

recognize that the work of Christ does, in a certain vague sense, terminate on God. They regard Him as interposing with God for sinners. The general idea which they appear to entertain is that this exalted Being, taking a deep interest in the welfare of sinners, endured humiliation, suffering and death, not to atone for their sins, but still on their account, and thus He obtained for Himself such a position and standing with God, that God is willing, at His request, to forgive sinners and restore them to favour. The sinner is taken back into favour, not because Divine justice has been satisfied by the atoning sacrifice of Christ, but very much as a man who by his misconduct has lost caste in society, while unable of himself to regain by repentance his lost place, may be taken back through the interposition of a friend of distinguished character and virtues, for whose sake his past bad conduct is overlooked. It is almost self-evident that there is no positive element here, which is not involved in the Catholic doctrine of the atonement. This view supplies no adequate reason why Christ endured humiliation, suffering and death, but the ordinary doctrine does—and a reason which enhances the significance and value of his entire work, and which explains why that work was fitted to secure Him a position and standing with God, which clothed His intercession and His work with power, when presented for sinners. It is only its negations which differentiate Arianism from orthodoxy.

4. Pelagianism. In examining the theistic systems as they ascend from the negative to the positive, the next which comes under review is Pelagianism. Earlier in time, it is also in some respects higher in structure than Socinianism. It embraces all the positive elements in the Socinian system, and recognizes, moreover, the Trinity, and cognate doctrines. But while admitting the truth of these doctrines, it cannot be said to have shown any special sense of their importance, and, in its practical teaching, it has generally ignored them. It is, indeed, scarcely possible that anyone cherishing Pelagian views of man's natural state and powers, could feel an urgent need for such aid as is involved in the direct interposition of God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, for man's salvation. "Modern Socinians and Rationalists are the only consistent Pelagians."