

life as a ground of acceptance with Him—he will never experience the joy and comfort, and peace, which are the immediate and abiding results of that act by which God justifies the sinner, and so places him in a position to receive all the other benefits and blessings of the Saviour's death purchase.

There can be no doubt that the sinner is the object of the Divine displeasure, and that he is so, even when by his own persevering effort he has accomplished an external reformation. The Almighty may indeed, as we have remarked, complacently regard his present conduct—nay, he may notify to him in a multitude of ways that He approves of all that is done; but at the same time, and apart from this, he is the object of His displeasure. There is nothing paradoxical here—nothing in the one statement which may conflict with the other; because changed though the man be, virtuous, and outwardly correct, his *heart is not changed*, his guilt is not cancelled, and consequently he is still a *sinner* before God. It is in this sense, then, that the *self-made* convert must ever be an object of the Divine displeasure. Vice and guilt, in whatever modified forms they appear to us, must ever be repulsive to God. "He cannot look upon sin but with abhorrence" and aversion. We cannot do better than close this paper in the words of the celebrated Adam Smith. In his Theory of Moral Sentiments, he remarks in connection with this subject: "If we consult our natural sentiments, we are apt to fear lest before the holiness of God we should appear to be more worthy of punishment than the weakness and imperfection of human nature can ever seem to be of reward. Man, when about to appear before a Being of infinite perfection, can feel but little confidence in his own merit, or in the imperfect propriety of his own conduct. In the presence of his fellow-creatures he may often justly elevate himself, and may often have reason to think highly of his own character and conduct compared to the still greater imperfection of theirs. But the case is quite different when about to appear before his infinite Creator. To such a being he can scarce imagine that his littleness and weakness should ever seem to be the proper object either of esteem or of reward. But he can easily conceive how the numberless violations of duty, of which he has been guilty, should render him the object of aversion and punishment; neither can he see any reason why the divine indignation should not be let loose, without any restraint, upon so vile an insect as he is sensible that he himself must appear to be. If he would still hope for happiness he is conscious that he cannot demand it from justice, but that he must entreat it from the mercy of God. Repentance, sorrow, humiliation, contrition at the thought of his past conduct, are, upon this account, the sentiments which become him, and seem to be the only means which he has left for appeasing that wrath which he knows he has justly provoked. He even distrusts the efficacy of all these, and naturally fears lest the wisdom of God should not, like the weakness of man, be prevailed upon to spare the crime by the most importunate lamentations of the criminal. Some other intercession, some other sacrifice, some other atonement, he imagines, must be made for him beyond what he himself is capable of making, before the purity of the Divine justice can be reconciled to his manifest offences.

"The doctrines of revelation coincide in every respect with those original anticipations of nature; and as they teach us how little we can depend upon the imperfection of our own virtue, so they show us, at the same time, that the most powerful intercession has been made, and the most dreadful atonement has been paid for our manifold transgressions and iniquities."

D. B. P.