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ARTICLE I.

SPIRITUAL BENEFICENCE.

The Divine Law of Beneficence. By Rev. PARSONS
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Zaccheus; or Scriptural Plan of Benevolence. By Rev.
SAMUEL HARRIS, Conway, Mass.

The Mission of the Church; or Systematic Beneficence.
By Rev. EDWARD A. LAWRENCE, Marblehead, Mass.

*The Faithful Steward; or Systematic Beneficence an Es-
sential of Christian Character.* By Rev. S. D. CLARK,
Ashfield, Mass.

Several years ago, a benevolent individual, unknown to us, offered a premium of two hundred and fifty dollars for "the best approved treatise on the importance of *Systematic Beneficence*, and of stately appropriating certain

* The following article was written by a New England man, and its phraseology conforms, in some places, to the systems of charity in operation in that section of our country, viz. the *voluntary associations*. But its principles are equally applicable here as there. Perhaps they are more so, since no *general system* of beneficence can be more perfect than that of the Presbyterian Church. What we need is, not to perfect our system as a whole, but to carry it out more generally and perfectly in its bearing upon particular parts, and upon individuals. This result it is hoped the article before us will have a tendency to produce.—[Eds. S. P. Rev.]

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no man can work." And as we lie on the bed of death, will it not be a comfort to us to reflect that, so far as the cause of Christ is concerned, we have not lived in vain? And when millennial scenes shall have been ushered in, will it not be an honour to us to be remembered as in the number of those who prayed and laboured to advance them? In the shining of that bright day, our children will love to say one to another, "These are the glorious things on which the eyes and the hearts of our fathers and mothers were fixed—the things for which they anxiously and patiently toiled, for which they prayed with many tears, and for which they cheerfully contributed of their store." O! such a reflection will then be worth vastly more to our children than an estate. They will *choose* to be known as the descendants of those who devoted themselves to the cause of Christ, rather than of those who bequeathed to them a worldly treasure.

Every consideration which ought to have weight with a rational mind is urging us, Christian reader, to continued and increased exertion. Let us, then, not be weary in well doing, but by faithful labours, and cheerful sacrifices, and patient sufferings in the cause of Christ, let us prepare to stand before Him, and to hear Him say, "*Well done good and faithful servants, enter ye into the joy of your Lord.*"

ARTICLE II.

UNCONDITIONAL DECREES.

It is with words as with men, they are often the objects of the most blind and inveterate prejudices. What horrible ideas, for instance, have been associated by those of the opposite party, with such terms as whig and tory, republican and royalist, catholic and protestant, unitarian and trinitarian, believer and infidel! And when one, who has been long duped by such prejudices, becomes personally intimate with his neighbor of the opposite party, he is often greatly astonished to find that he is not only a man and a gentleman, but possibly a devout and exemplary christian!

Few words in modern times have been more perverted by such prejudices than the words decree, election, reprobation, and all that vocabulary of terms peculiar to Calvinism. A very large class, of not only intelligent but pious persons, can never hear such words uttered, without either secret or open disgust. And yet, these are all scriptural phrases, and represent ideas and truths held by the great body of the church from the days of the Apostles to the present time.

Among the other obnoxious terms to such persons is the word *decree*. Instead of attaching to this term the sense which belongs to it, and which has come down with it from the remotest antiquity, they give it a meaning entirely novel, and which neither lexicographers nor common usage tolerates. According to them, the term *decree* signifies a rash and arbitrary determination whereby a ruler seeks to accomplish certain measures, irrespective of either their character or the methods by which they are accomplished. (a) Now to associate the term *decree*, in this distorted view of its meaning, with the character of even an earthly prince, would be to represent him as the basest and most tyrannical of men. How awful then must be that presumption, which can affirm a decree of this sort of the infinitely wise and perfect Ruler of the universe! To represent God as supremely selfish and also blind and capricious—who does not shudder at the thought?

In distinction from these perverters of language and maligners of christian doctrine, we hold that the word *decree* has a good signification; and that in theology, at least, it can be associated with no other ideas than those of wisdom, justice and benevolence. Indeed, so excellent is this term,

(a) "The opinion, says Knapp, has long existed in the church, that the decrees of election and reprobation were absolute; that is, without respect to their moral character, God selected from the human race a certain number and destined them to eternal happiness; and on the other hand rejected others in the same arbitrary manner and destined them to eternal condemnation." [The. vol i, 248.] It is wonderful that this learned divine should thus represent the Calvinistic system. According to Calvinistic theology, all men are by nature totally corrupt and worthy of death. Their native characters are essentially equal. From this general mass of fallen humanity, God has been pleased, for reasons known fully to himself alone, to elect, redeem and *sanctify*, not the whole, but a part of the race. These positions Calvinists hold to be fundamentally true. They certainly do not harmonize, however, with the statement given above.

that in the second Psalm, we hear even of the Eternal Son of the Father boasting of it: "I will declare the decree; Jehovah hath said unto me, thou art my Son, this day I have begotten thee." The Hebrew word *hok*, here translated decree, is equivalent, according to Gesenius, to the terms "statute, ordinance, law." Now, when we consider that "the statute, ordinance or law" here spoken of, originated with the Eternal Son, and constitutes the substratum of human salvation, we cannot wonder surely, that He who dwelt from everlasting ages in the bosom of the Father delighted to make it known. And what is true of this primary decree concerning man's redemption, is also true of all those other decrees of God, by which that redemption is communicated. They all originate not only in wisdom, but in infinite wisdom; and they are all directed, not only to good ends, but to the best ends conceivable. No decree of God is, or can be, either arbitrary, capricious, or malignant. Why then, we ask, do men find fault with them? Wholly, we apprehend, from either their own malignity and insubordination, or their ignorance of the true nature of the divine decrees.

But let us enquire more particularly, what are the decrees of God. Webster defines the term decree in its theological sense, as "a predetermined purpose of God." The latter term again he defines as "that which a person sets before himself as an object to be reached or accomplished." Now, placing the two definitions together, a decree of God, according to this lexicographer is, a predetermination of God to accomplish a certain object, or end.

In the human mind a resolution or purpose is usually formed before we proceed to the accomplishment of any object whatever. Indeed, such predetermination of the will is absolutely necessary to render any human action a matter either of intelligence or morality. What is done without such a purpose is the result of accident or mere muscular motion—it is in no sense the deed of the human spirit. Now, the only method by which we can conceive of the operations of the divine mind, is, through analogies drawn from our own. How can we form any conception of God's love or anger, save as we ourselves are the subjects of these emotions? The same is true in reference to the operations of the divine intelligence—we know nothing of them, save

as we make our own modes of reasoning and thought the guides to our conclusions. And if there be in Deity, as there may be, attributes and qualities, none of which we possess, there is a strong probability that such perfections of the Infinite God will ever remain unintelligible to us. Judging thus of the operations of the divine mind from the operations of our own, we can come to no other conclusion but that a fixed purpose or decree must necessarily precede every divine action. We see around us in space a vast system of worlds, all performing various revolutions, and all controlled by some mighty, but invisible power. Now, we can no more conceive that this great universe of nature was brought into being for no definite and fixed purposes, than we can conceive that the whole of it is the product of mere chance. Indeed, it is upon the latter supposition alone, that we can arrive at the conclusion, that the work of creation subserves no ultimate and predetermined ends. If in its origin, the universe is accidental, then in its results it may also subserve accidental purposes. But if an infinitely wise and powerful Creator originated these mighty fabrics of nature, then must there have been ends and objects contemplated by the mind of that Creator, to the fixed accomplishment of which all the agencies in the universe are directed. Nor can we conceive it possible, that by any seeming mishaps by the way, by any false calculations at the outset, or by any errors, oppositions or casualties whatever, these ultimate ends of the Godhead can be defeated. True, it may appear to a being of such limited capacities as man, occupying as he does but a spot in the infinite succession of causes and effects—it may appear to such a being, that both moral and physical evils are intrusions upon God's plan, and that they must, more or less, affect the ultimate objects of creation. But conclusions of this sort arise wholly from the utter incompetency of the human observer to cast his eyes over the whole area of the divine plan. Now, that navigators have often sailed around our globe, it is easy to speculate and argue concerning both its size and shape. But to the first tenants of our planet, to those who occupied but one seemingly flat spot of its surface, how utterly unknown were all the facts of our present geographical knowledge? So with us, who fill but a moment in eternal duration—who encompass but a point in

infinite extension, and whose utmost capacity can comprehend but a drop in universal knowledge—to us the adaptations of seemingly counterworking agencies to those ends which we *infer* an infinitely wise and benevolent God must have had in view in creation, appear not only mysterious, but impracticable. We see not how sin and misery, and “all our wo” can subserve the benevolent purposes of the Supreme Ruler of the universe; or how greater and higher results of good can accrue from causes so malignant and afflictive. To a mind, however, like that of Jehovah, that “sees the end from the beginning,” that encompasses at once the results contemplated and the whole succession of agencies by which those results are to be reached—to a mind of this sort, there is and can be no incongruity whatever between the agencies that precede and the ends that complete the purposes of God.

To enlighten our ignorance on this subject, and also to dissipate our incredulity, God has given us many and powerful analogies. Does the acorn perish in the earth? It is only to yield the oak, whose branches and shade are to delight and protect the traveller. How strange the process, when every Spring, the husbandman covers the fruitful grain beneath the soil, in order that the barns of Autumn and of Winter may overflow with the products of the earth! How ruinous, seemingly, are storms and hurricanes? And yet were it not for these powerful agents, our atmosphere would be in a condition productive only of disease and death. In providence too the same lessons are taught us. Who that holds in his hands the complete biography of one human life, has not there read the truth, that apparent evils in such a life, resulted ultimately in positive and superabounding good? There he sees that poverty produced great wealth; that an ignoble birth reached the palm of immortal honour, and that afflictions and crosses formed a character that nothing else could have created. The hatred of his brethren led Joseph to the premiership of Egypt, and the persecutions of Saul exalted David to the throne of Israel! Daniel’s supremacy over the counsellors of Persia, was brought about by his exposure in a den of lions, and the apostleship of Paul succeeded to his persecution of the christians! Even our blessed Savior’s exaltation to his Father’s right hand, is ascribed in scripture, to “his endur-

ing the cross and despising of its shame." Thus in all nature, and in the histories of both men and nations, is God continually forcing and constraining that hated agent *evil*, to subserve great and good results. These lessons are taught us in all things, and they are taught to us daily. Can we believe then, that those mightier evils that extend, not only over a generation, but over a race; that cover, not simply our zenith but our horizon; that pursue us not only in time, but in eternity; can we believe that evils of even these enlarged dimensions are not subject to the same laws that regulate the lesser trials of our short pilgrimage, and that constrain our bitterest earthly gall to yield us a sweet and heavenly nectar? If God sees to it, that all the shorter roads of evil shall lead to manifest good, will he not also care, that in its mighty pathway through his kingdom—in its highway career to the eternal future—sin shall be so overruled as to promote and enlarge the boundaries of universal bliss? Of this, to our minds, whether we consider the character of God, the lessons He daily sets to us in his works and providence, or the yet clearer elucidations of his will in scripture; there is and can be no doubt. We cannot believe that evil is an accident, or that it is a thing of such inveterate nature, that even omnipotence cannot make it co-operate with other and even antagonistical agencies in the completion of his pre-chosen and infinitely complete plan.

Some may suppose that these views lead to Universalism. We differ from them. Universalism assumes it as a datum, that the highest and best good of the universe consists in the personal felicity of every individual member of that universe. But we do not concede this point. Even in its most exalted and perfect condition, the empire of the Great God may admit, for aught we know, not only of suffering, but of a great amount of suffering. We believe that so far as God himself is concerned, and that countless number of individual beings that constitute His loyal creation, all the moral and physical evils that exist will work out ultimate and real good; but that every rebel in the universe will be a participant of that good, is what we dare not affirm in the face of so many express texts of Scripture to the contrary. (*b.*)

(*b*) Ignorant as we now are of all the motives which led the mind of Deity

The decrees of God, so far as they relate to the salvation of men, are divided by Theologians into two classes; conditional and unconditional; or, contingent and arbitrary. The Arminians hold the former, the Calvinists maintain the latter. The difference, however, between these two classes of divines does not refer to the question, whether or not, means precede ends and antecedents consequents. Both admit the validity of the tie between cause and effect, condition and result. Without planting, according to each, there can be no reaping, and without repentance no forgiveness. The real question of dispute here is, *in whose hands are the conditions, or antecedents, of salvation—those of man or those of God?* The Arminian defends the former, the Calvinist the latter.

“Conditional decrees,” says Knapp, “are those in making which God has respect to the free actions of moral beings. These conditional decrees are founded upon that fore-knowledge of the free actions of men, which we are compelled to ascribe to God. God foresaw from eternity how every man would act, and whether

to permit sin, we can yet perceive that good has resulted from that event which otherwise would never have existed. The highest bliss of the universe must ever consist in the enjoyment, directly or indirectly, of the first originating mind. Before, however, God can be enjoyed he must be revealed. Now, whatever may be said of the origin of sin, it is certain that it has given occasion to the manifestation in the Godhead of attributes and exercises that otherwise had never been known. The holiness and justice of God are never so clearly seen as when brought into contact with sin. Yet more plain is it, that mercy had never been exercised but for the misery into which sin has plunged a part of God's creation. The Incarnation certainly, and the Trinity possibly, had never otherwise been realized. Nor can we conceive that even the power and wisdom of God are revealed so impressively in nature as in the dispensations of Divine Providence with our fallen race. The permission of moral evil, as overruled by God, has also impressed many salutary lessons upon the minds of his intelligent creatures. How has it taught them their frailty, their responsibility, their danger. How has it implanted in them the true principles of moral government; and especially, how has it developed in them, as in God, attributes and exercises that otherwise had never existed! Nor have we completed the picture yet. Our race, like our planet, is evidently connected with a vast creation of intelligent beings existing elsewhere. If not in our present crasis state, no doubt in the immortality of our being closer connexions will be formed between us and them than now exist. The history of our race, therefore, will become hereafter a book of instruction to myriads of beings whose very existence may now seem as merely problematical. Now, how far these and other consequential blessings of sin exceed the positive evils it produces, or whether they are even equal to them, it is for the mind of God alone to determine. That determination we think pretty clearly expressed in his permission of moral evil.

he would comply with the conditions under which the designs of God concerning him would take effect, or would reject them; and upon this fore-knowledge He founded His decree. Of this class are the decrees of God respecting the spiritual and eternal welfare of men. They are always founded upon the free conduct of men, and are never absolute, but always conditional."

In perfect harmony with these sentiments is the following statement of Watson in his Institutes :

"We see, then, the order of Divine operation in individual experience; conviction of sin, faith, justification and regeneration."

The condition of salvation in this category is faith, which, though it be ascribed to a divine operation, is nevertheless located anterior to regeneration. It must be, therefore, at last only such a faith as man is competent to without the renewing of the Holy Ghost. All that the Spirit does in this case is to impart an inclination or desire; the *power* to exercise saving faith being wholly in the hands of the sinner himself.

The Calvinistic view may thus be given, in the language of Dr. Hill :

"The Calvinists say that the faith and good works of the elect are the consequences of their election, and are foreseen by God, because he determined to produce them; that being the fruits of his determination, they cannot be regarded as the cause of it, and therefore that the election of some and the reprobation of others, are to be resolved into the good pleasure of God, acting indeed upon the wisest reasons, but not originally moved by the foresight of any circumstance in the former rendering them more worthy of being elected than the latter." (Div. Bk. iv. ch. 7.)

These quotations are sufficient to show the point at which the Calvinistic and Arminian systems diverge from each other; that point is, *Is saving faith the product of Divine grace; or, is it the exercise of an unrenewed heart?* There are two kinds of faith spoken of in the Scriptures—natural and supernatural, dead and living. The former is that which is exercised by man in the truths of Revelation previously to the new birth; the latter is that which he exercises after that event. The former is represented as the faith of hypocrites and devils; the latter as belonging only to "God's elect." The former results from the unassisted powers of the human mind in the contemplation

of evidence; the latter is the "fruit of the Spirit," "the gift of God," and the result of "His operation." The former is inactive and powerless; the latter "overcomes the world, works by love and purifies the heart." Now, the question is upon the exercise of which of these two kinds of faith is it that "God justifies the ungodly?" Is it upon the exercise of the former, then is the whole world of nominal believers in a state of justification! Why, the veriest drunkard that lies in the ditch; the most profane swearer that visits a bar-room; the whole class of the ungodly around us, admit implicitly the great truths of the gospel, and some of them are often much affected by them. But is it through a faith such as this that God pardons, adopts and saves men? The very question carries in it its own refutation.

The prominent idea in justifying or saving faith, and that which wholly distinguishes it from the ordinary belief of the unconverted, is, trust or confidence in Christ as a Saviour. Hence it is said "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness." Nor is this trust merely such confidence as a man has in the stability of his government, or the regularity of the laws of nature. It is rather the confiding spirit of a wife in her husband, of a child in his parent. The soul perceives in Christ not only dignity and excellence, but love and friendship. It is attracted to him, and is enabled to rely on him wholly and forever, for all the blessings of salvation. Now, it is evident that a state of mind of this sort does not show a man to be in a state of nature, but of grace. No internal evidence of regeneration can possibly be stronger than the exercise of such confidence in the all-sufficiency of Christ to save from sin and hell. Even the highest rapture, or the most extatic joys, would not indicate as surely that a soul was born of God. Indeed, an unrenewed heart is wholly incompetent to exercise that trust in Christ which is the very essence of justifying faith. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Now, the great fact in "things of the Spirit" here spoken of, is Jesus Christ as a propitiatory sacrifice for sin. It is the chief office of the Holy Ghost, in the work of conversion, to reveal Christ to the soul, and so enable the soul to rely on Him for salva-

tion. But until the soul perceives the loveliness of Christ, and has some suitable notions of the design and import of His death upon the cross, it cannot confide in Him. These perceptions, however, of Christ and His work, the Apostle assures us no man has in his natural state. Never, till the soul is renewed, does it, or can it, properly appreciate the Lord Jesus Christ. Up to that moment, even in the depth of his conviction, does every awakened sinner reject Him as a Saviour. There may be in such a state of mind desires for pardon; there may be strong crying and striving after salvation; there may be, under the teachings of the ministry, a seeming concentration of all the powers of the soul to find an unknown Christ; but there is in it no true faith, because the soul, at this period of its exercises, really has no true knowledge of the son of God as a Saviour. Hence it uniformly happens, that persons in this state of mind seem to be little profited by the counsels or exhortations of friends. You may demonstrate to them that all that is required is faith; you may explain and illustrate the nature of that faith so clearly, that one would think they could not remain a moment longer in darkness, and yet all your efforts and explanations are powerless until the Spirit accomplishes his work of renewal. The moment this work takes place, not only faith, but peace and joy, ensue. The soul now sees the excellency of Christ and feels no difficulty whatever in resting upon Him for salvation. Thus is faith not the operation of a natural heart—not the product simply of human endeavour and agency, but the “fruit of the Spirit,” and “the gift of God.”

Again: to place justifying faith anterior to regeneration, is to invert the order of things in the Gospel, and instead of representing God as anticipating man in all the various parts of the work of redemption, it exhibits man in the foreground, and as leading after him the mercy and goodness of the Creator. Expiation was conceived and executed, not by consultation of man, but wholly in the counsels of the Godhead. All the institutions, too, of the true religion, whether Mosaic or Christian, were not ordained of man, but appointed by God. The call, too, of the Prophets and Apostles was not by human authority, but by that of God. So, too, in the conversion of the soul, the work of God is not second but first; not resultant, but

causal; not subsidiary, but effectual. Christ said to his disciples, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." The Apostle John also declares, "We love Him because He first loved us." Now, if we put faith anterior to regeneration, we invert this order of things in the divine economy, making man, not only an agent, but the chief agent in the work of his conversion. Faith, according to this theory, is the antecedent or condition of regeneration; and inasmuch as such faith is exercised antecedently to regeneration, it is of course but a natural faith, and one which man exercises by means of his own native powers. Now, if regeneration is the result of such faith, and not its source, then do we place man and his work in a state of priority to God and the gifts of His grace. We represent not God as seeking man, but man as seeking God—not grace as subduing and sanctifying nature, but nature as stimulating and urging forward the grace of God.

But it may here be asked, why is the exercise of faith in Christ the first duty enjoined by the Gospel upon a sinner, if, in an unrenewed state, he is wholly incompetent to such exercise? The answer to this, so far as it relates to the subject under discussion, is easy. God commands faith in order to *impart it*. There is a strong analogy between these moral operations of the Spirit and those physical changes wrought by the same agent upon the first chaos. Over that chaos the Almighty Speaker issued his commands to "things that were not, as though they were." Nor were those commands ineffective, but under their influence light was developed; a firmament was spread abroad; plants and animals sprang into being; the heavens were peopled with winged songsters; the seas became alive with fish; and man, God's image, though last work, stood up in beauty and grandeur. If not the physical, our moral world, from its original glory, has been reduced to a universal and calamitous chaos. The Spirit, however, has not been withdrawn, but through Christ is still "moving upon the face of the waters," and the voice of the same Almighty Speaker is still heard amid all the chasms and depths of spiritual death, saying, "Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." God, as truly now as in the first arrangement of elementary matter, calls those "things that

are not as though they were." He commands repentance, but gives it; He requires faith, but bestows it.

The miracles of our Saviour afford beautiful illustrations of these facts. When the blind, the lame, and the diseased, were brought to Christ, he commanded them respectively to see, to walk, to be whole. In themselves they were competent to do none of those things commanded. True, the blind could walk, the lame could see, and the diseased, in many cases, do both. But the wonder-working Saviour, to show forth his power and grace, addressed his commands to those things which each respectively could not do. It was their impotence that he would convert into strength, their weakness that he would change into power, their deadness that he would reanimate with life. It is just so here. Christ does not call men to salvation because they are able to save themselves; He does not call them to repentance because they are able to repent of themselves; nor does He call them to faith because they are able, even before regeneration, to believe. The reason of the command is just the opposite of all this. He calls men to salvation because they are lost; he calls them to repentance because they are helplessly impenitent; and He calls them to faith because in themselves they would remain forever in unbelief.

The foregoing observations are sufficient, we trust, to prove that the exercise of justifying faith is not anterior to regeneration, but its effect. True, it is a human exercise—it is man that believes. But, then, it is man made alive by the Spirit, and not man "dead in trespass and sins." It is said of Lazarus, "And he that was dead came forth." But this coming forth was not anterior to his quickening, but subsequent to that event. So with every one truly converted—he believes—but then it is only after Christ has given him life. All the exercises of a dead heart are like itself dead—its repentance is dead, its faith is dead, its desires and hopes are dead. But when the grace of God quickens that heart, then all its exercises are vital—its repentance is genuine—its faith is lively and justifying—its hopes and joys are spiritual and heavenly.

Now, if we have proved, as we hope we have, that the condition of salvation, *faith*, is in the hands of God, and not of man, then, even according to the admission of Ar-

minians themselves, it is the fit object of a divine decree. The difficulty with the Arminian system here is, that by subjecting the exercise of faith to mere carnal volition, it places the decree of God upon a contingency. True, that contingency is foreknown to God; but it is foreknown to God only as an Omniscient Being, and not as the product of His own will. He foresees how many men will, by their own choice and power, believe; and these he elects to everlasting life. But to arrive at this conclusion we must previously admit a most fearful error—that faith, the prime condition of salvation, has its origin in man, not in God; in the sinner, not in the Holy Spirit. This error, we trust, we have refuted, demonstrating, both from Scripture and reason, that justifying faith is the result, not the cause or means of regeneration; and that therefore it is the work and gift of God, and not the endeavour or virtue of man.

Now, if regeneration be a work of God, and faith be its consequent, not its antecedent, then is regeneration *decreed* and not contingent. It results from the will of God; that will never acts save from predetermination, and that predetermination is what we mean by a decree. We hold it then as a great truth, that if man does not save himself, or is not unintentionally saved by God, that he is saved by virtue of a divine decree or purpose. God saves him, and he previously determined to do so.

But it is the *eternity* of such a decree that is peculiarly offensive to some minds. This eternity of the decree, however, has not so much to do with the *doctrine* of predestination as it has with the *nature* of God. God is eternal, and his purposes are said to be eternal from that fact. They, therefore, who war against the doctrine of decrees on this score, must either attempt to prove that God acts without any definite intention, or that eternity is not a proper element of his nature.

The controversy then, between Arminians and Calvinists on this subject, is reduced down to *the authorship of faith*. If faith be, as the Arminians allege, the product of unregenerated human nature, and if its exercise be so much a matter of man's volition as to lie beyond the control of Deity, then is its exercise contingent; and, of course, the salvation that follows that exercise is contingent also. But if faith is the product of the Spirit in regeneration, and if

God be truly its author and source, then is it as much a matter of the divine decree as any event that occurs in the kingdom of nature. It is a work of God, and therefore pre-determined. This fact, we presume, few would deny, were it not for the fearful consequences that must ensue. But what are these fearful consequences? Why, simply that a part of mankind are saved; and that God saves that part by an act of free grace! Is this a suitable matter for complaint? But says the caviller, why did he not save all? Ah, this is the rub at last. Men see no good reason why that grace which selects a portion of the race should not have chosen the whole. "Is not God a just Sovereign, they are ready to say, and is not his power infinite? Why then, if salvation be his work, is it not universal?" To defend the character of God in the case, they betake themselves to numerous devices and subterfuges. Thus it happens, that under the pretext of apologizing for the divine conduct, salvation is wrested entirely out of the hands of Jehovah, and placed in those of the creature! But is the evil remedied by this device? Not at all; but greatly increased; for besides the original difficulty, there is introduced for our settlement another and a greater one. True, in our disputes about the latter, the former may be overlooked. But it still exists; and despite the benevolent creed and efforts of Arminians, a large portion of mankind live and die under guilt and condemnation. Account for it as we may, apologize for it as we can, it still remains a truth, that but a *part* of mankind are saved. The Calvinist maintains that this part are saved, not by themselves or by mere human agency, but by God. He is also firmly persuaded that were it not for God's special intervention in behalf of these, even they would share the fate of the rest, a just and merited perdition.

In conclusion we would say, that the limitation of the remedy provided for sin to a part of our race, is to be solved upon the same ground that we account for the existence of moral evil. To allege that moral evil exists through an abuse of human freedom, is precisely equivalent to saying that the reprobate of our race are sent to perdition on account of their sins. We simply assign in each case the proximate cause of sin and punishment. Now, it is true, that were man not free he could not sin; and it is also true, that his sinning is the abuse of his freedom. It is true

also, that the rejecters of Christ and all the wicked who perish, deserve that perdition. *entirely* for their sin's sake. They have natures and characters that by a sort of moral necessity must precipitate them into hell. But solutions of this kind reach only to the *human part* of these great mysteries. Beyond human agency, however, in these mighty events, there lies a back-ground of divinity—God's plans, and purposes and decrees, are at the base of these things. The fall of man was surely no accident; nor is the partial redemption of our race a matter of chance. The finger of God was in both; and the purpose of God was in both.—Now, if it still be asked, why God permitted moral evil to exist, or why he did not extend the remedy to the limits of that evil, our reply is, that it is not for man, the creature of a day, the proprietor of but a spark of intelligence, to interrogate his Maker on these points. (c) God is infinitely wise, benevolent, and just. This we know, and hence infer, that even these mysterious dispensations of his providence are essentially good, and must be followed by good results. Here, if anywhere, we must take our stand till all this darkness shall pass away. The future is for the most part a fast sealed-up book; but when its mysteries shall be disclosed, we will clearly see, that both in the permission of moral evil and in the limitation of redemption, God was actuated by good and wise motives, and that even here, in these deep shades of humanity, "He is light, and in Him is no darkness at all."

(c) Besides the fact, that the partial application of the remedy for sin, demonstrates God's absolute sovereignty over his creatures, (and this is Paul's solution of the matter) it appears to us, that a universal redemption would have been, as a governmental measure, nearly as bad as a universal pardon. The difference in the case is chiefly in this, that the one rests solely upon the divine clemency, and the other upon a satisfaction rendered to government.—But when it is considered that this satisfaction has been provided by the government itself, the practical result in each case must be substantially alike. The authority of the throne would be lessened; the transgression would be viewed as a trifle; and the whole influence of example would be turned to ill account. Let us illustrate. Suppose the inhabitants of a province to rebel against their sovereign, and that they are all accounted worthy of death. Would not the restoration of that Province to royal favor, by some method of substitution on the part of the government be all one, as a general amnesty pronounced by the King? But if the government should discriminate; and on the one hand deliver up a part to the law, but rescue the balance from death, no pernicious consequences could follow. On the contrary, by the combined exhibition of rigid justice and of a prudent clemency, the Province would be restored and the authority of the sovereign exalted.