

THE

# CALVINISTIC MAGAZINE.

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"Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."

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For the Calvinistic Magazine.

## A FAMILIAR DIALOGUE,\*

BETWEEN CALVINUS AND ARMINIUS: PRINCIPALLY ON THE  
DOCTRINES OF ELECTION AND PREDESTINATION.

*Arminius.* Friend *Calvinus*, I am glad to see you. I have had, for some time, a desire of a friendly interview with you; that we might converse freely together, on some important points, much agitated in the present day, and, I fear, in such a manner as tends greatly to retard the progress of piety and brotherly love.

*Calvinus.* Be assured, Sir, that my sentiments on any subject with which I am acquainted are free and candid. I am also fond of friendly discussion, so long as it tends to edification. But you know, friend *Arminius*, that we differ very widely in some of our opinions; and should we enter into any matter of controversy, I fear the adversary might take advantage of us.

*Ar.* The grace of God, I trust, will sufficiently guard us against the evil you mention. And as I do not intend a controversy with you, but principally to put forth enquiries, and state objections, for the sake of hearing your replies, the danger which you have anticipated need not be seriously dreaded.

*Cal.* I am not fond of religious controversy. It too often generates strife and animosity, sours the temper, confounds the judgment, foments feuds, excites malevolence, banishes love from the heart, offends God, and often proves a successful engine in the

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\*A work of this title appeared some years ago in an anonymous pamphlet, printed in Kentucky. The present is an abstract of that work in a condensed, and somewhat improved form. It embraces only a part of the original work, as some of the topics of discussion in that work have already appeared, though in a different form, but by the same hand, in the Calvinistic Magazine. The ideas, & sometimes the words of different Calvinistic writers are introduced without mention of the author's name, or reference to the work. The design of the writer was that *Calvinus* should represent the sentiments of the Calvinists generally, in this discussion, to whomsoever they might belong. His sincere desire is that it may prove satisfactory to all who are denominated Calvinists, and edifying to the readers of the Magazine generally.

offer, and hope we shall not fall out by the way. Come, let us repair to yonder green shade; the day is calm and pleasant, and we shall be separated from noise and interruption.

*Ar.* With all my heart; the place is agreeable, the season suitable, and I anticipate a favorable opportunity of a fair and candid statement from you of those doctrines and sentiments which you hold, and which appear to me, not only to be very objectionable, but I find likewise they are almost every where spoken against.

*Cal.* I expect I anticipate you. The doctrine of Divine Sovereignty, in *Predestination* and *Election*, is the principal thing, I suppose, to which you allude.

*Ar.* There are some other matters respecting which I shall expect your opinion before we part; but, as you have observed, the points just mentioned are the principal that occasion so much altercation, and which appear to me contrary to both reason and scripture.

*Cal.* The doctrine of God's *Decrees* of Predestination and Election, is very unpopular at all times, because of the hostility of the carnal mind, and the pride of self-righteous man. "Ignorance and prejudice are up in arms here; and he who would stand up in defence of this article of *the faith once delivered to the saints*, is deemed a fatalist, and unfriendly to piety." So deeply rooted are the prejudices of the human heart against it, that a more hopeless undertaking can scarcely be thought of, than to appear in its defence. The man's reputation as a believer, and knowledge as a divine, are both likely to be forfeited. So that no secular interest, or popular motive could, therefore, be an inducement to any one to embrace this hated doctrine; and nothing but the cause of sacred truth could prompt me to appear in its favor.

As to its being "contrary to *reason*," you must permit me to observe, that it does not owe its origin to reason, no more than the doctrine of the Trinity, the Incarnation of Christ, the Resurrection of the same body, Miracles, &c. Now, reason had no hand in the discovery of these, but they are doctrines of pure revelation, which reason, alone, could never have found out; still, they are consistent with the highest reason. Think not then to combat the doctrine of the decrees with reason *alone*. It is better to observe that docility of mind, that submission to God, and that deference to what he has taught in the sacred Scriptures, than to wander without a guide in the intricate mazes of speculation.—Some people had better take a "*Thus saith the Lord*" for it, than to speculate.

*Ar.* But can you make it appear that the doctrines, in question, are *scriptural*?

*Cal.* Certainly. They are there as plainly taught as Faith and Repentance; and I think if ever I read my Bible with understanding, I as plainly see the one as the other. And although reason's line be infinitely too short to fathom these *deep things of God*, yet when discovered by revelation, they are by no means contrary to reason. By "the decrees of God," I understand his *purpose and determination concerning all persons and things*. Eph. i. 11. Now in this purpose or decree, he hath so connected the means and the end, that the rational exercise of the natural powers of the moral agent is not abridged, nor the freedom of choice destroyed. Or, to use the language of our confession, "There is thereby no *violence* offered to the *will* of the creature, nor is the *liberty or contingency of second causes taken away*, but rather established;" as will appear from Acts xvii. 26—ii. 23, and iv. 27, 28, which we shall notice more particularly hereafter. So that the horrid charge of "*fatalism*," or "*devilism*," so repeatedly reiterated, and so loudly fulminated against us by many of your young preachers, and others, to say the least, is very illiberal and ungenerous.

I wish you farther to observe, that "these decrees are founded on and proceed from the *self-existence, independence, unchangeableness, omniscience, wisdom, and justice of God*, who always acts according to *plan, order, determination, and choice*. For the Deity to act without *order and design*, would necessarily imply imperfection and weakness, which idea would be shocking to indulg." That God always *effects* what he *designs*, and always *designed* what he *effects*, is a proposition so plain and self-evident that it cannot be denied.—"I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it." Eccl. iii. 14.

"In the New Testament, there is no expression on this subject, that has been translated *decree*, though some of the *phrases* might have been so translated. The expressions there, are *counsel, purpose, determinate counsel, foreknowledge*; and when it relates to the state of man, it is *choosing, ordaining, predestinating*." Now, if you choose to enter upon the "criticism of the Greek words, you will not only find them translated well into English, but that they are mostly, if not wholly, of the same import that the generality of sound Calvinists understand them to possess.—If we consider the *objects* of these divine *decrees or purposes*, call what you please; it is evident they are strictly and properly *universal*; so much so

indeed, as not to admit of any exception or shadow of exception—all creatures, and all their actions, and all events.” Do not be startled, *Arminius*: but let me not be misunderstood: I admit there is some *difference* between the light in which some events and actions, are to be considered as the objects of the divine appointment, and others. The difficulty indeed is, to shew wherein the difference consists; yet it is equally certain from revelation and reason, that *natural good and evil*, and *moral good and evil*, are to be considered as *not in the same sense*, the object of Divine appointment. I need not undertake to prove, what none can deny, namely, that God *has*, and *ever had*, a perfect knowledge of all things that *did*, or *ever shall* come to pass:—All creatures, and all their actions, and all events. We may safely, and must necessarily conclude, that if the nature of God is infinite, his knowledge must be so too, and that he must consequently foreknow whatsoever shall come to pass. “His foreknowledge then of the sanctification and eternal salvation of all that ever shall be saved, renders those events certain and necessary: because they will not, they cannot be otherwise, than he foreknew they would be; for if his knowledge were not certain, it would not be knowledge but conjecture. If God’s foreknowledge be certain, the event must likewise be certain and necessary, for how could he otherwise foreknow it? If he did not eternally foreknow these events in all their circumstances, just as they would come to pass, it would not have been knowledge but mistake; and if he foreknew those events just as they would come to pass, they must necessarily come to pass, just as he foreknew they would.—A necessity of infallibility or certainty must, therefore, be unavoidably connected with the knowledge of God.” As to the *event* then, where is the difference between God’s eternal and infallible foreknowledge, and his eternal decrees?

*Ar.* It appears very strange to me, how you can view the divine decrees as extending to such a multiplicity of objects, and in such variety of conditions, as we now see in the world, and at the same time view a consistency in the divine character as a just and holy Being.

*Cal.* These divine decrees, to our finite minds, appear to be innumerable, according to the multiplicity of their objects; yet in God they are not so, being only one eternal, intuitive, comprehensive view in his infinite mind, of what creatures, and what performances, would be for his glory and the praise of the great perfections of the divine nature. Thus at once, “known unto God are

*all his works* from the beginning of the world." Acts xv. 18. And "*all things*" were wrought "*after the counsel of his own will.*" Eph. i. 11. Now this one comprehensive, and to us incomprehensible divine act and decree, being pregnant with the whole of creation, and all the events relative thereto, we, of necessity, must divide and subdivide, the several divine purposes respecting angels and men, owing to the finite dark conceptions we have of these things. However dark and incomprehensible it may appear to a finite mind, yet there seems to be no difficulty in believing, that he who saw the whole glorious complex system of the universe, together with its daily and hourly accomplishment, could at once, in infinite wisdom, write down, in the comprehensive eternal purpose, the number of men that should ever come into the world—class them in so many generations—divide those generations into different nations, kingdoms and governments—wisely provide amongst them all the necessary different gifts and accomplishments for the support and management of the whole—purpose the several great political changes and alterations upon which, as so many hinges, the more subordinate should turn, as a "wheel in the middle of a wheel," keeping a special eye upon the well-being of his church, in her progress through all generations, and in the whole of this conduct, the Almighty so influencing and overruling the most minute event with respect to man in time and all his actions, yet in such a way, that he is by no means the author of sin, nor does he impel the will of his creatures, or destroy the influence or contingency of second causes, but in the issue, in the last great day, a solid ground-work shall be found to have been laid for the eternal glory of the divine Sovereignty, wisdom, justice and mercy of God. "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out." What mortal man on earth can *deny* the right of his Sovereign to appoint the number of his days, the moment of his birth, and of his death—the different plans of his habitation, and to order and dispose of his lot and condition in time with respect to all the different ingredients and changeable circumstances thereof? Who can deny the absolute decrees of God, without at the same time denying his fixed and unalterable plan of providence? Or who can advance the absurd notion of conditional decrees without making the Divine Being dependent on the creature, and uncertain as to his determinations until the fickle volitions of sinful man shall enable him? And, to push the inquiry a little further, who can deny the doctrine of foreordination, and yet expect the

certain accomplishment of those events which are to be fulfilled from prophetic declarations made some thousands of years ago by men inspired of God? In short, a denial of the doctrine, for which I plead, will not stop short of downright skepticism, which maintains that all things are uncertain.

*Ar.* But how can you reconcile the *divine purpose*, according to your statement, with the *free-agency* of man, and the righteous punishment of sin?

*Cal.* I readily acknowledge that there is a difficulty in *explaining* that point; yet it does not prevent me from believing the *fact*; especially when I find it in the volume of Divine Inspiration. And I can as readily believe in this declaration, that "God hath, for his own glory, foreordained whatsoever comes to pass." as that "according to his purpose, he worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." Eph. i. 11. He that can discover the difference except in words, I must freely own, has a capacity of discernment that I do not possess.

*Ar.* But you said that, "the purpose of God extended to all creatures, and all their actions, and all events;" I wish you to enlarge on this subject, as I am anxious to know how you can manage it so as not to make God the author of sin.

*Cal.* I have often thought that an Arminian, who finds fault with the doctrine of Predestination, as making out God the author of sin, unjust, &c; ought first to reconcile, or clear the difficulty in his own way, namely, to believe, as he must do "that the Deity has created millions of human beings, *knowing, with certainty*, that they would prove incorrigible sinners, incur his divine displeasure, and that he, in consequence, would consign them to eternal punishment in the region of misery and woe." So that Calvinists are not the only persons who have difficulties in their way on these subjects. But I shall endeavor, as well as I can, to comply with your request; and would observe, in the *first* place; that the *purposes* of God extend to the Angels. Some, for the advancement of his glory, were permitted to fall irrecoverably. Jude 6. Others are confirmed in a state of complete holiness, and are called "*elect angels*" I. Tim. v. 21. With respect to man, his birth, life and death are objects of the divine decree, as will appear from the word of God. "Is there not an *appointed* time to man upon earth? Seeing his days are *determined*, the number of his months are with thee; thou hast *appointed* his bounds that he cannot pass." Job vii. 1, and xiv. 5. It is likewise *appointed* unto man once to die, and the reason why the enemies of our

Lord could not lay hands on him was because, *his hour was not yet come*. Men come into the world at God's appointed time; they spread abroad over the earth and with perfect freedom make choice of the place of their habitation; and yet, in doing this, fulfill the divine appointment; and this is one fact, amongst many, that there is no inconsistency between *foreordination* and man's *free-agency*. This is further confirmed from the passage which declares that God, "hath made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath *determined the times before appointed*, and the *bounds of their habitation*." Acts xvii. 26.

I proceed in the next place to observe, that *good* and *bad* actions, are all subject to the divine purpose. Here you are to be reminded of what has been said, namely, "That *natural* good and evil, and *moral* good and evil, are to be considered as not in the same sense, the object of divine appointment." That good actions are of divine appointment, will not be doubted. "The *steps* of a good man are *ordered* by the Lord." Ps. xxxvii, 23. "It is God who worketh in you both to *will* and to *do* of his good pleasure." Phil. ii. 13. The purposes of God, in these cases, do not force, or compel, but sweetly incline and determine the will, both to the action and the right manner of performing it. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of my power." Ps. cx. 3. "*By me* kings reign, and *princes decree justice*. By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth." Prov. viii. 15, 16. Another proof, this, of the consistency of divine Sovereignty and means free-agency. But I have said that *sinful actions* are likewise the objects of the divine decrees. While I discard the abhorrent thought, of making God the author of sin, as much as you do, yet I am bold to say, and the scriptures will bear me out in it, that both *natural* and *moral* evil are, some how or other, the objects of divine appointment; with a difference I am not able to explain. It is very certain that *sinful actions* are not barely *permitted*, but also *limited* and *directed* to good and holy ends, contrary both to nature of sin, and the intention of the sinner.

On the subject of natural evil, such as war, famine, pestilence, and such like, the word of God is plain: "I make peace and *create evil*. Is there evil in a city and the *Lord hath not done it?*"—Isa. xlv. 7: Amos iii. 6. With respect to moral evil, it is admitted on all hands that God cannot be the author of it; and yet it is evident, from the following cases, that the divine purpose is, some how or other, conversant about it.

The conduct of Joseph's brethren respecting him was doubtless

very sinful; yet he declares to them afterwards, that "God *did* send me before you to preserve life. So now it was not you that *sent me hither, but God.*" Gen. xlv. 5, 8. It was no doubt a sinful action in Shimei to curse David, the Lord's anointed; yet when Abishai desired to go and take off his head, David forbade him saying, "Let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David.—Let him alone and let him curse, *for the Lord hath bidden him.*" II. Sam. xvi. 10, 11. David had "sinned against the Lord," and this conduct of Shimei was intended as a part of his punishment, which was more fully to be affected by another and more powerful circumstance. "Thus saith the Lord, behold I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house: and I will take thy wives before thine eyes and give them unto thy neighbour, and *he shall lie with thy wives* in the sight of this sun." II. Sam. xii. 11. Here, the *end* in view, is David's punishment: sinful actions were the *means* by which it was to be accomplished; and this was effected by the king's own son; "So they spread Absalom a tent upon the top of the house, and Absalom went in unto his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel." II. Sam. xvi. 22. Now it cannot be supposed, that the Lord *infused* this wickedness into the heart of Absalom, but left him under the influence of those vile affections which were there before; neither was he *impelled* to the action by any decree of God, for of this he could have no knowledge, and consequently could not be a rule of his conduct; yet the difficulty lies here;—how could the positive and express purpose of God be fulfilled;—how could the punishment decreed, be inflicted on David, in the above mentioned cases, without some determination, in some way or other, as to the means by which it was to be effected? A similar case we find in Hosea, iv. 13, 14. The people of Israel sacrificed upon the tops of the mountains, burnt incense upon the hills, under oaks, and poplars, and elms. For this sinful conduct the Lord expressly denounces the following punishment upon them. "Therefore your daughters *shall commit whoredom*, and your spouses *shall commit adultery.* I will not punish your daughters when they commit whoredom, nor your spouses when they commit adultery." Now it is certain that all such conduct is very sinful; and yet it is as certain that the punishment denounced could not take place without it; yet every person must see and know, that the perpetrators, and not God, were the real *authors* of the sin committed.

*Ar.* Pray, sir, can you tell in what way, or whether at all, was the Divine agency employed in the fall of Adam: and how is it now.



employed with respect to the sinful affections and actions of men?

*Cal.* "Adam, created after the image of God in holiness, was capable of *changing*, and becoming unholy, *without any positive divine interposition*. Satan's insinuations, therefore, *might*, when believed, produce *by their own efficacy* his image; yet surely man had begun to fall at the moment when he favorably listened to the temptation; and his belief of Satan's lies was *wicked* in itself, as well as the principle of his subsequent wickedness. No creature can act without the concurrence and influence of the Almighty: yet it is certain, if God does not influence to the *moral goodness* of the action, it is impossible that a sinful creature, without that influx, can perform an action morally good. In order to the holiest creatures losing their virtue, need any thing more be supposed on God's part, than only his leaving them to themselves, or not upholding in them, and constantly invigorating a virtuous disposition. On the other hand, I imagine there is no need of supposing any other divine agency, than only to uphold in existence, creatures that have lost their virtue, amidst surrounding temptations, in order to account for all the evil affections which we ever feel; and for all the external wickedness that is ever committed." And as, in this way, we can account for the existence of all manner of evil; so we can thus understand how it is possible for God to bring about "whatsoever comes to pass," without being the *actor, maker, or instigator*, of any thing that is not perfectly good.

*Ar.* I must confess that your views of this subject are not quite so frightful as I had supposed, from what I had heard oftentimes stated as the sentiments of Calvinists.

*Cal.* Yes, sir, and the want of candour and christian charity, or something else, in our opponents, has induced them to make use of ugly names and hard speeches, in attempting to palm upon us obnoxious sentiments which we disavow; and which are calculated to prejudice the populace against us, by clothing them in such horrid colours. But I now will proceed to observe, that the *voluntary actions* of men are subject to the purposes of God. "There are many devices in a man's heart: nevertheless the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand. A man's heart deviseth his way, but the Lord *directeth* his steps. Man's goings are of the Lord; how can a man then understand his own way." Prov. xvi. 9—xix. 21—xx. 24. It will be admitted, I suppose, that the conduct of Joseph's brethren toward him was entirely voluntary; so was that of the Jews and Romans in the crucifixion of our Lord;

yet they all fulfilled the divine purpose. From such cases it will appear, that human creatures being actuated by their own selfish and political views, Divine Providence renders the operation of their passions subservient to its most impenetrable designs, and governs all by an absolute control, regulating all mundane affairs according to the vast and complicated plan of causes and effects, existing through everlasting ages in the eternal prescience of God, without infringing the liberty, or restraining the free will of man. The whole series of causes and effects—the infinitely diversified train of physical and moral circumstances, and the continued succession of events, are from all eternity, present to the divine intellect. But all events are produced by a train of causes and consequences, by a combination of circumstances so closely connected, that without one, another cannot exist. The history of the world is nothing less than the history of God's eternal purpose and providence.

*Ar.* I suppose then you hold that “Marriage is a lottery,” and that whatever *is to be, will be.*”

*Cal.* I hold that marriage is of divine appointment; and altho' generally speaking, there is nothing on earth more voluntary than the marriage contract, yet in this very thing is the counsel of heaven fulfilled. Hundreds, and thousands of marriage contracts have been broken off unexpectedly, by the most trivial circumstances; and thousands more accomplished, which, previously, were marked with every appearance of improbability; and matters have so turned out as to enforce the conviction, even from the most reluctant, that surely such and such persons were *designed* to meet together in the marriage relation; which rendered all precontracts with others abortive, until the proper persons did meet. Although distance of time and place, intervening continents, rivers and mountains, inequality of age, person, and fortune, disapprobation of parents and friends, all seemed to conspire to prevent the connexion. Time, however, has brought about the whole affair like a “weel in the middle of a wheel,” and gave us to know that though “there are many devices in a man's heart, nevertheless the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand.”

As for marriage being a “lottery,” I must deny it, if I understand the phraseology, which means, according to Dr. Johnson, “A game of chance;” and I confess I am not fond of the language of gamblers, such as *luck, chance, fortune, &c.* when discoursing on matters that relate to the divine providence. To suppose that marriage is not under the special control of the divine Being, or

that it is a mere accidental thing, is to suppose an entire uncertainty respecting the *number* of human beings who shall come into the world, the instruments *by* whom they are to be propagated, and finally does not stop short of downright skepticism, making all things entirely uncertain; or, to say the least of it, subject to mere *chance*. And as to the sentiment of "whatever is to be, will be," who can deny it without falling into the absurdities just mentioned. If you deny this, you might as well maintain that what is yet future, with respect to man, but present with respect to Deity, may nevertheless never take place; or that what now exists, never was future. The existence of every individual now on earth, with all the appending circumstances, two hundred years ago were future and certain; yet if you deny the position in question, you must be forced into the absurdity of maintaining that although these things *were to take place*, yet they might *not have taken place*. I have often smiled at the simplicity of some who were mighty opposers of the doctrine of preordination; yet, they supposed it might be true that, "whatever is to be, will be;" and were confident that a man who is "born to be hanged, could never be drowned;" so forcibly sometimes does the truth of this doctrine present itself to men's minds, that they are led to acknowledge it unawares. And I am astonished to think how you can believe your Bible, and yet cry out against the doctrine of predestination, as though it were not to be found there.

*Ar.* Pray, give me a definition of the word *predestination*, and point out the passages where you see it so plainly.

*Cal.* Predestination, as has been intimated, is the decree of God, whereby he hath for his own glory foreordained whatsoever comes to pass. "The verb predestinate is of Latin original, (*predestino*) and signifies in that tongue to deliberate beforehand with one's self how one shall act; and, in consequence of such deliberation, to constitute, foreordain, and predetermine, where, when, how, and by whom, any thing shall be done, and to what end it shall be done. So the Greek word ( $\Pi\rho\omicron\upsilon\pi\iota\zeta\omega$ ) exactly answers to the English word predestinate." The words decree, purpose, counsel, &c. as already observed, mean the same thing.

The following passages we think are so plain, as to authorize us to receive the doctrine as a revelation from heaven:—"For whom he did foreknow, he also did *predestinate*, &c. whom he did *predestinate*, he also called. Having *predestinated* us unto the adoption of children. Being *predestinated* according to the *purpose* of him who worketh all things after the *counsel* of his own will."

Rom. viii. 29, 30. Eph. i. 5, 11. Another passage which expresses this doctrine as plainly as words can do it, we find in Isa. xlvi. 9, 10. "I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me; declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, my counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." Now, whether the doctrine for which I plead be true or not, if I wanted to express it, I do not believe I could find words in the English language better adapted than these; and what our opponents do with this passage I cannot tell, as I believe they seldom find use for it, either in the pulpit or the press. But that we may come more directly to a point we had in view a while ago, respecting the consistency of the divine purpose with the voluntary actions of men, I would ask, whether the death of Christ was not foreordained?

*To be continued.*

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## A SERMON,

BY CHARLES COFFIN, D. D.

PRESIDENT OF EAST TENNESSEE COLLEGE.

JEREMIAH xvii. 27. "But, if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the Sabbath-day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath-day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched."

Thus ends the most extended passage in the Bible on the signal duty of remembering the Sabbath-day to keep it holy. The subject being of the deepest interest, both to the Jewish nation at large, and to every soul in particular, God adopted a method of urging it upon them all, which was singularly fitted to arrest and rivet universal attention. "Go," said he to Jeremiah, "and stand in the gate of the children of the people, whereby the kings of Judah come in, and by which they go out, and in all the gates of Jerusalem, and say unto them, hear ye the word of the Lord, ye kings of Judah, and all Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, that enter in by these gates; thus saith the Lord, take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden, on the Sabbath day; nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem; neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the Sabbath day, neither do any work, but hallow ye the Sabbath-day, as I commanded your fathers."

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For the Calvinistic Magazine.

## AN OVERLOOKED HISTORY.

The rise of religious denominations, as well as that of states and empires, has often attracted the attention of the inquisitive; and it is as often a matter of considerable gratulation to sects, as to communities, to have a fair and incontrovertible claim to high antiquity. The more ancient the origin of any, their standing is usually accounted the more honorable. Calvinists and Arminians each, have their claims to a considerably remote origin. But while Calvinists are at any time ready to spread their whole history before the world, it is often remarked that Arminians, although quite venerable in years, as well as numbers, are not so prompt in exhibiting their claims to such high antiquity. Could we have a condensed history of Arminian Theology, it might be satisfactory, if not profitable. Their great Apostle, John Wesley, figured on the stage about one hundred years ago. Not that he had originated the Theology of the sect, but only modified the opinions which James Arminius had propagated in Holland, about the beginning of the seventeenth century, and which were the substance of opinions, warmly asserted and pressed about the beginning of the fifth century, by Pelagius and others;—"Who denied the doctrines of Predestination, Election, Divine Sovereignty, &c. and asserted that human nature was not totally depraved—that nothing was necessary to human perfection, but the exercise of our natural faculties, and that no supernatural aid was necessary to enable man to repent, to believe, to do good works, &c."

These doctrines contain the marrow of what Arminians contend for to the present day, and constitute them a sect distinct from others. All who embrace them, are accounted Arminians in principle, and may safely enough be denominated Arminians in whatever age they live, or may have lived, Arminians have, then, a standing at least of fourteen hundred years.

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particular religious sect, who, he said, were aiming to secure all the political power of the country, and whose objects were highly dangerous to the liberties of the people. He continued for a long time in the same strain, impeaching the motives of the petitioners, and arraigning the religious denomination alluded to, until he was at length called to order. In the afternoon the Doctor brought into the House a pocket full of old newspapers, from which he read extracts to prove, as he said, his charges. The House were disgusted, and the result was, that the motion to reconsider was carried, and the bill passed by a large majority.

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For the Calvinistic Magazine.

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DOCTRINES OF ELECTION AND PREDESTINATION.

*Continued from page 105.*

*Ar.* I think the doctrine of the decrees reduces men to mere machines: For if we are elected, we shall be sure to obtain salvation, do what we will: and if not, we shall be sure not to obtain it, do what we can. It is therefore to no purpose to strive.

*Cal.* See now what a blow you have given the *middle* of the chain! How long will you continue to separate the *means* from the *end*? You have entirely forsaken first principles now, as appears to be always the case with you all when you get upon this subject. What God did foreknow should come to pass must certainly and infallibly come to pass; or else he could not have foreknown it, as has been considered already. Now the foreknowledge of God renders the event as certain and necessary as his eternal counsel can do. He certainly foreknew from all eternity that among the fallen race of Adam he would certainly save some and damn others: but I would ask whether he could foreknow he would do this, without *designing* to do it? No man of common understanding can deny this; and this is all I contend for. You may call it *design*, *decree*, *counsel*, or *purpose*, which you please; it is all the same. Now I ask, whether you can venture to say that God cannot be omniscient; that he cannot know all future events? Certainly you cannot, when you remember that every *hair in your head is numbered*; and that even a *sparrow falls not to the ground without his knowledge*. Your objection cannot be well grounded then, seeing it militates against God's prescience as well as his eternal purpose. And let me observe further, your whole objection is founded on a mistaken apprehension of the decrees of God. He has not designed to save any but persevering saints, and he has decreed to save all such; hence there can be no room for the supposal, that any shall be saved, do what they will; or that others shall perish, do what they can. But what I have said, I say again, that if God has chosen any man to salvation, he has chosen him also to sanctification; that by faith in Christ, by a life of holiness, and by perseverance in both, and in no other way, he shall obtain eternal life. Pray do

not take your eye off the chain, but follow it from beginning to end. But a little further before we stop: If your objection against the decrees of God, will not stand good in the common affairs of life, it is a folly to to bring it against the doctrine in question. We read, Job xiv. 5. "That our days are determined, the number of our months is with God, he hath appointed our bounds that we cannot pass." Now it being certain that the period of every man's life is decreed, will you or any man take occasion from hence to argue that there is no need to eat or to drink, or use means for the preservation of life; for if the continuance of it be decreed, you shall live do what you will: and if not, you shall die, do what you can? Our secular affairs are certainly the objects of God's decrees, as will as the more important concerns of our soul's eternal interest; will you argue from hence, that there is no need to plough or sow—that if God has decreed you a harvest, you shall have it, do what you will; if not, you shall have none, do what you can? Do you not see, that if God has decreed you a harvest, that he has decreed also that it shall be obtained in the use of the appointed means and not otherwise? In the fixed plan of Providence there is a real influence of second causes both natural and moral, and I apprehend the connection between cause and effect is similar in both cases, although we may be unable to explain it better than is done by the chain to which we have been attending. How unreasonable and absurd then is this objection, which nevertheless is always one of the first that is brought. Did not the Angel inform Paul that God had given him the lives of all that were in the ship with him, so that none of them should be lost? Yet did not Paul declare although he knew none would be lost, that except the soldiers abide in the ship, they could not be saved? Acts xxvii. 24. 31. Here you have the doctrine of predestination in its true sense, the *means* appointed as well as the *end*. So that instead of the decree destroying moral agency, it effectually secures it. The free agency of man is an essential thing in the divine plan, and as much the object of the divine decree as any thing else. Nor has this doctrine any undue influence on the will, in its determinations, it being evident that all objects of volition, must first be the objects of perception; or in other words, before any thing can be the object of the choice of the will, it must approach by the door of the understanding; it being impossible that the will should perform any volitions, or acts of choice respecting any thing, of which the soul has no idea. Now, the decrees of God respecting future events, being unknown to us, cannot be the object of human perception, or knowledge, consequently, they have no irrational or undue influence on the determination of the will.

*Ar.* But how can you reconcile the sincerity of God, in the gospel offer to all, with the doctrine of predestination?

*Cal.* When we have reason to believe that God does any thing, we ought to believe it is well done, although we may not be able to comprehend every thing concerning it. But this much we know that the merits of Christ are sufficient for the salvation of *all*—that upon the sufficiency of his merits the general call and offer of

the gospel founded, and that God never has given the least evidence of insincerity by refusing to admit any of the human race, who came to him in the way of his own appointment. We cannot refuse our assent to any part of the revealed will of God, nor foolishly imagine an opposition between one part of it and another. All the obscurity arises from and may be resolved into the weakness of our own understandings; *but let God be true and every man a liar.*

*Ar.* If God has exercised any choice respecting the number that shall be saved, then is he not *partial* and a *respector of persons*?

*Cal.* This objection is found in the mouth of every opponent. We hear it every day, and from all quarters:—From the ignorant and profane;—from Infidels, Unitarians, Universalists, and from every description of Arminians. Yes, all, with united voice affirm, “If the Calvinistic doctrine of Election be true, God must be a *respector of persons*.” The true meaning of this phrase they have never settled; and therefore many of them are ignorant of its real import.

*Ar.* I never considered there was any difficulty about it. It always appeared very plain to me, that to shew *favors* to one and not to another, was *partiality*. What meaning do you attach to the phrase “*respector of persons*?”

*Cal.* This will depend on what character or relation in Deity, you refer to, by the use of the terms. If you refer to him as a *Benefactor* conferring *unequal favors* on his creatures, he is doubtless, in this respect, a *respector of persons*; and fact proves it every day. It meets you wherever you turn your eye. Look at the unequal distinction between angels and men; between men and worms; between the lost angels and the fallen race of men, in passing by the former, and providing a Saviour for the latter; between the pagan tribes and the regions where the gospel sheds its benign influence; between those sinking under constitutional disease, and unremitting pain, and those of vigorous and almost uninterrupted health; between those who inherit nothing but poverty and disgrace, and those who are born to wealth and honor.—In short, behold how He gives to one “five talents,” to another, “two,” to another “one.” If then you mean by respect for persons the holy sovereignty exercised in these discriminations, so far from disowning it derogatory to his character, the great Proprietor of heaven and earth claims it as his glory and unalienable right; and instead of taking offence at this, all the holy universe pronounce with one voice, ‘Amen!’ let none but Infinite Wisdom and Love decide a single event to eternity!

*Ar.* What then does the Sovereign of the world mean, when he disclaims the character of being a *respector of persons*?

*Cal.* If you will place him on the *Judgment Seat*, acting in the capacity of *Judge*, or of a king on the throne, there will be no difficulty in the case. It is in this character that he always has reference to himself in distributing *rewards* and *punishments*, when he so often disclaims the character of *respector of persons*. The simple idea is this: “He will treat men according to their *naked characters*,” whether Jews or Gentiles, rich or poor, masters or servants, kings or peasants. This is a correct view of the subject, and the plain meaning of the terms “*respector of persons*.”



referring to God in the character of a judge, you may find by a single glance at the passages in which the phrase is used. Lev. xix. 15. Deut. i. 16, 17, and x. 16—18, and xvii. 18—20. II. Chron. xix. 6, 7. Job xxxiv. 17—28, and xxxvii. 24. Prov. xxiv. 23, 24, and xxviii. 21. Luke xx. 21. Acts x. 34, 35. Rom. ii. 5—11. Gal. ii. 6. Eph. vi. 9. Col. iii. 23—25. Jas. ii. 1—9. I. Pet. i. 17.

Now I do entreat that you take your Bible, and examine carefully all these passages, and I believe these are all the instances in which the phrase is to be found in that book; and what will it amount to? Just to what I have before said,—“that when God acts in the character of a *judge*, or when he distributes *rewards* and *punishments*, He will treat men according to their *naked character*, unbiassed by any other consideration.” Let this idea be kept in view, and we shall hear no more about God’s being a respecter of persons. If he choose to treat some sinners *better than they deserve*, in making them the children of his grace, let him do so. If he choose to pass by any and ordain them to dishonor and wrath, it is “*for their sin*,” and consequently now are punished *undeservedly*.

*Ar.* I acknowledge this view of the subject never appeared to me in the same light before. But still I am under the impression that, “the sum of all is this; one in twenty (suppose) of mankind are elected; nineteen in twenty are reprobated. The elect shall be saved *do what they will*; the reprobate shall be damned *do what they can*”

*Cal.* This is the language of John Wesley, *verbatim*, which has been repeated more than a thousand times by his followers. But the fact is, that human ingenuity could not make a representation of the doctrine, more uncandid, distorted, or false. And yet this picture, so very unlike in its *essential features*, the doctrine which we maintain, is, what Arminians and Unitarians are continually attempting to palm upon us. But the doctrine of Election which we believe, and preach, is not the doctrine which they manufacture for, and ascribe to us. It is under such a distorted and false coloring that we are to account for the ravings of Mr. Wesley, when he says, “You represent God as worse than the devil; more false, more cruel, more unjust,”—yea, “an omnipresent omnipotent tyrant.” But if after all the explanations which have been given of our doctrine, any man shall choose to represent in this manner, he must be left to himself to assign his reasons for doing so.

*Ar.* But does not your view of the doctrine of election imply, that only a *small part of mankind are chosen to salvation*?

*Cal.* The word of God plainly teaches the contrary. It nowhere declares that there will be only a small number saved, in reference to the whole human race, from the beginning to the end of the world. “It is therefore a manifest error, to represent our doctrine thus. And any one who gets advantage against it from such a view, gets it unfairly. And any one who justifies the representation often made of our doctrine in this respect, justifies what may justly be called *religious calumny*. Many who firmly believe our doctrine of election, do also firmly believe that there

will be more of the human family saved than lost. But this belief does not affect the doctrine of election one way or the other: Tho' the multitude at last will be so great that "no man could number;" this does not make it indefinite in God's account. The number saved will still be a definite number of *individuals*. He saves *that definite number*, and *no more, or less*. To deny that he always determined to save a certain *definite* number of individuals, is the same as to affirm that he does not *know* the number that he will save, and that all whom he does save, he saves without *previously intending to do it*.

*Ar.* But suppose we say, "that, from before the foundation of the world, God chose to elect Jesus Christ to be the Great Head of the church;" and, "that God at the same time chose the *character* that every one of his members should sustain;" not "that he at that time elected us *personally*, but left it to our free will, whether to be, or not to be of that character,"—"that the names which were recorded in the book of life from the foundation of the world, were nothing more than the *characters* which God had determined to save. And now we are left to our own free choice whether we will, or will not be that character or name."—What objection have you to this view of the subject?

*Cal.* Its absurdity and want of intelligence would be a sufficient objection, if no more. But it is also grossly anti-scriptural. You have taken the representation verbatim, from a *thing* called "A Sermon on Election, by Wm. Kinkade," one of our modern Arian, or New Light Sermonizers, if I am correctly informed; and which you Methodists, I believe, have pretty extensively patronized, eulogized, and vended from place to place. It is no uncommon thing when they reside in the same region, to hear of Arminians and Unitarians fighting as though they were in alliance, offensive and defensive, against Calvinists. It is to be regretted that so much ink and paper should be polluted with such a mass of corruption, sophistry and nonsense as appears to be comprised in Kinkade's pamphlet. And more is the pity that any one, professing the holy doctrines of Jesus Christ, should receive such stuff as the food of his soul. A man who can preach to the world, "that God has decreed some things that never did come to pass, and that some things have happened *contrary* to his decrees," ought to be considered "a stranger" whose voice the sheep of Christ will not hear. Perhaps such senseless passages, such a jargon of nonsense is not to be found in the same compass in any book of its size, as can be found in Kinkade's volume.

*Ar.* But you have not pointed out the absurdity of the sentiment against which you exclaimed just now, and which you proscribed as nonsense.

*Cal.* Why, really, the thing speaks for itself. God's election according to the representation, is an election of something called *Character, exclusive of individuals*. But what is character? "It is," says Dr. Johnson, "a representation of any man as to his personal qualities"—"The person with his assemblage of qualities." Who ever thought before of separating *individuality*, or *personality* from

character? When we elect a President, a Senator, &c. do we elect an *assemblage of qualities*, separated from an unknown individual. When a rich man chooses an orphan for his adopted heir, does he choose an individual, or only a character? If a character, what sort of a one is it? A rich character, a learned character, a noble character? None of these. Perhaps he chooses a poor orphan boy, not *because* he is rich, learned, &c. but that he *should* be rich,—*should* become learned, and thereby elevated to such a rank and character as he never could have attained had he been left to himself, without this benevolent interposition. So the Bible tells us that *we* are the objects of God's election, not on account of holiness in us, as the *cause*, but we were chosen before our existence, even before the foundation of the world "that we SHOULD BE HOLY," &c. Eph. i. 4.

But if God has chosen a character, then left corrupt unholy men, entirely to themselves, to come into it or not, just as *they* please, this destroys the doctrine of human depravity completely, and, consequently, disclaims the doctrine of the Holy Spirit's agency in regeneration. If God does not elect the sinner,—the *individual* sinner, as the object of unmerited favor and mercy, and then wash him in the laver of regeneration, and thus *make* him holy, how is it possible, with the Bible description of his native character and condition before us, to account for his ever becoming a holy character at all? "Their righteousness is of me," saith the Lord, respecting his people; while they respond and say, "Thou, Lord, hast wrought all our works in us."—"By the grace of God," says Paul, "I am what I am."—"Not of works, lest any man should boast." It is wonderful what fancies, visions, and whimsies men will fall into in order to set aside "the election of grace," which is the "election of God."

*Ar.* I acknowledge there appears to be an inconsistency in the idea of an election of *character* separate from *individuals*; but the interpretation we give to the ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, though somewhat like this sentiment, yet I presume it is not liable to the same objection.

*Cal.* I readily anticipate you. To get rid of the hated doctrine of personal election, all idea of individuality must be left out of view. And the whole scope of the Apostle's reasoning in that chapter, respecting Jacob and Esau, of God's loving the one and hating the other, of his *choosing and calling the Gentiles*, and *casting off the Jews*, must be understood of the respective bodies of those people, *nationally* considered, and to their *external privileges*, to the exclusion of *particular persons*, in the one or the other, with reference to their *spiritual, internal, and eternal state*. That both these views are aimed at, in the Apostle's reasoning, I have no doubt. But the supposition of a national election, or the election of collective bodies and communities, to *external privileges*, without the idea of an election of *persons* among *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*, to *spiritual, internal, and saving benefits*, is as curious a distinction, and pregnant with as great inconsistency and absurdity, as the election of character without individuality attached to it.

*Ar.* As this distinction, however, is pretty generally embraced by our denomination, and is, therefore, considered as a matter of no small magnitude, as well as a ground of triumph over the Calvinistic notion of a personal election, which you attempt to prove from that chapter, I would like to hear you a little further on that point; and shew wherein consists the fallacy of our interpretation.

*Cal.* I very well know that this interpretation is not only adopted by your denomination generally, but by the Unitarians also; who can all join heart and hand with you in the same channel of interpretation. The views of Dr. John Taylor, of Norwich, one of the most acute and learned Arians that ever lived, are adopted, on this subject, by your learned Expositor, Dr. Adam Clarke; likewise from Drs. Channing and Ware, full blooded Unitarians of New England, down to little Kinkade, in the Western wilderness,—all are well pleased with the aforesaid distinction which, in their imagination happily rids the Bible of the odious doctrine of personal election. But seeing it is a matter of such great importance with you and the Unitarians, and esteemed by you as a principal fulcrum by which you can overturn the whole fabric of Calvinism, especially if you only had the  $\Delta\omicron\varsigma$   $\pi\omicron\upsilon$   $\sigma\tau\omega$  and the forked lever of *Archimedes*, we shall be a little more particular on this subject,—and

1. A *national election*, so far from being inconsistent with, is certainly inclusive of, and supposes a *personal election* of some, to holiness and glory. How can they who admit the one, deny the other? Your interpretation even if admitted removes no difficulty. For it is still as hard to account for God's choosing to send the only ordinary means of grace and salvation to one *nation* rather than another, a fact which no man can dispute, as for his choosing to make them effectual to one *person* rather than another. Is the divine conduct in choosing *individuals* to holiness and salvation improper? Then surely it is no less so in relation to *nations* and *communities* which comprise a large number of individuals. If the *unconditional* election of an *individual* to holiness and glory is, in any respect, improper, must not "the *unconditional* election of the Jewish nation" (I quote the language of your own Confession, p. 85) be equally improper?" That a *distinction is made* in relation to individuals as well as to nations, is a fact that no one can deny. And it occasions certainly as great a difficulty in the one case as the other. And if it be a matter of great magnitude for particular persons to enjoy distinguished blessings, while others are passed by, and left without them, is it an affair of less magnitude for a nation or a community to be so dealt with? Let the blessings intended or bestowed, be temporal or spiritual, still, is not the difficulty, in accounting for the distinction as great when it relates to *communities* and collective bodies, as when it relates to *individuals*? Indeed, one might suppose the objection to the purpose or providence of God, in relation to the former case, would be much greater than in the latter. But further, how is it possible, that any purpose or providence of God should refer a *nation*, a *community*, or *society* of men without referring to the *individual*?

als of whom that society is composed?—For instance, can a *community* be visited with an epidemic, or famine, and yet the *individuals*, who compose that community, escape? Can they receive a *blessing*, in the *collective* capacity, and yet be destitute of it in their *individual* capacity? Can a *law* be *obligatory* upon a public body of men, and yet the individuals composing that body be free from that obligation? Can you *love a society* without loving its *members*? As a nation, a community, &c. is a collection of *individuals*, who retain perfectly their individual existence, properties and relations, how is it possible, that any purpose or conduct of God should refer to such a *body* or *society* of *men*, without referring to the *individuals* of whom that society is composed? Christ came from heaven to be the Saviour of the *world*, yet his followers are *individuals* chosen *out of the world*—redeemed by his blood *out of every nation*, and kindred, &c. I say, therefore, that your interpretation, so much boasted of, removes no difficulty. And before I proceed, I would just advise you and others, to sit down coolly, and with unbiassed candour, and read prayerfully in the Epistle to the Romans, from the eighth to the eleventh chapters inclusively, and see if the Apostle teaches nothing respecting *personal internal, spiritual, and saving benefits*.—See whether he is inculcating nothing more nor less than the idea of *national distinctions* between the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, with *external benefits* and *privileges only*.

2. The second remark I have to make is short. When the Apostle wrote this Epistle, the *distinction* between *Jews* and *Gentiles* *nationally* considered, had been done away. It could not therefore be a national distinction merely, which was the subject of his discourse. Because, it was on those distinctions, that the Jews valued themselves, but which the Apostle shows *were now done away*. But he also shews that a real distinction is *still made* among *individuals*, and Justifies God in making it. What was that distinction? Not a national one, otherwise the Jews would have gloried in it still: but this they must not do, seeing it exists no more. Therefore, “it must have been a distinction, *then really existing*—a distinction which *Paul* would not have found fault with, but *justify*.” Do not let this thought escape you. It settles the point, that the distinction about which the Apostle was discoursing was not *national merely*, but *personal* and *individual*. And it is this very thing that caused *modern* as well as *ancient* Jews to cavil and find fault to this day. It is this that stirs up the pride and enmity of the natural heart to quarrel with the doctrine of *personal, individual, and eternal election*. It does not like that God should exercise the sovereignty of even a *Potter*, who can make, as he chooses of *the same lump, some vessels to honor and others to dishonor*. Now let me say, finally: “It was to this distinction, *then actually existing*—*then objected to by the pride of Jews*, but *defended by the Apostle*—it was to *this distinction* the Apostle applied that general principle of the divine administration which he vindicated, by referring to distinctions of another character, formerly made.”

*To be concluded.*

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**A FAMILIAR DIALOGUE**

BETWEEN CALVINUS AND ARMINIUS: PRINCIPALLY ON THE  
DOCTRINES OF ELECTION AND PREDESTINATION.

*Concluded from page 160.*

*Ar.* Your reasoning appears plausible, and I know not how it can be easily refuted. But there is one point on which I wish you to be a little more explicit; it is to shew the use of preaching in relation to the elect and non-elect, for the former, if I understand your scheme, will be infallibly saved, and the latter as certainly damned, whether with or without preaching.

*Cal.* I see you do not understand the scheme, or you will not remember it. How could you think of such an objection as this after such a plain representation and connection of the *means* and the *end* in the chain exhibited sometime ago, the links of which you will still try to separate. I think there is no doubt that Paul was a *Predestinarian*; and all must acknowledge he was a consistent preacher. Let us see his conduct on one single occasion. He came to Corinth where a few Jews resided in a populous city of Greek and Roman idolaters. He meets with such opposition that he is discouraged and intimidated. God tells him, (Acts xviii. 9. 10) “Be not afraid, Paul, but speak, and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee, to hurt thee: for I have *much people in this city.*” Many of his elect ones no doubt were there, but they must have preaching, and Paul is appointed the instrument. Accordingly the Apostle continues eighteen months with them. He works, and God works. Paul preaches: the Holy Spirit enlightens; and God justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies. This is God’s way; and this is Paul’s way. But according to your objection, Paul should have answered, “Lord, if thou hast much people in this city, my preaching is useless; for they will infallibly be saved without it.” But this man of God was a clear headed, consistent predestinarian; he knew that the decree of election did not destroy man’s free-agency, nor set aside the use of means, but invariably included all the means, and instruments, by which his

gracious purposes were to be accomplished. This is genuine Calvinism; or I would rather say it is true Bibleism. Election kills nobody. It saves all that are saved. It is not the *cause* of reprobation, nor is reprobation the *consequence*, or, as some have called it, the *counterpart* of Election. Such a representation of the subject, all judicious Calvinists disclaim.

*Ar.* But, sir, the doctrine of predestination and election, according to your plan, does not give all an equal chance, and must be discouraging to poor sinners.

*Cal.* Chance! what, must there then only be a *chance* for salvation? If we have a *chance* only to get to heaven, why then our chance for hell is pretty certain. I want something more than a chance in the business of my salvation. But it discourages "poor sinners." And pray, who are *poor sinners* that they ought not to be discouraged? Are they not rebels, enemies to God, and despisers of his Son, of his character, his laws and government? Surely they are much to be pitied indeed! I am afraid that you, like many others, look only at the *calamitous* state of sinners, and the *mercy* and *compassion* of God; while his holiness, and justice, and their *criminal* state are left out of view. But why are not poor devils pitied too? God has displayed his sovereignty in passing them by without providing salvation for them. Why could he not as well have left the whole family of Adam in the same condition? Yet you never think of commiserating poor devils, or even dream of quarrelling with God's justice in their universal condemnation.

*Ar.* But how, upon your plan, can you preach *Free Grace* to all mankind when only a *part* will be saved?

*Cal.* Free grace! free grace! this is a fine harping cord with many who I fear do not know what free grace is. Arminians are thought by some to be the only persons who preach free grace; while Calvinists are supposed to preach the reverse. But what is free grace? Is it a scripture phrase? As soon may you find the expressions *good goodness*, or *wise wisdom*, or free liberty. If but one sinner of the human family were saved, it would certainly be by grace; and if by grace, it must be free, otherwise it would not be grace, but works. It is not therefore the *universality* of grace, but the *nature* of it that makes it free; and the very reason why it is free, is because it is *bestowed* without money or price. If any person in the world preaches free grace, it must certainly be the Calvinist, who always maintains that salvation is entirely of grace and not of works. Pray tell me, (for I had like to have forgotten to ask you) what is your view of the passage from which we made out the chain a while ago?

*Ar.* The meaning of Rom. viii. 29 appears to be this, namely: 'It was the purpose of God to conform to the image of his Son, those whom he foresaw would believingly receive the light which should shine unto them in their respective dispensations. And this is what the Methodists believe and teach.'

*Cal.* I have no reason to dispute it, because what you have said is a quotation from one of their writers. But if this doctrine

be true, and none are conformed to the image of the Son of God but those whom he foresaw would believe, then all dying in *infancy*, and all *idiots* must inevitably be lost; for no man can suppose that God ever foresaw them doing that which they were *naturally unable to do*. But this is not the only dilemma into which this doctrine will drive you.—If God did purpose or decree to conform to the image of his Son all whom he foresaw would believe, I am at a loss to know how he could foresee them in the possession of *faith* without his predetermination to bestow it on them; *for this is the gift of God*; and you acknowledge there is nothing good in man till God puts it in him. But this is not all the inconsistency of the sentiment; for it is not possible to conceive how any can totally fall from grace, whom God foresaw would believe, and consequently according to your own plan, whom he *purposed to conform* to the image of his Son. The consequences of your doctrine are worse, far worse, than you suppose Calvinism to be. Your preachers say so little on the doctrine of Election, except in opposition to it, that the generality of mankind think you do not believe it to be a Bible doctrine at all. Pray, tell me further what you believe about it, and how you get over so many plain passages of scripture that seem to be so full on the subject.

*Ar.* I shall answer you agreeably to the 37th sec. of the articles of our religion, which states, that “God hath chosen some to life and glory before or from the foundation of the world.” So that it is wrong to say we do not hold election as a Bible doctrine.

*Cal.* Do you understand then wherein lies the point of difference between us on this subject?

*Ar.* You hold that election is *eternal and unconditional*; that is, without foresight of faith, or good works, as the *cause* of it. But we hold that “God from the foundation of the world, foreknew all men’s believing or not believing. And according to this his foreknowledge, he chose or elected all obedient believers, as such, to salvation, and refused or *reprobated* all disobedient unbelievers, as such, to damnation.”

*Cal.* “Wickedness foreseen is doubtless the cause of the Lord’s purpose to condemn, because it is of a man’s self by nature; but holiness foreseen in a *fallen creature* cannot be the cause of his election, because it is the effect of special grace, and never comes from any other source.” This is an undeniable truth. And let it be farther observed, that there is no more grace in choosing men to salvation *because of works certainly foreseen*, than because of works *already done*. According to your conception of the matter, God never designed any distinction between his elect, and the non-elect, until they first made themselves to differ. But if it be thus, surely it is not “the election of *grace*,” nor can it be understood how men are elected *from the foundation of the world*.

*Ar.* “Christ is called the *Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*; although indeed he was not slain for some thousand years after. Even so God calleth men *elected from the foundation of the world*, though not elected till they were men in the flesh. Yet it is all so before God, who knoweth all things from eternity, and



*calleth things that be not as though they were.*" I conclude, "therefore they were not chosen before they believed, for they are said to be such as did *first trust in Christ.*" Eph. i. 11, 12.

*Cal.* Your reasoning is certainly erroneous; and your quotations from scripture inapplicable. As we have before proved, the elect are said to be *chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world—chosen to salvation from the beginning—called with an holy calling not according to their works, (their foreseen faith and obedience,) but according to God's own purpose and grace, which was given them in Christ Jesus before the world began—to have their names written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, and at last to inherit a kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world.* Eph. i. 4. II Thess. xi. 13. II Tim. i. 9. Rev. xvii. 8. Mat. xxv. 34. But according to your method of interpretation, the meaning of all these scriptures that speak so plain, must be put down by a passage in Rom. iv. 17. "God—calleth those things that be not, as though they were." It is surprising that the necessity of defending a favorite hypothesis, should drive you to such a miserable shift as this!—A shift which not only perverts the real meaning of the scriptures, and particularly the passage quoted, but also completely demolishes the very foundation of christianity. It appears very evident that God had purposed to make Abraham the father of many nations; the dead body of his ancient servant, and the deadness of Sarah's womb could not prevent the certainty of his purpose, nor the sufficiency of his power to bring it to pass; and therefore could speak to Abraham and give him as strong assurance of it, as if it had already come to pass; so that he staggered not at the promise of God; but was strong in faith, being fully persuaded that what he had promised, he was able to perform. This seems to be the scope of the Apostle's meaning. But to apply this to the elect who are chosen *from the beginning, before the foundation of the world, &c.* in the same sense as in the case of Abraham, is a most wretched prevarication, and an unwarranted interpretation of sacred scripture. By this rule of interpretation we may overturn the whole Bible; for the very same language, "from the beginning—before the foundation of the world. &c." applied to the elect, are also made use of in respect of the omniscience of God, the eternity of Christ, and other essential perfections of the Godhead. It is said, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." But according to your method of interpreting scripture, Jesus Christ was not eternal, for God calleth those things that be not, as though they were. Again: "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." Acts xv. 18. "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory I had with thee *before the world was.*" John xvii. 5. "For thou lovedst me *before the foundation of the world.*" ver. 24. "Who verily was *foreordained before the foundation of the world.*" I. Pet. i. 20. Now apply your passage—"God—calleth those things that be not, as though they were," and it will appear that, besides the eternity of the Son, it would destroy the omniscience of God; the eternal glory of Jesus Christ;

the eternal love of the Father towards him, and his eternal appointment as Mediator and Redeemer. But if all the works of God were known to him from the beginning, and Christ was foreordained before the foundation of the world as the great head of the church, where is the impropriety of considering all his members as foreordained likewise? "And in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them." Ps. cxxxix. 16

*Ar.* But did not David say this with reference to the members of his own body?

*Cal.* So did Paul say, that God calleth those things that be not as though they were, with reference to his promise to Abraham. David was a type of Christ, and often spake as though it were Christ himself. And surely none can deny, that it is at least of as great importance to register the *members* of Christ's mystical body in God's eternal book, as the members of David's *natural body*. But I must notice the abuse of another passage you cited a while ago. You say, "They whom God did predestinate according to the counsel of his own will, were such as did first trust in Christ." That is, they first trusted in Christ, before they were predestinated to the praise of his glory. Astonishing! And is this erroneous sentiment, this gross perversion of scripture yet retained amongst the articles of the Methodist Church! Who first trusted in Christ? The Jews, the natural posterity of Abraham, or the Gentiles? Who first had the institutions of religion amongst them? Who were first called God's covenant people? To whom did the Saviour first come? and who first partook of the blessings of the gospel of Jesus Christ? "The Jew first, and also the Greek." So because some of the natural descendants of Abraham were the first who trusted in Christ before the gospel was preached unto the Gentile, you have perverted the passage in question and applied the word "first," to trusting in Christ before election, instead of the Jews who were the "first fruits" before the Gentiles. Did Adam in the garden—Matthew sitting at the receipt of custom—Zaccheus on the sycamore—and Saul on his way to Damascus—did they all *first* trust in Christ before they were chosen to everlasting life? But if men must *first* trust in Christ before they are predestinated according to the counsel of God's own will, to the praise of his own glory, I again infer, that all dying in infancy and all idiots must inevitably be damned. For if election be not unconditional, that is, without faith or any thing foreseen in the creature, as the cause of it, it is not possible for all the Arminians in the world to account, in any other way, for infant salvation. But on the ground of unconditional election I am encouraged to hope that all such are saved, through the merits of the Mediator, with an everlasting salvation. Nor has this belief any thing in it contrary to the perfections of God, or to any declaration of the holy scriptures; and it is highly agreeable to all those passages which affirm where sin hath abounded, grace hath much more abounded. And as to adults, it is evident that God's distinguishing grace is previously, neither merited, nor desired by any of them; it might justly have

been withheld from all mankind; but it is graciously communicated to one, and not to another, by a sovereign God, "according to the counsel of his own will." He, and He alone, hath made one to differ from another." Now, was this distinction *intentionally* made by the sovereign Disposer of all things, or was it not? If *intentionally*, was that intention *first conceived at the moment of execution, or previously?* If previously, why not from eternity? And if from eternity, it could not be in time, or after regeneration and conversion. "The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people. But because the Lord loved you," &c. Deuteronomy vii. 7.

This sentiment of yours plainly contradicts the Bible, and puts a decided negative upon many plain passages; for instance, "whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be conformed* to the image of his Son." But if election be *after* faith, the elect were not predestinated *to be conformed*, &c. but were conformed *first* by faith and then predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son.— See what a contradiction. Again; it is said, "According as he hath chosen us in him, *before the foundation of the world* that we *should be holy*, and without blame before him in love." "For we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus *unto good works*, which God hath *before ordained* that we *should walk* in them." But agreeably to the notion of an election *after* faith, and holiness, we cannot be said to be chosen that we *should be holy*; but chosen because we *are holy*. We are not created *unto* good works and *ordained* to walk in them, but good works and walking in them *must precede our ordination* to eternal life. It is said of Jeremiah, i. 5, "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and *before* thou camest forth out of the womb, I *sanctified* thee, and *ordained* thee a prophet unto the nations." Was this *after* he believed, or *before* he was born? It is said of John the Baptist, Luke i. 15, "He shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb." This looks like an unconditional election without any perquisites. According to your notion, Christ chooses his disciples, because they first choose him, and he loves them because they first loved him; but this is not the language of Christ and his followers. He says of them "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." And they reply, "We love him because *he first loved us*." And this is agreeable to that important passage in Jer. xxxi. 3, "I have loved thee, with AN EVERLASTING LOVE." But if so, it could not be before faith either in existence or foreseen, unless it could be prior to eternity itself.

And now, friend Arminius, if you be a christian, what harm will the Calvinistic doctrine of election do you? Must you fall out with your Maker for inscribing your name in the book of life from the foundation of the world? Will you arraign his justice and wisdom because, for reasons not revealed to us, he determined to leave some *deservedly* to perish in obstinate enmity, and *graciously* to recover others by regeneration? Will you be offended with him because he planned the way of your recovery long before you were

born, and prepared a kingdom for you from the foundation of the world? I am at a loss to see how the doctrine of election can offend any christian. Yet this is the doctrine that is *now* treated as the martyrs of old have been in some ages and nations, when they were wrapped in the skins of wild beasts, and then torn in pieces by furious dogs; or as those Protestants, who having fallen into the hands of the inquisition, were clothed in canvass on which devils and infernal flames were painted, and thus actually committed to the fire. It is now cashired as a doctrine abhorrent to reason, and at eternal war with the moral perfections of God. It is traduced as a declared enemy to practical piety, and as highly injurious to the comfort and hope of mankind. This being the case we need not wonder that it has become unfashionable with many preachers of the present day. But your preachers, generally, raise the hue and cry against it all round their circuits, and as generally display their ignorance of the subject they oppose. They throw out a great many hard speeches, call ugly names and say many ludicrous things. "To try the truth of the sentiments of others, by the test of ridicule, that poor artillery of human wit, as though any thing which an adventurous sophistry can dress in a ludicrous garb, and which a thoughtless multitude may laugh at, is a very poor way to convince rational beings that those sentiments must therefore be ridiculous or untrue. It seems rather a fallacious way of getting rid of some arguments which they have not either truth enough, or wisdom enough to answer. But it ought to be known that a foolscap forcibly placed on a wise man's head by a knave, however it might excite the mirth of a crowd, would be no actual disgrace, nor impeachment of his understanding. So with respect to these great things of God, the malice of men, whether covered by a laugh or open in its violence is rather an argument of their truth than of their falsity."

*Ar.* The reason why so much is said against election, is because it appears to render preaching altogether useless, and an attention to the means of grace unnecessary by either those who are saved or lost. For if God has made one man to be saved, and another to be damned, where is the use of preaching and striving?

*Cal.* Here we have again the same old story that has been refuted a thousand times and more. But who ever held that God made a man on purpose to damn him? This is no part of the doctrine of election, but it is a gross misrepresentation of it. Although God "*Made the wicked for the day of evil.*—Prov. xvi. 4.—*Hated some before they were born.*—Rom. ix. 11, 13.—*Before ordained of old certain men to this condemnation*—Jude iv.—*Some being disobedient whereunto they were appointed,*—I Pet. ii. 8.—*Vessels of wrath fitted to destruction.*—Rom. ix. 22.—*And some to dishonor*—II Tim. ii. 20.—*Made to be taken and destroyed*—II Pet. ii. 12—*Ordained for judgment and established for correction*—Hab. i. 12; yet I apprehend all this is done not without regard to the *sinfulness* and *wickedness* of man whom a sovereign God may pass by and leave exposed to condemnation and ultimately experience the just consequences of a state of final impenitence.

“But what is the use of preaching?” Why, because by this method God is “pleased to save them that believe.” But what is the use of answering? for Arminians may be answered and refuted a thousand times, and yet as often gather up their “blunted shafts that have recoiled, and aim them at the shield of truth again.” “What is the use of preaching?” This is the old hackneyed objection which is found in the mouth of every opposer. Arians, Socinians, Sabellians, Pelagians, Shakers, Ranters, and a long list of such errorists will be found to join heartily with you in opposing what they call Calvinism. Here you are all agreed. And against such a parade, such a motly host, I would consider it no disgrace but rather a high privilege, to stand alone. You are quite welcome to the numbers in this enrolment with you, in opposition to the doctrines I maintain. “But what is the use of preaching?” This question we are fully able to answer; and in doing this we shall be able to place the difficulty in your own way, unless you deny the omniscience of God. And although I have already answered you on this subject, I will try and do it again in such a manner as should silence the objection forever.

You and I are both preachers; we set out to travel together, and on the road we see a man coming towards us; he is a son of Adam; a sinner—a rebel. I express my intention to preach a little to him; but you tell me it is not worth while; for if he is one of the elect he will be saved any how; and if not, he shall be damned at any rate; therefore, you tell me, it is useless to preach to the man at all. But here lies your mistake; I am not first to know whether the man be of the elect or not before I preach to him. That is entirely out of the question. But I am to preach to him *as a sinner*, and lay before him the truths of God’s word. I am to describe his natural state and point out the remedy. I am just simply to tell him the truth, whether he believes it or not;—whether he be elect or reprobate; I thus discharge my duty and pass on, leaving the event with God who giveth or withholdeth the increase. Perhaps I may never see this man till I see him at the bar of judgment, and whether he be found on the right hand or the left, that will by no means affect my conduct in preaching to him on the road. The gospel is to be preached to sinners, *as sinners*, and the truth to be declared independent of what men *are*, or what they *may* be.

But let me state another case. Suppose we were about to preach to a large assembly to-day, and while on the way you accost me thus: Friend Calvinus, you need not preach to-day to that assembly, for agreeably to your belief, a certain number, called the elect, will be saved, and the rest as certainly damned, whether you preach or not. The matter is fixed in the eternal counsels of heaven, and cannot be altered, and therefore it is useless for you to preach to the people: But I in turn reply: Friend Arminius, you forget the chain I shewed you a while ago, exhibiting the connection of the *means* and the *end*. You forget that Paul has said that it is “*by* the foolishness of *preaching*, God is pleased to save them that believe.” I know not but some of the elect may be there; but whether or not it will not prevent me from declaring the truth,

whether any of that congregation will be saved or not. But I inquire, Do you not believe in God's infallible and eternal foreknowledge of all things? O yes, you will say, for "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." Acts xv. 18. Very well, I reply, friend Arminius, you need not preach to-day to this large assembly, for God certainly and infallibly knows who of them will be saved and who will not; and his knowledge is so certain that it cannot fail; therefore, whom he knows will be saved, are sure to be saved, and whom he knows will be damned, are as certain to be damned, whether you preach or not; you cannot alter the matter either one way or the other. And now, sir, I do maintain that you and every coadjutor in opposition must deny the absolute certainty of God's foreknowledge, or acknowledge that the same difficulties lie in your own way, which you are so officiously and triumphantly placing in ours.

*Ar.* What then are we to do with the congregation before us in the case you have stated?

*Cal.* Why, both go and preach faithfully and agreeably to God's revealed will. Let us preach, and let God work as he may think proper; for neither of us can change the heart of a sinner if we preach till doomsday, unless it please God to afford the increase by making our instrumentality a blessing. I have only this request to make of you, and that is, first to get difficulties out of your own way, which are as insurmountable as those you attempt to throw in ours, before you raise such a tragical outcry against despised Calvinism. The conduct of many of your preachers, and people, is really surprising. They seem to know as little about the real sentiments of Calvinists, as a child does of the Newtonian Philosophy. And either through ignorance, or wilful misrepresentation, the most ungenerous charges are exhibited against us. The populace are informed that Calvinism makes man a machine—that one part of mankind shall be saved and the other damned, whether they will or not—that reprobation is the counterpart or unavoidable consequence of election—that those in Christ may live as they list, commit whoredom, murder and what not, they are safe—that God is the author of sin, and that man is as though he were tied with a great chain to a tree and invited to come to a rich feast, and then damned for not complying; and a thousand such absurdities enough to offend patience and make charity blush. It does appear to me that no society of people with whom I am acquainted exhibit more opposition, selfishness, censoriousness, contention, bickering and controversy, than the preachers of your connexion. And some go so far as to border on pride and impudence, in their manner of strutting, boasting, and vociferating against their opponents. Don't frown, Arminius, these are stubborn facts, well known to the world as to myself, and I appeal to disinterested testimony if it be not the truth.

But before we proceed to another subject, while we are speaking of absurdities and inconsistencies in doctrinal sentiments, I beg leave to point out a few in yours, which in my opinion, far ex-

ceed all the alledged absurdities of Calvinists, in establishing Antinomianism, making man a machine, &c. &c.

*Ar.* Ah! how will you make that appear? I always thought that Antinomianism was only to be found amongst Calvinists; and I by no means can conceive how Arminians can be charged with that error.

*Cal.* It is to be found in your own book of doctrines and discipline in the following plain words: "No man is able to perform the service, which the *Adamic* law requires; and no man is *obliged* to perform it: God does not require it of any man. *For Christ is the end of the Adamic*, as well as the *Mosaic law*. By his death he hath *put an end* to both: he hath *abolished* both the one and the other with regard to man, and the obligation to observe either the one or the other is *vanished away*. Nor is any man living bound to observe the *Adamic* more than the *Mosaic law*." This is a solemn funeral indeed! First preached by John Wesley in his scheme of the death and burial of the moral law of God, and subsequently adopted as the creed of your church, and strongly recommended by your Bishops. Here man's accountableness to his Maker and Sovereign is done away by his fall and total degeneracy. His criminal inability to obey the law has rendered him excusable, or rather exempted him from its obligation. If this sentiment does not *make void the law*,—if it be not downright *Antinomianism*, or something worse, I will acknowledge my incapacity to judge of doctrines.

*Ar.* But how can you make it appear that our doctrine destroys the free agency of man by making him a machine?

*Cal.* From your own book of doctrines, as before, which says, "We believe the moment Adam fell he had no freedom of will left." If so, then what was he? a beast, or a stone? If he had no freedom of will left, the moment he fell, he could not have been a *free moral agent*, and consequently could not be capable of sin or duty, worthy of praise or deserving of blame, nor a subject of rewards and punishments. Therefore, his restoration by Christ was a curse instead of a blessing; for he must have restored him to a capacity of sinning, and thereby occasioned all the sin ever since committed by human beings. The conclusion also, from such a sentiment must be, that the moment the devil fell he had no freedom of will left; and seeing he and his companions have never been restored by the merciful interposition of a Redeemer, they have never been capable of sinning any more since their fall.

*Ar.* But we maintain that "man is a moral agent, endowed with the liberty of choice; i. e. he possesses power to will, and power to choose, moral good. This power was lost by Adam, but restored by Christ to him again, and all his posterity in him of course."

*Cal.* This amounts to the same, but if any thing a little more confused and contradictory. It is a lame attempt by one of your fraternity to *explain* the matter. Here is something like a power *behind* the will, and *distinct* from the will itself. It is said to be a "power" *to will* and a power *to choose* moral good, and this seems to be essential to the free agency of a fallen being; but if so,

as we have shown, the lost angels are not, and never have been free moral agents since their fall. But man was as much a free moral agent *before* as after the death of Christ. The death of Christ never changed man's nature—never infused into him or imparted any good quality to him when Christ died on the cross. No: this is the work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration. The death of Christ was a circumstance, not of an *internal* character, effecting any change in the nature of fallen man, but it was of an external, governmental character, opening up the way for the sanctification of man by the Holy Spirit in the new creation. Prior to this change man is the same depraved being as ever, having the same evil nature that Adam had after the fall.

I always thought a moral agent was one who acted according to choice, and whose actions had a moral quality in them, i. e. either morally good, or morally evil, and worthy of praise or blame, and deserving of reward or punishment. In this sense the devil and wicked men, acting freely in their wickedness are free moral agents, without any *disposition*, or power as you call it, to choose moral good. So the great and blessed God, holy angels and glorified saints are free moral agents, without any disposition, or power to choose moral evil. Thus good men and angels, wicked men and devils, are all free moral agents, each acting freely, or of choice, according to their respective characters and dispositions. To me, therefore, your notion of moral agency makes God rather the author of sin, or at least accountable for all the sin that men have committed since God "restored them to moral agency," which it seems was lost by the fall.

Indeed, sir, your scheme appears to me full of contradiction and confusion. "It represents the whole Godhead as determining rather from incidental events, than by a perfect design; and consequently as acting not according to the wise *counsels of his own eternal will*, but according to the unstable conduct of foolish and mutable man. It exhibits the Sovereign Agent of all good in a state of supplication to a helpless worm, intreating that worm to receive his salvation, and often intreating in vain; changing his purposes according to the variable fancy of a creature subject to sin; and at last disappointed of his expectations through the power and subtilty of Satan and the world. It represents the will, the wisdom, the power and other perfections of the Omnipotent Jehovah, subservient to the perverse and forward affections of an impotent sinner. He is represented as working without any providential design, and willing without any certain or determined effect. Nay, more: the attainment of his own will depends on the wills of his creatures. And so the Almighty God must wait in his operations upon a set of beings, who of themselves can will to do nothing but evil: By thus diminishing Christ, and by thus exalting the powers of human free will, your scheme confounds the whole economy of salvation, and represents the wise counsels and designs of the ETERNAL THREE, but a little more than a chaos of wishes and intentions. There is not a principle of grace laid down in the Bible, but which is obscured and debased by these gloomy, low and contradictory notions of the Arminian scheme."



*Sr.* It may appear so to you; but I do not view things in the same way. However, I will reflect more fully on these things at my leisure. And as our conversation has been somewhat lengthy, it will not at present be convenient to trouble you with some other matters, respecting which I would like to have your views.

*Cal.* With all my heart, sir; whenever it shall be convenient, I am at your service. And I hope you will hear nothing from me contrary to the Spirit of Christ,—with that freeness and plainness of speech, fairness of argument, and liberality of sentiment with which his cause should always be advocated.

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**TO THE REV. O. B. ROSS, EDITOR OF THE  
GOSPEL HERALD.**

DEAR SIR.—In the 4th. No. of the Gospel Herald, there is an article headed “The Calvinistic Magazine,” on which I have a few remarks to make, and I address them to you as the author. You there assert that “good and talented men are not always exempt from sectarian prejudice.” It is a truthful remark, and I do think we have an exemplification of the fact in the Article before us. To me it seems that you look upon ANY *accusation* coming from one of your brethren, to the injury of Presbyterians, as quite a trivial and indifferent matter. Whilst any attempt to exculpation from the latter you regard as horrible, “fondness for ribaldry,” “defamation of the religious character of your church,” an attempt to “dig out an impassible gulf between the two denominations,” &c. &c.

When a man is in the habit of looking at one side of a controversy only,—when he permits his partialities to blind him to the faults of his own people; whilst they sharpen his vision as he inspects the defects of others, it is not easy to convince him that this is his condition;—it is not however always impracticable. I verily believe that you are thus biassed, or you never would have accused the Editors of the Cal. Magazine of “casting off all the restraints of religion and decorum”—of carrying on a “ceaseless and bitter warfare against the Methodist ministry,” &c. &c. I do not believe you would engage in a “wanton perversion of truth.” I never expect you to carry on against any one a “ceaseless and bitter warfare;” or put forth “extraordinary misrepresentations” for any sinister purpose. But that you have thought and felt mostly on one side, I deem it my duty now to shew if I can; as well in self-defence, as in friendship to you. I will also try to convince you