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## ARTICLE VII.

## MÜLLER'S CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF SIN.

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[SIN and Redemption—these are the two great facts which engage the attention of the student of Christian Theology. Our views of one of these facts will be according to our views of the other. It is impossible truly to understand the nature of redemption without first understanding the nature of sin. The various departments of Christian doctrine may, indeed, be separately treated of, but together they form an organic body, in which the individual members mutually affect and support each other.

Germany has been distinguished not only for the number of her systems of divinity, but also for the number of monographs, or works on particular doctrines. Among these, few have attracted more notice than Prof. Müller's<sup>1</sup> work on Sin. We propose to give a general sketch of the argument contained in this work. It is entitled, *The Christian Doctrine of Sin*, and is divided into five books. The subject of the first book is, The Reality of Sin, which is subdivided into two parts, (a) The Nature of Sin; (b) Its Guilt. In the second book the author examines several prominent theories which have been given for the explanation of sin. In the third book he gives his own theory, or in other words, his views of the Freedom of the Will. The fourth book is entitled, The Spread of Sin, i. e. its Universality as pertaining to the race, or Original Sin. The subject of the fifth book is, The Increasing Power of Sin in the Development of the Individual.

It is proper in the first place to state briefly the principles which have guided the author in the treatment of his subject. These have been gathered in part from the Introduction and in part from the general method of his argument.

Prof. Müller is decidedly opposed to that school of philosophy which pretends without the aid of premises and empirical observation and by a method of its own to evolve a system of truth. In his view, human thought is never an independent producing, but is a *reproducing* in relation to what actually exists as an object of perception or subject of consciousness. The doctrines of Christian Theology are not pro-

<sup>1</sup> Vid. Biblioth. Sacra, Vol. IV. p. 217 sq.

duced or invented by the activity of the human mind, but are received from a source in which the human mind may be certain of the presence of a Divine power and of eternal truth. Religion is a reality present in the history of the world and in the life of millions. It is a *fact* as real as the existence of an outward world of nature, and as nature did not wait till a science of nature allowed her to exist, so neither have the facts of religion waited for a philosophy to produce them. In unfolding the Christian doctrine of sin, a two-fold purpose may be had in view. Our object may be either to discover the teachings of Christ and the apostles respecting it, or more extensive than this, it may be to exhibit the various theological and philosophical opinions respecting it which have been held both in the church and out of it, and determine their relation to each other and to the doctrine of the New Testament. The first method is possible without the second, but evidently the second is not possible without the first, for a scientific exhibition of doctrines from the sources of Christian consciousness has this double relation to the Holy Scriptures, that on the one side it is a further development of the germs of doctrine contained in them, and on the other side finds in them the measure and criterion of its correctness. And such a criterion is necessary, because the Christian consciousness is liable to be darkened and disturbed by unchristian elements. It is so impressible in its nature, that a skilfully applied logic can give a shape to a doctrine inconsistent with its true character. Every statement of doctrine, to give it validity as an expression of Christian consciousness, needs the corroboration of an outward support, and this is to be found in the revealed word of God.—E. R.]

### § 1. *Nature of Sin.*

In order to overcome an enemy, it is necessary to know something about him. The inquiry, therefore, into the nature of sin is practical in its tendency, and any reluctance to engage in this inquiry because of the painfulness attending it, does not by any means diminish the reality of sin, and, like the cunning of the ostrich, that thinks by thrusting its head into a thicket, to be safe from the pursuit of the hunter, does but deliver us the more certainly into its power.

Sin manifests itself at first as opposition to law. Sin is the transgression of the law (1 John 3: 4). The idea of a moral law requiring absolute obedience, belongs so essentially to human consciousness, that we must doubt of the completeness of human nature in any individual in whom it should be supposed to be wanting. This law, however,

does not have its origin in man. To him it is *given*, and can have its origin only in a Being to whom it is not given, that is, in a Personal God. There is one lawgiver (James 4: 12).

The definition of sin as "transgression of the law," is manifestly only *formal* in its character, the nature of sin it does not determine unless we know already the nature of the law. In order to understand the essential principle of sin, it will be necessary first of all to understand the essential principle of the divine law. Sin appears to us in a variety of forms. The law also is given to us in a variety of precepts, and our inquiry after the principle which binds together the various kinds of sin, or is the common source from which they spring, must begin with the inquiry after the principle which pervades and unites the divine commandments, or, in other words, the essence of moral good.

It is the opinion of not a few that the primary ground of moral right is no other than the will of God itself, (*merum arbitrium Dei*).<sup>1</sup> This view is to be regarded as the result of a misunderstanding of the idea of freedom, as if the freedom of the will was limited in the same proportion as the subject is determined by motives presented to him by intelligence. On the contrary, we must maintain that an act of the will is so much the more free, the clearer the agent knows *what he wills* and *why he wills*, the more his entire spiritual life is embraced in the act of the will. The law of God which he has given as the rule for the conduct of his creatures, is the expression or manifestation of his own nature, and when the schoolmen (Alexander of Hales, Thomas Aquinas) speak of a *lex eterna*, they do not regard this as existing independently of God, and standing as it were over him, but they place it in the Divine understanding—*mens divina*. Occasionally by these writers the doctrine is advanced that the moral law would not cease to obligate men, *etsi daretur Deum non esse*. Now, while we reject such a doctrine, believing that without a personal God a moral law is not possible, we yet may acknowledge that it contains this truth, that our *moral* consciousness would not at once be destroyed with the loss of our *religious* consciousness. It is an oft-repeated fact, that unbelievers in the existence of a personal God are not able to rid themselves of the warnings of that law which God has written in their consciences. And may we not herein observe a holy and merciful purpose of God, that when man has sundered the bond of communion with his Maker, another bond should remain by which it is possible to

<sup>1</sup> Among the Schoolmen, who held this view, were Duns Scotus and his disciples.

bring the wanderer back again to allegiance to Him from whom he has so wilfully departed?

Yet the advice may be given us not to seek for the inner unity of the moral law, which contains such a variety of precepts, but to rest satisfied with the facts of our moral consciousness and of historical revelation, under the plea that this unity, although present in the Divine Mind, yet cannot be discovered by man. So Augustine, with reference to the doctrine of predestination, regarded the grounds of the decisions of the Divine Will as undiscoverable by the human mind, and Calvin, by his *decretum absolutum*, did not by any means understand arbitrariness on the part of God, but only the incomprehensibility by man of the wise and holy decrees of God. But certainly it is not merely a scientific interest, it is also a practical interest which prompts our present inquiry. With respect to the nature of the N. T. Dispensation, we read Heb. 10: 16, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them. We wish to know the fundamental principle from which a holy life develops itself, and penetrates and pervades all the varieties of human relations.

To the scribe who asked our Saviour (Matt. 22: 36—40. Mark 12: 29—31), Which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the great commandment, and the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, and to prevent the conception that these commandments were only the greatest among others which might be added to them, and to lead the inquirer to the knowledge that in them the living unity of all moral commandments is contained, he adds, On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

In this answer the highest unity seems still to be concealed between a duality of requirements, Love to God and Love to our neighbor. But the manner in which Christ denotes the first of these commandments as the great commandment, shows clearly, that we are to seek in this the unity of both, and this appears still more clearly if we ask why man, in distinction from all other creatures, should be the object of a love which by no means allows us to regard him as means for our own ends, but recognizes him as having a destination equal to our own. If one points to the unity of the species as the ground of this love, this is indeed the natural basis of the universal love of man, but that is not the ground of its ethical worth and necessity. This is to be found in the fact that the image of God shines in the spiritual nature of man. And if it is our duty to love the Original, it is also our duty

to love the image. Consequently, the second command has the first for its principle, and the external relation of the two tables of the law, one containing our duties to God, the other our duties to man, is elevated to a true unity. God is not only *an* object of love, but is the absolute and all-embracing object of love, so that any other love is holy and imperishable only by being taken up into this. This principle is implied in the requirement of a love to God with all the heart, with all the soul, with all the mind, and with all the strength.

In the Old Testament, the commandment to respect the life of man is based on the image of God in man, (Gen. 9: 6). From this, James derives the exhortation not to curse man, and represents it as a contradiction to praise God as Father, and at the same time to cherish hatred towards men, which are made after the similitude of God, (Jas. 3: 9—11. Love to the Original is not genuine, unless it is preserved in love to the image; and so much the less since we are able to know God only through his revelations, and man is, to some degree, a revelation of God. However, we are never to forget that a revelation of God is only really such to us, when it leads us to Him.

It is not one text alone in which love to God is declared to be the productive principle of all fulfilling of the law, but this truth pervades the New Testament. Christ often represents love to his Father as the soul of his life; e. g. John 14: 31. 15: 10. He requires love to himself, which is identical with love to the Father, (John 14: 9); as the living ground, on the part of his disciples, of the fulfilment of his commandments, (John 14: 15, 21. 15: 10). In like manner, love to God or to Christ, or love generally, is set forth by the apostles as the essential principle of all true virtue. Eph. 3: 17. 4: 15. 1 Cor. 8: 2, 3, 13: 1—7. Rom. 14: 7, 8. 2 Cor. 5: 14, 15. Gal. 2: 20. 1 Tim. 1: 5 1 John 4: 19—21. 5: 1—3. The same thought is expressed, only in another form, when the apostle Paul requires of Christians that all that they do, they do to the glory of God, (1 Cor. 10: 31). The same is taught in the words of Christ to one who, from his youth up, had kept the commandments, (Matt. 19: 16—22). Our Saviour turns his attention away from the individual precepts relating to external acts, to that perfection which embraces every other, and from the abstract idea of goodness to the personal God who alone is good, and to fellowship with him as the only source of holiness and spiritual life for the creature.

Thus, according to the instructions of the Holy Scriptures, we are to regard love to God as the proper essence of whatever is morally good, and every other feeling or action is good only so far as it has its

root in this.<sup>1</sup> This love is not merely gratitude for benefits received, but is adoration of the perfection of the character of God. Yet this perfection, apprehended in its innermost nature, is self-imparting love, (1 John 4: 8, 16); and, in the light of this truth, the opposition into which the historical development of Christian Ethics has frequently brought these two kinds of love, viz. gratitude and adoration, is taken away, and their inseparable unity realized. That love may be the productive principle of a higher life, it must be conscious of its absolute object, God as a person, and of other objects in their relation to him. Only thus is the heavenly magnet found which can sustain the soul not merely for a few moments of enthusiasm, such as perhaps the pantheist may occasionally feel in his adoration of nature, but continually, above that abyss into which the powers of darkness and its own weight would continually draw it.

If, then, the essential principle of the moral law is love to God, the essential principle of sin is estrangement from God, not merely an absence of the love of God, but with this negation of man's true relation to his Creator, there is also a false affirmation. Man cannot withdraw himself from allegiance to God without giving the place of God to some idol. What is this idol? The answer to this question has often been, *the creature*—the love of the creature has been regarded as having taken the place of the love of the Creator. The objects, however, embraced under the term *creature* are very manifold, but one distinction reaches through their whole domain, the distinction between personal and impersonal existences. But since impersonal existences, or things, are only means with reference to personality, if any man loves them instead of God, he loves in them after all only himself, he seeks only his own satisfaction; or, shall we say, that the perverted inclination of the heart, which has taken the place of true love to God, is the love of other persons. that sin is inordinate love to other persons? How were this possible? The bond which unites men in a true and imperishable union is, their common relation to God, (1 John 1: 3. 4: 7, 12, 16); and when men turn away from God, and are estranged from communion with him, they at the same time unfit themselves for the exercise of true love towards one another. In the alliances which the sinner forms with his fellow men, he seeks only his own interest. If any one has the power to deny himself, and to live for the good of others, he has it from God, and lives in God, however undeveloped his knowledge of God may be.

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<sup>1</sup> Love to God is the fundamental Idea in Christian Ethics, since the duties which we owe to our fellow-creatures are founded upon their relation to the Creator.

The idol, therefore, which man puts in the place of God can be no other than his own self. He lives for the gratification of himself, and the essential principle of sin, in all the variety of its forms, is *selfishness*.

If this be admitted, then sin is not merely a disorder in the outward sphere of human life, an impurity as it were, which might be removed like the dust from the feet, but is a malady which has penetrated the marrow of our life. There are conditions of life, and with many they form the usual course, in which a person keeps himself free from wild and unrestrained passions, and but seldom performs acts which appear to him as sins. But yet in his soul, "the me, the dark despot rules."

In this connection a question may arise with regard to the moral character of self-love, which has a place in most of our ethical systems. It may be asked, if the selfishness in which the me places himself as the ultimate end of his efforts and actions, be the essence of sin, can any action be morally good in which the subject makes himself the object of it? If there be, must not sin then be regarded as only the excess of that which, in itself, is good, (*nimius amor sui*)? Thus the difference in *kind*, between good and evil, would be resolved in a difference in *degree*, and sanctification would only be a limitation and moderation of a propensity in itself justifiable. It is evident how floating and insecure would be the limits between good and evil, on such a supposition, especially when we consider that only a small part of those who are governed by selfishness are distinctly conscious of this principle of their life, that the greater part sacrifice the requirements of morality to some particular purpose, which can be traced to the ruling principle of selfishness only by the exercise of reflection.

That self-love is of moral obligation, is recognized in the Scriptures, (Matt. 22: 39. James 2: 8). Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself; for though self-love is not expressly commanded, yet it is implied as the measure of our love to others. We feel, too, that others are obligated to obey this precept towards ourselves, and it would be a contradiction to deny ourselves a worth which we are conscious that others should ascribe to us.

What is the ground of the obligation to love ourselves? As all moral obligations towards man rest upon the original obligation towards God, man can be an object of moral obligation towards himself, only because of his relation to God. The moral dignity of the individual rests upon this, that he is made in the image of God, and destined to realize an eternal thought of God. Since sin with its enslaving power has entered the world, the destination of man can be realized only by redemption. Now then, it is no more his natural self, but his self as

redeemed and taken up in communion with God, that man is to regard in his duties towards himself. He must first lose himself, (Matt. 16: 25), give himself up entirely unto God, regard himself as belonging to God, in order that his actions, with regard to himself, may be morally good. It is only in this point of view, that self-love has a rightful place in an ethical system.

That the root of sin is selfishness, is confirmed to us by the Holy Scriptures in various ways. Our Saviour gives testimony of his perfect holiness by saying, that he seeks not his own will, not his own honor, but the will, the honor of his Father, (John 5: 30. 7: 18. 8: 50. cf. Matt. 20: 28. 26: 39). He is set before us for our example, as one who lived not for his own pleasure, but for God, (Rom. 15: 3). The crisis, in regeneration, between the old life under the ruling principle of sin, and the new life produced by the Holy Spirit, is denoted by expressions like these—that the man cease to live unto himself, to seek his own, to love his worldly life, (Rom. 14: 7, 8. 2 Cor. 5: 15. Phil. 2: 3—8, 21. 1 Cor. 10: 24, 33. Luke 14: 26. John 12: 25); in one word, that the power of selfishness be broken. That, however, which needs first of all to be broken, in order that sanctification may begin, must be the essential principle of sin. The same view of the nature of sin is taught us in the picture which the apostle gives us of the development of sin, towards the end of the history of the world, as exhibited in the *Man of sin, who, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God*, (2 Thess. 2: 3, 4). No one can fail to observe a correspondence between this mystery of iniquity and the words of the tempter in the history of the fall: "Ye shall be as gods."

The Christian Fathers and also the Schoolmen generally denote *superbia*, pride, as the beginning of sin. Yet the manner in which they define the term, as a presumptuous desire after independence, as a striving after equality with God, shows that they regard the essential evil to be this, that man has made his own gratification the rule of his life.<sup>1</sup>

The various kinds of sin may be traced to selfishness as their root, and thus a proof be given, that the essential principle of sin has been rightly determined. For example, the lust of the world has its origin in selfishness. Man, as a created and self-conscious being, is necessarily affected by certain impulses or desires, which are indications of his need of something out of himself. Without such impulses, man would be without any necessities, and, like his Creator, would find his rest in himself. Under their influence arises his constant striving to subdue and appropriate to himself the things of the world. And the

<sup>1</sup> Augustinus, De civitate Dei, Lib. xiv. c. 13, 14. Enchir. c. 45.

world is given to man as an object of pursuit, (Gen. 1: 26—28). He is commanded to have dominion over it. But that he may have this dominion over the world, it is necessary that he himself be inwardly free from the world. Man, however, can be free from the world only so far as he finds his resting-place, not in the world, but in a region lying above it, in communion with God. To move the world, Archimedes wanted a place out of it to stand upon. So in a spiritual sense, to overcome the world, man needs to stand on a position out of it, and independent of it. Such a position is found when man acknowledges God as governing and controlling the world and regulates his relation to the world by his relation to God. But when he sunders himself from the Eternal Source of his being, and, disregarding his relation to the Giver of every good gift, seeks for the things of the world only for his own gratification, then their use becomes abuse, and instead of having dominion over nature, he is himself its slave, and language well denotes his desire after it as a *passion*.

Again, the sin of falsehood may be shown to have its origin in selfishness. Truth, in the genuine sense of the word, can be possessed by those alone who live in communion with God, for only thus can they be in harmony with themselves, i. e. with the object for which they were made—a thought expressed in various ways in the Gospel and Epistles of John. Cf. John 18: 37. 1 John 3: 19 with John 8: 47. 1 John 4: 4, 6. It is ever a self-contradiction, although realized in innumerable instances, when a created being, and of course absolutely dependent, makes himself the centre of his life. It is the deepest self-deception, not merely because the satisfaction which is sought for in self-gratification is never found, but because it is not the chief end of man to seek his own satisfaction, but to live in communion with God and in unison with his holy will. And falsehood towards others, and every other form of sin, all come from the utterly wrong principle which man, in his estrangement from God, has made the ruling motive of his life.

### § 2. *The Guilt of Sin.*

In the idea of guilt two distinct points are embraced. The first is, that sin must be ascribed to the man, in whom it is, as its author. The second, that because of sin, man is fallen under condemnation and is unworthy of a share in any other manifestation of God than in his wrath.

The guilt of sin is also to be distinguished from the consciousness of sin. The former is far greater and more extensive than the latter.

Guilt, primarily considered, is something altogether objective, a debt that must be paid because of a previous obligation remaining unpaid, and demands expiation, even though the sinner be not conscious of his relation to the offended majesty of the Divine law. The presence of guilt is by no means dependent upon the acknowledgment of the same in the consciousness of the sinner. ●

It must be acknowledged, that the difficulties are not small which lie in the way of maintaining, that the causality of sin is to be found in man himself. This independent causality which is involved in the nature of guilt, how is it consistent with the idea of a creature, or with the all-embracing and all-upholding power of God? Since man is the creature of God, he has not only the beginning of his existence from God, but in every moment of his life is absolutely dependent upon God. Since God is everywhere present with his Almighty will, the will of man can work nothing great nor small, nothing useful nor pernicious, without the Divine co-working. A wide cleft between God and the world exists only in the conception of an extremely meagre piety and barren rationalism. In truth, God is so near us, that we cannot move without being moved by him, that we cannot withdraw from his all-pervading power, even if we would. In him we live and move and have our being.

If, then, actions which draw so deep in human life as the contrivance and execution of moral evil, are to be referred to the human will as their original source, how is it possible that they should on that account be regarded as having their ground any the less in the Divine Providence? The doctrine of the omnipresent agency of God and the doctrine of the reality of human guilt are both alike to be maintained. Equal truth belongs to both, and the solution of the problem is to be found in the union of both.

That power in man which originates sin, is the will. But the created will can in no way work without being accompanied by the Divine efficiency. And yet there is a difference in the relation of the Divine co-working to the activity of the human will, and its relation to the activity of the powers of nature. In the former case it *accompanies*, in the latter it *absolutely determines*. To consider the working of the powers of nature as at the same time Divine working is unobjectionable. On the contrary, we are not allowed to think thus with regard to those actions for which we impute guilt to ourselves, even because of this consciousness of guilt. In every sinful action a distinction is to be made between its natural and its moral character. The former consists in the working of those faculties which form as it were the basis, the material, on which the moral character is stamp-

ed. The latter depends upon the principle of selfishness, by which the will has striven to give a direction to those faculties corresponding to this principle. In its moral character, the sinful action is to be ascribed to its subject alone. According to its natural character, the sinful action is done by the Divine co-working. The powers of the human will were not only created by God, but by him they are continually preserved and supported. The omnipresent agency of God does not disdain to join itself to the self-movement of the human will, even in its course of perverseness, and to follow it with its upholding influence. And herein lies a distinction between the Divine co-working in its general sense and the efficacy of Divine grace. The one leaves man considered as a moral being as it finds him, while the other imparts a new principle of holy life. Therefore, however elevating and quieting the consciousness must be to any one to be supported and surrounded by the omnipresent agency of God, yet it were a pernicious error, if one should suppose to have embraced in this feeling the true meaning of religion. The consciousness of that communion with God which is given by justifying faith in Christ, is infinitely higher than the consciousness of a communion with God, in which the wicked share as well as the righteous, and the irrational creation as well as the rational.

There are two fundamental doctrines of Christian theology which unequivocally confirm the testimony of conscience respecting the reality of human guilt, the doctrine of the judgment and of the atonement.

In the judgment, according to the original meaning of *χωρισμός*, *separation*, the union which to some extent necessarily exists in this life between the righteous and the wicked, will be taken away, and the essential difference between them which is now in some degree concealed, will then be clearly manifest. Where there is a difference between persons in their relation to God, every other band which may unite them must be transitory. Without doubt there is already in this life a beginning of the separation. They who believe in Christ have everlasting life, have passed from death unto life, have now the fruits of the Spirit, which are joy and peace. On the other hand, he that believeth not, is condemned already. Whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin. Punishment begins in the disquietude of the conscience and in the experience that sin is a tyrannical power, and submission to it a bondage. Yet neither the Holy Scriptures, any more than experience, allow us to be deceived as to the fact that the inner peace of the Christian in this life is prevented from pervading his whole being by hindrances independent of his own control, and on the

other hand, it is not true that even in the inner domain of the heart and conscience, punishment always follows immediately upon the commission of sin. Often rather does the sinner escape it, and so much the easier, the more decided he is in the service of sin. The history of the world is the judgment of the world, as it regards nations, but this principle does not admit of an unlimited application to individuals. The good and the bad are here so interwoven that the blessings of Divine grace bestowed upon the former, are not altogether unexperienced by the latter. Not till the end of the history of the world will the disharmony between the inner character and the outward condition be entirely removed, the perpetual continuance of which would be a disorder inconsistent with the sovereignty of God over the world. Opposition to the will of God is possible, but it is not possible for that opposition to maintain itself in a system created and governed by God. To make this fact manifest is the design of punishment. He who has acted sinfully is subjected to a corresponding suffering. By this punitive justice, the majesty of God is attested, upon which rests the authority of law, and the inviolability of which is the safeguard of all his creatures. The assault upon the majesty of God which sin has attempted, can in fact not violate it, for the assault has returned upon the sinner in his punishment. The punishment of the sinner is the expression of the inviolability of the authority of the Divine law.<sup>1</sup>

It seems hardly necessary minutely to apply the argument from the doctrine of judgment to prove that man is guilty for his sin. If sin were a necessary element in the development of human nature, would not God in punishing it condemn his own work? And were there ever so many intermediate members between the creative will of God and the origin of sin, still, if no one of them has a causality independent even in relation to God, must not the guilt of sin be ulti-

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<sup>1</sup> A common opinion that the proper design of punishment is the reformation of the criminal arises from confounding punishment with chastisement, *paideia*. In Scripture, Divine chastisement is very distinctly referred only to those who have received the renewing grace of God and are become his children (Heb. xii.), and has for its object their sanctification (1 Cor. 3: 11—15. Rev. 3: 19), while the punitive justice of God is upon those who refuse to render to the gospel the obedience of faith, (2 Thess. 1: 8, 9). Both relations appear, (1 Cor. 11: 32). If punishment were a suitable means to effect a renovation of character, what would have been the need of redemption, or rather the reverse, if this renewal is to be obtained by redemption, for what purpose the severe instrument of punishment? or, is the relation of this kind, that when redemption cannot avail to renovate man, he shall be renovated by punishment? Then it would follow that punishment is a more powerful means towards regeneration than redemption.

mately referred to God and thereby a most destructive contradiction be introduced into our consciousness of God? The Divine judgment necessarily presupposes in man the presence of a causality of *relative independency*—of *independency*, for otherwise it could produce nothing which could be an object of Divine judgment, and *relative*, for the very fact that it is subject to Divine judgment shows it to be such.

Still more clearly is the guilt of sin made manifest by the doctrine of the atonement. Were sin merely a calamity, a malady of the race for which man was not guilty, i. e. of which he was not himself the cause, it might, indeed, be regarded as forming a point of transition in the development of the race, and its removal by Divine interference might still be called redemption; but such a deliverance from sin would be very different from the redemption set before us in the gospel. The difference is this, that salvation through Christ is everywhere in the New Testament represented as an operation of Divine grace, as that to which man has no claim, but which is given to him contrary to his deserts. But had God in his plan of the world placed the yoke of sin upon man, we would not say that it were only an act of Divine justice to take it away, for on such a supposition, both justice and mercy would be emptied of their genuine meaning, and the moral earnestness of repentance on the part of man would be an impossibility. The frequent remark that in redemption we have the justification of the ways of God to man, is, therefore, to be received with some allowance, or otherwise, it may lead to an error subversive of the Christian doctrine of grace.

The forgiveness of sins has for its foundation the expiatory sacrifice of the Redeemer. By the commission of sin, man has given himself up to a power from which he cannot free himself without the assistance of the Holy Spirit working within him. He can never in his own strength make the sin which he has committed merely a thing past and gone, but the sin of the past continues to produce itself in the present. But suppose that man were able to sunder the bonds of a sinful nature, and from a certain point in life henceforth by the power of his will to abstain from every sin, yet he could not thereby annihilate his former life of sin, but the past would still be actually present to him as a register of innumerable transgressions. Even though sin when once committed should not continue to set itself forth in the moral condition of the agent, it is not on that account any the less to be imputed to him. It remains upon him as guilt, and he remains responsible for it, and exposed to punishment so long as its guilt is not expiated.

If then man is ever to be restored to communion with God, he needs

an *atonement*, which Christ alone can make, because he alone among men is perfectly holy, and he alone as the incarnate Son of God sustains a relation to humanity which embraces the entire race. Unit- ing himself by the power of his love in the closest ties with that na- ture which needed an atonement, he becomes capable as the substi- tute of man to suffer the death to which on his own account he was not subject. And not till this bond of guilt which connects in the life of the sinner the past with the present, was sundered, could also that other bond, consisting of the power of sin in the heart of him who has committed it, be also taken away. For the Holy Spirit as a principle of new life could not take up his abode in man so long as unexpiated sin lay upon him, so long as Christ by his expiatory death had not entered into his glory, John. 7: 39. Had not sins that were past as well as those that are present, the power to separate from God, did they not lay upon man the necessity to render satisfaction to the violated law, the death of Christ upon the cross would have been superfluous. Hence in that *locus classicus* for the doctrine of atonement, Rom 8: 24 sq., the atoning death of Christ is expressly referred to the *προγεγοῦσα ἀμαρτήματα*. To maintain the au- thority of the Divine government in view of innumerable sins being left unpunished (*πάσσις*), it was necessary that God in establishing a new kingdom of love and grace should manifest his justice in the expiatory death of its founder and king. Thus, by the doctrine of the atonement is the truth of our moral consciousness respecting the guilt of sin fully proved. The cross of the Son of God, of him who alone among men was holy, declares more loudly than all the puni- tive judgments of God, that sins which are done, are still a reality, a power that separates from God, and with good reason did the primi- tive church acknowledge in the cross of Christ a manifestation of the wrath of God no less than of his love and grace.