

THE
CALVINISTIC MAGAZINE.

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

No. 7.

JULY, 1827.

VOL. I.

MOLE-HILLS AND MOUNTAINS,

OR THE

DIFFICULTIES OF CALVINISM AND ARMINIANISM COMPARED.

"You will, perhaps, ask, are there no *difficulties* to be encountered in embracing that system of evangelical truth, which is usually styled *Calvinism*? It ought not to be disguised, that there *are* in this system real difficulties, which, probably, no human wisdom will ever be able to solve. But are the difficulties which belong to the system of *Arminianism*, either *fewer* in number, or *less* in magnitude?" Instead of this, they are more numerous, and more serious; more contradictory to reason, more inconsistent with the character of God, and more directly opposed both to the letter and spirit of His Word. I rest in the *Calvinistic* system, with a confidence daily increasing, not only because the more I examine it, the more clearly it appears to me to be taught in the Holy Scriptures; but also because, the more frequently and the more carefully I compare the amount of the difficulties, on both sides, the more heavily they seem to me to press against the *Arminian* doctrine.

It is easy and popular to object, that *Calvinism* has a tendency to cut the nerves of all spiritual exertion; that, if we are *elect*, there is no need of exertion; and if *not* elect, it will be in *vain*. But this objection lies with quite as much force against the *Arminian* hypothesis.' An *Arminian* who finds fault with the doctrine of predestination, as making out God the author of sin, unjust, tyrannical, &c. how shall he reconcile or clear the difficulties in his own way, namely, to believe, as he must do, that the Deity has created millions of human beings *knowing*, with *certainty*, before he brought them into existence, that they would prove incorrigible sinners, incur his divine displeasure, and that he in consequence should consign them to eternal punishment in the region of misery and woe? 'All *Arminians*, though they reject the doctrine of *election*, explicitly grant that while *some* will, in fact, be saved, *others* will, in fact, as certainly perish. Now it is perfectly plain, that this position is just as liable to the abuse above stated, as the *Calvinistic* doctrine. For a man may say, "I shall either be saved,

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or I shall not. If I am to be saved, no anxiety about it is necessary; and if I am to perish, all anxiety about it will be useless." Would *Arminians* consider this objection valid against *their* creed? I presume not. But it has no more validity against *ours*. Another objection is equally common and popular. It is said, if none but the *elect* will be saved, how can God be considered as *sincere* in making the offers of mercy to *all*? The *Arminian* is just as much bound to answer this question, as the *Calvinist*. He grants that all men will not, in fact, be saved; he grants moreover, that God foreknew this from eternity; and that he not only foreknew the *general fact*, but also the particular persons who will, and who will not partake of salvation. How then we may ask the *Arminian*, is God sincere, on *his* plan, in urging and entreating all to accept of mercy? Again, it has been frequently asked, "If none but the *elect* will be saved, is not God a partial master, and a respecter of persons?" But it may be quite as plausibly and confidently asked, "How can we reconcile it with the impartiality and the benevolence of God to *save* only a part of mankind?" If salvation be his work, then why does he not save all? Why does he make a distinction? And if it be *not* his work, THEN MEN SAVE THEMSELVES. Will the *Arminian*, with all his inveteracy against *Calvinism*, go this length?

But while the objections which our *Arminian* brethren urge against *Calvinism*, lie with full as much force against their own system, there are others, of a still more serious nature, to which that system is liable and which, if I were compelled to admit, would plunge me into darkness and despair.

Yes, if I could bring myself to believe, that the infinite and eternal God has laid no *plan* in the kingdom of his grace, but has left all to be decided by *chance* or *accident*, not knowing the end from the beginning—If I could believe that the *purposes* of Jehovah, instead of being *eternal*, are, all formed *in time*; and instead of being *immutable*, are all liable to be *altered* by the changing will of his creatures—If I could suppose that, after all the Redeemer has done and suffered, the work of redemption cannot be completed unless perishing mortals choose to lend their arm to its aid—If I could admit the idea, that God has done nothing more than decree, in general, to save all who may happen to believe; without any *determination*, or, which is the same thing, without any certainty, whether *few*, or *many*, or *none* would be thus blessed—If I could suppose that God foresaw events as *certainly future*, which he had not *unchangeably determined* to accomplish, and which, therefore, might never happen—If I could suppose that the omniscient Saviour died with a distinct *purpose* and *design* to save *all men alike*, while it is certain that *all will not* be saved—If I could embrace the opinion that real christians are no more indebted to grace than others, having received no more than they; and that what makes *them* to differ from others is, not the sovereign goodness of God, but

their own superior wisdom, strength or merit; in other words that they make themselves to differ—If I could admit the dreadful thought, that the christians continuance in his journey heavenward, depends not on the immutable *love* and *promise* of his God, but on the firmness of his own strength, and the stability of his own resolutions; and of course, that he who is the most eminent saint to-day, may become a child of wrath, and an heir of perdition to-morrow—In short, if I could conceive of God as working without any providential design, and willing without any certain effect; desiring to save man, yet unable to save him, and often disappointed in his expectations; *doing* as much, and *designing* as much for those that perish, as for those that are saved; but after all baffled in his wishes concerning them; hoping and desiring great things, but *certain of nothing*, because he had *determined on nothing*—If I could believe *these things*, then, indeed, I should renounce *Calvinism*, but it would not be to embrace the system of *Arminianism*. *Alas!* it would be impossible to stop here. I must consider the *character* of God as dishonored; his *counsels* as degraded to a chaos of wishes and endeavors; his *promises* as the fallible and uncertain declarations of circumscribed knowledge and endless doubt; the best hopes of the christian as liable every hour to be blasted; and the whole plan of salvation as nothing better than a gloomy system of possibilities and peradventures; a system on the whole, nearly, if not quite, as likely to land the believer in the abyss of the damned, as in the paradise of God.”

DR. MILLER.

The Scriptural doctrine of the preservation and final perseverance of the Saints, plainly stated and defended.

A SERMON;

BY THOMAS CLELAND, D. D.

OF HARRODSBURG, KENTUCKY.

ISAIAH XXVII. 3.—I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it I will keep it night and day.

The subject of this positive and encouraging declaration is the church; the whole body of God's chosen people, brought into a state of grace by a holy calling. It comprehends all who are savingly brought into his moral vine-yard, denominated, in verse 3d, *a vine-yard of red wine*, to denote its fruitfulness. It is under God's special care and protection. Its complete and final preservation is therefore, placed beyond a doubt; for, *I Jehovah do keep it*. The church called the body of Christ, composed of all really regenerated persons, in every period of time, is God's holy Zion; a "city of solemnities"—his Spiritual "Jerusalem, a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the