs, the Christology alienates several key atonement theories from cooperation. On one level, these results do nothing to undermine CC as a model of the incarnation. On the other hand, at some point theologians must turn from a piecemeal examination of theological *loci* towards a unified theology of the Christian faith. As the CC-theologian makes that transition, they may find themselves with sparse willing partners amongst the available atonement theories. Moreover, should any of the SAM models garner substantive biblical and theological support, they would thereby position themselves as defeaters for CC.

Conclusion

Beall has produced an innovative and rigorously formulated model of the incarnation that succeeds in dealing with the apparent contradictions within the hypostatic union. Beyond that, Beall has done a great service to contemporary theological discourse in shining a light upon the often-overlooked importance of establishing a proper consequence relation for theological discourse. Nevertheless, Beall's CC model faces some obstacles as one attempts to integrate it with other theological *loci*. In particular, this paper has demonstrated that Beall's model is incompatible with any model of the atonement on which Christ's suffering is a necessary condition for the salvation of some people. Moreover, we observed that atonement theories of this kind represent a significant portion of the theological terrain. The import of this point is twofold. First, as the advocate of CC broadens her gaze to construct a full systematic account of Christian doctrine, they may find

sparse willing partners among the available atonement theories. Second, to the degree that theologians can establish the veracity of these incompatible atonement theories, they thereby generate a full fledge defeater for Beall's model.

Bibliography

Anselm. 1939. *Proslogium, Monologium; An Appendix, In Behalf of the Fool, by Gaunilon; and Cur Deus Homo*. Translated by Sidney Noton Deane. Chicago, IL: The Open Court Publishing Company.

Beall, Jc. 2009. *Spandrels of Truth*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199268733.001.0001

———. 2019. "Christ—A Contradiction: A Defense of Contradictory Christology." Journal of Analytic Theology 7 (June): 400–433. https://doi.org/10.12978/jat.2019-7.090202010411

———. 2021. *The Contradictory Christ*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198852360.003.0001

Beall, Jc, and Greg Restall. 2006. *Logical Pluralism*. Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199288403.001.0001

Calvin, John. 2010. *Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists Matthew, Mark, and Luke*. Translated by William Pringle. Vol. 3. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

———. 2011. *Institutes of Christian Religion*. Edited by John T. McNeill. Translated by Ford Battles. 2nd ed. 2 vols. The Library of Christian Classics. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press.

Cohnitz, Daniel, and Luis Estrada-Gonzalez. 2019. *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Logic*. Cambridge Introductions to Philosophy. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316275573

Craig, William Lane. 2018. *The Atonement*. Cambridge Elements. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108558020

———. 2020. *Atonement and The Death of Christ*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press.

Evans, C. Stephen. 2006. "Kenotic Christology and the Nature of God." In *Exploring Kenotic Christology: The Self-Emptying of God*, edited by C. Stephen Evans. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Forrest, Peter. 2000. "The Incarnation: A Philosophical Case for Kenosis." *Religious Studies* 36 (2): 127–40. https://doi.org/10.1017/s003441250000514x

Garland, David. 2012. *Luke*. Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Grotius, Hugo. 1889. *A Defense of the Catholic Faith Concerning the Satisfaction of Christ, against Faustus Socinus*. Translated by Frank Hugh Foster. Andover, MA: Warren F. Draper.

Hodge, Charles. 2003. *Systematic Theology*. Reprint. 3 vols. Hendrickson Publishers.

Leftow, Brian. 2002. "A Timeless God Incarnate." In *The Incarnation: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Incarnation of the Son of God*, edited by Stephen T. Davis, Daniel Kendall, and Gerald O'Collins. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/0199248451.003.0012

Nolland, John. 1993. *Luke 18:35-24:53*. Vol. 35c. Word Biblical Commentary. Dallas, TX: Word Books.

Pawl, Timothy. 2016. *In Defense of Conciliar Christology*. Edited by Michael C. Rea and Oliver Crisp. Oxford Studies in Analytic Theology. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198765929.003.0002

Priest, Graham. 2008. *An Introduction to Non-Classical Logic*. Second. Cambridge Introductions to Philosophy. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511801174

Stump, Eleonore. 2002. "Aquinas' Metaphysics of the Incarnation." *In The Incarnation: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Incarnation of the Son of God*, edited by Stephen T. Davis, Daniel Kendall, and Gerald O'Collins. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/0199248451.003.0009

Swinburne, Richard. 1994. *The Christian God*. Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/0198235127.001.0001

Published Online First: June 24, 2024