

the work of Christ was to satisfy the justice of God by paying the debt legally incurred by the sinner. The third is the period from the Reformation to the present time, and the leading thought has relation to the *government* of God, the work of Christ being mainly to produce an impression on the human mind, by manifesting God's hatred of sin, his respect for his law, or his forgiving love.

Throughout the whole of this time we see that the doctrine is in progress. It passes from the most theoretical to the most practical form. The work of Christ is at first something wholly outward, out of men, out of the world; it is at last wholly inward, a work taking place in the interior soul. It is at first objective, it is finally subjective. Atonement is at first a transaction between God and Satan, in the supernatural world; then it becomes a transaction between God and man, in which God is to be satisfied; and then an influence exercised upon the human mind by which man is to be redeemed. But after reaching this extreme point of subjectivity, a reaction takes place, and in the systems which have followed from the philosophy of Kant, Schelling and Hegel, there has been an attempt to combine the objective and subjective forms; in other words, to represent the Atonement as a transaction in which God is reconciled to man, as well as man reconciled to God.

Returning therefore to the first period, which we have called the *mythic* period of the doctrine, we shall see that the writers of the early church, taking a partial view of the New Testament statements concerning the work of Christ, and seizing on a particular class of Scripture expressions, constructed a theory in accordance with the habits of thought peculiar to their age.