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“constant” might well have been employed. Yet the nature of that word, which Origen thought was invented by the Evangelists, has the appearance of *official* translation. For the ordinary translator does not invent words.

It would seem that the original words employed are to be found in LS and CS or are not to be obtained at all. A scholar of merit suggested in this magazine many years ago that the variation between *sins* and *debts* in the petition for forgiveness implied that the Aramaic original was the word which signifies both. It seems at least as probable that the occurrence of the word *debts* in the Matthaean recension is accommodation of the petition to the clause attached to the petition, wherein a human debt is made analogous to a sin against God ; and that the true inference is that the Matthaean recension exhibits further alteration than the Lucan recension, the original word being the equivalent for “sins.” Meanwhile the critic of to-day, who can compare texts in his study, has clearly an easier task than that of the ancient Evangelist, for whom each of the questions noticed in these verses may have meant a difficult and dangerous journey.

D. S. MARGOLIOUTH.

SIN AS A PROBLEM OF TO-DAY.

IV. SIN IN ITS PRINCIPLE AND DEVELOPMENT.

SIN is now to be more exactly considered in its own nature—not simply in its formal character as transgression of moral law, nor in its enormity as contradiction of the divine Holiness, not even in its obliquity as departure or turning aside from the true moral end, but in its own inmost *principle* and *genesis*, in that deepest spring within the soul from which all its baleful manifestations proceed. Is there such a “principle” of sin ? If there is, it must be of the

utmost importance for the right estimate of sin to be able to lay the finger upon it.

It has been seen that there are theories which, from their nature, exclude the existence of any such all-comprehending principle,—theories, to which sin is something relative only to the finite human judgment, which belongs to the parts, not to the whole, which, from the point of view of the Absolute, simply does not exist,—theories which deny to man free volition, therefore rob him of his power of acting as a voluntary cause,—theories which enchain man in a destiny not of his own making through heredity or the inheritance of brute-instinct. What room, e.g., is left for moral action, entailing responsibility, on such a theory as Herbert Spencer's, who declares that our faith in the reality of freedom is "an inveterate illusion," that man is no more free than a leaf in a tornado, or a feather in Niagara ;¹ or as Maudsley's, who affirms: "There is a destiny made for man by his ancestors, and no one can elude, were he able to attempt it, the tyranny of his organisation."²

High metaphysical theories, like Hegel's, which make sin a necessary "moment" in the process of the evolution of the absolute "Idea"—a moment of "negation" to be afterwards sublated in a higher unity: in the case of man, a necessary stage in the transition from animal to human consciousness,³ equally preclude the search for a "principle" of sin, originating in a culpable misuse of human freedom. So with theories, weaker echoes of the above, which trace sin to a necessary play of opposites in

¹ Cf. his *Psychology*, i. pp. 500 ff.

² Quoted by Dr. Amory Bradford, in his book on *Heredity*, pp. 81 ff.

³ Cf. Dr. McTaggart's exposition in his *Heg. Cosmol.*, ch. vi. and pp. 230 ff. This is not to deny that there are instructive points in Hegel's teaching on sin, as in everything he wrote. Some of these are noted below.

the universe—to a law of “polarity” which prescribes that a thing can exist and be known only through its contrary:¹ light through darkness, sweet through bitter, pleasure through pain, good through evil—or which treat it, aesthetically, as the discord necessary for the production of the perfect harmony.

Even here, however, one fact is to be noticed. In all such theories it has still to be recognised that, however it may be in the contemplation of the infinite—of the whole, from the standpoint of the finite, the part, sin, culpability, is a terrible and omnipresent reality. Men do every day things they know they ought not to do, and leave undone things they ought to do. Judged by whatever standard one will, law of conscience, social opinion, public law, offences, iniquities, abound, entailing on the wrong-doer sharp and deserved penalty. It is a proper question to ask—How are such things there? Is there any unity of principle to which they can be referred?

1. A first point in the Christian doctrine of sin is that sin does not arise as part of the necessary order of the universe, but has its origin or spring in *personal will*, revolting against God and goodness. It has not its ground in the nature of God: the suggestion is blasphemy. “God cannot be tempted with evil, and He Himself tempteth no man.”² It has not its ground in an uncreated, God-resisting “matter,” as many old thinkers taught, and as even so Christian-minded a man as R. Rothe permitted

¹ Thus Mr. Fiske, in his *Through Nature to God*, deduces the necessity of sin from what he calls “the element of antagonism” in the universe. “If we had never felt physical pain, we could not recognise physical pleasure. . . . In just the same way it follows that, without knowing that which is morally evil, we could not possibly recognise that which is morally good. Of these antagonistic correlatives, the one is unthinkable in absence of the other” (pp. 34–5). In *Nineteenth Century*, February, 1889, Mr. Huxley banters Mr. S. Laing on his use of the word “Polarity” in this connexion.

² James i. 13.

himself to believe.¹ Matter, in the Biblical view, is not non-divine, but was created "good." How can it be the source of ethical evil? It has not its ground in a "flesh" inherently sinful—a doctrine which some would read into St. Paul,² but with which St. Paul's teaching on the *σάρξ* has nothing to do.³ Apart from special texts, sin is everywhere represented in Scripture as originating in voluntary disobedience on the part of man,⁴ as unfaithfulness to better knowledge,⁵ as wilful choosing of evil rather than of good—all flesh "corrupting" its way upon the earth.⁶ Only on this ground is sin something that God can judge and punish. This also is the teaching with which the Church, in its creed-formations, has been constantly identified.⁷

¹ *Theol. Ethik* (2nd Edit.), i. Sects. 40, 104–30. In his *Still Hours* he says: "Evil, in the course of development, or sin, is not in itself a condition of the development of the good; but it belongs to the idea of creation, as a creation out of nothing, that the created personality cannot detach itself from material nature otherwise than by being clothed upon with matter, and being in this way altered, rendered impure and sinful. . . . The necessity of a transition through sin is not directly an ethical, but rather a physical necessity" (pp. 185–6, E.T.).

² Thus Holsten and many moderns. C. Clemen supports this view in his *Christ. Lehre von der Sünde*, i. pp. 200–1. Baur, Pfeiderer, etc., opposed Holsten.

³ Christ assumed our human nature, yet without sin (Rom. viii. 3; Phil. ii. 7; 2 Cor. v. 21). The bodily members that were servants of sin are to become instruments of righteousness (Rom. vi. 13, 19; Rom. xii. 1). The life which Paul lived, as a renewed man, "in the flesh," he lived by the faith of the Son of God (Gal. ii. 20). It was through "disobedience" that sin and death entered (Rom. v. 12 ff.).

⁴ Ps. xiv.; Rom. v. 19; Jas. i. 13–15. Cf. the indictment of Israel, Deut. xxxii. 4–18; Isa. i. 2–4.

⁵ Rom. i. 21 ff.

⁶ Gen. vi. 12.

⁷ This is true of Calvinistic, as of all other important symbols. In the *Westminster Confession*, e.g., the natural liberty of man is affirmed, with his power, in the state of innocence, "to will and to do that which is good and pleasing to God" (ch. ix.), and God's providence is described as extending to all sins, in permitting and overruling, "yet so as the sinfulness thereof proceedeth only from the creature, and not from God; who being most holy and righteous, neither is nor can be the author or approver of sin" (ch. v.).

All theories of the universe, it is acknowledged, do not minimise the tragic reality of sin. Many even of those which throw back the origin of sin into the original constitution of things—into the nature of God Himself—are, in an indirect way, a testimony to the awfulness of that reality. Sin—evil—is felt to be a fact too real to be explained as mere seeming, too deeply interwoven into the nature of man and the texture of the world to be accounted for by the contingencies of individual volition. A deeper ground, it is thought, must be sought for it. Hence Zoroastrianism, with its hypothesis of eternally antagonistic principles striving for the mastery—one good and one evil. The dualistic solution reappears in Manichæism, and has a strong fascination for many modern minds.¹ It is overlooked that a principle which is *only* evil—which never knew good and rejected it—is not properly an ethical principle at all. It sinks to the level of a nature-force, beneficent or harmful, as the case may be, but in no true sense moral. Hence the inevitable tendency in dualism to confuse natural and moral evil. Gnosticism took the bolder step of carrying up the origin of evil into the region of the divine itself—into the “Pleroma.” *There* the primal fall took place which re-enacts itself in lower spheres.² Modern Pessimistic systems seek to give the theory of the inherent evil of existence an absolute philosophic grounding—one, however, which refutes itself by its own irrationalities and internal contradictions. The original, inexpiable crime is creation. The absolute “Will,” by an insensate act, rushes into existence, and binds itself in bonds of the finite, from which, with the misery it entails, its utmost ingenuity afterwards

¹ J. G. Mill tells us in his *Autobiography* that his father was inclined to favour the Manichæan hypothesis. The God of Christianity he regarded as the *ne plus ultra* of wickedness (p. 40).

² Thus specially the Valentinians.

hardly enables it to escape!¹ It is striking to observe the attraction which this idea of a "Fall" in the sphere of the divine has for the framers of absolute philosophies. The Pessimism of Schopenhauer has its roots in ideas of philosophers who preceded him—of Böhme, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel.² The system has its service in showing how impossible it is to get rid of sin as a tragedy in the universe. As Professor Flint has said, Pessimism, "like Macbeth, has murdered sleep."³ It has killed for ever the superficial optimism of the older Rousseau school. Its fatal defect is that, seeking a transcendental ground for evil, it relieves man's will of the responsibility for sin, and shifts the blame back on the Absolute Principle of the universe.⁴ With such a view Christianity can make no terms.

The first really deep note in the reaction from the optimism of the French and German *Aufklärung* was that struck by Kant in his section on "The Radical Evil in Human Nature" in his *Religion within the Limits of Mere Reason*. Kant recognises the existence of a propensity to evil in human nature, but is clear that this propensity can only be really (ethically) evil, and imputable to man, if it is not an affair of mere sensibility or inheritance, but has its origin in an act of personal freedom—i.e., springs from the human *will*. This wrong decision, altering man's whole character, Kant seeks, in accordance with his philosophy, not in the empirical (phenomenal), but in the "intelligible" (transcendent,

¹ Cf. Schopenhauer's *World as Will and Idea*, and Von Hartmann's *Philosophy of the Unconscious*. A criticism is offered in the writer's *Christian View of God and the World*, pp. 53 ff.

² Illustrations are given in *Christian View of God*, p. 54. Schelling, in his *Philosophie und Religion*, describes the Creation as an "Abfall"—the assertion by the ego of its independence. In quite the strain of Schopenhauer he speaks of this as the original sin or primal fall of the spirit, which we expiate in time. Cf. Prof. Seth (Pringle-Pattison), *From Kant to Hegel*, p. 65. The idea has place in Hegel also (cf. his *Phil. d. Rel.*, ii. p. 251). ³ *Anti-Theistic Theories*, p. 294.

⁴ Yet v. Hartmann speaks in his *Religionsphilosophie* of the "Holiness" of God!

timeless, noumenal), domain, to which all man's acts of freedom are referred.¹ Few will follow him in this line, but the value of his assertion that moral evil can only have its origin in a misuse of freedom remains unaffected by the peculiarity of his theory of freedom. It is on this account that Ritschl could speak of Kant as laying the foundations of a sound Christian theology.²

In other directions, as through the rise of the evolutionary philosophy, necessity—what J. Fiske calls “the brute-inheritance”—is brought back to explain the origin of sin in man's nature. This will require separate consideration.

2. A second point in the Christian doctrine of sin is that, originating in volition as something that *ought not to be*, it can be defined, and judged of, only by *reference to the good*—to that of which it is the *negation*.

This is not the same thing as to say, as some theorists have done,³ that sin is mere “privation,” absence of a quality of goodness which ought to be present. For sin, while negative in relation to that which ought to be, is, as everyone must see, positive enough as an appallingly active force for corruption and ruin. Scripture, indeed,

¹ Cf. the translation of this part of Kant's work in Abbott's *Kant's Theory of Ethics*, pp. 325 ff., or the exposition in Caird's *Kant*, ii. pp. 593 ff. It is not clearly shown by Kant how, on his theory, sin should be universal.

² Cf. his *Justif. and Recon.*, i. (E.T.) p. 387. Kant's importance, he thinks, lies in his having “established critically—that is, with scientific strictness—those general presuppositions of the idea of reconciliation which lie in the consciousness of moral freedom and moral guilt.” He speaks of Kant's “leading thought, viz., the specific distinction of the power of will from all powers of nature” (p. 444). He accepts Kant's distinction of the phenomenal and noumenal in respect of human freedom (pp. 389, 394).

³ Sin is an *ens privativum*, requiring for its explanation, not a *causa efficiens*, but only a *causa deficiens*. Thus Leibnitz in his *Théodicée*, and many others. Augustine, in his recoil from Manichæism, used similar language, but chiefly as meaning that sin is not a substance, but arises from the perversion of what in itself is good. Cf. the writer's *Progress of Dogma*, p. 147. See also Müller's *Doct. of Sin* (E.T.), i. pp. 286 ff.

speaks of sin—carnal-mindedness—as a state of “death.”¹ It means, without doubt, the loss of the soul’s true life in God—is in that sense “privative.” But it is not a privation which converts man into a clod (reason, consciousness, desire, all active powers remain), but one which, as the result of the taking into the will of a hostile, God-negating principle, holds within it the germ of a new and perverted development. It has a “law” which runs its own course—a “law of sin and death.”² In the words of J. Müller, “the perverted negative presupposes a perverted affirmative.”³ Sin is a power, a tyranny, which defies all man’s efforts, in his natural strength, to get rid of it.⁴

It is not, again, meant, in what is just said, to reaffirm the doctrines already rejected that good and evil are polar opposites, only to be known or realised the one through the other—the good through the evil, the evil through the good. This notion, the offspring of a false dialectic, is really a reversion to the dualism which takes from both good and evil their proper character, and has for its logical issue the disappearance of the distinction altogether in the Absolute, who (Schelling’s “point of indifference”) is necessarily above the contrast. Sinless life, on such an hypothesis—in God, in Christ, in beings higher than man, as angels are presumed to be—becomes an impossible conception. There cannot be an absolute Holiness such as the moral ideal requires us to postulate in God, for only through experience of evil could good, even for God, be known. This, indeed, is what the doctrine comes to in systems which merge God’s life in that of the universe, and make sin a necessary movement in that life. No such necessity exists. The negative can only subsist through

¹ Rom. viii. 6; Eph. ii. 1, etc.

² Rom. vii. 21–25; viii. 2.

³ *Op. cit.*, i. p. 287.

⁴ Rom. vii. 23, 24.

the positive ; but the positive subsists in its own right—in and through itself—and is the presupposition of the other. If it is urged that, for finite beings, the good, at least the highest realisation of the good, can only be attained through experience of evil, the Christian, in reply, takes his firm stand on the sinless development of the world's Redeemer. Sin, indeed, Christ knew, but it was the world's sin, not His own. Temptation He endured, yet without fall. His development was faultlessly pure from cradle to Cross.

To understand sin's principle, therefore, it is necessary, first, to understand the *principle of the good*. This true thought Ritschl carries to an extreme when he affirms that sin, in Christianity, is determined by the idea of the highest moral good—the Kingdom of God.¹ The Kingdom of God is, indeed, the Christian formula at once for the highest good or blessedness, and for the highest moral aim ; but the Kingdom itself presupposes a community of moral beings united for the realisation of righteousness, and themselves “good” in virtue of this fundamental determination of their wills. Ritschl's view inverts the true order of ideas. It is certainly not the idea of the Kingdom of God which first makes it a man's duty, “denying ungodliness and worldly lusts,” to live “soberly and righteously and godly in this present world”²—which makes it right, e.g., to be self-respecting, just, kind, truthful, or wrong for one to cherish pride, or envy, or malice, or lewdness in his heart. The wrong of these things lies in themselves ; the ideal of the good excludes them, and demands their opposites. The attitude of mind and will which the individual takes up towards the things which

¹ *Justif. and Reconcil.* (E.T.), p. 57 : “The religious moral good of the Kingdom of God forms the standard of our conception of sin and guilt.” Cf. pp. 329, 334, 348.

² Titus ii. 12.

are good, and true, and pure—the “principle” by which his will is regulated in regard to them—is what makes the individual good or bad.

Kant has given a classical utterance on the subject of the good in his dictum that nothing can possibly be conceived of which can be called good without qualification except a *Good Will*.¹ The question of the principle of the good thus resolves itself into the question of what constitutes a good will. Kant would find the answer in a will determined by pure reverence for the moral law. This accords with the philosopher’s moralism, but it falls short of the demand of religion, and specially fails to satisfy the Christian demand. The good will, in the Christian sense, is a will determined, not by its attitude to an abstract law of reason, but, fundamentally, by its attitude to God. “Which is the great commandment in the law?” asked the Scribe of Jesus. Jesus answered: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment, and a second like unto it is this. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”² This demand for love to God Christ lays down, not as a requirement for a select few, but as a first, permanent, and unalterable demand, springing from the essential relation of the moral being to God; not as something man is to reach as the goal of a long development, but as the only state of goodness, something that ought to be there from the beginning, and in all stages of development. It is a demand, therefore, applicable to all, Scribes, Pharisees, publicans, sinners, alike. One is reminded of Anselm’s statement of the primary moral obligation, in his *Cur Deus Homo*: “The whole will of a rational creature ought to be subject to the will of God.”³

¹ *Fund. Principles of Met. of Morals*, Sect. i. (Abbott’s translation, p. 9).

² *Matt.* xxii. 36-39; *Mark* xii. 28-34.

³ *Op. cit.* i. 11.

Expression may vary. We may speak of the will as determined by "love," or by "fear" of God; as subject to God, surrendered to God, obedient to God; but the essence of the matter is always the same—the will is viewed as *God-regarding*, not *self-regarding*, a will yielded up to God in loving, trustful obedience,¹ for God's ends, not one's own. Only thus, as Augustine of old, who here gets to the root of the matter, apprehended, is it a truly *good* will.²

It need hardly be said that a good will, in the sense described, can only exist and develop normally, i.e., in unflinching obedience, in a nature into which sin has not already entered; a nature pure in its springs and impulses, and harmoniously constituted. The good *nature* is the correlative of the good *will*, and the moral demand embraces both. Divine law takes account of disposition, as well as of principle and motive, and requires that the heart be pure, the affections and desires regulated, as befits a state of uprightness. This does not, of course, mean that a nature right in principle is not subject to growth and development. There are *stages* in growth. As in the kingdom: "first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear."³ The child thinks as a child, speaks as a child, understands as a child. Jesus, though sinless, advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.⁴ This, however, a growth in goodness, is very different from growth out of evil into good,⁵ with which it is often con-

¹ Everywhere in Scripture the test of godliness is obedience. The only disciple Christ recognises is he who does the will of the Father (Matt. vii. 21, etc.). "This is the love of God," says St. John, "that we keep His commandments" (1 John v. 3). Cf. 1 Cor. vii. 19; Gal. v. 6.

² Augustine rejected the Pelagian idea of a will neutral to good and evil. If the will has not the love of God as its principle, it is because it has taken into itself an opposite principle.

³ Mark iv. 29.

⁴ Luke ii. 40, 52.

⁵ Dörner says: "Evil does not consist in man's not yet being initially what he will one day become; for then, evil must be called normal, and

founded. How absolutely contrary such conceptions are to current ideas of man's natural development—the moral ideal slowly evolving through ages of animalism, brutality and savagery, of superstition, vice, and crime, till the existing (still very imperfect) stage of civilisation is reached—the writer is well aware. Only, it is held, morality must change its nature, and Christ's teaching on man's relation to the Heavenly Father, and duty to Him, be shown to be other than it is, before a different conception of what constitutes goodness can establish itself as Christian.

3. If the principle of the good has been correctly apprehended, the way is open for stating what, in the Christian view, is the principle of *badness* or *sin*. To reach this principle one must go deeper than any mere conflict of higher and lower tendencies in man's nature—of sense with reason, of animal appetency with dawning consciousness of duty, of egoism with altruism, and the like. As examples, Schleiermacher finds the explanation of sin in the relative weakness of the God-consciousness as compared with the strength of the sensuous impulses.¹ Ritschl, not dissimilarly, finds it in the fact that man starts off as a natural being, with self-seeking desires, while the will for good is a "growing" quantity² (sin, therefore, is largely "ignorance," and to that extent is non-imputable). Evolution finds it in the presence and sway of the "brute-inheritance." A sufficient reason for rejecting these theories, from the point of view already taken, is that they, one and all, make sin a necessary, at least an "unavoidable,"³

can only be esteemed exceptionable by an error. Evil is something different from mere development. . . . Evil is the discord of man with his idea, as, and so far as, that idea should be realised at the given moment. . . . Sin is not being imperfect at all, but the contravention of what ought to be at a given moment, and of what can lay claim to unconditioned worth." (*System of Doct.* [E.T.], iii. p. 37.

¹ *Der christ. Glaube*, sects, 66-9.

² *Unterricht*, p. 26.

³ Ritschl's word (*unvermeidlich*), *Recht und Ver.*, p. 360 (E.T., p. 380, "inevitable"). Evolution theories will be considered later.

condition of human development, and describe man as from the first a being with unequal conflict established in his nature—a state in contradiction of the moral idea. The theories take up man at a point at which the disorder of sin is already present.

Martensen comes nearer a true explanation when he views man as, in accordance with "his twofold destiny of a life in God and a life in the world," moved fundamentally by two impulses—the one, the impulse towards God; the other, the impulse towards the world, which, as having a relative independence, he may be tempted to make an object on its own account.¹ Love of the creature, therefore, rather than God, might seem to be the principle of sin.² It is apparent on reflection, however, as Martensen, too, sees, that behind even this stands the wrong act of the will *choosing* the creature rather than God; so that, in the last analysis, the essence of sin is seen to lie in the resolve of the will to make itself independent of God—to renounce, or set aside, God's authority, and be a law to itself; in other words, in *self-will*, or *egoism*. It is the desire for a false independence of which the story of the Prodigal is the eternal parable; the search for a freedom which really ends in bondage and misery. Augustine calls it "self-love"; it is more truly "selfishness"; the enthroning of self in the core of the being as the last law of existence. It is Christ's word inverted: "Not Thy will, but mine, be done." With this corresponds the uniform representation in Scripture of sin as rebellion, disobedience, apostasy, the turning aside from God to one's

¹ "God and the world are the highest universal powers which stir in human nature, and through the corresponding impulses make man their instrument. For although the world is God's world, yet in a modified sense He has permitted it to have life in itself. He has bestowed a relative independence and self-dependence on it as being other than God; and this principle of the world's independence and the world's autonomy aims at establishing its sovereignty in man and through him by means of these impulses." (*Christian Ethics*, E. T. p. 95.)

² Cf. Rom. i. 25; 1 John ii. 15-17.

own ways ; and of repentance as the return to God in faith, love, and new obedience.

That the analysis of sin's principle here offered ¹ is the true one will be manifest in the further tracing of the developments of sin : it is pertinent, at present, to observe how essentially it agrees with the analysis which philosophy itself furnishes when seeking to probe this matter of the nature of evil to its bottom. Kant, e.g., is insistent that the last explanation of sin is the determination of the will to be a law to itself. As he puts it : " A man is bad only by this, that he reverses the moral order of the springs in adopting them into his maxims. . . . Perceiving that they (the moral law and self-love) cannot subsist together on equal terms, but that one must be subordinate to the other, as its supreme condition, he makes the spring of self-love and its inclinations the condition of obedience to the moral law." ² For Hegel also, whatever the defects otherwise of his theory of sin as part of a dialectic process, the essence of sin lies in the assertion of independent being, a Being-for-Self in isolation from the universal.³ Dr. McTaggart may explain : Sin " is thus both positive and negative—positive within a limited sphere, but negative inasmuch as that whole sphere is negative. And this does justice to the double nature of sin. All sin is in one sense positive, for it is an affirmation of the sinner's nature. When I sin, I place my own will in a position of supremacy. This shall be so, because I will it to be so, regardless of the right. . . . The position of sin lies in the assertion—rather in the practical adoption—of the maxim that my motives need no other justification than the fact that they are my motives." ⁴ When regard is had to this

¹ The subject is discussed in other relations in the writer's works, *The Christian View of God*, pp. 171 ff., and *God's Image in Man*, pp. 212 ff.

² Cf. in Abbott, *loc. cit.*, p. 343.

³ *Phil. d. Rel.*, ii. p. 264.

⁴ *Heg. Cosmol.*, pp. 150, 158.

deepest "maxim" of sin, it is obvious that, in principle, as St. James declares, the law is negated as a whole in every single violation of it.¹

4. Sin, as originating in a law-defying *egoism*, is a principle of *God-negation*.² It cannot cohere with love to God, trust in Him, or enjoyment in His presence. The possibility of a spiritual communion is dissolved. The "love of the world," with its new ruling principles, "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the vain-glory of life," excludes the "love of the Father."³ The fatality with which sin's principle acts in the depravation and ruin of the soul, its frustration of the destiny of man, its unspeakably baleful consequences for the individual and society, must form a subject for investigation by itself. But it will be of use here, in a general view, to test the soundness of the conclusion arrived at by comparing it with the actual forms of sin in the course of its development.

There is no need, in order to support a one-sided case, to indulge in exaggerated diatribes on the existing condition of human nature. Let all the good—the relative good—one undeniably sees in humanity, be ungrudgingly, even gratefully, acknowledged. The evil of the world is too patent a fact to need heightening through the extravagances of a morbid pessimism, or the grovelling in filth of the coarser school of fiction.⁴ Even with ignoring of the Godward side, Kant, in the opening of his work on *Religion*, gives nearly as dark a picture of the wickedness of mankind

¹ Jas. ii. 10.

² Hence the prevailing Scriptural representation of sin as *ἀσέβεια*, godlessness.

³ 1 John ii. 15, 16.

⁴ Max Nordau, in his book on *Degeneration*, repudiates the claim of M. Zola, that his series of Rougon-Macquart novels represent "a typical average family of the French middle class, and that their history represents the general social life of France in the time of Napoleon III. . . . The family whose history Zola presents to us in 20 mighty volumes is entirely outside normal daily life, and has no necessary connection whatever with France and the Second Empire" (p. 495.)

as St. Paul does in his first chapter to the Romans. It is not pretended by any one, however deeply convinced of the deadliness of sin, that the evil implicit in sin comes to manifestation at once, or in like degree in all, or that sin in its developments is not checked and restrained by a variety of original principles in human nature, and influences in society, acting in an opposite direction. The original constitution of human nature, as Kant also affirmed, is good, and reacts, so far, to hinder sin's full development. Indelible traces of the image of God remain in man. There is a *νοῦς* which testifies against the law of sin, though often its protests are feeble and ineffectual.¹ The doctrine of human "depravity" has often been misunderstood in this respect—perhaps has laid itself open by some of its expressions to be misunderstood—but even the stoutest upholders of the doctrine—e.g., Calvin—guard themselves against such extremes as are imputed to it. The beauty and goodness of God's natural gifts in man; man's love of truth, sense of honour, skill in law, other virtues and talents, are freely acknowledged.² With all abatements, however,

¹ Rom. vii. 14-25.

² A few sentences may be quoted from the *Institutes* of Calvin in illustration. "To charge the intellect with perpetual blindness, so as to leave it no intelligence of any description whatever, is repugnant not only to the word of God, but to common experience. We see that there has been implanted in the human mind a certain desire of investigating truth, to which it never would aspire, unless some relish for truth antecedently existed" (Bk. ii. 2, 12). "Accordingly we see that the minds of all men have impressions of civil order and honesty. Hence it is that every individual understands how human societies must be regulated by laws, and also is able to comprehend the principles of these laws" (Bk. ii. 2, 14). "Therefore, in reading profane authors, the admirable light of truth displayed in them should remind us that the human mind, however much fallen and perverted from its original integrity, is still adorned and invested with admirable gifts from its Creator. If we reflect that the Spirit of God is the only fountain of truth, we will be careful, as we would avoid offering insult to Him, not to reject or contemn truth wherever it appears. . . . Nay, we cannot read the writings of the ancients on these subjects without the highest admiration; an admiration which their excellence will not allow us to withhold" (Bk. ii. 2, 15). "Nor do I set myself so much in opposition to common sense as to contend

the Apostolic verdict holds good : " The whole world lieth in wickedness." ¹ The question asked is : How far the character of this wickedness bears out what has been said of the root-principle of sin ?

It has often been observed that the forms of sin connected with the indulgence of *the sensuous nature* have a power of veiling the egoism of the principle in which the sin originates.² The drunkard's revel, the licentious man's pleasures, have an element of sociability—of companionship—attaching to them, which hides the selfishness which is their core. Yet underneath the roystering mirth of the reveller, and the voluptuous softness of the debauchee, it is not difficult to see that in sensual sin it is *self-gratification* which is the last motive of the whole. The drink-appetite will convert a naturally generous man into the most selfish of human beings. Wife, home, children count for nothing, that his craving may be satisfied. The heartless selfishness of the dissolute man is proverbial. For the gratification of his lust, honour, truth, friendship, are ruthlessly sacrificed, and when injury beyond repair has been done, the victim of his deceit is callously cast off.³

It is sins of the flesh which society visits with its most unsparing reprobation. To Jesus, however, who knew, in His tenderness, in how many cases such sins partake more of human infirmity than of deliberate wickedness, they were less heinous than many sins of *the spirit*, in which the egoistic principle of sin is more glaringly apparent. that there was no difference between the justice, moderation, and equity of Titus and Trajan, and the rage, intemperance, and cruelty of Caligula, Nero, and Domitian ; between the continence of Vespasian and the obscene lusts of Tiberius ; and between the observance of law, and justice, and the contempt of them. . . . Hence this distinction between honourable and base actions God has not only engraven on the minds of each, but also often affirms in the administration of His providence" (Bk. iii. 14, 2).

¹ 1 John v. 19 R.V. has "in the Evil One."

² Cf. Müller on the *Doctrine of Sin*, i. pp. 159-60.

³ Literature is full of illustrations. One recalls the desertion scene in Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*, ch. iii., or Tito Melema in *Romola*, or Thomas Hardy's *Tess*.

“The publicans and harlots,” He told the Pharisees, “go into the kingdom of heaven before you.”¹ He was gentle to the woman who was a sinner, to the woman of Samaria, to the woman taken in her very act of sin,² but His denunciations of the hypocrisy, ostentation, covetousness, arrogance, of the Pharisees were scathing.³ The reason was that He saw how much more of the essence of sin as a God-denying power there was really in them. What but egoism in its varying forms are pride, envy, covetousness, worldly ambition, love of the praise of men, lust of rule? Pride exalts in selfish isolation, covetousness would grasp all for self, envy grieves at the good of another, vanity craves for adulation of self—so through the whole gamut of this class of sins. Self is manifest in all.

There are, however, forms of evil in which the principle latent in all sin appears in yet more hateful nakedness. This is the stage of *malignancy*, in which evil seems chosen for its own sake. “Evil, be thou my good,” says Milton’s Satan, and by a general consent this class of sins are spoken of as “devilish.” Kant uses this term for them.⁴ Max Nordau devotes a large space in his book on *Degeneration* to what he calls “Satanism.”⁵ Malevolence—evil for evil’s sake—is the outstanding mark of it. There is a positive delight in the sight of suffering, in the inflicting of misery, in the temptation and ruin of the innocent. Nordau’s lurid pictures, drawn from contemporary literature, of this revolting phase of the *fin du siècle* spirit, reveal almost incredible depths of depravity. “There is no indifference here to virtue or vice; it is an absolute predilection for the latter, and aversion for the former. Parnassians do

¹ Matt. xxi. 31.

² Luke xi. 37 ff.; John iv. 7 ff.; viii. 3 ff. Society excuses the man, and is severe on the woman. It was to the woman Jesus showed most mercy.

³ Cf. Matt. xxiii.

⁴ Cf. Abbott, *loc. cit.* p. 334.

⁵ See specially his chapter on “Parnassians and Diabolists.”

not at all hold themselves 'beyond good or evil,' but plunge themselves up to the neck in evil, and as far as possible from good."¹ In all its subjects this form of evil is described as connected with the grossest lasciviousness.²

By Nordau this "diabolist" tendency is treated as a form of the "Ego-Mania," to the elucidation of which in our latter-day civilisation over a couple of hundred pages of his volume are given. It is easy to see how wickedness so unrestrained should pass over into rankest *blasphemy*, and this may be regarded as the culminating form of sin. In it sin's inmost essence as "enmity against God" is laid bare. "Ego-Mania," however, is not necessarily connected with the outward foulness of the preceding type, and may take shapes of antichristian blasphemy springing from the sheer self-exaltation that will submit to no law of God or man. Nordau, with some justice, takes F. Nietzsche as the crowning example of this Titanic egoism in our era. But history knows of many periods in which a blatant atheism has vented itself in passionate hatred of God. On this the veil may be allowed to fall.

Without carrying sin to any of these extremes, it is easy to see the stamp of egoism which rests on all life in separation from God. Self-centred enjoyment, self-centred culture, self-centred morality, self-centred science, self-centred religion even (Worship of Humanity)—such are among the world's ideals. John Foster remarks somewhere that men are as afraid to let God touch any of their schemes as they are of the touch of fire. It is the old Stoic *τάρκεια*, self-sufficiency, not without a certain nobleness where men had nothing else, but sin in its renunciation of dependence on God. Existence on such a basis is doomed to futility.

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¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 275.

² "If Baudelaire prays it is to the devil (*Les Litanies de Satan*). . . . Besides the devil, Baudelaire adores only one other power, viz. : voluptuousness" (*Op. cit.*, p. 293).