

justice makes it so. 4th. Psalm ciii.: "He hath not dealt with us after our sins," etc. *Answer*: The reason of that is, not that sin can go unpunished, but that our Mediator bore its curse, and thus opened the way of mercy to men. 5th. Were God bound to punish a sinner for every offence, He could not bring him to repentance. *Answer*: The penal theory does not require such punishment, since the Mediator has borne the penalty of our offences. The assumption running through these five arguments is, that it was impossible for Christ to bear our punishment.

Limborch affirms that the exertions of Divine justice are "free," like those of mercy (p. 91). That is exactly what they are not. Is justice free to break a promise? Or, if Limborch means that it is only free in one direction, namely, to forego its due or not, I ask, is it free to let God be insulted and robbed of His honor by His creatures with impunity? If all His moral subjects were to disobey and defy His authority, would He be free to choose that no punishment should be inflicted? or could He be induced to punish it only for the subsequent good of the offenders, and not from any necessity of justice to himself, or regard for the proper and necessary ends of justice? \*

\* Dr. James Martineau, while suggesting an utterly inadequate ground and a mistaken import of Divine forgiveness, has clearly grasped a great truth—that sin cannot go unpunished—which the non-penalists have let slip. "If anywhere in this universe it were discovered that the law of cause and effect did not universally hold, that the conditions under which physical phenomena occurred were not steady, that the supposed connections of events were broken, and the signs of their coming, which were noted on one day, could not serve for another; this would be the death-blow to human science—a proclamation that creation had run wild—that nature, relapsing into chaos, was knowable no more. Not less true is it, that if, anywhere upon the track of time, one sin were found to have escaped its menaced punishment, if the rule were seen to waver and relent, which joins suffering to the faithless will as its inseparable shadow, if ever He who sets the poor with princes, were to set the wicked with the saints; this would be the death-blow to all moral faith—a declaration that the foundations of life were crumbling beneath our feet—a premonition of universal dissolution. As reason cannot move without presuming on the uniformity of nature, so must conscience rely on the unchangeableness of law, and can worship only a God pledged never to treat those who have been guilty like those who have not. ("Hours of Thought," pp. 108, 109.) With respect to the perpetrated volition He has irrevocably committed himself: His word has gone forth, which binds together guilt and pain, and it cannot return unto Him void. Not one consequence which He has annexed to wrong-doing will fail to appear with relentless punctuality: no miracle will interpose to conduct away the lightning of retribution. Within that realm of law and nature, He is inexorable, and has put the freedom of pity quite away" (p. 112).