

WHAT IS ARMINIANISM ?

WITH A

Brief Sketch of Arminius.

BY

REV. D. D. WHEDON, D.D., LL.D.

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REV. E. H. DEWART, D.D.

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Queen's University at Kingston

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INTRODUCTION.

IT is frequently claimed that the controversy between Calvinism and Arminianism is a dead issue, handed down from a past age; and that the questions in dispute belong to the realm of philosophy, rather than to practical theology. There is good ground to question the correctness of this allegation. If the matter in dispute be a question of philosophy, it is a philosophy that underlies and moulds our views in Christian theology. It is true, indeed, that, when it comes to practical directions respecting the work of life, even Calvinists must speak like Arminians. But it is nevertheless a fact, that there is an irreconcilable contradiction between the fundamental principles of the two systems of theology; so that both cannot be right. We are sometimes told that both views are taught in the Bible; and that we must therefore accept both, though we cannot reconcile them. It is enough to say, in reply to this, that we cannot possibly believe two propositions which appear to us to be contradictory; and that the Bible cannot really teach freedom and non-freedom—a limited and an unlimited Atonement. One of the two systems must be accepted and the other repudiated by all logical thinkers.

The following cogent and instructive essay, by Dr.

Whedon, is commended to the careful study of Canadian readers ; because it places in a clear light the main features of Arminianism, which we believe to be in harmony both with the teaching of the Holy Scriptures and the unperverted intuitions of every sound mind. It is surprising what misconceptions of Arminianism are presented in the works of Calvinistic theologians. It is frequently spoken of as an unscriptural heresy ; which denies “the doctrines of grace,” and maintains that man can save himself and merit heaven by his own righteousness. It is, however, an unintentional compliment to Arminianism, that it is so generally found necessary to misrepresent and caricature its teaching, before it can be made to appear worthy of condemnation. The freedom of the human will, as attested by consciousness and reason, and the testimony of the New Testament to the universality of the Atonement, unanswerably vindicate the essential principles of Arminianism against all the cavils of its opponents. No sentimental liberality should induce us to surrender principles that are the basis of human responsibility.

This essay appears in the July issue of the *Methodist Quarterly Review*, taken from “Johnson’s Universal Cyclopædia ;” in which there is a paragraph, interpolated by some foreign hand, designed to soften and counteract the force of Dr. Whedon’s arguments against Calvinism. In this paragraph, it is intimated that most of the difficulties of Calvinism arise from the limitation of our faculties, leading us to connect the idea of time with the Divine actions which have no relation to time. This suggestion

and perplex us, by throwing doubt upon our right to accept the conclusions to which the exercise of our reason leads us. Whatever may be true respecting the mode of the Divine action, it is certain we can form no conception of any acts, human or divine, which are not related to time. The objection urged in this case would equally arrest all our thinkings, disparage all our conclusions respecting God's character and purposes, and land us in Agnosticism.

When it is alleged that any doctrine is contrary to the Divine character as revealed in the Bible, it is no proper reply to this objection to say, that because the human mind cannot comprehend the infinite perfections of Jehovah, we cannot tell what is, or is not, in harmony with his moral nature. For all our religious convictions and hopes are based upon our conceptions of God's character. And those who thus object to making human conceptions of God a standard by which to test any system, when these conceptions condemn their theories, in all other cases appeal to such human conceptions of the mercy, wisdom, and faithfulness of God, as the ground of confidence and the motive to enforce the obligations of duty.

E. HARTLEY DEWART.

TORONTO, *August 8th, 1879.*

WHAT IS ARMINIANISM ?

ARMINIANISM, as the customary antithesis to Calvinism, is, within the limits of the evangelical doctrines, the theology that tends to freedom in opposition to the theology of necessity, or absolutism. This contrast rises into thought among all nations that attain to reflection and philosophy. So in Greek and Roman thinking, Stoicism and all materialistic atheism held that mind, *will*, is subject to just as fixed laws in its volitions as physical events are in their successions. When, however, men like Plato and Cicero rose to a more transcendent sense of moral responsibility, especially of eternal responsibility, they came to say, like Cicero, "Those who maintain an eternal series of causes despoil the mind of man of free-will, and bind it in the necessity of fate."

Theistic fatalism, or Predestination, consists in the pre-determination of the Divine Will, which, determining alike the volitions of the will and the succession of physical events, reduces both to a like unfreedom; but those who hold Predestination very uniformly hold also to volitional necessity, or the subjection of will in its action to the control of strongest motive force. And as the Divine Will is held subject to the same law, so Necessity, as master of God, man, and the universe, becomes a universal and abso-

lute Fate. This doctrine, installed by Saint Augustine, and still more absolutely by John Calvin, in Christian theology, is from them called Augustinianism, or, more usually, Calvinism.

In opposition to this theology, Arminianism maintains that in order to true *responsibility, guilt, penalty, especially eternal penalty*, there must be in the agent a *free-will*; and in a true responsible free-will the freedom must consist in the power, even in the same circumstances and under the same motives, of *choosing either way*. No man can justly be eternally damned, according to Arminianism, for a choice or action which he cannot help. If fixed by Divine decree or volitional necessity to the particular act, he cannot be held responsible or justly punished. In all such statements, however, it is pre-supposed, in order to a just responsibility, that the agent has not responsibly abdicated or destroyed his own power. No agent can plead in bar of responsibility any incapacity which he has freely and wilfully brought upon himself. It is also to be admitted that there may be suffering which is not penalty—finite sufferings for which there are compensations, and for which every one would take his chance for the sake of life. But eternal suffering, for which there is no compensation, inflicted as a *judicial penalty* on the basis of *justice*, can be justly inflicted only for avoidable sin. If Divine decree or volitional necessity determine the act, it is irresponsible, and judicial penalty is unjust.

Arminianism also holds that none but the person who freely commits the sin can be guilty of that sin. One person cannot be guilty of another person's sin. A tempter may be guilty of tempting another to sin, but then one is guilty of the sin, and the other of solely the sin of temptation. There can thus be no vicarious guilt; and as punishment, taken strictly, can be only infliction *for guilt upon*

the guilty, there can literally and strictly be no vicarious punishment. If innocent Damon die for Pythias guilty of murder, Damon is not guilty because he takes Pythias' place in dying, and his death is not to *him* a punishment, but a suffering, which is a substitute for another man's punishment. The doer of sin is solely the sinner, the guilty, or the punished. These preliminary statements will elucidate the issues between Calvinism and Arminianism on the following points:—

1. *Foreordination*.—Calvinism affirms that God does, unchangeably and eternally, foreordain whatever comes to pass. That is, God, from all eternity, predetermines not only all physical events, but all the volitions of responsible agents. To this Arminianism objects that the predetermination of the agent's volitions destroys the freedom of his will; that it makes God the responsible predeterminer and willer of sin; and that it makes every sinner to say that his sin accords with the Divine Will, and, therefore, so far as himself is concerned, is right. It makes God first decree the sin, and then punish the sinner for the sin decreed. The Arminian theory is this: God does, from all eternity, predetermine the laws of nature and the succession of physical and necessary events; but as to free moral agents, God, knowing all possible futurities, does choose that plan of his own conduct which, in view of what each agent will ultimately in freedom do, will bring out the best results. His system is a system of his own actions. And God's predeterminations of his own acts are so far contingent as they are based on his prerecognition of what the agent will freely do; yet as his omniscience knows the future with perfect accuracy, so he will never be deceived nor frustrated in his plans and providences.

Some Arminians deny God's foreknowledge, on the ground of the intrinsic impossibility of a future contingency being

foreknown. As the performance of a contradictory act is impossible, intrinsically, even to Omnipotence, so, say they, the knowability of a future contingency, being an essential contradiction, is impossible even to Omniscience. A contradiction is a nothing ; and it is very unnecessary to say in behalf of God's omniscience that he can do all things and all nothings too. So it is equally absurd to say in behalf of his omniscience that he knows all things and all nothings too. The exclusion of contradictions does not *limit* God's omnipotence or omniscience, but *defines* it. Arminians do not condemn this reasoning, but generally hold that their theory is maintainable against Calvinism on the assumption of foreknowledge. They deny, as against the Calvinist, that foreknowledge has any influence upon the future of the act, as predetermination has. Predetermination *fixes* the act—foreknowledge *is fixed* by the act. In foreordination God determines the act as he pleases ; in foreknowledge the agent fixes the prescience as he pleases. In the former case God is alone responsible for the creature's act ; in the latter case God holds the creature responsible, and a just divine government becomes possible. Yet most Arminians, probably, would say, with the eminent philosopher, Dr. Henry More, If the divine foreknowledge of the volitions of a free agent contradicts the freedom, then the freedom, and not the foreknowledge, is to be believed.

2. *Divine Sovereignty*.—Calvinism affirms that if man is free God is not a sovereign. Just so far as man is free to will either way, God's power is limited. Arminians reply that if man is not free, God is not a sovereign, but sinks to a mere mechanist. If man's will is as fixed as the physical machinery of the universe, then *all* is machinery and not a government, and God is a machinist and not a ruler. The higher man's freedom of will is exalted above mechanism, so much higher is God elevated as a sovereign.

Here, according to Arminians, Calvinism degrades and destroys God's sovereignty, and Arminianism exalts it; that the freedom of man no more limits God's power than do the laws of nature by him established; that in both cases, equally, there is simply a self-limitation by God of the exercise of his power; that Arminianism holds to the absoluteness of God's omnipotence just as truly as Calvinism, and to the grandeur of his sovereignty even more exaltedly.

3. *Imputation of Adam's sin.*—Calvinism affirms that Adam's posterity is truly *guilty* of Adam's sin, so as to be eternally and justly punishable therefor without a remedy. As *guilty* of this sin, God might have the whole race born into existence under a curse, without the power or means of deliverance, and consigned to eternal punishment. Upon this Arminians look as a dogma violative of the fundamental principles of eternal justice. They deny that guilt and literal punishment can, in the nature of things be thus transferred. Their theory is, that upon Adam's sin a Saviour was forthwith interposed for the race as a previous condition to the allowance of the propagation of the race by Adam, and a provision for inherited disadvantages. Had not a Redeemer been provided, mankind, after Adam, would not have been born. The race inherits the nature of fallen Adam, not by being held *guilty* of his sin, but by the law of natural descent, just as all posterity inherit the species-qualities, physical, mental, and moral, of the progenitor. Before his fall, the presence of the Holy Spirit with Adam in fullness supernaturally empowered him to perfect holiness—the tree of life imparted to him a supernatural immortality. Separated from both these, he sunk into a mere *nature*, subject to appetite and Satan. The race in Adam, without redemption, is totally incapable of salvation; yet under Christ it is placed upon a new redemptive proba-

tion, is empowered by the quickening Spirit given to all, and, through Christ, may, by the exercise of free agency, attain eternal life.

4. *Reprobation.*—Of the whole mass of mankind thus involved in guilt and punishment for sin they never actually committed, Calvinism affirms that God has left a large share “passed by”—that is, without adequate means of recovery, and with no intention to recover them—and this from the “good pleasure of his will,” and for a display of his “glorious justice.” The other portion of mankind God does, from “mere good pleasure,” without any superior preferability in them, “elect” or choose, and confers upon them regeneration and eternal life, “all to the praise of his glorious grace.” The Arminians pronounce such a proceeding arbitrary, and fail to see in it either “justice” or “glorious grace.” The reprobation seems to them to be injustice, and the “grace,” with such an accompaniment, unworthy the acceptance of honorable free agents. Election and reprobation, as Arminianism holds them, are conditioned upon the conduct and voluntary character of the subjects. All submitting to God and righteousness, by repentance of sin and true self-consecrating faith, do meet the conditions of that election; all who persist in sin present the qualities upon which reprobation depends. And as this preference for the obedient and holy, and rejection of the disobedient and unholy, lies in the very nature of God, so this election and reprobation are from before the foundations of the world.

5. *Philosophical or Volitional Necessity.*—Calvinism maintains the doctrine that all volitions are determined and fixed by the force of strongest motive, just as the strokes of a clock-hammer are fixed and determined by the strongest force. The will can no more choose otherwise in a given case than the clock-hammer can strike otherwise. There is

no "power of contrary choice." Calvinism often speaks, indeed, of "free agents," "free-will," "self-determining power," and "will's choosing by its own power;" but bring it to analysis, and it will always, say the Arminians, be found that the freedom is the same as that of the clock-hammer—the freedom to strike as it does, and no otherwise. Arminianism affirms that if the agent has no power to will otherwise than motive-force determines, any more than a clock-hammer can strike otherwise, then there is no justice in requiring a different volition any more than a different clock-stroke. It would be requiring an impossibility. And to punish an agent for not performing an impossibility is injustice, and to punish him eternally, an infinite injustice. Arminianism charges, therefore, that Calvinism destroys all just punishment, and so all free volition and all divine government.

6. *Infant Damnation.*—Holding that the race is truly *guilty*, and judicially condemnable to endless torment for Adam's sin, Calvinism necessarily maintains, according to Arminians, that it is just for God to condemn all infants to eternal punishment, even those who have never performed any moral act of their own. This was held by Augustine, and wherever Calvinism has spread, this has been a part of the doctrine, more or less explicitly taught. Earlier Calvinists maintained against the Arminians that there is actual reprobation—that is, a real sending to hell—as well as particular election of infants. Arminianism, denying that the race is judicially *guilty*, or justly damnable for Adam's sin, affirms the salvation of all infants. The individual man as born does, indeed, irresponsibly possess within his constitution that nature which will, amid the temptations of life, commence to sin when it obtains its full-grown strength. He is not, like the unborn Christ, "that holy thing." There is, therefore, a repugnance which

God and all holy beings have towards him by contrariety of nature, and an irresponsible unfitness for heaven and holy association. If born immortal, with such a nature unchangeable, he must be forever unholy, and forever naturally unhappy under the divine repugnance. Under such conditions Divine Justice would not permit the race, after the fall, to be born. But at once the future Incarnate Redeemer interposes, restores the divine complacency, and places the race upon a new probation. Man is thereby born in a "state of initial salvation," as Fletcher of Madeley called it, and the means of final salvation are amply placed within the reach of his free choice.

7. *Pagan Damnation.*—On its own principle, that power to perform is not necessary in order to obligation to perform, Calvinism easily maintains that pagans, who never heard of Christ, are rightly damned for want of faith in Christ. They may be damned for original sin, and for their own sin, and for unbelief in Christ, without any Saviour. Arminianism, on the contrary, maintains that there doubtless are many in pagan lands saved even by the unknown Redeemer. They, not having the law, are a law unto themselves. Nay, they may have *the spirit of faith*, so that were Christ truly presented he would be truly accepted. They may have faith in that of which Christ is the embodiment, like the ancient worthies enumerated in Heb. xi. There may not be as great differences in the chances for salvation in different lands as Calvinism assumes. Where little is given, much is not required. Arminianism holds that no one of the human race is damned who has not had full chance for salvation. Missions are none the less important in order to hasten the day when *all* shall be converted. If that millennial age shall come, and be of long duration, Arminianism hopes that the great majority of the entire race of all ages may be finally saved.

8. *Doctrines of Grace.*—Calvinism maintains that the death of Christ is an expiation for man's sin : first, for the guilt of men for Adam's sin, so that it is possible for God to forgive and save ; and second, for actual sin—that thereby the influence of the Spirit restores the lapsed moral powers, regenerates and saves the man. But these saving benefits are *reserved for the elect only*. Arminianism, claiming a far richer doctrine of grace, extends it to the very foundations of the existence of Adam's posterity. Grace underlies our very nature and life. We are born and live because Christ became incarnate and died for us. All the institutes of salvation—the chance of probation, the Spirit, the Word, the pardon, the regeneration, the resurrection, and the life eternal—are through him. And Arminianism, against Calvinism, proclaims that these are for ALL. Christ died for all *alike* ; for no one man more than for any other man, and sufficient grace and opportunity for salvation is given to every man.

Calvinism maintains the irresistibility of grace ; or, more strongly still, that grace is *absolute*, like the act of creation, which is called *irresistible* with a sort of impropriety, from the fact that resistance in that connection is truly unthinkable. Against this Arminians reply that will, aided by prevenient grace, is free even in accepting pardoning grace ; that though this acceptance is no more meritorious than a beggar's acceptance of an offered fortune, yet it is accepted freely and with full power of rejection, and is none the less grace for that.

9. *Justifying and Saving Faith.*—Faith, according to Calvinism, is an acceptance of Christ wrought absolutely, as an act of creation in the man, whereby it is as impossible for him not savingly to believe as it is for a world to be not created, or an infant to be not born. And as this faith is resistlessly fastened in the man, so it is resistlessly kept

there, and the man necessarily perseveres to the end. Faith, according to Arminianism, is, as a *power*, indeed the gift of God, but as an *act* it is the free, avoidable, yet really performed act of the intellect, heart, and will, by which the man surrenders himself to Christ and all holiness for time and eternity. In consequence of this act, and not for its meritorious value or its any way compensating for or earning salvation, it is accepted for righteousness, and the man himself is accepted, pardoned, and saved. And as this faith is free and rejectable in its beginning, so through life it continues. The Christian is as obliged, through the grace of God assisting, to freely retain it as first freely to exercise it. It is of the very essence of his probationary freedom that he is as able to renounce his faith and apostatize as to reject it at first.

10. *Extent of the Atonement and Offers of Salvation.*—Earlier Calvinism maintained that Christ died for the elect alone; later Calvinism affirms that he died for one and all, and so offers salvation to all on condition of faith. But Arminianism asks, With what consistency can the atonement be said to be *for all* when, by the eternal decree of God, it is foreordained that a *large part* of mankind shall be excluded from its benefits? How also can it be *for all* when none can accept it but by efficacious grace, and that grace is arbitrarily withheld *from a large part*? How can it be *for all*, when God has so fastened the will of a large part of mankind, by counter motive-force, that they are unable to accept it? The same arguments show the impossibility of a rightful *offer* of salvation to *all*, either by God or by the Calvinistic pulpit. How can salvation be rationally offered to those whom God, by an eternal decree, has excluded from salvation? What right to exhort the very men to repent whom God determines, by volitional necessity, not to repent? What right to exhort men to do

otherwise than God has willed, decreed, and foreordained they shall do? If God has decreed a thing, is not that thing right? What an awful sinner is the preacher who stands up to oppose and defeat God's decrees? If a man is to be damned for fulfilling God's decrees, ought not that imaginary God to be, *a fortiori*, damned for making such decrees? If a man does as God decrees, ought he not to be by God approved and saved? And since all men do as God decrees, wills, and determines they shall do, ought not all men to be saved, so that the true theory shall be Universalism? How can grace be offered to the man whom God has decreed never to have grace? or faith be preached to those from whom God withholds the power of performing conditions? Hence, the Arminian affirms that in all public offers of a free or conditional salvation to *all*, the Calvinistic pulpit contradicts its own creed.

11. *Analogy of Temporal Superiorities.*—Calvinism argues that in this world God distributes advantages, such as wealth, rank, beauty, vigour, and intellect, not according to desert, but purely as a sovereign. Hence, in the same way, he may bestow on one faith and eternal life, and on others unbelief and eternal death. Arminianism replies that this very analogy between the temporal and the eternal bestowment proves the precise reverse. In this probationary world advantages are *professedly* distributed *without regard to judicial rectitude*. Men are not rewarded according to their works or voluntary character. The wicked are set on high, and Satan is this world's god. And the very difference between the dispensation of the world and that of the kingdom of God is, that in the latter blessedness is placed at every man's choice, and the result is judicially according to voluntary faith and works. The Bible nowhere places beauty or intellect at our own choice, but it does declare

faith, repentance, and eternal life to be in our own power, and holds us responsible for not exerting the power.

Basis of Morality.—Calvinism claims that the very severity of its system, its deep view of human guilt and necessary damnability by birth and nature, its entire subjection to divine absolutism, irrespective of human ideas of justice, tends to produce a profound piety. Arminianism replies that this is missing the true ideal of piety. It seems to be basing Christian morality on fundamental immorality. For God to will and predetermine the sin, and then damn the sinner—for him to impute guilt to the innocent, and so eternally damn the innocent as guilty—are procedures that appear fundamentally unrighteous, so far as the deepest intuitions of our nature can decide. Thus, first to make God in the *facts* intrinsically and absolutely bad, and then require us to *ascribe* holiness and goodness to his character and conduct, perverts the moral sense. It is to make him what we are in duty bound to hate, and then require us to love and adore him. Such adoration, secured by the abdication not only of the reason, but of the moral sense, and the prostration of the soul to pure, naked absolutism, naturally results in the sombre piety of fear; just as children are frightened into a factitious goodness by images of terror. While the pity of Jesus is serene, firm, winning, and gently yet powerfully subduing, the piety of absolutism tends to be stern and Judaic-like. While thus apparently defective at the roots, it does, nevertheless, often present an objective character of rectitude, a practical hardihood and aggressive energy in the cause of 'morality and regulated freedom. Arminianism, in order to a true and rational piety, sees the ideal of rectitude in the divine character and conduct, not by mere *ascriptions* contradicted by *facts*, but both in the *facts* and the *ascriptions*. A harmony of facts and intuitive reason is produced, love to the

Divine Being becomes a rational sentiment, and a piety cheerful, hopeful, merciful, and gladly obedient becomes realized.

Civil and Religious Liberty.—As the freedom of the individual, and his own intransferable responsibility for his own voluntary character and conduct, are fundamental principles with Arminianism, it is, in its own nature, adverse to civil or religious despotism. It has been said that when Romanism persecutes, it accords with its fundamental *principle*, the denial of right of private judgment, while when Protestantism persecutes, it contradicts itself. So when Calvinism persecutes, it obeys an intrinsic absolutism, while if Arminianism persecutes, it contradicts its own freedom and individualism. Yet *position* has often in history produced in all these parties palpable violations of, and discordance with, their *principle*. Romanists often become by *position* asserters of ultra-democracy, and Protestants of absolute despotism. And so Calvinism has, historically, been *by position* the advocate for revolution, and Arminianism the asserter of authority. In fact, as Arminianism has been, as above shown, the ruling doctrine of the Church, and Calvinism an insurgent specialty, so the historical *position* of the first has been favourable to the assertion of authority, and the normal position of the latter has been revolt. This may be called one of the *accidents of history*. So the learned Selden, in his "Table-Talk," remarked on the curious contradiction in the English civil war, that the advocates of absolutism in religion were the advocates of political liberty, and *vice versa*. Yet it may, perhaps, be truly said that when the religious absolutist gains the power he is apt to be an absolute, though a conscientious, despot. He makes a better rebel than ruler. Professor Fisher, a Calvinist, gives a severely true picture of the conscientious despotism of Calvinism at Geneva. A similar despotism,

on a larger scale, in England, under Cromwell, rendered the nation willing by reaction to rush into the depravities of the Restoration. Driven to America, even while under the rule of an Arminian monarchy, a similar despotism, on a small scale, overspread New England.

Nor was Calvinism, as Professor Fisher truly affirms, the advocate of liberty of conscience. Not only did Calvin himself banish Bolsec, ruin Castellio, and favour the execution of Servetus, but he maintained, doctrinally, the *duty of the magistrate to punish heresy*. Beza, his learned successor, wrote a treatise in favour of punishing heretics. Bogerman, the president at the Synod of Dort, was the translator of Beza's essay. It is but too evident that the Protestant Calvinists differed with the Romanists, not about the punishment of heretics, but about who the heretics to be punished were. In this respect the Calvinism of the new Church and the Arminianism of the old were nearly upon a par. The new Church, however, belonged to the progressive order of things ; but whether, finally, the Calvinism or the Arminianism of the new Church first actually proclaimed toleration is a matter of question.

Comparative Morality.—Mr. Froude endeavours, by comparison, to show that Calvinism is superior to Arminianism in morals, by selecting his own examples. But the Arminian may, perhaps, in reply make also *his* selections. Scottish Calvinism has an unquestioned severity of morals, but are Scotch character and history, as a whole, even ethically superior to the English ? Is the morality of Presbyterianism, in its entire aspect, superior to that of Moravianism, Quakerism, or Wesleyan Methodism ? Are our American Calvinistic Baptists more Christian in morals than the Free-will Baptists ? Is there any umpire qualified to decide that the devout Presbyterian is superior to the devout Episcopalian ? Did Jonathan Edwards present a

type of piety superior to that of Fletcher of Madeley? or John Calvin to that of James Arminius? Can Calvinism show a grander type of an evangelist than was John Wesley in England or Francis Asbury in America? Has she produced, in all her history a system of evangelism as earnest, as self-sacrificing, as aggressive, as the itinerant ministry of English and American Methodism? Taking the entire body of Calvinism since the Reformation, does it excel in purity, martyrdom, doctrine, and missionary enterprise the (Arminian) Church of the first centuries? If it comes to counting persons, has any section of the Church nobler names than Justin Martyr, Ignatius, Irenæus, Origen, Athanasius, Tertullian, Jerome, Chrysostom, John of Damascus, Hinemar of Rheims, Erasmus, Luther, Melancthon, Sir Thomas More, Calixtus, Savonarola, Arminius, Grotius, Episcopius, Limborch, Curcellæus, John Milton, John Goodwin, Jeremy Taylor, Cudworth, Bishop Butler, Bishop Bull, Bengel, Wetstein, Wesley, Fletcher, and Richard Watson?

Comparative Republicanism.—Nor did, nor does, Predestination, as compared with Arminianism, possess any peculiar affinity with republicanism against monarchy. By its very nature Calvinism establishes an infinite and eternal distinction between different parts of mankind, made by divine prerogative, by which one is born in a divine aristocracy, and the other in an eternal helpless and hopeless pariahism; while Arminianism, holding every man equal before God, proclaims an equal yet resistible grace for all, a universal atonement and Saviour alike to all, an equal power of acceptance in all, a free, unpredestined chance for every man to be the artificer of his own eternal, as well as temporal, fortunes. Caste, partialism, are the characteristics of the former; equality, universality, republicanism, of the latter. It is as plain as consciousness can make any

fact that it is the latter that is the natural ally, not of monarchies, aristocracies, or hierarchies, but of regulated freedom. Hence, neither Luther nor Calvin was any more a republican than Eck or Erasmus. Augustine and Gottschalk were good papists, and Augustinianism was as entirely at home under the tiara of Gregory the Great as under the cap of Bogerman—in the court of Charlemagne as in the camp of the Covenanter. Irrespective of their Calvinism, the Reformers everywhere acted *according to conditions*. Where kings and nobles favoured them, they favoured kings and nobles; where (as was generally the case) they were rejected by rank and power, and had nothing to make royalty and aristocracy out of, they fashioned a theocratic Commune, out of which modern political experience has picked some aids and methods for voluntary government. Modern experience has eliminated the theocracy, the intolerance, and the predestinarianism, and added the elements to make Republicanism. For all this it duly thanks the Reformers, but does not thank their Calvinism.

HISTORY OF ARMINIANISM.—The theology of freedom, essentially Arminianism, in opposition to predestination, necessitated volitions, and imputation of guilt to the innocent is universally acknowledged to have been the doctrine of the entire Christian Church through its most glorious period, the martyr age of the first three centuries. The Calvinistic historian of theology, Hagenbach, says, (vol. i. p. 155 :) “ All the Greek Fathers, as well as the apologists Justin, Tatian, Athenagoras, Theophilus, and the Latin Minucius Felix, exalt the autonomy or self-determination of the human soul. They know nothing of any imputation of sin, except as a voluntary or moral self-determination is pre-supposed. Even Irenæus and Tertullian strongly insist upon this self-determination in the use of freedom of the will.” Again, (157 :) “ Even the opponents of human

liberty, as Calvin, are compelled to acknowledge this remarkable unanimity of the Fathers, and in order to account for it they are obliged to suppose a general illusion about this doctrine !”

Arminians contend that we know as well when predestination was introduced into the Church—namely, by Augustine—as we do when transubstantiation and image worship were introduced ; that it was in the fourth century, when Pelagius, upon one extreme, made free-will dispense with divine grace, Augustine, on the other extreme, made divine grace irresistibly nullify free-will, and thus both lost their balance ; that both invented dogmas never before recognized in the Church ; that, tried by the previous mind of the Church, both were equally heretical ; that the heresy of one, pushed to the extreme, becomes rationalism and pure deism—the heresy of the other, pushed to extreme, becomes presumptuous antinomianism. They assert that the Eastern Church maintained her primitive position, neither Pelagian on one side nor Augustinian on the other, essentially in the position of modern Arminianism ; that hence Arminianism is not a *compromise*, but the primitive historical position, the permanent centre, rejecting innovations and extremes on either side ; that the Western Church, in spite of the great name of Augustine, never became Augustinian. It is, indeed, customarily said by anti-Arminian writers that this was because the “age of systematic theology” had not then arrived. Arminians reply that a theology not only unrecognized during that best period of the Church, but, still more, a theology unanimously condemned as heretical by that period, has little right now to lay claim to pre-eminent Christian orthodoxy. The Eastern Church—namely, the Churches of Asia, with whom the language of our Lord and his apostles was essentially vernacular ; the Greek Church, to whom the language of the New Testament

was vernacular ; and the Russian Church, embracing many millions—all inherited and retain, firmly and unanimously, the theology of freedom, essential Arminianism. The learned Calvinistic scholar, Dr. Shedd, in his " History of Doctrines, (vol. ii., p. 198) says : " The Augustinian anthropology was rejected in the East, and, though at first triumphant in the West, was gradually displaced by the semi-Pelagian theory, or the theory of inherited evil [instead of inherited guilt] and synergistic [or co-operative] regeneration. This theory was finally stated for the papal Church in exact form by the Council of Trent. The Augustinian anthropology, though advocated in the Middle Ages by a few individuals like Gottschalk, Bede, Anselm, slumbered until the Reformation, when it was revived by Luther and Calvin, and opposed by the papists." It will thus be seen, on a review of the universal Church in all ages, how small, though respectable a minority, Augustinianism, before the Reformation, ever was. With minor exceptions, Arminianism was the doctrine of the universal Church.

The accuracy of Dr. Shedd's statement of the general non-existence of Augustinianism during the Middle Ages is not invalidated by the fact of the great authority of Augustine's name, arising from the powerful genius and voluminous writings of the man. It was no proof that a man was truly Augustinian because he belonged to the " Augustinian order," or quoted Augustine's authority. Such Schoolmen as Bernard, Anselm, and Peter Lombard modified Augustine's doctrine materially ; Bonaventura and Duns Scotus were essentially Arminians, and Hincmar, of Rheims, and Savonarola literally so. Gottschalk, the high predestinarian, was condemned for heresy, and Thomas Bradwardine, the " second Gottschalk," made complaints, doubtless overstrained, that in his day " almost the whole world had become Pelagian."

At the Reformation, however, we encounter the phenomenon that all the eminent leaders at first not only adopted, but even exaggerated, the absolutism of Augustine. This might seem strange, for it was apparently natural that the absolute papacy should identify itself with the absolute, and that asserters of freedom would have stood on the free-will theology. The twin doctrines of the supremacy of Scripture, and of justification by faith, were amply sufficient, without predestination, for their purpose to abolish the whole system of popish corruption. The former dethroned alike the authority of tradition and the popedom; the latter swept away alike the mediations of Mary, saints, and priests. But the first heroic impulse of reform tends to magnify the issues to their utmost dimensions. The old free-will theology belonged universally to the old historic Church, and was identified by the first Reformers with its corruptions. Luther at first, in his reply to Erasmus "On the Bondage of the Will," uttered fatalisms that probably had hardly ever been heard in the Christian Church, and perhaps it would be hard to find a Calvinist at the present day who would adopt the trenchant predestinarian utterances of Calvin. Under the indoctrinations of these leaders, especially of Calvin at Geneva, the absolute doctrines were diffused and formed into the creeds of Germany, the Netherlands, France, England, and Switzerland. But in Germany the "second sober thought" of Melancthon, who at first coincided with Luther, receded from predestination, and Melancthon himself intimates that Luther receded with him; so that the Lutherans are now essentially Arminian. In the Netherlands the same "second thought," led by Arminius himself, was suppressed by State power. In France, Protestantism, which was Calvinistic, was overwhelmed in blood. In England the Calvinism was generally of a gentle type, and the same "second thought," was

awakened by the Arminian writings of Grotius and Episcopius diffused through Europe. And as the English Church gradually inclined to the ancient high episcopacy of the old Church, so it adopted the ancient Arminianism. Calvinism, persecuted and oppressed, overthrew monarchy and Church, and for a brief period ruled with hardly less intolerance, until, overthrown in turn, Calvinism took refuge in America, and laid foundations here. Even here past sufferings did not teach tolerance, and that doctrine had to be learned from checks and lessons administered by surrounding sources. Calvinism has, nevertheless, here acted a noble part in our Christian civilization. It, perhaps, about equally divides the evangelic Church with Arminianism.

Arminianism, proper and Protestant, came into existence under the severe persecution by Dutch Calvinism, in which the great and good Arminius himself was a virtual martyr. The Synod of Dort, the standard council of the Calvinistic faith, made itself subservient to the unprincipled and sanguinary usurper, Maurice ; and even during its sessions the judicial murder of the great Arminian and republican statesman, Olden Barnevelt, was triumphantly announced at Dort, to overawe the Arminians at the synod, who were bravely maintaining their cause under the leadership of the eloquent Episcopius. Then followed the banishment of Episcopius, the imprisonment of Grotius, the ejection of hundreds of Arminian ministers from their pulpits, and the firing of soldiers upon the religious assemblies of Arminian worshippers. The great Arminian writers of Holland, Episcopius, Grotius, and Limborch, are claimed by Arminian writers to be the first public proclaimers of the doctrine of liberty of conscience in Europe, as those two Arminian Puritans, John Milton and John Goodwin, were its earliest proclaimers in England.

Wesleyan Methodism is now by all admitted to be a great

modern Arminian development. Beginning most humbly as a half-unconscious awakening, amid the general religious chill of Protestantism, it has not only quickened the religious life of the age, but gathered, it is said, twelve millions of worshippers into its congregations throughout the world. Its theology is very definite, and very nearly the exact theology of James Arminius himself, and of the first three centuries. Cradled in both the Arminianism and High Churchism of the English establishment, Wesley's maturer years earnestly approved the Arminianism, but severed it from the High Churchism. The connection between Arminianism and High Churchism is hereby clearly revealed to be historical and incidental, rather than intrinsic or logical. Yet, even after adopting the doctrine that every Church has the right to shape its own government, as a lover of the primitive, post-apostolic Church, as well as from notions of Christian expediency, Wesley preferred and provided for American Methodism, an episcopal form of government. Arminian Methodism has, in little more than a century of her existence, apparently demonstrated that the Augustinian "systematic theology" is unnecessary, and what it deems the primitive theology amply sufficient for the production of a profound depth of piety, a free ecclesiastical system, an energetic missionary enterprise, and a rapid evangelical success. She exhibits in her various phases every form of government, from the most decisive system of episcopacy to the simplest congregationalism, all voluntarily adopted, and changeable at will. The problems she has thus wrought suggest the thought that the free, simple theology of the earliest age may be the universal theology of the latest.

PERSONAL HISTORY OF ARMINIUS.—The name of Arminius in his native language was *Jacobus Hermans*, identical with *Herman*, the name of the hero of Germany, who destroyed the Roman legions under *Varus*. And as this name was

transformed into Arminius by Tacitus and other Roman writers, so, in accordance with the custom of the age when Latin was the language of current literature, this name was Latinized, and has come down in modern English as James Arminius. He was born in 1560 at Oudewater, ("Oldwater,") a small town in the Southern Netherlands. He lost his father in early childhood, and, his mother being left in straitened circumstances, the promising intellect of the boy so attracted the attention of patrons that he was taken to school at Marburg. When fifteen years of age his native town, Oudewater, was taken by the Spaniards, and his mother, brother, and sister were all massacred, leaving him the sole survivor of his family. He was sent by his patrons to the new university at Leyden, where he remained six years. Such was his proficiency that the city of Amsterdam adopted him as her *vesterling* or foster-child, to be educated at the public expense, being bound by a written obligation to be at the command of the city through life. He studied at Geneva under Beza, as well as at Basle under Gryneas. At the latter place he was offered a doctorate, but declined the offer on account of his youth. By Beza he was commended to Amsterdam in high terms. He then went to Italy to become accomplished in philosophy under Zerabella, and, having visited Rome and the other principal cities, returned to Amsterdam, where he was installed minister at the age of twenty-eight.

Arminius's ministry in Amsterdam, of fourteen years' duration, forms the second period of his life. His learning and eloquence, were rapidly rendering him one of the leading theologians and preachers of his age. He was of middling size, had dark, piercing eyes, and voice light but clear, and possessing a winning mellowness. His manners were magnetic, and he had the power of fastening firm friends. He was condescending to the lowly, and a

sympathizing guide to the religious inquirer. At the same time he was an independent seeker and follower of truth.

In 1585 the extreme predestinarianism prevalent in the Netherlands had been for ten years so effectively attacked by Richard Coornhert, an eminent patriotic and acute layman of Amsterdam, that Arminius was invited by the city to refute him. In a debate at Delft between Coornhert and two high Calvinistic clergymen, the latter were so hard pressed that they yielded, and took the lower or sublapsarian ground, and published a pamphlet against the higher view. The extreme Calvinists called upon Martin Lydius, professor of theology in Friesland, to refute them, but he handed over the task to Arminius, who had thus a double request on his hands. He bravely undertook the task, but was soon convinced of the untenableness of either the higher or lower predestination. At the expense of an ignominious failure in even *attacking* Coornhert, he resolved to pursue the light of honest conviction. Avoiding the entire subject in public, he prosecuted his investigations with earnest study. Yet, in lecturing on Romans vii, having given the non-Calvinistic interpretation, he found himself generally assailed by the high Calvinists as a Pelagian and Socinian. He was arraigned before the ecclesiastical courts, where he successfully defended himself on the ground that, though adverse to the prevalent opinions, his interpretation contradicted nothing in the standards; namely, the Belgic Confession and the Catechism. Being questioned as to predestination, he declined to answer, as no fact was alleged against him.

In prosecuting his inquiries he determined to consult privately the best theologians of the day. He commenced a confidential correspondence with Professor Francis Junius, of the University of Leyden, the most eminent of the Dutch theologians. He was delighted to find how far Junius

coincided with him, but when he addressed to Junius the arguments for still more advanced views, the professor kept the letter by him unanswered for six years, when he died. The friends of Arminius believed that this silence arose from the fact that Junius found more than he could answer or was willing to admit. Unfortunately, his correspondence was inadvertently exposed by Junius to discovery, and was used to the disadvantage of Arminius. Arminius, also, having received a treatise in favour of predestination by Professor Perkins, of Cambridge, prepared an epistle to him, but was prevented by Perkins's death from sending it. His letters both to Junius and Perkins are embodied in his published works, and, whatever may be thought of the validity of the argument, no one will deny that in candor, courtesy, and Christian dignity they are hardly to be surpassed.

On the death of Junius the curators of the University of Leyden looked to Arminius as his successor. The reluctant consent of Amsterdam being at length gained, Arminius assented. But the predestinarians, led by Gomarus, senior professor of theology at Leyden, opposed his election. After a long series of strifes, Arminius offered to meet Gomarus and satisfy his objections. The meeting took place, and Gomarus, admitting that he had judged Arminius by hearsay, after Arminius had fully declared his entire opposition to Pelagianism and Socinianism, fully renounced his objections. So far as predestination was concerned, each professor was to deliver his own sentiments with moderation, and all collision with the other was to be avoided; and Arminius was thereupon elected.

The six years of his Leyden professorship closing with his death are the most important yet troublous period of his career. The terms of peace were broken within the first year by Gomarus, who delivered a violent public harangue

on predestination in terms of insult to Arminius, who was personally present ; to which the latter prepared a refutation clothed in terms of personal respect toward his opponent. Gomarus afterward confessed that he could easily live at peace with Arminius but for the clergy and Churches, who were intensely hostile to his liberal doctrines. Their Belgic Confession, Calvinistic as it was, was sacred in their hearts as being the banner under which they had fought the battle of civil and religious liberty against Spain and popery ; and they now, alas ! were making it the instrument of religious intolerance. Arminius was held as invalidating that Confession, and so was every-where traduced by the clergy as a bapist, a Pelagian, and a Coornherter. Yet, really, the doctrines he taught were essentially the doctrines of St. Chrysostom, Melancthon, Jeremy Taylor, and John Wesley. In regard to the Confession, he ever treated it with reverence, and only claimed the right of that same liberality of interpretation which Lutherans exercised with the Augsburg Confession—a liberality similar to that which the English clergy now exercise in regard to the seventeenth of their Thirty-Nine Articles. A voluntary Church may, like any other voluntary association, be, if it pleases, stringent in its interpretations, but a State Church, which strains all to a tight interpretation of a specific creed under pain of State disabilities, runs into religious despotism. This was, therefore, a genuine contest for religious liberty. Arminius was proscribed by the clergy, harassed by irresponsible deputations, and his students were subjected to persecutions and exclusions from the ministry. The more intelligent laity, including the magistracy, and especially the chief magistrate, Olden Barnevelt, were favourable to Arminius, who at length appealed to the national legislature (called the States-General) for protection. That body appointed a committee or council, who, having heard both Gomarus and

Arminius in full, reported that the latter taught nothing but what could be tolerated. Before the States-General themselves Arminius delivered a full oration, expounding his entire views, which is published in the American edition of his works. The clergy demanded the appointment of a national synod, consisting purely of ecclesiastics, but the States-General, well knowing what would be the fate of Arminius in their hands, refused. Under the constant pressure of these years of persecution the gentle spirit of Arminius at length sunk. He was taken from the bloody times that followed the Synod of Dort. His nervous system was prostrated, and, attended by his faithful pupil, the afterward celebrated Episcopius, he died in the faith he had maintained, October 19, 1609, a martyr to his views of truth.

