

sity of his holy nature, averse from sin. There is then a law of the Divine nature, which seems necessarily to separate him from the sinner. God is separated from the sinner by the necessity of his nature, no less than the sinner from God by the voluntary act of disobedience. The work of Christ therefore was not only to remove the obstacle to reconciliation on the side of the sinner, but also that on the side of God. The first he removes by making the sinner penitent; the second by making him holy. When penitent, he is reconciled to God; when holy, God is reconciled to him. A similar truth may be detected in the theory of Grotius. But the error in all these systems is to make that a limitation of God's will, which is in reality a manifestation of his nature.

4. Nor are we to suppose that this succession of theories is merely a change from one error to another, merely a substitute of one defective. There has been not only change but progress. Through the whole history of the doctrine we see a steady advance of thought, and what each age has gained, that it retains. The doctrine beginning at first as a transaction in the supernatural world beyond the sphere of human experience, comes at last into the region of human ideas and relations. Beginning in a fantastic realm of images, and passing through a metaphysical world of abstractions, it enters at last the domain of spiritual experience. Its course is not yet ended, nor has it as yet taken its complete and perfect form, in which it can satisfy the demands both of the reason and of the religious nature. But it cannot go back to any of its previous forms. Their defects having been once fully seen, the possibility of their recovering their former influence is forever prevented. The course of this doctrine, like that