



Vicarious Satisfaction in Lutheran Hymns

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Outline

Abstract	Criteria for Identification of Lyrics
The Question	Formulation of Vicarious Satisfaction
Summary of the Answer	Language of Vicarious Satisfaction
Background	Foci of Criteria Recapped
An Eruption of Lutheran Hymns	Criteria Illustrated by Examples
Lutheran Hymns are Confessions	Hymns Singing Vicarious Satisfaction
What Do Lutheran Hymns Confess?	Explicit and Brief
Method Used in This Study	Explicit and Extended
Difficulties of this Study	Implicit
Hymns Reviewed	Caveats

Abstract

Lutheran Orthodoxy teaches that an indispensable part of the mighty work that God has done in Christ is atonement by vicarious satisfaction. Adversaries of Lutheran Orthodoxy deny vicarious satisfaction. They teach that God just “up and forgave” before and without the blood of Christ. They teach that Christ did not accomplish atonement on the cross and that atonement only happens when someone believes a bloodless word of absolution.

In a series of studies, the author examines how those claims stand up against established witnesses to the teaching of the Lutheran church. Prior writings in the series brought forth the orthodox Lutheran teaching of vicarious satisfaction in the Lutheran confessions in the *Book of Concord* and in explanations of the *Small Catechism*. This writing continues the series by examining the witness of Lutheran hymns.

Lutheran hymns have a special characteristic as confessions of the faith. That makes them witnesses to authentic Lutheran doctrine. This writing recites an abundance of evidence from the texts of Lutheran hymns confessing vicarious satisfaction.

As prolegomena to that recitation, this writing first presents a background about the eruption of Lutheran hymns, the character of Lutheran hymns as confessions of the faith, what Lutheran hymns confess, difficulties of the study of the hymns regarding vicarious satisfaction, a definition of the body of hymns reviewed, and the criteria for identification of lyrics that confess vicarious satisfaction. The criteria are derived from a stated formulation of the doctrine of vicarious satisfaction. Based on that formulation, a realization of the language of vicarious satisfaction is made. Application of the criteria to the texts of hymns is illustrated by examples with commentary.

With the criteria having been established, a sampling of the abundant evidence from the texts of Lutheran hymns is recited. Selected for recitation are explicit and brief excerpts from 58 hymns, explicit and extended excerpts from 35 hymns, and implicit excerpts from 5 hymns.

The essay concludes with two caveats.

The Question

In prior writings we have seen the abundant evidence for the Lutheran doctrine of vicarious satisfaction in the atonement from the Lutheran confessions in the *Book of Concord*¹ and in the way atonement is taught in explanations of the *Small Catechism*.²

Against that, the Fordeans and other adversaries deny vicarious satisfaction. They claim it is neither scriptural nor Lutheran. They teach instead such notions as that the incarnation of Christ was not necessary for the forgiveness of sin, that the obedient and righteous life of Christ in our stead was not necessary, that the innocent sufferings and death of Christ in our place under the Law were not necessary, and that the bodily resurrection of Christ after he had been made sin for us was not necessary for our justification.

The question in this writing is: What do hymns written or used by Lutherans confess about vicarious satisfaction? Do Lutheran hymns agree with the confessions and the catechism and join them as witnesses to vicarious satisfaction?

Summary of the Answer

Lutheran hymns tend to be confessions of *the* faith. They give predominance to objective truth rather than to subjective faith. While the way any Christian tradition sings the atonement is significant for that tradition, this trait special to Lutheran hymns makes them especially

significant evidence of the doctrine of the Lutheran church.

The passages of Lutheran hymn texts that clearly confess vicarious satisfaction are numerous, span centuries, transcend ethnicities and synods, come from the pens of Luther himself and many others whose stature authoritatively represents Lutheran doctrine, spans the range of theological subtypes within Lutheranism from Orthodoxy to Pietism, and weaves itself into every other hymnic theme from the birth of Christ to his presentation, epiphany, his Baptism, life, death, resurrection, ascension, session with the Father, his coming again, justification, the Sacraments of Baptism and Communion, the church militant, the church triumphant, and so on.

Were we to deny vicarious satisfaction as the Fordeans and other adversaries do, we would have to gut our hymnals of large organic portions of their content. If the adversaries were right, we would have been singing error in most Divine Services, Matins, Vespers, and other services for more than 500 years. For that matter, some hymns Lutherans use that would have to be rejected were composed as early as the Sixth Century. The Lutheran church did not invent vicarious satisfaction. Rather, the Lutheran church confesses in continuity with the Church universal from Genesis 3:15 onward.

By contrast, the doctrine of the adversaries finds no expression whatsoever in our hymns. The notions that the incarnation was not necessary for the forgiveness of sin, that the obedient and righteous life of Christ was not necessary, that the innocent sufferings and death of Christ in our place under the Law were not necessary, that the bodily resurrection of Christ after having been made sin for us was not necessary, and that there is no atonement at the cross but only if and when some sinner believes a generic word of absolution shorn of the blood of Christ appear nowhere in Lutheran hymns. The notion that God just “up and forgave,” to use Forde’s expression,³ without and apart from the blood of Christ no Lutheran sings. Lutherans and all “Christians throughout the ages have joined in the celestial singing” of the new song of Revelation 5:9.⁴

For You were slain,
And have redeemed us to God by Your blood
Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation

“In our generation, numerous Lutheran hymnals have a musical setting that includes the very words of this canticle.”⁵

It is very difficult for the adversaries to preach their sermons on the atonement and not be contradicted by the hymnal.

Background

An Eruption of Lutheran Hymns

“The sudden bursting forth of the Lutheran chorale is one of the most thrilling chapters in the history of the Reformation.”⁶ “Wherever the Reformation gained entrance, publishers vied in bringing out better and more comprehensive hymnals. Magdeburg, Zwickau, Leipzig, Erfurt, Nürnberg, Augsburg, Königsberg, and many other cities produced their own collections.”⁷ “The

Reformation produced close to one hundred hymnals from 1524 until Luther's death in 1546."⁸
"In comparison, the English Reformation produced thirteen hymnals up to the end of the sixteenth century (Scottish hymnals included)."⁹

"A book with Lutheran hymns was sure to sell, for the chorales were the fanfare that opened many a Jericho to the advent of the Reformation."¹⁰

A chronicler of the city of Magdeburg gives a vivid account of a peddler who on May 6, 1524, sang the new Lutheran hymns on the market place and sold the leaflets to the people. The mayor had him clapped in jail, but the enthusiastic burghers saw that he was freed in short order to continue singing the hymns of Martin Luther.¹¹

Lutheran Hymns Are Confessions of the Faith

It is not a stretch to class Lutheran hymns along with the Lutheran confessions and explanations of Luther's *Small Catechism* as witnesses to the doctrine of the Lutheran church. Granted, the confessions and catechism rank before the hymns, but along with the liturgy, Lutheran hymns are witnesses of the next highest rank.

In *Lutheran Service Book: Companion to the Hymns*, Richard Resch contributes the essay, "Hymns as Sung Confession." He says:

Lutherans could rightly define the hymn as "a sung confession of the faith," for it describes what they have required of their hymns from those first days of the Reformation.¹²

The word "confession" (as creed) fits this concise definition of a hymn so well, and it suggests this significant result: that Lutherans believe what a hymn puts onto their lips and into their hearts.¹³

Lutheran singing preeminently confesses *the* faith (*fides quae*). The sung confession of the individual Christian, *my* faith by which I believe (*fides qua*), is secondary.¹⁴

Every hymn by Luther conveys the faith. One would expect this didactic approach in his catechism hymns, but the same catechetical style continues in his psalm hymns, canticle hymns, liturgical hymns, and even his children's hymns.¹⁵

The didactic hymn modeled by the Wittenberg hymnists dominated Lutheran hymn writing for more than a century and a half. This sung confession consistently proclaimed Christ, his work, and His saving benefits received by His people through faith, not the individual singer and his experience. The period of orthodox Lutheran hymnody gave the Church thousands of hymns that objectively teach the faith.¹⁶

Ulrich S. Leupold in "Introduction" to "The Hymns," in the American Edition of *Luther's Works* says, "Luther's hymns were meant not to create a mood, but to convey a message. They were a confession of faith, not of personal feelings."¹⁷

Carl F. Schalk says the church's song "is a song in which proclamation, teaching, and praise interweave in a tapestry of music unique to the Church."¹⁸

Herman Sasse explains the essence of a church confession as bearing witness to objective truths.

The essence of a church confession lies, first of all, in the fact that it bears witness to *objective* truths. These, like the incarnation of Christ, cannot be derived from subjective experiences and are independent of all subjective opinions. Second, it belongs to the nature of such a confession that it is the creed of the *church*, that it is confessed not only as an *I* but as a *we*.¹⁹

Robin A. Leaver speaks of the catechetical intentions of Lutheran hymns.

It is because the classic Lutheran hymns were Scripture-based that they functioned not only as worship songs, expressing the response of faith to be sung within a liturgical context, but also as theological songs, declaring the substance of the faith to be sung with catechetical intentions.²⁰

That we should look to our hymns to combat the error of the adversaries against vicarious satisfaction is nothing new. On the contrary, not to look to our hymns would be an abandonment of one of their uses throughout church history. "Early in its history the song of the Church, as it developed in both East and West, became a vehicle for combating error and heresy."²¹

Gnosticism in the East and Arianism in the West from the second to fourth centuries immediately were combatted in hymns. Basil, Ambrose, Luther, and others extol the use of hymns to teach pure doctrine and guard against error.

Throughout its history, the song of the Church has been a guardian of the proclamation of the Gospel. It is the Church's song that has often had to carry the story of salvation despite bad preaching or no preaching at all, despite bad liturgy or no liturgy at all.²²

What Do Lutheran Hymns Confess?

What do Lutheran hymns confess? Carl F. Schalk shows that they do what Christian hymns always have done in continuity with the hymns of the Old and New Testaments. They proclaim the mighty acts of God. They are vivid, historical, and dramatic. They are not metaphysical or rationalistic. They are about what God *has done*.²³ With the coming of Christ and his work, "The song of the Church is a fruit of saving faith created by the Spirit in response to what God *has done in Jesus Christ*."²⁴

That being so, the question, what *has* God done in Jesus Christ is of the essence of Lutheran hymns.

The very first hymn in the earliest Lutheran collection of 1524, Luther's 'Dear Christians, one and all, rejoice' (*LSB* 556,) underscores this point: . . . 'Proclaim the wonders God *has done*.'²⁵

Along with *Christus Victor* and ransom (which Lutheran hymns clearly and abundantly sing), do Lutheran hymns sing vicarious substitution? Do they teach and confess that God laid our sin upon Christ as our substitute so that when He died, that was a stroke of justice under the Law?

Do Lutherans sing that the sufferings and death of Christ were the just penalty of the Law for our sin? Do our hymns confess that Christ's suffering in our place exhausted on our behalf the penalty of death, reversed the verdict of the Law that had stood against us, freed us from condemnation, and effected our justification?

As a foreshadowing, consider this lyric: "But the deepest stroke that pierced Him was the stroke that justice gave," ("Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted," LSB 451:2, TLH 153:2, ELH 297:2, CW1993 127:2, LW 116:2, ALH 399:2). This lyric all by itself entirely refutes the errant doctrine of the adversaries such as Gustaf Aulén, Gerhard O. Forde, and Stephen D. Paulson. In their rejection of "the legal scheme" of the atonement, they deny that once Christ became sin for us, his death was justice under the Law, just as, had we no substitute, our deaths would be justice under the Law. But in this hymn, Thomas Kelly gives us words to confess and teach one another that not only did Jesus suffer a stroke of justice, but that it was the deepest stroke. It was deeper than the miseries of Jesus' arrest, desertions, denials, mocking, scourging, beating, sleep deprivation, false accusations, illegal trials, miscarried verdicts of the mob, Pilate, and Herod, carrying the cross beam, degradation rituals attendant to Roman crucifixion, nails, exsanguination, exposure, shock, and asphyxia.

Those all were bad, "But the deepest stroke that pierced Him was the stroke that justice gave." The adversaries deny the deepest stroke and thus deny Jesus' deepest love for us that moved him to suffer that deepest stroke in our place, thus sparing us from it. "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends." (John 15:13)

Method Used in this Study

Difficulties of this Study

Surveying the confession of vicarious satisfaction in the Lutheran confessions of the *Book of Concord* is relatively easy. Being familiar with the confessions, we already know off the tops of our heads where first to look to see how they confess the atonement. Added to that are aids in the tables of contents and indexes such as in the reader's edition published by Concordia Publishing House. The dogmatics texts such as Pieper²⁶ cite the confessions and point to where they confess vicarious satisfaction.

Surveying the teaching of vicarious satisfaction in explanations of the *Small Catechism* is even easier. The explanations are organized pedagogically and didactically (if not systematically), and we only must flip a few pages to find the material teaching the atonement.

By comparison, surveying how Lutherans sing the atonement in hymns is much more difficult. There are multiple layers of difficulty. Following are some of them.

The corpus of hymns well used by Lutherans both currently and in prior times is vast. The universe of data is orders of magnitude greater than the explanations of the Catechism.

In English, a large fraction of the hymns are translations. Comparing a single hymn in various English hymnals shows alternative ways translators conveyed the original text with meter, length of clauses, and rhyme. Sometimes the original German or Latin clearly sings vicarious satisfaction, but as rendered in English, while the doctrine is evident, the clarity suffers. Ulrich S.

Leupold describes the manifold aspects in which English translations of Luther's hymns suffer much in meter, phrasing, and content.²⁷

The work of Christ in atonement kills many birds with one stone and does so in a panoply of ways. Scripture speaks of atonement in words and themes of covenant, testament, sacrifice, Day of Atonement, Passover, Pascal Lamb, redemption, reconciliation, propitiation, justification, the blood of Christ, Lamb of God, payment, Surety, covering, mercy-seat, deliverance, victory over our enemies (the Devil, the world, our sinful selves, death), and ransom, to name some. In Scripture and in dogmatics, these words and themes have usually related and sometimes partially overlapping meanings. Yet each remains a distinct theme. When these are expressed in hymns, owing partly to the poetic and lyrical nature of the hymn texts together with their brevity, sometimes distinct ideas seem to be blended together or at least coordinated.

For example, ransom and redemption are distinct, but sometimes hymn writers use the word ransom where, from the surrounding context, they seem to have redemption more or equally in mind. For this reason, I have omitted reliance on texts speaking of ransom unless the context clearly joins ransom in blending or coordination with vicarious satisfaction.

The same principle has been followed for other such overlaps, blends, and coordinations. An example of a stanza included is "The Royal Banners Forward Go," *ELH* 273, *LSB* 455, *TLH* 168, *LW* 103 and 104, *SBH* 75, *CSB* 91.

The royal banners forward go
The cross shows forth redemption's flow,
Where He in flesh, our flesh
Our sentence bore, our ransom paid

"Ours sentence bore" plainly is legal, juridical, and forensic and speaks to vicarious satisfaction. The line immediately continues "our ransom paid." The two phrases are glued together. If not a blending of ransom and vicarious satisfaction, it is at least a coordination of them, a singing of distinct but intimately allied themes.

A similar example occurs in "O Jesus So Sweet, O Jesus So Mild," *LSB* 546, *CWI993* 366, *CW* 2021 540.

O Jesus so sweet, O Jesus so mild
With God we now are reconciled
You have for all the ransom paid
Your Father's righteous anger stayed

"Your Father's righteous anger" plainly is legal, juridical, and forensic. The staying of that anger speaks to propitiation. These are joined in the stanza with the immediately preceding line about ransom. The stanza coordinates ransom with vicarious satisfaction.

The English word "for" has multiple uses. In one use, it is the most succinct way in English to speak of vicarious substitution. "Jesus died for me" easily could be talking about vicarious

satisfaction, but the Fordean adversaries employ their high educations, facilities with language, and sophistry to formulate explanations of how “for” has a different meaning. Since this study has, among other things, a polemical purpose to refute the errors the adversaries, I have usually omitted hymn formulations using only “for” to express substitution because I can safely forego reliance on those theoretically ambiguous instances, having such an abundance of clear evidence without them. But believers of sincere and childlike faith no doubt are hearing and singing those lines in praise to their Vicar who substituted himself into the death they confess they by sin deserved.

Sometimes the lyrics of a hymn express vicarious satisfaction in explicit terms much like prose. Sometimes those expressions are brief, comprised of only a clause or two or four lines. Other times those expressions are extended for two, three, or four stanzas. Sometimes the fact that a stanza expresses vicarious satisfaction is clear only by considering it with the succeeding or preceding stanzas. In such instances, to demonstrate in a writing like this that a hymn is confessing vicarious satisfaction requires presentation of an extended portion of the text.

These properties of the hymns suggest an ordering of the evidence in the following categories:

- Explicit and Brief
- Explicit and Extended
- Implicit

Hymns Reviewed

To fit the work into the time available, I had to limit the hymns to review. A more proper body of hymns to review no doubt could be selected because in the time available, I chose only from among those on hand at home. The sources included are:

AH	<i>Ambassador Hymnal for Lutheran Worship</i> (Minneapolis: The Coordinating Committee of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, 1994).
CSB	<i>Common Service Book of the Lutheran Church</i> (Philadelphia: the Board of Publication of the United Lutheran Church in America, 1917).
CW1993	<i>Christian Worship</i> (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1993).
ELH	<i>Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary</i> (Mankato, Minnesota: Evangelical Lutheran Synod, 1996).
LSB	<i>Lutheran Service Book</i> (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2006)
LW	<i>Lutheran Worship</i> (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1982)
SBH	<i>Service Book and Hymnal</i> (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House and Philadelphia: Lutheran Church in America, 1958).
TLH	<i>The Lutheran Hymnal</i> (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1941)

Because I am a member of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod familiar with *LSB* and because I had at home a copy of the magnificent *Lutheran Service Book: Companion to the Hymns*, I read all the stanzas of every hymn in *LSB*. Not having time to do that in all the other listed hymnals, I

read a subset under the headings of Lent, Holy Week, Good Friday, and Easter. Given that expressions of vicarious satisfaction are spread throughout *LSB* and are not concentrated only under those headings, no doubt I have missed many relevant instances in the non-*LSB* hymnals, which I regret. A person of proper qualifications with adequate time and resources likely would be able to marshal much evidence omitted from this study. If such a person is prompted by this study to carry out the research properly, this study might be considered a success.

Criteria for Identification of Lyrics

Formulation of Vicarious Satisfaction

From a survey of explanations of the *Small Catechism*, we may draw a useable and succinct formulation of the doctrine of vicarious satisfaction, as follows.

Jesus made satisfaction to God for us under the Law in two ways.

- **Active Obedience.** On our behalf He lived a life of active obedience under the Law. He fulfilled all righteousness for us under the Law.
- **Passive Obedience.** On our behalf He rendered passive obedience to God. He did this by his innocent suffering of the Law's penalty of death.

"God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law." (Galatians 4:4)

God demonstrated his satisfaction with the redeeming work of Christ by resurrecting him from the dead (Romans 4:25). God announces his satisfaction with the redeeming work of Christ by his "word of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:19) which He proclaims by the apostles and pastors in the "ministry of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:18).

Consonant with this, Luther is fond of speaking of the *frohlicher wechsel*, "the joyous exchange," or "the wonderful exchange." Christ exchanges his righteous merit with us for our guilty sin. For a commentary on Psalm 22 in 1519, which he regarded as "a prophesy of the suffering and resurrection of Christ and a prophecy of the Gospel,"²⁸ Luther says:

[5] Atque hoc est mysterium illud opulentum gratiae divinae in peccatores, quod admirabili commertio peccata nostra iam non nostra, sed Christi sunt, et iustitia Christi non Christi, sed nostra est. Exinanivit enim se illa, ut nos ea indueret et impleret, et replevit se nostris, ut exinaniret nos eisdem, ita ut iam non modo obiective (ut dicunt) sit nostra Christi iustitia, sed et [10] formaliter, sicut non tantum obiective Christi sunt peccata nostra, sed et formaliter. Quo modo enim ille in nostris peccatis dolet et confunditur, hoc modo nos in illius iustitia laetamur et gloriamur, at ipse revera et formaliter in illis dolet, ut hic videmus.²⁹

which may be rendered,

[5] And this is that rich mystery of divine grace for sinners, that by a wonderful exchange our sins are no longer ours, but Christ's and the righteousness of Christ is not Christ's but ours, for He emptied himself of his righteousness that He might clothe us with it and fill us with it, and He filled himself with our sin, that he

might empty us to the same, so that Christ's righteousness is no longer just objectively (as they say) ours, but also [10] formally, just as our sins are not only objectively Christ's, but also formally. For in the same way that he suffers and is confounded in our sins, in this way we rejoice and glory in his righteousness, but he really and formally suffers in them, as we see here.

“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” (2 Corinthians 5:21)

Language of Vicarious Satisfaction

That formulation may serve as a foundation for recognizing language that identifies lyrics as confessions of vicarious satisfaction. Some of the elements we could expect to see are:

- Substitution
- Active obedience
- Passive obedience
- Satisfaction
- God's Law, justice, verdict, judgment, condemnation, curse, counting, reckoning, imputation

In the formulation, the element of substitution is seen in “for us” and on “on our behalf.” We can recognize language hymn writers use that express substitution. “For us” and “for sinners” frequently are used. But language not expressly used in the above formulation also clearly express the same substitution, such as “in my place” and “in the sinner's stead.” These and language of similar import, depending on context, can identify expressions of vicarious satisfaction.

The active obedience of Christ sometimes is expressed by forms of that word, “obedience,” “obedient,” or “obeying.” But hymn writers also refer to his active obedience by its fruits such as “his merit” or “his righteousness.” These and language of similar import, depending on context, can identify expressions of vicarious satisfaction.

The passive obedience of Christ often is expressed by words about his death, such as “death,” “dying,” “died,” and “his Passion.” “Christ has humbled himself and become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” (Philippians 2:8) While death and burial are at the climax of Christ's humiliation, our explanations of the *Small Catechism* teach us five steps in his state of humiliation. Hymn writers tend to associate all the steps with his passive obedience and frequently refer to his lowly birth, life of suffering, crucifixion, death, and burial. They tend to portray all of these as forming an organic whole in Christ's mighty work of atonement. That is sound theology. To dissect and dismember any of the steps of Christ's humiliation and exclude it from his passive obedience on our behalf would be rationalistic over-analysis and over-systematization. Language describing Christ's humiliation, depending on context, can identify expression of vicarious satisfaction.

Satisfaction of God for our sin sometimes is expressed directly with words like “satisfied.” But hymn writers are not impoverished for poetic expressions of satisfaction. Language showing the response of God to the sacrifice of Christ, depending on context, can identify expression of

vicarious satisfaction.

An interesting area is language that speaks all at once to the Law, substitution, and satisfaction. The scripturally related words of counting, reckoning, and imputation are legal words. “Sin is not imputed when there is no law.” (Romans 5:13) Language of counting, reckoning, and imputation is used in Bible passages that Lutherans employ as key in teaching justification. In the atonement, our sin was counted, reckoned, and imputed to Christ and the righteousness of Christ was substituted for our sin. Abraham “believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.” (Genesis 15:6, Romans 4:3, James 2:28) Indeed, the whole extended argument Paul makes in Romans 4 and 5 is centered on imputation, reckoning, and counting. In two chapters, relying on the text as rendered in English by the *New King James Version*, Paul explicitly uses terms of imputation six times and terms of counted or accounted six times. It is the backbone of his argument. Remove imputation of Christ’s righteousness to us by substitution and the whole epistle to the Romans collapses.

Lutherans teach that we are justified by grace through faith for Christ’s sake. That last phrase, “for Christ’s sake” is associated with counting, reckoning, and imputation. We are justified when Christ’s righteousness and merit are counted to us, reckoned to us, imputed to us. God does not just “up and forgive” as the adversary Forde teaches. He forgives for Christ’s sake, which means on account of his vicarious satisfaction for us under the Law.

Lutherans added Public Confession and Absolution to the Service of the Word and the Service of the Sacrament in the Divine Service. The liturgy of “I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and You forgave the iniquity of my sin” is from Psalm 32. Should we expect that Lutherans are ignorant of Psalm 32 when we pray this liturgy? Maybe some are, but we should not be. We should know Psalm 32.

1 BLESSED *is he whose transgression is forgiven,
Whose sin is covered.*

2 Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not ² impute iniquity,
And in whose spirit *there is no deceit.*

3 When I kept silent, my bones grew old
Through my groaning all the day long.

4 For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me;
My vitality was turned into the drought of summer. Selah

5 I acknowledged my sin to You,
And my iniquity I have not hidden.
I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,”
And You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah

Note 2 in the above quotation from the *New King James Version* provides an alternative translation for “impute” as “charge his account with.” The *English Standard Version* renders it “counts.” The *Holman Christian Standard Bible* and the *International Standard Version* use “charge” and “charges.” Luther renders it in German in the clause, “*dem der HERR die Missetat nicht zurechnet*,” “to whom the LORD does not reckon [alt. charge] transgression.”

Thus, not only do Lutherans sing of vicarious satisfaction in our hymns. We begin the Divine

Service with allusion to it from the song in Psalm 32.

Hymn writers refer to the legal, forensic, and juridical aspect of Christ's atonement in terms of "the law's demands," "the judgment that stood against me," "just condemnation," and "justice." Despite the objections of the adversaries against Law, justice, and judgment as too uncivilized and barbaric, hymn writers are not ashamed to speak of *avenging* Justice. As rendered in English in "Enslaved by Sin and Bound in Chains," *TLH* 141:4, *CW1993* 102:4, we sing not only of Justice and not only of avenging Justice, but by capitalizing Justice as a proper noun, the hymn translator intimates God Himself as avenging Justice.

Jesus the Sacrifice became
To rescue guilty souls from hell
The spotless, bleeding, dying Lamb
Beneath avenging Justice fell.

This soundly presents scriptural doctrine, as *Lutheran Service Book: Companion to the Hymns* explains in its commentary on "the deepest stroke . . . that Justice gave" in "Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted."

The "deepest stroke," then, was heard in Jesus' cry, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matthew 27:46) For this was the stroke of *divine* justice, executing judgment for the sins of all humanity. Jesus truly was '*smitten by God*'; yet 'with His wounds we are healed' (Isaiah 53:4-5).³⁰ [emphasis added]

American Lutheran Hymnal even renders it "Was the stroke God's justice gave."³¹ "Smitten by God" in Isaiah 53:3 is among the grounds for the lyric "the stroke that Justice gave." Thus, this same intimation where "Enslaved by Sin and Bound in Chains" capitalizes Justice also occurs in the rendering of the phrase in "Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted" in *TLH* and *ELH*, "But the deepest stroke that pierced Him was the stroke that Justice gave."

This is profoundly dissonant from the claim of adversaries like Paulson who deny that the Law is concordant with and expressive of God's inherent and eternal nature. Hymns like "Salvation unto Us Has Come," *LSB* 555, *AH* 410, *CW1993* 390, *CW2021* 558, *ELH* 227, explicitly confess that the Law must be fulfilled and was fulfilled for us by Christ.

Yet as the Law must be fulfilled
Or we must die despairing,
Christ came and hath God's anger stilled,
Our human nature sharing.
He hath for us the Law obeyed
And thus the Father's vengeance stayed
Which over us impended.

Given the organic and multi-organged fabric of Law-substitution-satisfaction, it will not be

surprising to see hymn writers speak of it in a variety of ways. As one more example, consider the language of “curse.” Sinners under the Law are cursed because they do not obey it.

For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.” (Galatians 3:10, Deuteronomy 27:26)

“What Wondrous Love Is This,” *LSB* 543:1, *AH* 72:1, *CW1993* 120:1, *CW2021* 526:1, *ELH* 306:1, a hymn that appears in no less than 241 English hymnals,³² sings vicarious satisfaction in a most compact line using the language of curse, “To bear the dreadful curse for my soul.” This confesses that my soul was under the curse of the Law for disobeying it. It confesses that Jesus bore my curse “for my soul.” There is no escaping substitution, vicarious satisfaction, and Law in this lyric.

Foci of Criteria Recapped

We can recap the foregoing as follows:

- Satisfaction language
- Substitution language, including language of “wonderful exchange”
- Active obedience language
- Passive obedience language
- Legal language

The mere presence of such language, which alerts us to take a closer look at the passage, is not adequate alone to conclude that a hymn writer is speaking of vicarious satisfaction. The context and usage of the language always remain indispensable to the criteria for identifying vicarious satisfaction in the hymns.

Criteria Illustrated by Examples

Let us apprehend the criteria by way of examples and illustrations.

A common phrase in Lutheran hymns is “Jesus’ blood and merit.”

The usage of the word “merit” in this common phrase often references the full righteousness of Christ in his active obedience, and hence speaks to vicarious satisfaction. In Luther’s “wonderful exchange,” Christ exchanges our sin and his righteous merit. That is vicarious satisfaction.

The usage of the word “blood” typically references Christ’s death on the cross. “The wages of sin is death.” (Romans 6:23) By humbling himself to death on the cross where his blood was shed for the remission of sin, Jesus suffered the penalty of the Law for us. This passive obedience that atones for us is vicarious satisfaction.

The hymn “Through Jesus’ Blood and Merit,” *LSB* 746, *CW1993* 445, *ELH* 414, *LW* 369, *TLH* 372 confesses:

Through Jesus’ blood and merit

I am at peace with God

Paul says that in our sinfulness, we are “enmity” against God (Romans 8:7). Therefore, on our

own we have no peace with him. This hymn confesses what reversed that calamity. Through Jesus' blood and merit, the enmity is gone and peace reigns. (Romans 5:1, 14:17, 15:13)

Thomas Kingo's cherished Baptism hymn, "He That Believes and is Baptized," *SBH* 259, *AH* 270, *ELH* 241, *CW1993* 299, *CW2021* 692, *LW* 225, *TLH* 301, *LSB* 601 ties salvation, Baptism, and eternal life to God looking on us "through Jesus' Blood and merit."

"Like the Golden Sun Ascending," *TLH* 207, *CW1993* 147, *CW2021* 470, *ELH* 354 may be used as an example of context clarifying that usage of the English word "for" speaks of vicarious substitution.

Thou hast died for my transgression

All my sins on Thee were laid

Thou hast won for me salvation

On the cross my debt was paid

The adversaries might try to manipulate the first line to make "for" means something besides Christ being substituted in our place. But the next line elucidates what "for" means. "All my sins on Thee were laid." They are my sins, but they are laid on him. That is substitution. Then the next line says that by being substituted into my sins and dying for my transgression, "Thou has won for me salvation." How has He done that. To childlike believers, that answer is obvious, but the stanza goes on to make it explicit, saying, "On the cross my debt was paid." Sin makes us debtors to God. When Jesus pays our debt for us, that is substitution and satisfaction. Put all that together and you have vicarious satisfaction.

Hymns like "To Jordan's River Came Our Lord," *LSB* 405, *CW1993* 89, *CW2021* 377 explicitly say that Jesus acted as "our substitute" even in actions like being baptized by John. John's was a baptism of repentance. Jesus had no sin of his own for which to repent. John, therefore, tried to prevent Jesus' from being baptized. But Jesus told him to allow it "to fulfill all righteousness." (Matthew 3:15). Jesus already was fully righteous, so for whom was He fulfilling all righteousness? He did this for us, to give us his righteousness.

Luther captured the primary meaning of his Baptism: "[Christ] accepted it from John for the reason that he was entering into our stead, indeed, our person, that is, becoming a sinner for us, taking upon himself the sins which he had not committed, and wiping them out and drowning them in his holy baptism (*AE* 51:315)³³

"Entering into our stead" is plain language of substitution. Thus, "To Jordan's River Came Our Lord" continues, explicitly using the language "Christ, our substitute."

The Savior came to be baptized

The Son of God in flesh disguised

To stand beneath the Father's will

And all His righteousness fulfill

Now rise, faint hearts, be resolute
This man is Christ, our substitute
He was baptized in Jordan's stream
Proclaimed Redeemer, Lord supreme

Whole stanzas of favorite hymns make no sense without substitution. Consider this stanza from "Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted," *LSB* 451, *TLH* 153, *ELH* 297, *CW1993* 127, *LW* 116, *AH* 75, *ALH* 399.³⁴

Ye who think of sin but lightly
Nor suppose the evil great
Here may view its nature rightly
Here its guilt may estimate
Mark the Sacrifice appointed
See Who bears the awful load
'Tis the Word, the Lord's Anointed
Son of Man, and Son of God

How may we "here," that is, at the cross, view the nature of sin rightly? How may we estimate its guilt? We may do so by marking the Sacrifice appointed, by seeing Who bears the awful load. If He is not bearing our sin, if He is not our substitute, if He is not making vicarious satisfaction, then our sin, its nature, and its guilt are not seen at the cross. It is just because of vicarious satisfaction that the cross exposes the enormity of sin by showing Who had to be our Substitute.

"When You Woke That Thursday Morning," *LSB* 445, *CW1996* 717, *CW2021* 416 confesses the same thing in a similar but varied formulation.

When but One could pay sin's wages
You assumed their dreadful sum

From this we see that language of debt and payment can speak to vicarious satisfaction. Similarly, the beloved Baptism hymn, "God's Own Child, I Gladly Say It," *LSB* 594, *ELH* 246, *CW2021* 679 confesses:

God's own child, I gladly say it: I am baptized into Christ
He, because I could not pay it, gave my full redemption price
Do I need earth's treasures many? I have one worth more than any
That brought me salvation free, Lasting to eternity

This hymn uses the language of payment and expresses the payment of "redemption price." The word redemption is drawn from the law of debt and mortgages. When a debtor defaults in making payments, the creditor may judicially foreclose the mortgage and take the land. Moses'

law gave debtors a right of redemption if they later could muster payment of the debt. That law also allowed vicars (substitutes) closely related to a debtor to pay the redemption price on their behalf. If no qualified person could redeem, then God himself redeemed all bonded land in the Jubilee Year. (Leviticus 25:23-38) In the hymn, “He, because I could not pay it, gave my full redemption price” Christ as our qualified Vicar makes vicarious satisfaction. He is qualified because, in the incarnation, He is fully human, our Brother.

The expressions in the third line about one treasure worth more than any refers to the treasury of Christ’s righteous merits. The hymn gives us words to confess and teach one another that in Baptism, Christ gives us his treasure of righteousness.. The last line plainly says his giving that treasure brought me eternal salvation. That is vicarious satisfaction.

Lutheran hymns expose the errors of the Fordean adversaries as being completely untenable. In the broadly used hymn, “The Death of Jesus Christ, Our Lord,” *LSB* 634:2, *TLH* 163:2, *ELH* 329:2, *CW1993* 135:2, *CW2021* 677:2, *LW* 107:2, *THOS* 234:2³⁵, consider how the rejection of “the legal scheme” by Paulson and company fares against what the church confesses:

He blotted out with His own blood
The judgment that against us stood
For us He full atonement made,
And all our debt He fully paid.

Face it. The word “judgment” is forensic, juridical, and legal. These lyrics are strongly referent to Colossians 2:14 (ESV): “Having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.”³⁶ *The Lutheran Study Bible* note on this verse says,

2:14 *record . . . legal demands*. The debtor kept a handwritten bill of indebtedness; in this case, it is the record of all our violations of God’s Law. This record is wiped away by Jesus’ death on the cross.³⁷

The work of Christ on the cross was not merely to make a grand gesture of a free-floating general amnesty that results in atonement only if and when someone believes a bloodless word of absolution. No. Christ atoned there and then on the cross. Christ blotted out the judgment with his own blood. He cancelled the record of debt. He nailed that record to the cross, showing that it was exhausted and fulfilled in his death. My faith is not what blots out the judgment. Christ’s blood blots it out. Faith does not cause justification but merely receives it. As we sing in “Let Me Be Thine Forever,” *LSB* 689, *CW1996* 596, *CW 2021* 715, *ELH* 427, *LW* 257, *SBH* 506, *TLH* 334, *CSB* 271:

For Thou has dearly bought me
With blood and bitter pain
Grant that in Jesus’ merit
I always may confide

When we confess that we are saved by faith, that does not mean we confide in our faith. We confide in Christ, his blood, his bitter pain, and his merit.

Returning to “The Death of Jesus Christ, Our Lord,” in addition to judgment being forensic, debt is legal and foreclosure is juridical and forensic. Those last two lines literally say that Christ’s atonement was a payment of our debt.

The stanza accords with Paul in Galatians 4:4: “When the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.” Even adoption is not by nature but by law.³⁸ Rid that Scripture of “the legal scheme” and there would be no redemption, no adoption, no justification – no Christianity.

In the realm of bluntness, the church sings in “I am Content! My Jesus Ever Lives,” *LSB* 468:1, *TLH* 196:1, *CW1993* 158:1, *CW2021* 464:1,

He has fulfilled the Law of God for me

God’s wrath He has appeased

How can anyone evade “the legal scheme” of “He has fulfilled the Law of God for me?” How can anyone evade the substitution of Christ fulfilling the Law for me? How can anyone evade the satisfaction of God’s wrath being appeased? How can anyone sustain the claim that God, before and without the sacrifice of Christ, just “up and forgave” sin when we sing that what appeased God’s wrath was Christ’s living and dying for us?

Similarly, how can one evade substitution under the Law and vicarious substitution in “The Night Will Soon Be Ending,” *LSB* 337:2?

Thus God, the judge offended

Bears all our sins deserve

If “the judge offended” is not legal, juridical, and forensic, what would be? If God “bears all our sins deserve” is not substitutionary, what would be?

In the same way, and without any necessity of elucidating it by analysis or commentary, “Lift Up Your Heads You Everlasting Doors,” *LSB* 339:3 plainly sings the righteousness of Christ meeting the Law’s demands in claiming the cross as his throne.

Who may ascend Mount Zion’s holy hill

To do God’s will

The One whose unstained hands

Can meet the Law’s demands

Whose purity within

Reveals One free from sin

Come praise this King who claims the cross as throne

Praise Him alone

A hymn that tightly wraps together many elements of vicarious satisfaction in four lines is “Before the Throne of God Above,” *LSB* 574, *CW2021* 561.

Because the sinless Savior died

My sinful soul is counted free

For God, the Just, is satisfied

To look on Him and pardon me

The active obedience of Christ: “the sinless Savior.” The passive obedience of Christ: “Savior died.” Imputation: “my sinful soul is counted free.” The Law and justice: “For God, the Just.” Satisfaction: “is satisfied.” Substitution: “to look on Him and pardon me.”

For a final example of an explicit and brief confession of vicarious satisfaction, consider “Of My Life the Life,” *ELH* 336.³⁹

For my proud and haughty spirit

Thy humiliation paid

For my death Thy death and merit

Have a full atonement made

My proud and haughty spirit references sin. “Thy humiliation” references Christ humbling himself to the death of the cross. “For my death Thy death and merit” is a plain and compact confession of the active obedience of Christ in “merit,” of the passive obedience of Christ in “death,” and substitution in “For my death Thy death.” All these come to satisfaction in “Have full atonement made.”

As an example of the importance of context, consider “Make Songs of Joy,” *LSB* 484:2, *LW* 132:2.

Our life was purchased by His loss

He died our death upon the cross

The language of purchase by itself is ambiguous. It could refer to ransom, which in and of itself would not be vicarious satisfaction. It could refer to redemption and thus could involve vicarious satisfaction, though not necessarily. But the lyric, “He died our death” plainly states substitution and passive obedience for us under the Law. Taken together, then, this hymn sings vicarious satisfaction.

Let us review just two instances of explicit and *extended* expressions of vicarious satisfaction. The first is one of Paul Gerhardt’s many great hymns, “A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth,” *LSB* 438, *TLH* 142, *ELH* 331, *CW1996* 100, *CW2021* 422. “Except for Gerhardt’s other Passion hymn, ‘O sacred Head, now wounded’ (*LSB* 449-50), it is probably the most significant Good Friday text in Lutheran practice.”⁴⁰ *LSB* uses stanzas 1-3 and 10 of the original.⁴¹ Here we review stanzas 1, 2 and 4 from *LSB*.

1. A Lamb goes uncomplaining forth,
The guilt of sinners bearing
And, laden with the sins of earth,
None else the burden sharing;
Goes patient on, grows weak and faint,
To slaughter led without complaint,
That spotless life to offer,
He bears the stripes, the wounds, the lies,
The mockery, and yet replies,
“All this I gladly suffer.”

2. This Lamb is Christ, the soul’s great friend,
The Lamb of God, our Savior,
Whom God the Father chose to send
To gain for us His favor.
“Go forth, My Son,” the Father said,
“And free My children from their dread
Of guilt and condemnation.
The wrath and stripes are hard to bear,
But by Your passion they will share
The fruit of Your salvation.”

4. Lord, when Your glory I shall see
And taste Your kingdom’s pleasure,
Your blood my royal robe shall be,
My joy beyond all measure!
When I appear before Your throne,
Your righteousness shall be my crown;
With these I need not hide me.
And there, in garments richly wrought,
As Your own bride shall we be brought
To stand in joy beside You.

The single word “Lamb” in the opening phrase would refer to what, if not “the Lamb of God

who takes away the sin of the world?” (John 1:29) Verse two rounds out the reference to “the Lamb of God, our Savior.” How, in the Bible, does a lamb take away sin and save? He does it in the same way that the next two lines of the stanza say, “The guilt of sinners bearing, and, laden with the sins of earth.” The Lamb of God bears our sin and substitutes for us in what we are about to sing next. He goes on to slaughter without complaint. Plainly, this references the death of Christ.

The sixth line, “That spotless life to offer” plainly references the active obedience of Christ. No one else has succeeded in living a life without spot. Though with extreme brevity, the word “offer,” in the contexts of both the hymn and Scripture, intimates both a satisfying sacrifice and a substitution of the Lamb for sinners. Without both satisfaction and substitution, the Lamb could not obtain the Father’s favor as confessed in the fourth line of stanza 2.

In the second half of the second stanza, the passion, which is to say, the death of the Lamb, frees sinners of guilt, condemnation, wrath, and stripes, and gives them salvation. This is an extended depiction of satisfaction and its effects.

For the sake of time and to avoid being pedestrian, let us skip forward to the last stanza. “Your righteousness shall be my crown,” references the active obedience of Christ for us in his fulfillment of all righteousness. That we are allowed to wear Christ’s righteousness as our crown is a gleaming depiction of wonderful exchange and substitution. In Christ’s state of exaltation, his mighty work of vicarious satisfaction is on parade.

“Your blood my royal robe shall be” says that the blood and death of Christ cover my sins and make me royal. When they had fallen into sin, Adam and Eve tried to hide themselves from the presence of the Lord (Genesis 3:8), but now with the crown of Christ’s righteousness and the royal robes of Christ’s blood, we sing, “With these I need not hide me.” We wear the active and passive obedience of Christ as our own. This is a pageantry of vicarious satisfaction.

A hymn that wraps together many of the elements of the formulation above of the doctrine of vicarious satisfaction is “O Perfect Life of Love,” *LSB* 452, *TLH* 170, *CW1993* 138, *CW2021* 431, *CSB* 103, *SBH* 89.

O perfect life of love
All, all, is finished now
all that he left his throne above
to do for us below
No work is left undone
of all the Father willed
his toil, his sorrows, one by one
the Scriptures have fulfilled
And on his thorn-crowned head
and on his sinless soul

our sins in all their guilt were laid
that He might make us whole
In perfect love he dies
for me he dies, for me
O all-atoning Sacrifice
you died to make me free
In ev'ry time of need
before the judgment throne
your works, O Lamb of God, I'll plead
your merits, not my own

Hymns Singing Vicarious Satisfaction

Following is a presentation of some of the evidence discovered by the described review of the defined body of hymns.

Selected for presentation are:

- Explicit and brief excerpts from 58 hymns
- Explicit and extended excerpts from 35 hymns
- Implicit excerpts from 5 hymns

Explicit and Brief

This category includes expressions of vicarious satisfaction that are explicit and relatively brief. In the quotations below, often only relevant portions of stanzas are rendered to retain focus and reduce the length of this writing.

Through Jesus' Blood and Merit, LSB 746, CW 1993 445, ELH 414, LW 369, TLH 372

Through Jesus' blood and merit
I am at peace with God

Like the Golden Sun Ascending, TLH 207 CW1993 147, CW2021 470, ELH 354

Thou hast died for my transgression
All my sins on Thee were laid
Thou hast won for me salvation
On the cross my debt was paid

Sweet the Moments, Rich in Blessing, TLH 155, ELH 300

Here we rest in wonder viewing
All our sins on Jesus laid

Here we see redemption flowing
From the sacrifice He made
Here we find the dawn of heaven
While upon the cross we gaze
See our trespasses forgiven
And our songs of triumph raise

He Was Wounded for Our Transgressions, AH 77

He was wounded for our transgressions
He bore our sin in His body on the tree
He was numbered among transgressors
We did esteem Him forsaken by His God
As our sacrifice He died
That the law be satisfied
And all our sin, and all our sin
And all our sin was laid on Him

Here, O My Lord, I See Thee Face to Face, LSB 631

Mine is the sin, but Thine the righteousness
Mine is the guilt, but Thine the cleansing blood
Here is my robe, my refuge, and my peace
Thy blood, Thy righteousness, O Lord my God

*The Death of Jesus Christ, Our Lord, LSB 634, TLH 163, ELH 329, CW1993 135, CW2021 677,
LW 107, THOS 234⁴²*

He blotted out with His own blood
The judgment that against us stood
For us He full atonement made,
And all our debt He fully paid.

Thanks to Thee, O Christ, Victorious, LSB 548

Thou hast died for my transgression
All my sins on Thee were laid
Thou hast won for me salvation
On the cross my debt was paid

I am Content! My Jesus Ever Lives, LSB 468, TLH 196, CW1993 158, CW2021 464

He has fulfilled the Law of God for me

God's wrath He has appeased

Make Songs of Joy, LSB 484

Our life was purchased by His loss

He died our death upon the cross

Christ the Lord Is Risen Today, LSB 463, SBH 99, AH 104, TLH 190

For the sheep the Lamb has bled

Sinless in the sinner's stead

The Night Will Soon Be Ending, LSB 337

Thus God, the judge offended

Bears all our sins deserve

The guilty need not cower

For God has reconciled

Lift Up Your Heads You Everlasting Doors, LSB 339

Who may ascend Mount Zion's holy hill

To do God's will

The One whose unstained hands

Can meet the Law's demands

Whose purity within

Reveals One free from sin

Come praise this King who claims the cross as throne

Praise Him alone

When All the World Was Cursed, LSB 346

Behold the Lamb of God

That bears the world's transgression

Whose sacrifice removes

The devil's dread oppression

Behold the Lamb of God

Who takes away our sin

Who for our peace and joy

Will full atonement win

God Loves Me Dearly, LSB 392

Jesus, my Savior

Himself did offer

Jesus, my Savior

Paid all I owe

Lamb of God, Pure and Holy, LSB 434

Lamb of God, pure and holy

Who on the cross didst suffer

Ever patient and lowly

Thyself to scorn didst offer

All sins Thou borest for us

Else had despair reigned o'er us

When You Woke That Thursday Morning, LSB 445, CW1996 717, CW2021 416

When You woke that Thursday morning

Savior, teacher, faithful friend

Thoughts of self and safety scorning

Knowing how the day would end

Lamb of God, foretold for ages

Now at last the hour had come

When but One could pay sin's wages

You assumed their dreadful sum

Jesus, In Your Dying Woes, LSB 447

Jesus, all our ransom paid

All Your Father's will obeyed

By Your sufferings perfect made

Hear us, holy Jesus

O Day Full of Grace, LSB 503

For Christ bore our sins, and not His own

When He on the cross was hanging

O, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing, LSB 528

See all your sins on Jesus laid
The Lamb of God was slain
His soul was once an offering made
For ev'ry soul of man

When I Behold Jesus Christ, LSB 542

You had no sin, holy Lord
But You were tortured, tried
On Golgotha there for all
My sins You bled and died

O Christ, Our Hope, Our Hearts' Desire, LSB 553

How vast Your mercy to accept
The burden of our sin
And bow Your head in cruel death
To make us clean within

God's Own Child, I Gladly Say it, LSB 594, ELH 246, CW2021 679

God's own child, I gladly say it: I am baptized into Christ!
He, because I could not pay it, gave my full redemption price.
Do I need earth's treasures many? I have one worth more than any
That brought me salvation free, Lasting to eternity!

Jesus Christ, Our Blessed Savior, LSB 627, ELH 316

Jesus Christ, our blessed Savior
Turned away God's wrath forever
By His bitter grief and woe
He saved us from the evil foe

The We Adore, O Hidden Savior, LSB 640

Thy blood, O Lord, one drop has pow'r to win
Forgiveness for our world and all its sin

Saints, See the Cloud of Witnesses, LSB 667

Come, let us fix our sight on Christ who suffered
He faced the cross, His sinless life He offered

He scorned the shame, He died, our death enduring
Our hope securing

*Let Me Be Thine Forever, LSB 689, CW1996 596, CW 2021 715, ELH 427, LW 257, SBH 506,
TLH 334, CSB 271*

For Thou has dearly bought me
With blood and bitter pain
Grant that in Jesus' merit
I always may confide

O Holy Spirit, Grant Us Grace, LSB 693

The hour of death cannot bring loss
When we are sheltered by the cross
That cancelled our transgression

I Am Trusting Thee, Lord Jesus, LSB 729

I am trusting Thee for cleansing
In the crimson flood
Trusting Thee to make me holy
By Thy blood

When Peace, like a River, LSB 763

He lives – oh, the bliss of this glorious thought
My sin, not in part, but the whole
Is nailed to His cross and I bear it no more
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul

Alabaré, LSB 799

Worthy is Christ the Lamb who was slain
Whose blood has set us free from every sin

How Great Thou Art, LSB 801

But when I think that God, His Son not sparing
Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in
That on the cross my burden gladly bearing
He bled and died to take away my sin

Spread the Reign of God the Lord, LSB 830

Tell of our Redeemer's grace
Who to save our human race
And to pay rebellion's price
Gave Himself as sacrifice

Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness, LSB 849

Let us praise the Word Incarnate
Christ, who suffered in our place
Jesus died and rose victorious
That we may know God by grace

Gracious Savior, Grant Your Blessing, LSB 860

Make their love a living picture
Showing how You loved Your bride
When You gave Yourself to cleanse her
When for her You bled and died
Jesus, You have made her holy
Pure and fair her radiant train
To Yourself, Your Church presenting
Without wrinkle, spot, or stain

Wide Open Are Thy Hands, SBH 66, CSB 65, ELH 265

Wide open are thy hands
Paying with more than gold
The awful debt of guilty men
Forever and of old
Jesus, clad in purple raiment
For man's evils making payment

At the cross, her station keeping, SBH 84

For his people's sins chastised
She beheld her son despised

O darkest woe, SBH 87, TLH 167, ELH 332

O sorrow dread

Our God is dead
He paid our great redemption
Jesus' death upon the cross
Gained for us salvation
O sinful man
It was the ban
Of death on thee that brought him
Down to suffer for thy sins
And such woe that wrought him
Behold thy Lord
The Lamb of God
Blood-sprinkled lies before thee
Pour out his life that he
May to life restore thee

Christ Jesus lay in death's strong bands, SBH 98, AH 114

Christ Jesus lay in death's strong bands
For our offenses given
But now at God's right hand he stands
And brings us life from heaven

What Wondrous Love Is This, LSB 543, AH 72, CW1993 120, CW2021 526, ELH 306

What wondrous love is this
That caused the Lord of bliss
To bear the dreadful curse for my soul
When I was sinking down
Beneath God's righteous frown
Christ laid aside His crown for my soul

The Hour in Dark Gethsemane, AH 76

When I among the solemn trees
In spirit gazed around
I saw the burden of my sin
On Him with judgment bound

Jesus, Name All Names Above, AH 8

Jesus, clad in purple raiment
For man's evils making payment

When Our Heads Are Bowed with Woe, CSB 76, ELH 274

Thou the shame, the grief, hast known
Though the sins were not Thine own
Thou hast deigned their load to bear
Jesus, Son of Mary, hear

Enslaved by Sin and Bound in Chains, TLH 141, CW1993 102

Jesus the Sacrifice became
To rescue guilty souls from hell
The spotless, bleeding, dying Lamb
Beneath avenging Justice fell.

Jesus Christ, Our Lord Most Holy, TLH 169, ELH 285

Jesus Christ, our Lord most holy
Lamb of God so pure and lowly
Blameless, blameless, on the cross art offered
Sinless, sinless, for our sins has suffered

Lord Jesus, We Give Thanks To Thee, TLH 173

Lord Jesus, we give thanks to Thee
That Thou hast died to set us free
Made righteous thro' Thy precious blood
We now are reconciled to God

Draw Nigh and Take the Body of the Lord, ELH 314

Victims were offered by the law of old
Which in a type this heav'nly myst'ry hold

Of My Life the Life, ELH 336⁴³

For my proud and haughty spirit
Thy humiliation paid
For my death Thy death and merit
Have a full atonement made

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus, LSB 338

By Thine all-sufficient merit
Raise us to Thy glorious throne

O Sing of Christ, LSB 362

What Adam lost, none could reclaim
And Paradise was barred
Until the second Adam came
To mend what sin had marred
For when the time was full and right
God sent His only son
He came to us as life and light
And our redemption won

Jesus, Once with Sinners Numbered, LSB 404

Jesus, once with sinners numbered
Full obedience was Your path
You, by death, have consecrated
Water in this saving bath

To Jordan's River Came Our Lord, LSB 405, CW1993 89, CW2021 377

The Savior came to be baptized
The Son of God in flesh disguised
To stand beneath the Father's will
And all His righteousness fulfill
Now rise, faint hearts, be resolute
This man is Christ, our substitute
He was baptized in Jordan's stream
Proclaimed Redeemer, Lord supreme

We Sing the Praise of Him Who Died, LSB 429, CSB 66, TLH 178

Inscribed upon the cross we see
In shining letters "God is love"
He bears our sins upon the tree
He brings us mercy from above

To Christ, who won for sinners grace
By bitter grief and anguish sore
Be praise from all the ransomed race
Forever and forevermore

Glory Be to Jesus, LSB 433, SBH 76, TLH 158, ELH 283

Blest through endless ages
Be the precious stream
Which from endless torment
Did the world redeem
Abel's blood for vengeance
Pleaded to the skies
But the blood of Jesus
For our pardon cries.

The Royal Banners Forward Go, ELH 273, LSB 455, TLH 168, LW 103 and 104, SBH 75, CSB 91

The royal banners forward go
The cross shows forth redemption's flow
Where He in flesh, our flesh
Our sentence bore, our ransom paid
Where deep for us the spear was dyed
Life's torrent rushing from His side
To wash us in that precious flood
Where flowed the water and the blood

O Jesus So Sweet, O Jesus So Mild, LSB 546, CW1993 366, CW 2021 540

O Jesus so sweet, O Jesus so mild
With God we now are reconciled
You have for all the ransom paid
Your Father's righteous anger stayed

Behold a Host, Arrayed in White, LSB 676

These are the saints of glorious fame
Whom from the great affliction came

And in the flood
Of Jesus blood
Are cleansed from guilt and shame

The Kingdom Satan Founded, ELH 259

To God I raise my crying
Before the mercy-seat
And on His Word relying
I grace of Him entreat
That He for Jesus' sake
Would cleanse my soul and spirit
Through Jesus' blood and merit
And Satan's power break

We Bless Thee, Jesus Christ Our Lord, ELH 275

We bless Thee, Jesus Christ our Lord
Forever be Thy name adored
For Thou, the sinless One hast died
That sinners might be justified
O very Man, and very God
Who hast redeemed us with Thy blood
From death eternal set us free
And make us one with God in Thee

Explicit and Extended

This category includes expressions of vicarious satisfaction that are explicit and more extended. In the quotations below, sometimes only relevant portions of stanzas are rendered to retain focus and reduce the length of this writing.

Upon the Cross Extended, LSB 453, TLH 171, ELH 304

Who is it, Lord, that bruised you
Who has so sore abused you
and caused you all your woe
We all must make confession
of sin and dire transgression

while you no ways of evil know
I caused your grief and sighing
by evils multiplying
as countless as the sands
I caused the woes unnumbered
with which your soul is cumbered
your sorrows raised by wicked hands
[TLH:5, ELH:5] 'Tis I who should be smitten
My doom should here be written
Bound hand foot in hell
The fetters and the scourging
The floods around Thee surging
'Tis I who have deserved them
[TLH:6, ELH:6] The load Thou takest on Thee
That pressed so sorely on me
It crushed me to the ground
The cross for me enduring
The crown for me securing
My healing in Thy wounds is found
[ELH:7] A crown of thorns Thou wearest
My shame and score Thou bearest
That I might ransomed be
My Bondsman, ever willing
My place with patience filling
From sin and guilt has made me free
Your soul in griefs unbounded,
your head with thorns surrounded
you died to ransom me
The cross for me enduring
the crown for me securing
you healed my wounds and set me free

[TLH:10, ELH:10] How God at our transgression

To anger gives expression

How loud His thunders role

How fearfully He smiteth

How sorely He requiteth

All this Thy sufferings teach my soul

A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth, LSB 438, TLH 142, ELH 331, CW1996 100, CW2021 422

A Lamb goes uncomplaining forth

The guilt of sinners bearing

And, laden with the sins of earth

None else the burden sharing

Goes patient on, grows weak and faint

To slaughter led without complaint

That spotless life to offer

He bears the stripes, the wounds, the lies

The mockery, and yet replies

“All this I gladly suffer”

This Lamb is Christ, the soul’s great friend

The Lamb of God, our Savior

Whom God the Father chose to send

To gain for us His favor

“Go forth, My Son,” the Father said

“And free My children from their dread

Of guilt and condemnation

The wrath and stripes are hard to bear

But by Your passion they will share

The fruit of Your salvation”

“Yes, Father, yes, most willingly

I’ll bear what You command Me

My will conforms to Your decree

I’ll do what You have asked Me”

O wondrous Love, what have You done
The Father offers up His Son
Desiring our salvation
O Love, how strong You are to save
You lay the One into the grave
Who built the earth's foundation
Lord, when Your glory I shall see
And taste Your kingdom's pleasure
Your blood my royal robe shall be
My joy beyond all measure
When I appear before Your throne
Your righteousness shall be my crown
With these I need not hide me
And there, in garments richly wrought
As Your own bride shall we be brought
To stand in joy beside You

O Dearest Jesus, What Law Hast Thou Broken, LSB 439, TLH 143, ELH 292

Whence come these sorrows, whence this mortal anguish
It is my sins for which Thou, Lord, must languish
Yea, all the wrath, the woe, Thou dost inherit
This I do merit.
What punishment so strange is suffered yonder
The Shepherd dies for sheep that loved to wander
The Master pays the debt His servants owe Him
Who would not know Him
The sinless Son of God must die in sadness
The sinful child of man may live in gladness
Man forfeited his life and is acquitted
God is committed

O Sacred Head, Now Wounded, LSB 449, CSB 99, TLH 172, ELH 334

[TLH v 4] My burden in Thy Passion

Lord, Thou has borne for me
For it was my transgression
Which bro't this woe on Thee
I cast me down before Thee
Wrath were my rightful lot
Have Mercy, I implore Thee
Redeemer, spurn me not
What thou, my Lord, hast suffered
was all for sinners' gain
Mine, mine was the transgression
but thine the deadly pain
Lo, here I fall, my Savior
'Tis I deserve Thy place
Look on me with thy favor
and grant to me thy grace

Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted, LSB 451, TLH 153, ELH 297, CW1993 127, LW 116, AH 75, ALH 399

Tell me, ye who hear Him groaning
Was there ever grief like His
Friends through fear His cause disowning
Foes insulting His distress
Many hands were raised to wound Him
None would interpose to save
But the deepest stroke that pierced Him
Was the stroke that Justice gave
Ye who think of sin but lightly
Nor suppose the evil great
Here may view its nature rightly
Here its guilt may estimate
Mark the Sacrifice appointed
See Who bears the awful load

'Tis the Word, the Lord's Anointed
Son of Man, and Son of God
Here we have a firm foundation
Here the refuge of the lost
Christ the Rock of our salvation
His the Name of which we boast
Lamb of God for sinners wounded
Sacrifice to cancel guilt
None shall ever be confounded
Who on Him their hope have built

O Perfect Life of Love, LSB 452, TLH 170, CW1993 138, CW2021 431, CSB 103, SBH 89

O perfect life of love
All, all, is finished now
all that he left his throne above
to do for us below
No work is left undone
of all the Father willed
his toil, his sorrows, one by one
the Scriptures have fulfilled
And on his thorn-crowned head
and on his sinless soul
our sins in all their guilt were laid
that He might make us whole
In perfect love he dies
for me he dies, for me
O all-atoning Sacrifice
you died to make me free
In ev'ry time of need
before the judgment throne
your works, O Lamb of God, I'll plead
your merits, not my own

Christ, the Life of All the Living, LSB 420, TLH 151, ELH 333

Thou, Ah Thou has taken on Thee
Bonds and stripes, a cruel rod
Pain and scorn were heaped upon Thee
O Thou sinless Son of God
Thus didst Thou my soul deliver
From the bonds of sin forever
Thou hast born the smiting only
That my wounds might all be whole
Thou has suffered, sad and lonely
Rest to give my weary soul
Yea, the curse of God enduring
Blessing unto me securing
Thou hast suffered great affliction
And has borne it patiently
Even death by crucifixion
Fully to atone for me
Thou didst choose to be tormented
That my doom should be prevented

Hail, Thou Once Despised Jesus, LSB 531, CSB 60, ELH 270

Hail, O once-despised Jesus
Hail, O Galilean King
You have suffered to release us
hope to give and peace to bring
Hail, O universal Savior
bearer of our sin and shame
by your merits we find favor
life is given through your name
Paschal Lamb, by God appointed
all our sins were on you were laid
by almighty love anointed

you have full atonement made
Ev'ry sin has been forgiven
through the power of your blood
open is the gate of heave
we are reconciled to God

The Lamb, LSB 547

The Lamb, the Lamb
As wayward sheep their shepherd kill
So still, His will
On our behalf the Law to fill
He signs, He dies
He takes my sin and wretchedness
He lives, forgives
He give me His own righteousness

I Lay My Sins on Jesus, LSB 606

I lay my sins on Jesus
the spotless Lamb of God
he bears them all, and frees us
from the accursed load
I bring my guilt to Jesus
to wash my crimson stains
white in his blood most precious
till not a spot remains

O Lord, We Praise Thee, LSB 617, ELH 327

May Thy body, Lord, born of Mary
That our sins and sorrows did carry
And Thy blood for us plead
In all trial, fear, and need
Lord, Thy kindness did so constrain Thee
That Thy blood should bless and sustain me
All our debt Thou has paid

Peace with God once more is made

Salvation unto Us Has Come, LSB 555, AH 410, CW1993 390, CW2021 558, ELH 227

Yet as the Law must be fulfilled

Or we must die despairing

Christ came and hath God's anger stilled

Our human nature sharing

He hath for us the Law obeyed

And thus the Father's vengeance stayed

Which over us impended

Since Christ hath full atonement made

And brought to us salvation

Each Christian therefore may be glad

And build on this foundation

Thy grace alone, dear Lord, I plead

Thy death is now my life indeed

For Thou hast paid my ransom

Thy Works, Not Mine, O Christ, LSB 565, CSB 68

Thy works, not mine, O Christ

Speak gladness to this heart

They tell me all is done

They bid my fear depart

To whom save Thee, who canst alone

For sin atone, Lord, shall I flee

Refrain: To whom save Thee, Who canst alone, For sin atone, Lord, shall I flee

Thy wounds, not mine, O Christ

Can heal my bruised soul

Thy stripes, not mine, contain

The balm that makes me whole

To whom save Thee, who canst alone

For sin atone, Lord, shall I flee

Thy cross, not mine, O Christ

Has borne the awe-full load
Of sins that none could bear
But the incarnate God
To whom save Thee, who canst alone
For sin atone, Lord, shall I flee
Thy death, not mine, O Christ
Has paid the ransom due
Ten thousand deaths like mine
Would have been all too few
To whom save Thee, who canst alone
For sin atone, Lord, shall I flee
Thy righteousness, O Christ
Alone can cover me
No righteousness avails
Save that which is of Thee
To whom save Thee, who canst alone
For sin atone, Lord, shall I flee

If Your Beloved Son, O God, LSB 568

If Thy beloved Son, O God
Had not to earth descended
And in our mortal flesh and blood
Had not sin's power ended
Then this poor, wretched soul of mine
In hell eternally would pine
Because of its transgression
But now I find sweet peace and rest
Despair no more reigns o'er me
No more am I by sin oppressed
For Christ has borne sin for me
Upon the cross for me He died
That, reconciled, I might abide

With Thee, my God, forever.
I trust in Him with all my heart
Now all my sorrow ceases
His words abiding peace impart
His blood from guilt releases
Free grace through Him I now obtain
He washes me from ev'ry stain
And pure I stand before Him
Saved through my Savior's precious blood
I am rejoicing ever
Naught from Thy grace, O Lord, my God
My ransomed soul can sever
All that my blest Redeemer's death
Hath won for me, is mine through faith
And Satan cannot harm me
All righteousness by works is vain
The Law brings condemnation
True righteousness by faith I gain
Christ's work is my salvation
His death, that perfect sacrifice
Has paid the all-sufficient price
In Him my hope is anchored
My guilt, O Father, Thou hast laid
On Christ, Thy Son, my Savior
Lord Jesus, Thou my debt hast paid
And gained for me God's favor
O Holy Ghost, Thou Fount of grace
The good in me to Thee I trace
In faith do Thou preserve me.

Before the Throne of God Above, LSB 574, CW2021 561

Because the sinless Savior died

My sinful soul is counted free
For God, the Just, is satisfied
To look on Him and pardon me
Behold Him there, the risen Lamb
My perfect, spotless Righteousness
The great unchangeable I AM
The King of glory and of grace
One with Himself, I cannot die
My soul is purchased by His blood
My life is hid with Christ on high
With Christ, my Savior and my God

The Gospel Shows the Father's Grace, LSB 580

The Gospel shows the Father's grace
Who sent His Son to save our race
Proclaims how Jesus lived and died
That man might thus be justified
It sets the Lamb before our eyes
Who made the atoning sacrifice
And calls the souls with guilt opprest
To come and find eternal rest
It brings the Savior's righteousness
Our souls to robe in royal dress
From all our guilt it brings release
And gives the troubled conscience peace

What Is This Bread, LSB 629

What is this bread
Christ's body risen from the dead
This bread we break
This life we take
Was crushed to pay for our release
O taste and see the Lord is peace

What is this wine
The blood of Jesus shed for mine
The cup of grace
Brings His embrace
Of life and love until I sing
O taste and see the Lord is King
So who am I
That I should live and He should die
Under the rod
My God, my God
Why have You not forsaken me
O taste and see the Lord is free

Christ, the life of all the living, SBH 79, CSB 98

Thou, O Christ, hast taken on thee
Bitter strokes, a cruel rod
Pain and scorn were heaped upon thee
O thou sinless Son of God
Only thus for me to win
Rescue from the bonds of sin
Thou didst bear the smiting only
That it might not fall on me
Stoodest falsely charged and lonely
That I might be safe and free
Comfortless that I might know
Comfort from thy boundless woe

Your Heart, O God, Is Grieved, LSB 945

Your heart, O God, is grieved we know
By ev'ry evil, ev'ry woe
Upon Your cross forsaken Son
Our death is laid and peace is won
Your arms extend, O Christ, to save

From sting of death and grasp of grave
Your scars before the Father move
His heart to mercy at such love
Glory to God, We Give You Thanks and Praise
Lord Jesus Christ, the Father's only Son
You bore for us the load of this world's sin
O Lamb of God, Your glorious victory won

There is a green hill far away, SBH 77, AH 67

There is a green hill far away
Without a city wall
Where the dear Lord was crucified
Who died to save us all
We may not know, we cannot tell
What pains He had to bear
But we believe it was for us
He hung and suffered there
He died that we might be forgiven,
He died to make us good
That we might go at last to heaven
Saved by His precious blood
There was no other good enough
To pay the price of sin,
He only could unlock the gate
Of heaven, and let us in
Oh, dearly, dearly has He loved
And died our sins to bear
We trust in His redeeming blood
And life eternal share

Ah, holy Jesus, how has thou offended, SBH 85, CSB 99

Lo, the good Shepherd for the sheep is offered
The slave hath sinned, and the Son hath suffered

For man's atonement, while he nothing heedeth
God intercedeth
For me, kind Jesus, was thine Incarnation
Thy mortal sorrow, and the life's oblation
Thy death of anguish and thy bitter Passion
For my salvation

Deep were his wounds, and red, SBH 80

Deep were his wounds, and red
On cruel Calvary
As on the Cross he bled
In bitter agony
But they, whom sin has wounded sore
Find healing in the wounds he bore
He suffered shame and scorn
And wretched, dire disgrace
Forsaken and forlorn
He hung there in our place
But such as would from sin be free
Look to his Cross for victory
His life, his all, he gave
When he was crucified
Our burdened souls to save
What fearful death he died
But each of us, though dead to sin
Through him eternal life may win

O World, See Here Suspended, AH 79

O world, see here suspended
His loving arms extended
Thy Savior on the cross
The Prince of life is willing
All righteousness fulfilling

To suffer anguish, scorn, and loss
O Thou, who hearts dost quicken
Why art Thou sorrow stricken
Why all this nameless pain
While we must make confession
Of sin and dire transgression
No sin on Thee hath left a stain
'Tis I who sins encumber
Whose misdeeds far outnumber
The sands upon the shore
I caused Thy condemnation
Thy deep humiliation
And all the wounds that pain Thee sore
Death for a time must hold Thee
The grave too must enfold Thee
Lest I should be its prey
Death, who for me had tarried
Death now himself lies buried
And I shall live with Thee for aye

There Is A Fountain Filled with Blood, CSB 77, TLH 157, ELH 301

There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel's vein
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains
The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in his day
And there may I, though vile as he
Wash all my sins away
Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power
Till all the ransomed Church of God

Be saved, to sin no more:
E'er since by faith I saw the stream
Thy flowing wounds supply
Redeeming love has been my theme
And shall be till I die

Jesus, Savior, Son of God CSB 78

Jesus, Savior, Son of God
Bearer of the sinner's load
Breaker of the captive's chains
Cleanser of the guilty's stains
Thou the sinner's death hath died
Thou for us wast crucified
For our sins Thy flesh was torn
Thou our penalty has borne
Savior, Surety, Lamb of God
Thou hast bought us with Thy Blood
Thou hast wiped the debt away
Nothing left for us to pay
Nothing left for us to bear
Nothing left for us to share
But the pardon and the bliss
But the love, the light, the peace

Lord Jesus, Thou Art Going Forth, TLH 150

(The Soul) Lord Jesus, Thou art going forth
For me Thy life to offer
For me, a sinner from my birth
Who cause all Thou must suffer
So be it, then, Thou Hope of men
The I shall follow weeping
Tears flowing free Thy pain to see
Watch o'er Thy sorrows keeping

(Jesus) O Soul, attend though and behold
The fruit of they transgression
My portion is the curse of old
And for man's sin My Passion
Now comes the nigh of sin's dread might
Man's guilt I here am bearing
Oh, weight it, Soul; I make thee whole
No need now of despairing
(The Soul) 'Tis I, Lord Jesus, I confess
Who should have borne sin's wages
And lost the peace of heavenly bliss
Through everlasting ages
Instead 'tis Thou Who goest now
My punishment to carry
The death and blood Lead me to God
By grace I there may tarry
(Jesus) O Soul, I take upon Me now
The pain thou shouldest have suffered
Behold, with grace I thee endow
Grace freely to the offered
The curse I choose that thou mightiest lose
Sin's curse and guilt forever
My fit of love from heaven above
Will give the blessing ever

O Sinner, Come Thy Sin To Mourn, ELH 272

O sinner, come thy sin to mourn
So vast and vile that it has borne
Christ to this vale of anguish
Son of a Virgin, sweet and mild
In poverty the Holy Child
Thy Substitute did languish

Behold with faith God's only Son
Come sigh and see what Love has done
To save thee from damnation
The Father cast on Him thy guilt
For thee His precious blood was spilt
To bless thee with salvation
O meditate how painfully
The Lamb of God on Calvary
Has dies for thy transgressions
How dreary was that awful night
Of agony how great the fight
Of His most wondrous Passion
O Son of God, eternal Word
Divine Redeemer, dearest Lord
We marvel at Thy suff'ring
For Thy disgrace, and pain, and shame
We'll ever magnify Thy name
And praise Thy glorious off'ring

The Day Is Surely Drawing Near, LSB 508

O Jesus, who my debt didst pay
And for my sin wast smitten
Within the Book of Life, oh, may
My name be also written
I will not doubt; I trust in Thee
From Satan Thou hast made me free
And from all condemnation
Therefore my Intercessor be
And for Thy blood and merit
Read from Thy book that I am free
With all who life inherit
That I may see Thee face to face

With all Thy saints in that blest place
Which Thou for us hast purchased

Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed, LSB 427, CSB 101, TLH 154, ELH 282

Thy body slain, sweet Jesus, Thine
And bathed in its own blood
While all exposed to wrath divine
The glorious Suff'rer stood
Was it for crimes that I had done
He groaned upon the tree
Amazing pity, grace unknown
And love beyond degree
Well might the sun in darkness hid
And shut his glories in
When God, the mighty maker died
For His own creatures' sin

When O'er My Sins I Sorrow, TLH 152, ELH 276

When o'er my sin I sorrow
Lord I will look to Thee
And hence my comfort borrow
That Thou wast slain for me
Yea, Lord, Thy precious blood was split
For me, O most unworthy
To take away my guilt
My manifold transgression
Henceforth can harm me none
Since Jesus' bloody Passion
From me God's grace hath won
His precious blood my debts hath paid
Of hell all its torments I am no more afraid

All My Heart Again Rejoices, LSB 360

Should we fear our God's displeasure

Who, to save
Freely gave
His most precious treasure
To redeem us He has given
His own Son
Now is one
Without our blood forever
See the Lamb, our sin once taking
To the cross
Suffering loss
Full atonement making
For our life His own He tenders
And His grace
All our race
Fit for glory renders

Not All the Blood of Beasts, LSB 431, TLH 155, ELH 305, CW1993 128, CW2021 398, LW 99

Not all the blood of beasts
On Jewish altars slain
Could give the guilty conscience peace
Or wash away the stain
But Christ, the heavenly Lamb
Takes all our sins away
A sacrifice of nobler name
And richer blood than they
My faith would lay its hand
On that dear head of Thine
While as a penitent I stand
And there confess my sin
My soul looks back to see
The burden Thou didst bear
When hanging on the cursed tree

I know my guilt was there
Believing, we rejoice
To see the curse remove
We bless the Lamb with cheerful voice
And sing His bleeding love

Jesus, Greatest at the Table, LSB 446

Jesus took the role of servant
when upon that gruesome span
for all human sin he suffered
as a vile and loathsome man
on the cross poured out like water
to fulfill the Father's plan.
Can we fathom such deep mercy
Do we see what God has done
Who can grasp this great reversal
love that gives his only Son
Christ, the sinless for the sinners
for the many dies the One

Jesus, Thy Blood and Righteousness, LSB 563

Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress
Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed
With joy shall I lift up my head
Bold shall I stand in that great day
Cleansed and redeemed, no debt to pay
Fully absolved through these I am
From sin and fear, from guilt and shame
Lord, I believe Thy precious blood
Which at the mercy seat of God
Pleas for the captives' liberty
Was also shed in love for me

Lord, I believe, were sinners more
Than sands upon the ocean shore
Thou hast for all a ransom paid
For all a full atonement made
When from the dust of death I rise
To claim my mansion in the skies
This then shall be my only plea
Jesus hath lived and died for me
Jesus, be endless praise to Thee
Whose boundless mercy hath for me
For me, and all Thy hands have made
An everlasting ransom paid

Christ Sits at God's Right Hand, LSB 564

Christ's altar was the tree
Where on the world's behalf
To seal God's guarantee
Of grace that cannot fail
With blood He entered for our good
Behind the veil
What costly sacrifice
To cover human sin
Who but Christ Jesus had the right
To enter in
His blood, that sprinkled price
So we might be assured
That our inheritance in light
Has been secured

Implicit

This category includes expressions of vicarious satisfaction that are implicit. Coming to the texts with a knowledge of Scripture, catechization in home and congregation, and familiarity with the confessions of the *Book of Concord*, one easily sees vicarious satisfaction in them. But as evidence, they hold a lower rank because of arguments the adversaries might make.

In Silent Pain the Eternal Son, LSB 432

In silent pain the eternal Son
Hangs derelict and still
In darkened day His work is done
Fulfilled His Father's will
Uplifted for the world to see
He hangs in strangest victory
For in His body on the tree
He carries all our ill
For peace He came and met its cost
He gave Himself to save the lost
He loved us to the uttermost
And paid for our release

These lyrics are categorized as implicitly rather than expressly confessing vicarious satisfaction because: the term “our ill” likely embraces the guilt of sin, but the adversaries might argue that it only contemplates the consequences of sin; “met its cost” has an unclear antecedent reference either to peace or our ill; “save the lost” in and of itself could speak to *Christus Victor*, ransom, covering, or other themes of the atonement without embracing vicarious satisfaction; “paid for our release” could be pure ransom language. *Companion to the Hymns* sees vicarious satisfaction in this stanza.⁴⁴

Jesus, I Will Ponder Now, LSB 440, ELH 287

Yet, O Lord, not thus alone
Make me see Thy Passion
But its cause to me make known
And its termination.
Ah! I also and my sin
Wrought Thy deep affliction
This indeed the cause hath been
Of Thy crucifixion

This stanza is included as confessing vicarious satisfaction on the strength of the commentary in *Companion to the Hymns* that it sings “His vicarious death.”⁴⁵

No Temple Now, No Gift of Price, LSB 530

The dying Lord our ransom paid

One final full self-offering made
Complete in every part
His finished sacrifice for sins
The covenant of grace begins

The adversaries might reject this stanza, but it is included as at least implicitly confessing vicarious satisfaction. It confesses that Christ's self-offering was a sacrifice for sins and a finished sacrifice, with allusions to his cry from the cross and the exposition of his sacrifice in the Epistle to the Hebrews, to say nothing of the rich Levitical background. Furthermore, though Forde claims God could and did just "up and forgive" before and without the coming of Christ or his sacrifice on the cross, the last line explicitly confesses that once Christ finished his self-sacrifice for sins, then "The covenant of grace *begins*." It is a *new* covenant (Jeremiah 31 and Hebrews 8 and 9). In the *Verba*, Christ's Words of Institution of the Lord's Supper, which every Christian knows, the cup of Christ's death and sacrifice is "the *new* covenant *in My blood*, which is *shed* for you." (Luke 22:20, Matthew 26:28, Mark 14:24, 1 Corinthians 11:25, and Hebrews 12:24).

Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing, LSB 686

He, to rescue me from danger
Interposed His precious blood

The adversaries say that since God all along was ready to "up and forgive" sin, there was no need for anything to interpose. We only needed to believe that God was ready to forgive in a generic mercy and general amnesty. These lyrics confess, however, that Jesus rescued us from danger by interposing his precious blood. The clear implication is that, without the interposition of Christ's blood, there would be no rescue and the danger still would be impending over us.

We All Believe in One True God, LSB 654

Born of Mary, virgin mother
By the power of the Spirit
Word made flesh, our elder brother
That the lost might life inherit
Was crucified for all our sin
And raised by God to life again
Who the Church, His own creation
Keeps in unity of Spirit
Here forgiveness and salvation
Daily comes through Jesus merit

Caveats

Caveat 1. Love and Blood

The adversaries say that the doctrine of vicarious satisfaction as a “legal scheme” is contrary to God’s love. They say that if the penalty of the Law for sin was suffered for us by Christ, then the forgiveness of sins is not based on mercy. Does that fairly represent Lutheran Orthodoxy?

Consider the question, Did God’s love move him to forgive sin or did the blood of Christ move God to forgive sin. Lutheran Orthodoxy answers, “Yes.” Both are true. Picking one and rejecting the other is a false dichotomy and a monistic failure to recognize the mighty acts of the Trinity – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – in our salvation. The Father acted. The Son acted. The Holy Spirit acted. This is spread all over the pages of Scripture, but we can find it in one tidy package in a single verse:

How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (Hebrews 9:14)

Christ offered his blood. The Father who had send Him, received and accepted his blood. He offered it through the Spirit. Other passages ascribe the justifying resurrection of Christ (Romans 4:25) to the Father (Romans 6:4, Galatians 1:1, Acts 5:30), and to the Son (John 10:18) , and to the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:11). Oversimplifying the atonement entails an oversimplification of God into a monism of so-called “love.”

Might we all agree that Who knows the answer to those two questions is Jesus himself? He says:

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

To the question, “Did God’s love move him to forgive sin,” Lutheran Orthodoxy trustingly, gratefully, and adoringly answers “Yes.” Jesus himself says that “God so loved the world” that the world not be condemned but saved. Unlike fallen humanity, however, God in his love knows what love must do to save. God understands love better than we do. Jesus reveals here that God did not just “up and forgive” but instead, because of his love, “gave His only begotten Son.” In this giving of the Son, what was the Father’s will? Paul greets the churches of Galatia, saying

Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father. (Galatians 1:3)

The Lord Jesus Christ gave himself for our sins according to the will of our God and Father. That is what God in his love knew love had to do for us. Jesus reveals that this was a commandment He received from his Father.

Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it

down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father. (John 10:17-18)

Thus, the question, “Did the blood of Christ move God to forgive sin,” Lutheran Orthodoxy also trustingly, gratefully, and adoringly answers “Yes.” To deny this is a one-sided reductionism. Lutheran Orthodoxy is the full-orbed truth that teaches the “full counsel of God.”

In the touching and affective scene of Paul's departure from those he so loved in Ephesus after ministering there three years, the longest of any of his missions prior to his imprisonment, he says:

And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more. Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God. Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. (Acts 20:25-28)

The whole counsel of God embraces that God purchased the church with his own blood. Because Paul declared the whole counsel of God including Christ's blood atonement, he is innocent of the blood of all men.

Caveat 2. Richness of Atonement Themes

The work of Christ in atonement kills many birds with one stone and does so in a panoply of ways. Scripture speaks of atonement in words and themes of covenant, testament, sacrifice, Day of Atonement, Passover, Pascal Lamb, redemption, reconciliation, propitiation, justification, the blood of Christ, Lamb of God, payment, Surety, covering, mercy-seat, deliverance, victory over our enemies (the Devil, the world, our sinful selves, death), and ransom, to name some.

Themes of *Christus Victor*, ransom, and others hold prominent places in Lutheran hymns along with vicarious satisfaction. This writing is not intended to imply that vicarious satisfaction is the only theme of the atonement that Lutherans sing or which receives prominence in Lutheran hymns.

¹ T. R. Halvorson, “Vicarious Satisfaction in the Lutheran Confessions,” *Brothers of John the Steadfast*, August 25, 2022, <https://steadfastlutherans.org/2022/08/vicarious-satisfaction-in-the-lutheran-confessions/>

² T. R. Halvorson, “What Are You Taught About Redemption,” *Brothers of John the Steadfast*, August 16, 2022, <https://steadfastlutherans.org/2022/08/what-are-you-taught-about-redemption/>

³ “Why could not God just up and forgive? Let us start there. If we look at the narrative about Jesus, the actual events themselves, the “brute facts” as they have come down to us, the answer is quite simple. He did!” Gerhard O. Forde, “Caught in the Act: Reflections on the Work of Christ,” *World in World*, 3/1 1983, p. 26.

https://wordandworld.luthersem.edu/content/pdfs/3-1_Christ/3-1_Forde.pdf

⁴ *The Lutheran Study Bible* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2009), 2208-2209 n. 5:9.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Ulrich S. Leupold, “Introduction” to “The Hymns,” *Luther's Works* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965), 53:191.

⁷ Leupold, *op cit.*, 193.

⁸ Leupold, *op cit.* 194.

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- ⁹ *Ibid*, n. 25.
- ¹⁰ Leupold, *op cit.*, 195.
- ¹¹ Leupold, *op cit.*, 191.
- ¹² Richard Resch, “Hymns as Sung Confession,” *Lutheran Service Book: Companion to the Hymns* (St Louis, Concordia Publishing House, 2019), II.131.
- ¹³ *Ibid*.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid*.
- ¹⁵ Resch, *op cit.*, 133.
- ¹⁶ Resch, *op cit.*, 134
- ¹⁷ Leupold, *op cit.*, 197
- ¹⁸ Carl F. Schalk, “The Church’s Song: Proclamation, Pedagogy, and Praise,” *Lutheran Service Book: Companion to the Hymns* (St Louis, Concordia Publishing House, 2019), II.123.
- ¹⁹ Hermann Sasse, *We Confess Jesus Christ*, trans. Norman Nagel (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1984), 74.
- ²⁰ Robin A. Leaver, *Luther’s Liturgical Music: Principles and Implications* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2007), 107-108.
- ²¹ Schalk, *op cit.*, 127.
- ²² Schalk, *op cit.*, 129.
- ²³ Schalk, *op cit.*, 123-129.
- ²⁴ Schalk, *op cit.*, 123, emphasis added.
- ²⁵ Schalk, *op cit.*, 125, (emphasis added). The hymn also is in *ELH* 378, *CW1996* 377, *CW 2021* 557, *TLH* 187.
- ²⁶ Francis Piper, *Christian Dogmatics* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950).
- ²⁷ Leupold, *op cit.*, 197-201.
- ²⁸ Martin Luther, *Reading the Psalms with Luther* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2007), 56.
- ²⁹ *D. Martin Luthers Werke*, Kritische Gesamtausgabe (Critical Complete Edition), (Weimar: Herman Böhlau, 1892), 5:608.5-10 (*Operationes in Psalmos*, 1519-1521).
- ³⁰ *Companion to the Hymns*, I:311.
- ³¹ *American Lutheran Hymnal* (Columbus, OH: Lutheran Book Concern, 1930) (American Lutheran Church) 399:2.
- ³² *Hymnary.com*, <https://hymnary.org/search?qu=what+wondrous+love>.
- ³³ *The Lutheran Study Bible* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2009), 1582 n. 3:15. The citation to *AE* is to Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works: American Edition* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing Houses; Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press; and Philadelphia: Fortress Press).
- ³⁴ *American Lutheran Hymnal* (Columbus, OH: Lutheran Book Concern, 1930) (American Lutheran Church).
- ³⁵ *The Hymnal and Order of Service* (Rock Island, IL: Augustana Book Concern, 1926) (Evangelical Augustana Lutheran Synod of North America).
- ³⁶ NKJV: “Having wiped out the handwriting of [NKJV note 9, alt. “certificate of with its] requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.”
- NASB: “Having canceled the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.
- NIV: “Having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross.”
- HCSB: “He erased the certificate of debt, with its obligations, that was against us and opposed to us, and has taken it out of the way by nailing it to the cross.”
- ISV: “Having erased the charges that were brought against us, along with their obligations that were hostile to us. He took those charges away when he nailed them to the cross.”
- LEB: “Having destroyed the certificate of indebtedness in ordinances against us, which was hostile to us, and removed it out of the way by nailing it to the cross.”

NET: “He has destroyed what was against us, a certificate of indebtedness expressed in decrees opposed to us. He has taken it away by nailing it to the cross.”

³⁷ *The Lutheran Study Bible* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2009), 2046, n. 2:14.

³⁸ Admittedly, it is taken over by the Gospel in Baptism. Moses, whose name means “drawn from water,” was drawn from water in an ark. The ark of Noah and the ark of Moses both prefigure Baptism. When Moses was drawn from water in this foreshadowing of Baptism, he was adopted. We, too, are adopted as sons of God in our Baptisms by Gospel grace. In both Law and Gospel, however, sonship by adoption is not by nature.

³⁹ Also in *The Lutheran Hymnary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1913), 319:4.

⁴⁰ *Lutheran Service Book: Companion to the Hymns*, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2019), I.277.

⁴¹ *Companion to the Hymns*, I:278.

⁴² *The Hymnal and Order of Service* (Rock Island, IL: Augustana Book Concern, 1926) (Evangelical Augustana Lutheran Synod of North America).

⁴³ Also in *The Lutheran Hymnary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1913), 319.

⁴⁴ *Companion to the Hymns*, I:263.

⁴⁵ *Companion to the Hymns*, I:285.