

ARMINIANISM

AND

GRACE.

BY

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PREFACE.

THE doctrine of Justification by Faith in Christ Jesus alone has been called the distinguishing feature of a living Church. The importance of sound views on the plan of salvation is, consequently, the greatest of all questions for the Christian Church to consider, and yet there are not a few who (in many cases unconsciously) ignore the Bible doctrines of Divine grace in the salvation of the soul, and, while calling the Lord Jesus their Saviour, seem to imagine somehow they can do something toward securing their salvation.

The following tractate on this subject, which originally appeared in the *Princeton Review* (Jan., 1856) is now reprinted, from the belief that its republication is fitted to be of service to the interests of religion in Canada.

The Rev. Dr. Hodge, presumed to be the author, was distinguished for the clearness of his views of Scripture truth, and acknowledged to have been the ablest writer on Systematic Theology in the present day—it is therefore with confidence we re-issue this tractate as a help to the promotion of scriptural views on the subject of which it treats.

TORONTO, February, 1881.

ARMINIANISM AND GRACE.

IT is not our desire to wound the feelings of our Arminian brethren. Nor have we any pleasure, except as it may subserve the cause of righteousness, in pointing out what we regard as a most serious conclusion, drawn legitimately from their principles. Both for their own sake, and to avoid distracting the attention of men by the differences of Christian denominations, we would gladly omit the observations now to be made. Such, however, is the prominence given in the Scriptures to the doctrine of grace, and such is its admitted importance to the whole scheme of redemption, that where it is impugned or misrepresented, either directly or by fair implication, silence is criminal. This is the necessity laid upon us at present. We believe that Arminianism is essentially wrong on this subject.

It has long been our settled conviction that the principles on which Arminians object to Calvinism are utterly subversive of the true doctrine of grace; but it is only recently that our attention has been called to certain authoritative statements on their part, which fully confirm this impression. Looking a little more than usual into the publications of the “Methodist Episcopal Church,” the palladium of Arminianism in this country,¹ we have been surprised and grieved at the bold and unscriptural assertions with which they abound on this subject. And with the hope of opening their eyes to the consequences of their principles; of making them a little more moderate and modest in their assaults on Calvinism, if perchance any of them should read these lines; and especially with the hope of defending the truth and guarding the people from deception, we propose to notice a few of these statements, and the conclusions which to our mind naturally follow. We shall cheerfully submit it to the judgment of the reader, whether we do them injustice.

The sum of our charge is that Arminianism, in its essential and avowed principles, is subversive of grace. This is certainly a grave charge, which ought not lightly to be made. We should shrink from preferring it, but for the conviction—first, that it is true, and then that the error charged is incalculably injurious. Before proceeding further, it is proper to state the sense in which we use the word *grace*. It means favour—that to which the receiver has no claim, and the performer is not bound. There can be no claim to an act of grace on the one hand, nor can there be any obligation to perform it on the other. It enters necessarily and essentially into the idea that it might be withheld and no wrong done. Otherwise it is not grace. When we say, therefore, that salvation is “by grace,” we mean that

¹ The United States.

man has no claim to divine favour; that God is under no obligation to bestow it, and that without this favour he could not obtain eternal life. If the former has a claim, or if the latter is bound, then grace is out of the question. That which we may demand, and He must give, is not grace, but justice.

The correctness of this statement will hardly be denied. And yet we affirm that the avowed principles of Arminianism entirely subvert this idea of grace. According to this system, man in his fallen state had a claim to divine favour; God was bound to provide salvation for him, and give him a measure of grace, (if we can conceive of the term as applying to what God was bound to give) or He could not hold him responsible as an accountable being. Let us look at the proofs.

The first is taken from a volume of "Doctrinal Tracts" issued in their present form "By order of the General Conference." To show the estimate in which these tracts are held, it may be stated that most of them were formerly bound with the "Form of Discipline" under one cover, but for convenience sake have been separated from it. They still bear the imprimatur of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

On page 25 of this volume, a Calvinist is represented as saying "God might justly have passed by all men;" *i.e.* might justly have left the whole race to perish, without providing salvation for any. To this the writer, John Wesley himself, replies: "Are you sure He might? Where is it written? I cannot find it in the Word of God. Therefore I reject it as a bold, precarious assertion, utterly unsupported by holy Scripture." But, says the Calvinist, "You know in your own conscience, that God might justly have passed by you." "I deny it," says Wesley. "That God might justly, for my unfaithfulness to his grace, have given me up long ago, I grant; but this concession supposes me to have had grace." This is plain and unmistakable language. "I deny that God might justly have passed by me and all men. I reject it as a bold, precarious assertion, utterly unsupported by holy Scripture." The opposite affirmation necessarily follows. There is no middle ground between them. God could not justly have left me and all men to perish in our fallen state. He was bound in justice to provide salvation; and of course, to make it known and give grace to accept it, inasmuch as the provision, without these, would avail nothing! It would have been unjust to have left us without them! But where then is the grace in doing what He could not justly have omitted to do? Is it an act of grace for the Most High to do justice? Certainly not. There is no grace in such a transaction. The Gospel provision is only what He was bound to make; and to call that a dispensation of grace which justice required at his hand, is but to stultify ourselves and deceive mankind. This is our first proof that Arminianism subverts grace. It is sufficient and unanswerable were

there no other. We have never seen a more bold or dangerous error couched in so few words by any writer who pretended to be evangelical. “It is another gospel, which indeed is not another,”—it overthrows all. And yet we shall see that this error, here so boldly set forth, runs through Arminianism.

The next proof is from the same volume of Tracts, p 154. “We believe that in the moment Adam fell, he had no freedom of will left.” If this be true, Adam was no longer a free agent. A free agent without freedom of will is of course an absurdity which no one will maintain. Into the same state also was his posterity brought. We have, by nature, no more freedom of will than he had after the fall. Then either we are unaccountable beings, or, in order that we might be held responsible, God was bound to restore our freedom through the dispensation of Christ. He certainly could not have held us accountable without freedom of will. He must then, on Arminian principles, either treat us as irrational beings, or restore our liberty; *i.e.*, He must provide a Saviour, through whom this freedom of will comes, or he could not hold any man responsible for his conduct. The Methodist Church holds that He has done the latter; *i.e.*, restored this liberty. But where, we ask again, is the grace—the unmerited favour of God in this transaction—in doing what He was bound to do before we could be held accountable? This principle of Methodism, published “by order of the General Conference,” aside from some monstrous absurdities connected with it, which will be noticed hereafter, either subverts all true notions of grace, or leaves man an unaccountable being. If God was bound to give us a Saviour, and through Him our liberty of will, there was no room for grace in his fulfilling that obligation.

A third proof that Arminianism subverts grace, is taken from Watson’s Theological Institutes. He teaches very distinctly (and correctly we may add) that in the fall of Adam, all men became liable to bodily, spiritual and eternal death. But mark the ground on which he defends this transaction against the charge of injustice. “In all this it is impossible to impeach the equity of the divine procedure, since no man suffers any loss or injury ultimately by the sin of Adam, but by his own wilful obstinacy—the abounding of grace having placed before all men, upon their believing, not merely compensation for the loss and injury sustained by Adam, but infinitely higher blessings both in kind and degree, than were forfeited in him. . . . As to adults then, the objection from divine justice is unsupported.”² But why is it unsupported? Because there is a chance to escape these dreadful consequences. It would have been unjust if there were not this chance, but since they have it, therefore it was just in God to visit them

² Vol. II, Page 57, American Edition.

with death temporal and spiritual, and with exposure to death eternal for the sin of Adam!

But if this be the ground on which the justice of that transaction is to be defended, where, we ask, is the grace of salvation? Is it an act of grace in God to do what justice demanded? Can there be any favour in providing salvation, if the provision of it was necessary to vindicate (and according to this writer is the only thing which does vindicate) divine justice? Surely it is not grace for God to vindicate His own honour. Here again is evidence that Arminianism subverts grace. God was bound to make the provision, or He would have been liable to the charge of injustice in permitting us to be ruined by the fall.

Aside too from its bearing on the doctrine of grace, the course of reasoning adopted by Mr. Watson involves the dangerous Jesuit dogma that the end justifies the means. God's design to provide salvation, made it right to permit the fall and to visit all mankind with death. It would have been wrong if this had not been his intention. But as He had a merciful end in view, and as He has actually offered compensation, therefore it was just! How much iniquity Rome has perpetrated and attempted to justify on this false principle, we need not stop here to mention. It has been the common defence of their vilest outrages on truth, decency and honesty. And that an acute Protestant theologian should rest his whole defence of the divine justice in our fall on this fallacious ground, is a matter of profound astonishment!

It is not our business here to intimate the ground on which our connection with Adam might be vindicated. We can only say in passing, that unless the thing itself was right, or can be justified by other considerations, the mere offer of compensation (which in fact has never been offered to the heathen—the largest part of mankind) cannot make it right. Should a ruler offer a pension of a million of dollars to one of his maimed subjects, this would not justify his barbarous act in cutting off the limbs or putting out the eyes of that subject, that he might become a cripple and so receive a pension. The very fact that a compensation was due, shows that the thing was wrong in itself considered. Mr. Watson's reasoning then amounts to this, that God did a great wrong to the human family in their connection with Adam, for which He now offers to compensate them through Christ. And this compensation is of grace, according to Methodism

A fourth proof that Arminianism subverts grace is now to be mentioned. The Methodist Church holds that "the condition of man after the fall of Adam is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and works, to faith and calling upon God; wherefore we have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God, without

the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will.”³ To this statement there would be no serious objection if it stood alone. It is certainly as strong as any Calvinist would desire. But observe what follows. They hold that this inability would excuse men from the guilt of sin, if they had not a Gospel provision by which to escape from their sad condition. Thus Mr. Watson, Vol. II., p. 341, says “If all men everywhere would condemn it as most contrary to justice and right, that a Sovereign should condemn to death one or more of his subjects for not obeying laws which it is absolutely impossible for them under any circumstances which they can possibly avail themselves of, to obey, . . . it implies a charge as awfully and obviously unjust against God, to suppose him to act precisely in the same manner.”

Now put these declarations together, and what do they teach? The first affirms, “he cannot turn and prepare himself to faith and calling upon God. . . . we have no power to do good works.” It would be utterly impossible for us then to perform them, “under any circumstances that we could possibly avail ourselves of,” without the Gospel. But the second says, “it would be most contrary to justice and right “to punish men for deeds committed in such circumstances. Then it follows, that without the provision and help of the Gospel we would have been unaccountable beings—it would have been most contrary to justice and right for the Almighty to have punished us for our improper conduct—in order to hold us accountable justly, He must provide and offer salvation, and give strength to accept it. This is the position of the Methodist Church, and of Arminians generally; where then, we ask again, is the grace of the Gospel? According to these statements it would have been unjust in God to have held men responsible without it, It is, therefore, simply an arrangement of justice and necessity without which the Lord could have exercised no moral government over men. Thus again is grace overthrown, just as certainly as by Wesley’s bold assertion, that God could not justly have passed by all men.

The grand error of Arminians here, is in supposing that man’s inability, whatever it is, would have destroyed his free agency and accountability, unless the Gospel dispensation had supervened. This they constantly assume in their tirades against Calvinism. But the fact is, that the sinner’s inability is no excuse for his sin—is no bar to his being held accountable for his conduct, even if there had been no Gospel dispensation. Adam was as truly and as justly accountable after his fall as before it; so are his posterity. It required no Gospel provision or partial restoration (as Method-

³ Book of Discipline. Article 8.

ism supposes) through Gospel grace to make them so. To suppose that it did, is to overthrow the grace of the Gospel, and to teach the absurdity that sin destroyed free agency and accountability. If it were true that inability destroys accountability, then those who are given up of God to hardness of heart could not sin after that abandonment. Can our Arminian friends understand and remember this point? Calvinists hold to no such inability as is inconsistent with strict and just accountability. Arminians do, and thus subvert the grace of the Gospel. This is the difference between us on this point.

Our next proof that Arminianism subverts grace is taken from the principal objection which its advocates urge against the doctrine of election. According to that doctrine, all men are by nature in a lost condition, and might justly have been left to perish for ever. They have no claim whatever to the divine favour; and even when pardon and eternal life are offered, such is their depravity that none would accept it without the constraining grace of God. Viewing all in this miserable condition He “elected some to everlasting life,” whom He would make willing in the day of his power, while the remainder He suffers to pursue their own wicked choice, and will punish them at the last for their sins.

The universal outcry of Arminianism against this doctrine is that it makes God unjust; and that for two reasons: 1st. That it represents Him as withholding from some, influences which he bestows on others; and 2nd, that those from whom these influences are withheld, are unable to deliver themselves, and therefore cannot be justly condemned. We cannot now turn aside to present the proper answer to this objection. What we affirm here is, that if it be well founded, it overthrows the whole doctrine of grace. It rests on the assumption that men have some claim on God for Gospel grace. One may claim what another has, and all may claim a certain amount, or they are unjustly treated by their Creator, if He hold them accountable for their conduct. If they have no claim, where is or can be the injustice?

The very term unjust implies a claim disregarded. It excludes necessarily the idea of grace. It rests upon merit or obligation. If, therefore, God cannot give what He chooses to some without wrong to others, or if he cannot properly withhold from some what He bestows on others, it must be because they have some claim to his favour. But if they have a claim, where is the grace of that influence to which they are entitled? Its bestowment is not grace but justice. When, therefore, Arminians assert that election makes God unjust, they do therein deny and subvert the doctrine of grace.

We have still another proof that Arminianism subverts grace. Its abettors affirm, as we have seen, that God could not justly have passed by all

men, leaving them to perish in their sins. He was bound in justice to provide and offer salvation, and give the strength to receive it. But mark what follows. After God has done all this, they hold that notwithstanding all the influence he can exert on the sinner's mind, he has power to resist it,—that even those who have been renewed by grace in the divine likeness, may undo the work of God in their hearts, in spite of all he can do to preserve them. Thus, Dr. Fisk, in his tract on Predestination and Election, (p. 16,) says, “Man's obedience or disobedience, if it has any just relation to rewards and punishments, must rest in its responsible character, upon the self-determining principle of the will.⁴ And if this view of the will be correct, there is an utter impossibility of an unconditional election; for the very act of God, imparting this self-determining principle to man, renders it impossible in the nature of things, for the Almighty himself to elect a moral agent unconditionally. . . . This would imply irresistible grace, and that would destroy man's accountability.” *i.e.* Man has a power of deciding his own will, “independent of any cause without himself;” or he is not accountable. He is, therefore, of course, able to decide independent of God, or of grace. “The very act of God imparting this self-determining principle renders it impossible in the nature of things for the Almighty himself to elect him unconditionally.”—He can do so only upon the condition that man does not choose to resist all possible divine influences!

Now if all this be true—if man has any such power—if its existence and exercise are essential to his accountability, where is the room for grace in his salvation? He has a just claim, according to Wesley, to the provision and offer of salvation, and to the strength necessary to receive it. There is no grace, therefore, in bestowing these upon him. God could not justly do less. And having these, he has, in his “self-determining principle,” power to resist all the grace that God can bestow on him afterwards! Nay, more “his self-determining principle,” which is said to be essential to free agency, forbids that there should be any influence whatever exerted upon him in his decision. If there is, how is it the act of “his self-determining principle?” The very phrase, “a self-determining principle,” decided by grace, *i.e.*, by something independent of itself, is an absurdity as gross and palpable as it would be to speak of a self-moving machine propelled by something else. In the face of this mighty principle, there is neither room nor occasion for grace, in the sinner's self-determination, to submit to God. He can do it himself, otherwise his “self-

⁴ “President Edwards defines this self-determining power or principle to be “a certain Sovereignty the will has over itself and its own acts, whereby it determines its own volitions; so as not to be dependent in its determinations on any cause without itself nor determined by any thing prior to its own acts.” Dr. Alexander calls it a power of deciding “independent of all motives and uninfluenced by any inclination.”

determining principle” cannot determine itself after all. And he must do it himself, otherwise his “self-determining” principle is not self-determined, and his accountability is gone. It amounts to this, then, that he can resist all influences—he can keep God out of his heart, or he can, without any influence, magnanimously open the door, and permit the Almighty to enter. Thus again does Arminianism subvert grace by making man able either to dispense with it altogether, or superior to its most potent influences.

There is, connected with this dogma of a self-determining principle, a rich display of theologico-metaphysical acuteness, which is worthy of notice. Where does man get this wonderful principle? It does not belong to him by nature; nor is it a necessary or inherent power of the mind (although Dr. Fisk says there can be no accountability without it for the general Conference says, “that in the moment Adam fell, he had no freedom of will left,”—of course his “self-determining principle” was destroyed with his freedom of will, though his mind still existed. The same is true of his posterity. Whence then do they obtain it? We are not left to guess. In immediate connection with the above declaration as to Adam, and as a part indeed of the same sentence, the Conference proceeds, “but that God, when of his own free grace He gave the promise of a Saviour to him and his posterity, graciously restored to mankind a liberty and power to accept of proffered salvation,” *i.e.*, graciously restored this self-determining principle. Grace then, in its first impartation, and without any voluntary reception of it by the sinner, restores his self-determining principle, and thus puts him in a position to resist all that grace can do afterwards! In the exercise of his self-determining principle even the renewed man can undo all that may have been accomplished! Verily, the theology and metaphysics of this school are alike wonderful and baseless.

Such are some of the proofs that Arminianism is subversive of grace. The first is taken from their declaration that God could not justly have passed by all men in their fallen state. If He could not, then there was no grace in providing salvation—it was simply a matter of justice. The second is based on their assertion that man in his fallen state has no freedom of will—is not a free agent. If this be true, God must either treat him as an unaccountable being, or restore his freedom of will through the Gospel, which then becomes a necessary condition of accountability, and is not of grace. The third rests on the principle that men are impotent by nature to all good, and that they are not culpable or liable to punishment in that state of impotency, unless they have the power and opportunity of recovering from it; *i.e.*, unless the Gospel dispensation had been introduced. If this be true, then its promulgation is not of grace, but a condition without which they could not be held accountable. The fourth is taken from their

common objection to Calvinism—that it makes God unjust. If this be true, it must be because the claim of some is disregarded. There can be no injustice where there is no claim. And if any have a claim, then grace is out of the question. The fifth is drawn from the ground on which they defend the fall of man in Adam. It was just because there is compensation for it in Christ. If that be so, then there is no grace in the provision of a Saviour. It is not grace in God to do justice. And the sixth is taken from the absurd dogma of a self-determining principle, which first forbids, and then can resist, all foreign influences. If this be true, it cannot be grace, but the sinner's own self-determining principle that leads him to God. Thus it is by arguments drawn from six distinct points in the great circle of truth, that our charge is established—Arminianism is subversive of grace. And when grace is overthrown, where is the Gospel?

We are fully aware that this conclusion will strike many, and among them, perhaps even our Arminian friends themselves, with surprise. Far be it from us to charge them with an intentional denial of grace. They glory in “free grace,” if we may use their own tautological expression. They seem to imagine that they are the only people in the world who hold or preach it in its fullness and purity. Their notion of grace, however, is a very erroneous one. It has relation mainly to the profusion with which Gospel blessings are offered—not to the ground on which they are given. When they look at the former, they sing of grace, and imagine that they hold the scriptural doctrine on this subject. But when they combat Calvinism, which they misunderstand, or misrepresent most egregiously, they avow principles, as seen above, which are utterly at war with gratuitous salvation. They undermine this great truth by representing God as bound to provide it, and yet, overlooking the tendency of their false principles, profess to hold the doctrine in all its completeness—a remarkable instance of persons self-deceived and full of self-complacency in their delusion. We may say of them as Dr. Fisk charitably says of us, “If the supporters of this system must adhere to it, I rejoice that they can close their eyes to its logical consequences, otherwise it would make them wretched in the extreme, or drive them into other dangerous theoretical and practical errors; which indeed in many instances it has done.” We reciprocate the kindness. Nay, we do more. For while he plainly insinuates that Calvinists are dishonest in concealing their opinions, or in refusing to look at what he considers the legitimate consequences of their doctrines, we give him and his brethren full credit for sincerity in their belief and honesty in advocating it; we have charity enough to believe that in the fury of their denominational zeal, and in the blindness of their bitter denunciation of sound doctrine, they have not seen the destructive bearing of their own principles. We claim the victory in charity at least, if not in logic. Here

our charity has not been put to a severe test; for we never supposed them to be men whose logical perceptions were remarkably clear. And if we had, these Doctrinal Tracts would have shown us our mistake. We must say that of all theological discussions which we have ever read, they are the most incoherent, illogical and vague. The one on Christian Perfection is a rarity.

But to return. The reader will perceive that the proofs of our position are not founded on mere incautious, unpremeditated admissions or assertions, but on the mature, deliberate, argumentative averments of Arminianism. These tracts were prepared with care (most of them by John Wesley, the father of Methodism) have been in existence a long time, were bound with the "Book of Discipline" in one cover, and still have the sanction of the General Conference. Watson's *Theological Institutes* is a standard work, designed to "exhibit the Evidences, Doctrines, Morals and Institutions of Christianity." Dr. Fisk's tract on Predestination and Election is one which they delight to place in the hands of uninformed or hesitating Presbyterians. These are books of authority, prepared expressly for the exhibition of principles—prepared for offensive and defensive war.

Upon the authority of these books we charge the Methodist Episcopal Church with holding and teaching: [1] that God could not justly have passed by all men without providing a Saviour; [2] that Adam by his fall lost all freedom of will, and therefore ceased to be a free agent; [3] that his posterity being in the same state would be excusable for their conduct if this alleged loss were not graciously (?) restored to them; [4] that electing love to some, would make God unjust to those not elected; [5] that our fall in Adam would be unjust but for the remedial scheme of redemption, and it is a self-determining principle by which a man can resist or dispense with all grace, is a necessary condition of free agency.

More than this. These principles we believe to be essential to the Arminian scheme. Unless they be maintained, or at least assumed, its advocates have no ground on which to defend their peculiar tenets, or to plant their batteries against the fortress of Calvinism. Let them admit the following propositions—the opposite of those we have charged upon them: [1] that God might justly have passed by all men without providing or offering salvation through Christ; [2] that Adam after his fall was still a free moral agent, and as such accountable for his conduct; [3] that his posterity, though like him fallen, are still by nature, free and accountable; [4] that in bestowing grace on some, God does no injustice to others, as none have a claim to his favour; [5] that the permission of our fall in Adam was just and righteous, so far as our Creator is concerned, without any compensation for it in the scheme of redemption; and [6] that there is no such thing as a "self-determining principle" in the human mind, by which a

man can resist all possible moral and spiritual influences brought to bear upon him. Let them admit these propositions, and what have they to say against Calvinism, or in favour of the crudities of Arminianism? We should like to see an Arminian treatise, setting out with the admission of these principles. They are the foundation stones of Calvinism. Admitting them to be true, an Arminian could no more write on theology than David could fight in the armour of Saul. Let them try it.

On the other hand, let them deny these propositions, and grace is overthrown inevitably. It is as clear as noon-day, that if God could not justly have passed by all men, then there is no grace in providing a Saviour. If Adam was not still a free, moral, and accountable being after his fall, and if his posterity are not so by nature, there is no grace in making them so by the Gospel. It was simply an arrangement of necessity, without which they could not have been held accountable. If God cannot justly withhold or give his favour in Christ Jesus as He pleases, there is no grace in bestowing it. If the permission of our fall in Adam was not just and righteous in itself, there is no grace in the Gospel, which, Mr. Watson says, makes it just. Where can be the grace in doing that which it would have been unjust not to do? Arminians then are shut up to the necessity of overthrowing the Gospel, or of admitting the essential principles of Calvinism. The fact is that they do both by turns. When they preach the Gospel, so far as it is ever preached by them in its purity, they do the latter. When they oppose Calvinism, they do the former. Are such inconsistent errorists safe guides for immortal beings?

The subject might here be left to the candid consideration of the reader. There are, however, in addition to the subversion of grace, several other strange and unscriptural conclusions which follow necessarily from some or all the Arminian statements on which we have dwelt. A few of these may now be mentioned.

(1) "I deny that God might justly have passed by me and all men. I reject it as a bold and precarious assertion, utterly unsupported by Holy Scripture." Then the atonement itself was not necessary. For if justice required that men should have the offer of pardon, why should Christ suffer to make it consistent for God to do a just thing? If justice were on the sinner's side, the law which is just and good would justify without any atonement. According to this dogma, therefore, Christ died in vain. Surely, the Father of mercies did not require to be lured to do justice by the unutterable agony of his beloved Son. What a picture of his character and of the glorious doctrine of the cross is thus afforded!

(2) "I deny that God might justly have passed by me and all men." Then He has treated the heathen very unjustly. For if He was bound to provide, He must certainly have been equally bound to offer salvation.

Simply providing a remedy, and leaving them without the knowledge of it, would not satisfy justice. What avails it to them that there is balm in Gilead, or a Physician there? “How can they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?” To be ignorant of it is to them as if no such provision had been made. And since, in fact, the Gospel has not been made known to the great mass of mankind, it follows that they have been treated unjustly by their Creator. He has withheld from them what he was bound to give!⁵

(3) “We believe that in the moment Adam fell, he had no freedom of will left.” Of course he could not sin in that state. Transgression without freedom of will is no sin. Then the first effect of Adam’s sin was to put himself beyond the possibility of ever sinning any more, unless God would graciously restore to him the power of so doing; *i.e.*, make him a free moral agent again! Fallen angels, too, according to this dogma, are no longer free agents or capable of sinning. They have no more freedom of will than Adam had. No guilt, therefore, can pertain to any of their devices! We mistake when we think and speak of them as awfully wicked beings, waxing worse and worse

(4) “We believe that God, when of his own free grace He gave the promise of a Saviour, graciously restored to mankind liberty and freedom.” Then the first effect of grace (for we were graciously restored, notwithstanding it would have been unjust to hold us accountable if we had not been) was to put us in a position in which we might sin! Left in our fallen state we could not have sinned, but now, by grace, we have the power to do so! Yea, and we have the power, too, to resist all future grace!

(5) “We believe that in the moment Adam fell he had no freedom of will left.” If the race had been left in that state, only Adam and Eve could have been punished; and they, but for one offence, unless they had been punished for things done after their freedom of will was destroyed. All the rest must have been saved. At least they could not have been lost, as they could have committed no crime without freedom of will. Then it follows that the introduction of the Gospel was a great calamity to the human race: for without it, all except the first pair, would have escaped the miseries of hell; but now, multitudes will endure it for ever!

⁵ With reference to this argument of the Princeton *Reviewer*, it is proper to state that Arminians hold that the knowledge of the Saviour, is not essential to salvation, and that all the sons and daughters of Adam—be they Heathens, Mahometans, Papists or Protestants—are in a condition so far to believe and obey God that they may obtain for themselves everlasting life.

(6) “Man’s ‘self-determining principle’ renders it impossible in the very nature of things that the Almighty himself should bring him in and keep him by irresistible grace.”

Then [1] God is dependent on the sinner, not the sinner on God! [2] When Christians pray that God would keep them by his grace—when they believe that He will keep them, they ask and believe what is, in the very nature of things, impossible! To be constrained by irresistible grace (just what common poor Christians in their weakness desire and pray for) would leave no room for their self-determining principle, would destroy their accountability, and is contrary to the nature of the divine government! They must therefore cease to pray and long for this divine guardianship, and rely on their “self-determining principle!” Is it in this view of the matter that our Arminian friends believe in falling from grace? Well they may, for this self-determining principle, which is superior to and independent of all motives or external influences, and which absolutely knows no law, must be a very uncertain dependence. We should undoubtedly believe in falling from grace ourselves, if we held to any such principle.

But this is not all. For [3] according to it, the moment the redeemed soul arrives in heaven it ceases to be an accountable spirit, being kept by irresistible grace; or [4] if not, for aught the grace of God can do for its preservation, it may, like fallen angels, sink down to the blackness of darkness for ever! We are not sure then of eternal life even after we get to heaven, much less can we be in this world! Who can tell what turn this lawless, self-determining principle may take, and how soon it may plunge the redeemed down to hell?

But the mind tires and the heart grows sick in tracing the sad conclusions which flow legitimately from these distinct averments of Arminianism. Enough has been said to show the tendency of their principles. We submit it to the judgment of every candid reader, whether we have done them injustice. As said before, it affords us no pleasure to make these exposures. It is a painful duty, made imperative by our love of the truth, and by the course of those who hold such principles. They are not content to propagate error, but seem to consider themselves called of heaven to overthrow Calvinism. These so-called “Doctrinal Tracts,” which the General Conference ordered to be published that they might be “within the reach of every reader,” and which they are so fond of putting into the hands of Presbyterian readers, are mainly intended to refute that system. They contain but little of the peculiar or positive teachings of Arminianism. Only here and there a cloven foot—an egregious blunder—appears, as in the extracts we have given. The full phials of their vituperation are poured out on Calvinism through more than two hundred pages of the volume. The

following specimens of the controversial style are worthy of preservation. Calvinism “represents the most holy God as worse than the devil, more false, more cruel, and more unjust. On these principles, one might say to our adversary, ‘Thou fool, why dost thou roar about any longer? Thy lying in wait for souls, is as needless and useless as our preaching. Hearest thou not that God hath taken thy work out of thy hands? And that He doth it much more effectually? Thou temptest; He forceth us to be damned, for we cannot resist his will!’”

Leaving the appropriate and heavenly work of disseminating truth, they assail, misrepresent and denounce other denominations in such a style as this. That this is characteristic of their pulpit performances also, as well as their publications, is notorious. With both they come stealthily into quiet and peaceful neighbourhoods, or enter heartily into divided congregations and glory in the work of making proselytes. In such circumstances we feel that it is no breach of Christian charity to exhibit their own principles and show their tendency. They are [1] utterly subversive of all grace in the Gospel of Christ; and [2] encumbered beside with the absurd and unscriptural conclusions mentioned above.

In writing the foregoing pages we have been constantly oppressed with the painful conviction that Arminianism is a delusion. We say painful, because it is with sorrow that we have felt ourselves forced to the conclusion. It is mournful to think of so many persons deceived and deceiving others. But the evidence is irresistible. We have presented it in part, and shall see more of it in the sequel. It pretends to be what it is not. Its advocates claim that they hold the doctrine of grace in perfection; whereas there is no grace in the Gospel, as held by them in distinction from Calvinists. They cannot preach a sermon on grace, but on the great Calvinistic principle that God might justly have left all men to perish in their sins without giving his Son to make an atonement—that men are accountable by nature, as free, moral agents, without the grace of the Gospel to make them so—that as such they may properly be rewarded or punished for their conduct—that God may justly give or withhold his grace as He pleases; and that in the exercise of it, He can move and keep the heart with perfect certainty, without destroying free agency—making his people “willing in the day of his power.”

If they can, let them preach on their own principles; “God could not justly have left me to perish without the offer of salvation.—I should have been irresponsible without it, and without a measure of the grace which it bestows. And now He cannot bring me into his favour and keep me by an irresistible influence without destroying my freedom.” Where could any just idea of grace be introduced into a sermon built on such principles? Yet these are the principles of Arminianism.

We feel constrained to add, here, our decided opinion, that no small part of the alleged success of Arminian sentiments has arisen from a popular delusion on this point. Multitudes have believed that those who, cry “free grace, free grace,” so vociferously, must understand and hold the doctrine, and hence have fallen into their ranks without examination. Let the people see, however, that Arminianism and grace are utterly inconsistent, and the wings of its progress will be clipped. The doctrine of grace is too clear and too precious to be overthrown by a delusion. Even the natural heart, much as it is inclined to such sentiments, cannot commonly embrace them at the expense of grace.

Other questions also have pressed upon us in the preparation of these pages, with painful interest. They are such as these: Can those who hold the Arminian principles, presented above, preach the Gospel fully? Can they fairly present to their hearers the God of the Bible, or the Saviour therein revealed? Suppose them not to preach the positive errors which these extracts contain (and it is mostly in their attempts at controversy that these false and dangerous principles are avowed), can they ever preach the truths to which these errors stand opposed? Can they, and do they, preach that God was under no obligation to provide a Saviour—that He is absolutely free and sovereign in his grace, giving or withholding it as He pleases—that He is able to break the most stubborn will, and to keep even the most wayward of his children against the snares of the devil? We think not. Then do they preach the pure Gospel? Is it not an eviscerated gospel in which God’s sovereignty, his perfect freedom in the gift of his Son, in the bestowment of his grace, and his ability to reach and keep the vilest sinner, are left out? Is it the Father, Son, and Spirit, revealed in the Scriptures whom they set forth? Or is it not their own mistaken idea of what that God ought to be and to do, which is proclaimed?

Having presented the doctrinal aspect of Arminian Methodism, it would be fair and important to inquire into its practical working. This, however, would be an invidious and a very different task, the responsibility of which we do not feel called upon to assume. The recent volumes by the Rev. Parsons Cooke, D.D., go at large into this part of the subject, and to them we refer our readers for many important facts and statistical details. We gladly acknowledge that the Methodists, both in this country and in England, have accomplished a great work. They have carried the Gospel to thousands whom it would never have reached in any other way. They are now pressing forward in the out-lying portions of society, and by their system of itinerant preaching, can reach scattered and feeble communities, which the more cumbrous organization of other Churches cannot so well supply. We would be most unwilling to detract from their merit as a pioneer, hardworking body of men and ministers. We cannot,

however, shut our eyes to some crying evils connected with their system and their spirit. They are, we fear, to a degree which gives them a sad pre-eminence, denunciatory and proselyting. We have hardly, in our whole life, ever heard a sermon from a Presbyterian avowedly against Methodism or Arminianism, and not more than half-a-dozen formal discourses on any distinguishing doctrine of Calvinism. It is the glory of Presbyterian preaching, that the distinguishing doctrines of Augustinianism underlie and sustain all its exhibitions of truth, just as the granite formations underlie the upper and fruit-bearing strata of the earth, without protruding their naked rocks constantly to view. Their necessity and value are not the less. What would the earth be without its granite foundations? On what would seas and soils rest? These doctrines are as precious to God's people as any other portions of his truth; but true men—men imbued with the true spirit of the Bible—leave them, as they are left in the Scriptures, to lie at the foundation, and not to constitute the whole building.

Can this be said of Arminian Methodists? Do they thus preach the truth in its Biblical and edifying form—or in a controversial manner? Are there not a hundred or a thousand sermons preached by Methodists against Calvinism, to one preached by Presbyterians against Arminianism? We have no doubt that it is so; and this preaching, as it is in general that of uneducated and fanatical men, is pure rant—disgusting to men of sense, and shocking to men of right feeling. This we regard as one of the great reproaches of Methodism.

Another evil with which they are charged, and we fear with too much justice, is that of a proselyting spirit. We know of instances within the sphere of our observation, and hear of them from all quarters, of the surreptitious creeping in of Methodists into the bounds of other Churches, and little by little seducing their members, and erecting churches, where the only possibility of their living or growing is by proselyting. We do not mean to say that is a sin peculiar to Methodists. It belongs more or less to all denominations. New-school Presbyterians plant a minister by the side of a feeble Old-school congregation, where the one can live only on the death of the other. Old-school Presbyterians often do the same thing. Episcopalians carry their heads so high that they do not see any other churches, and therefore are never conscious of the sin of intrusion, though they are as often guilty of it as others. Consistently with this confession of the common sin of Churches in this matter, it may, we think, be justly said that Methodists have a very undesirable reputation for being specially offensive and pertinacious in their proselyting temper and measures. Their system gives them peculiar facilities for this work. To plant a Presbyterian or Episcopal Church in any place, there must usually at least be a reliable body of Presbyterians or Episcopalians to begin with. But Methodists,

getting their support from a central fund, can go where there is not a single family of their own denomination, and continue their work from year to year. As they can do this work more easily than others, it is not wonderful they do more of it than others, and that practice gives them skill.

The great practical evil of Methodism, however, as we believe, is the false conversions, and the false form of religion which it fosters. We believe the fact is so notorious, that the better class of Methodists themselves do not deny it, that their system of revivals and periodical excitements brings within their churches multitudes who profess to be the subjects of divine grace, who are deluded by mere emotional excitement, and who relapse into their former state, and become almost inaccessible to all subsequent impressions. The facts connected with this subject are so numerous and so well authenticated as to be really appalling. It cannot be otherwise. What is false in their system of doctrine and theory of religion, must produce the bitter fruits of evil, just in proportion as it is prominently presented and acted out. We have no disposition to pursue this subject, though it is one which calls loudly for the serious attention of all the friends of religion. In proportion as the Methodists become educated, and enabled to understand what Calvinism is, they become less bigoted and denunciatory; and we hope that many of the evils connected with their system will be lessened, if not entirely removed, by their progress in professional knowledge, which need not interfere either with their zeal or their hard working.