

In I. Samuel, ii. 25, we read: "If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but, if a man sin against the Lord, who shall intreat for him?" This passage clearly takes the position, that an earthly judge may treat an offence committed by man against his fellow, but the sin of man against his God it lifts infinitely above the power of human adjudication; the whole bearing of the passage being obviously to awaken the conviction, that for a man to sin against his God, makes him immeasurably more guilty, than if his sin consisted chiefly in an offence against man. Indeed, to deny this meaning of the passage, is to reduce it to contemptible bombast. In this connection might be quoted all such passages as Ex. xix. 12,—"Take heed to yourselves that ye go not up into the mount to touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death: 13, There shall not a hand touch it but he shall surely be stoned or shot through." I. Samuel, vi. 9, "And he smote the men of Bethshemish, because they had looked into the ark of the Lord; even he smote of the people fifty thousand and threescore and ten men: 20, And the men of Bethshemish said, who is able to stand before this holy Lord God? Lev. x. 1: "And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. 2. And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them; and they died before the Lord. 3. Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace." And thus page after page might be filled with quotations from the Old Testament, which set at defiance every attempt at exposition which ignores the principle, that the guilt of every offence committed against God is in proportion to the supreme dignity and glory of his character. On appealing to the New Testament, however, the evidence is so positive, that the principle universally applicable to the measurement of the guilt of offences committed by man against his fellow, is also applicable to his offences committed against God; that all doubt upon the subject must be dispelled by a single passage. Passing by the texts which relate to the sin against the Holy Ghost, which never hath forgiveness, and also passing by a multitude of others, in which the principle is unquestionably involved, Acts v., 3, 4, and 5 is selected:—"But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. And Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things."

Here the magnitude of the guilt of Ananias—its overwhelming and measureless turpitude is made to rest wholly upon the fact that he had NOT LIED UNTO MEN BUT UNTO GOD. So that now it must be considered as proved, not only that the guilt of offences committed by man against his fellow, rises in proportion to the dignity of the personage sinned against, but also, that this principle reaches higher—that it is admitted in heaven—and must be applied to the offences committed by man against his God. But if the guilt of offences committed by man against JEHOVAH be in proportion to his INFINITE DIGNITY, it follows inevitably that the guilt of every offence committed against God MUST BE INFINITE; for the proposition admits of no denial, that whatever is

proved to bear any proportion to that which is *known* to be infinite, that thing, be it what it may, *must in itself* be infinite; and therefore every one who has sinned against God, stands in the sight of the universe justly charged with INFINITE GUILT; but if chargeable with infinite guilt, then, as it is certain that every sinner incurs by his sin a punishment in proportion to his guilt, it follows inevitably that every sinner of our race has incurred INFINITE PUNISHMENT. Now as man is only a finite being, and therefore not possessed of infinite powers of endurance, it follows that he cannot suffer the infinite punishment he has incurred, by sin, in any limited period, and therefore if he suffers infinite punishment at all, it can only be by its being made infinite in duration and not in pungency; but punishment infinite in duration is punishment *without end*, and therefore the conclusion is absolutely inevitable, that every one who sins against God, does thereby necessarily incur ENDLESS MISERY.

The line of argument just closed, being perfectly invulnerable in itself, the attempt has been ignorantly made to reduce the whole to an absurdity. That the objection such as it is, may be fully met, I will present it in its strongest possible aspect, as follows:

If the guilt of every sin is necessarily infinite, then it follows that the sinner's first sin renders him *infinitely guilty*, so that he never can become *more* guilty, sin as he may; and it also follows, that all sinners must be *alike* or equally guilty; for, if the sin of the *least* guilty be really infinite, that of the most guilty cannot exceed it—but the impossibility of a sinner increasing his guilt, and the absolute equality of the guilt of all sinners, are doctrines, each of which is utterly at variance with both reason and Scripture; and therefore the argument which proves that the guilt of every sin is infinite, is an argument that proves too much, and hence UTTERLY WORTHLESS.

In answer to this objection, let it be observed, that its whole strength lies in what the logician calls a fallacy of false assumption. It assumes that whatever is infinite admits of no increase; also, that all infinities are necessarily equal to one another; both of which are not only mere assumptions, but assumptions so gross as to be susceptible of being proved utterly false. Of this the mathematician can need no proof—having often added infinite quantities together—squared them, cubed them, and raised them to as high powers as the arithmetician ever raised his finite quantities, and to far higher; he can but smile at that ignorance which would teach him that all infinite quantities are equal: and knowing also, as he does, that he can, with the utmost ease, descend from dealing with infinite quantities, to deal with those in the other extreme—to add, subtract, multiply, and divide infinitesimals, *i. e.*, quantities infinitely small, and then amuse himself by multiplying the infinitely great by the infinitely small, and both of these by finite quantities; reversing the process in each case at pleasure; developing, at every step, results of deep and absorbing interest; exhibiting truth in its most reliable forms, as more startling, by far, than the vagaries of the wildest imagination:

Having said more than enough to satisfy the mathematician of the utter fallacy of the assumptions on which the objection is based, it is now necessary to present these fallacies in a light in which *all* must see them with equal clearness to be absolutely false.

Let it be observed, then, in the outset, that the term infinite has two leading significations. In its first and highest sense, it represents that which admits of no increase—no addition or multiplication. This is a sense in which the term is applicable to God *alone*. In its secondary use, it represents that