

4. Sin is not necessary antagonism

This view holds that all of life involves action and reaction. There can be no rest without fatigue, no life without death, no light without darkness, no good without evil. Sin is the necessary condition of the existence of virtue.

This view makes evil a good, destroys moral consciousness, makes all the denunciations of the Bible against sin meaningless, and virtually makes God the Author of evil in order that good may come.

5. Sin is not merely self love arising from the natural development of the appetites before the development of reason

This view holds that before the reason has opportunity to develop sufficiently to counterbalance them, the appetites develop to such a degree that they take the stronger hold upon the will, resulting in the will's gratification of the appetites rather than of the will. This gratification is sin, and becomes habitual. The habitual nature of self gratification explains the universality of sin.

This view makes sin an unfortunate necessity, a result of an arrangement that God Himself has made.

6. The essence of sin cannot simply be reduced to selfishness or self-will

a. Selfishness has sometimes been called the essence of sin. In this context, selfishness must be defined not merely as self love (which has a proper place), but as the undue preference of our own happiness, advantage, welfare, or comfort to that of another.

Sometimes in extreme circumstances parents violate the Law of God to benefit their children; e.g., by stealing food to keep their children alive, or by stating something contrary to fact to protect their children from danger. Such violation may be sin, but it is not an instance of selfishness! If it be objected that this is only an indirect way of benefitting the parents and is thus selfish, then all good acts become selfish, since good acts always benefit the doer in some way. In the case of these parents, the question must be, "What is the motive?" if it is the happiness, advantage, welfare, or comfort of their children, then the action, even though it may be sin, is not selfish.

Therefore not all sins are selfish or arise from selfishness; and thus the essence of sin cannot be said to be selfishness.

b. Self-will has sometimes been called the essence of sin. But what is self will? Is it merely the self-willing or choosing to act, or deciding to do something? If we ourselves will to do the will of God, surely this is not sinful! If self-will or self-determination in opposition to the will of God is called the essence of sin (including in self-will not only the external actions, but also the internal inclinations and desires), then we are merely defining sin as transgression of the Law of God, rather than giving its essence!