Table of Contents

Translator's Preface

. . . ix

I

Usage

"Sin" – a word no longer used? – "Mildly facetious" (Thomas Mann) – What people claim to mean by the word and what they really mean – Keeping silent vs. not speaking up when one should – "Conflict between guilt and sin" (Nicholai Hartmann) – Violation of an absolute norm.

II Missing the Mark

Evil, lapse, guilt – The structure of the false step: more a violation of a behavioral rule than a failure to hit the mark? – All lapses outside of the moral realm are inadvertent – The innocence of art? – "Activity" and "Labor" – Only moral lapses make the doer evil – Unavailing attempts to make the immensity of sin comprehensible. 16

III Contra Naturam, Contra Rationem

Sin as "contrary to order" – What does "order" mean? – Sin as an act "contrary to nature" – Human nature: the quintessence of what man is meant to be as a created being – Why no one can sin with full heart – The "theological" neglect of human nature – Sin as an action contrary to reason – Reason and conscience – Participation in the divine Logos.

THE CONCEPT OF SIN

IV Contra Deum

"Contrary to order," "contrary to nature," "contrary to reason": incommensurate terms – The *true* name for sin: a failing *against* God – Does "natural man" not know what sin is? – The answer of the tradition of humanity – Sin hides its true name – Failing God: too "anthropomorphic" a concept? 48

\mathbf{V}

Pride and Desire

"Deliberately turning away from God" – Is sin really a "turning away" and not rather a "turning toward"? The affirmation of creaturely goods cannot make a deed into a sin – *Cupiditas* and *superbia* – Pride as the inner wellspring of all sin – The demand for freedom as a possible mask of our turning away from God ... 56

VI Moral and Venial Sin

Curable and incurable infractions: a distinction not unique to Christianity – "Mortal" sin and "venial" sin: not a distinction of a genus into species – What does "deadly" sin mean? The "eternal in man" as the place of the sinful act in the full sense – "Serious" vs. "deadly" sins.

VII The Paradox of Sin - A Freely Chosen Compulsion

How can the deliberate denial of the ground of our existence ever be possible? – Various ways to surrender to this question – Why the appeal to man's free will is no answer – Man can sin because, like all creatures, he comes from nothing – Less an explanation than a *reductio ad mysterium*.

Contents

VIII The Stain of Sin

What remains after the sinful act is over - Macula, guilt, lia	ability
to punishment - Atonement as a chance to purge guilt - T	he
problematic reliance on punishment decreed by man - The	e
"eternity-intention" in deadly sin - "Hell" as self-imprisor	nment
with the prisoner holding the key – The prerequisite for fo	orgive-
ness: recognizing and repenting one's own guilt - Contriti	ion;
self-accusation; confession - Man's autonomous self-unde	r-
standing and the attitude of the "fallen angels" - The nece	essity
for a divine act of forgiveness.	83

Notes		99
Index		113