

Calvinism and Evangelical Arminianism

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It is impossible to prove, that a scheme which provides for the possible salvation of all men more conspicuously displays the divine goodness than one which secures the certain salvation of some men. The words, atonement offered for all men, universal atonement, Christ died to save all men, Christ died for every soul of man, — these words are very attractive. They seem to breathe a kindness which is worthy of God. But let us not be imposed upon by the beauty or pomp of mere phrases. What is the exact meaning of the language? It is obscure, and, to be understood, must be filled out. The meaning is, that atonement was offered for all men, that Christ died for all men, merely to make the salvation of all men possible: therefore the meaning is not what the language appears to imply — namely, that atonement was offered for all men to secure their salvation; that Christ died to save all men. That is explicitly denied. It is the heresy of Universalism. Let it be noticed — attention is challenged to it — that, upon the Arminian scheme, the whole result of the atonement, of the death of Christ, of the mission of the Holy Ghost, is the salvability of all men — the possible salvation of all. Dispel the glamour from these charming words, and that is absolutely all that they mean.

But let us go on. What precisely is meant by the possible salvation of all men? It cannot mean the probable salvation of all men. If it did, the word probable would have been used; but facts would have contradicted the theory. Not even the Arminian would assert the probable salvation of all men, in consequence of the atonement. It is then only a possible salvation that is intended. Now what makes the salvation of all possible? It is granted, that all obstacles in the way of any sinner's return to God are, on God's side, removed. The Calvinist admits that, equally with the Arminian. Where then lies the difference? What does the Arminian mean by a salvation possible to all? He means a salvation that may be secured, if the human will consent to receive it. To give this consent it is persuaded by grace. But it is not constrained by grace to give it. It holds the decision of the question in its power. It may accept the offered salvation; it may not. The whole thing is contingent upon the action of the sinner's will. This is what makes the salvation of all men merely possible; and it inevitably follows that the destruction of all men is also possible.

I shall, with divine help, presently prove that a possible salvation, contingent upon the action of a sinner's will, is really an impossible salvation. But conceding now, for argument's sake, that there is such a thing as a merely possible

salvation of all men, it is repeated, that it cannot be shown to exhibit the beneficence of God one whit more clearly than does the certain salvation of some men. Upon the Calvinistic scheme, the absolute certainty of the salvation of countless multitudes of the race is provided for; on the Arminian, the certainty of the salvation of not one human being is provided for. But let it be admitted that although not provided for, yet in some way, the final result will in fact prove to be the certain salvation of countless multitudes. How can the Arminian show that these multitudes will exceed in number those which are saved upon the Calvinistic scheme? He can not. The human faculties have no data upon which they can institute such an equation. But until that is shown, it is impossible to see how his scheme more signally displays the saving goodness of God than the Calvinist's. One thing is clear: according to the Calvinistic doctrine, those who are saved will praise God's goodness for having saved them; and, according to the Arminian, they will praise his goodness for having made it possible for them to be saved. Which would be the directer tribute to the divine benevolence, it may be left to common sense to judge.

The Arminian, however, if he should candidly admit that his scheme labors under the difficulties which have been mentioned, will still reply, that it has, in regard to goodness, this advantage over the Calvinistic: that it makes possible the salvation of those whose salvation the Calvinistic scheme makes impossible. He charges, that while the Calvinistic scheme makes salvation of some certain, it makes the destruction of some equally certain. The one scheme opens the door of hope to all; the other closes it against some. This, it is contended, cannot be shown to consist with the goodness of God. It is not intended to deny that this is a difficulty which the Calvinistic scheme has to carry. Its adherents are sufficiently aware of the awful mystery which hangs round this subject, and of the limitations upon their faculties, to deter them from arrogantly claiming to understand the whole case. The difficulty is this: If God can, on the ground of the all-sufficient merit of Christ, save those who actually perish, why does not his goodness lead him to save them? Why, if he know that, without his efficacious grace, they will certainly perish, does he withhold from them that grace, and so seal the certainty of their destruction? These solemn questions the Calvinist professes his ability to answer only in the words of our blessed Lord: "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight."

But should the Arminian, professing to decide how the Deity should proceed in relation to sinners, use this conceded difficulty for the purpose of showing that the Calvinist imputes malignity to God, it is fair, it is requisite, to prove that he has no right to press this objection — that it is incumbent on him to look to his own defenses. What if it should turn out that he is oppressed by a still greater difficulty?

In the first place, the Evangelical Arminian admits that God perfectly foreknew all that will ever come to pass. Consequently, he admits that God foreknew what, and how many, human beings will finally perish. He must also admit that God

foreknows that he will judge them at the last day, and that what God foreknows he will do on that day, he must have eternally purposed to do. The final condemnation, therefore, of a definite number of men is absolutely certain. The question is not now whether God makes it certain. Let us not leave the track. What it is asserted the Arminian must admit is, that it is certain. Now this is very different from saying that God eternally knew that all men would perish, unless he should intervene to save them. For he foreknew his purpose to make such an intervention in behalf of some of the race, and so foreknew the absolute certainty of their final salvation. The case before us is, not that God knew that those who will actually perish would perish unless he intervened to save them. It is, that he foreknew that they will finally perish. But if this must be admitted — that God foreknew with certainty that some human beings will be, at the last day, adjudged by him to destruction, then their destruction is certain. Now we crave to know how a provision of redemption which made their salvation possible can exercise any effect upon their destiny. Their destruction is to God's knowledge certain. How can the possibility of their salvation change that certainty? It cannot. Where, then, is the goodness to them of the redeeming provision? It is impossible to see.

Further, how can salvation be possible to those who are certain to be lost? How can their salvation be possible, if their destruction be certain? There is but one conceivable answer: it is, that although God foreknew that they would be lost, he also foreknew that they might be saved. That is to say, there was an extrinsic impossibility of their salvation created by God's certain foreknowledge, but an intrinsic possibility of their salvation growing out of their ability to avail themselves of the provision of redemption. It may be pleaded that their case is like that of Adam in innocence. God knew that he would fall, but he also knew that he might stand. This brings us to the next point, and that will take us down to one of the fundamental difficulties of the Arminian scheme.

In the second place, a possible salvation would be to a sinner an impossible salvation. Mere salvability would be to him inevitable destruction. It will be admitted, without argument, that a possible salvation is not, in itself, an actual salvation. That which may be is not that which is. Before a possible can become an actual salvation something needs to be done — a condition must be performed upon which is suspended its passage from possibility to actuality. The question is, What is the thing which needs to be done — what is this condition which needs to be fulfilled before salvation can become a fact to the sinner? The Arminian answer is: Repentance and faith on the sinner's part. He must consent to turn from his iniquities and accept Christ as his Savior. The further question presses, By what agency does the sinner perform this condition — by what power does he repent, believe, and so accept salvation? The answer to this question, whatever it may be, must indicate the agency, the power, which determines the sinner's repenting, believing and so accepting salvation. It is not enough to point out an agency, a power, which is, however potent, merely an auxiliary to the determining cause. It is the determining cause itself that must be given as the answer to the question. It must be a factor which renders, by virtue

of its own energy, the final decision — an efficient cause which, by its own inherent causality, makes a possible salvation an actual and experimental fact. What is this causal agent which is the sovereign arbiter of human destiny? The Arminian answer to this last question of the series is, The sinner's will. It is the sinner's will which, in the last resort, determines the question whether a possible, shall become an actual, salvation. This has already been sufficiently shown in the foregoing remarks. But what need is there of argument to prove what any one, even slightly acquainted with Arminian theology knows that it maintains? Indeed, it is one of the distinctive and vital features of that theology, contra-distinguishing it to the Calvinistic. The Calvinist holds that the efficacious and irresistible grace of God applies salvation to the sinner; the Arminian, that the grace of God although communicated to every man is inefficacious and resistible, and that the sinner's will uses it as merely an assisting influence in determining the final result of accepting a possible salvation and so making it actual. Grace does not determine the will; the will "improves" the grace and determines itself. Grace is the handmaid, the sinner's will the mistress. Let us suppose that in regard to the question whether salvation shall be accepted, there is a perfect equipoise between the motions of grace and the contrary inclinations of the sinner's will. A very slight added influence will destroy the equilibrium. Shall it be from grace or from the sinner's will? If from the former, grace determines the question, and the Calvinistic doctrine is admitted. But that the Arminian denies. It must then be from the sinner's will; and however slight and inconsiderable this added influence of the will may be, it determines the issue. It is like the feather that alights upon one of two evenly balanced scales and turns the beam.

Moreover, this will of the sinner which discharges the momentous office of determining the question of salvation is his natural will. It cannot be a gracious will, that is, a will renewed by grace; for if it were, the sinner would be already in a saved condition. But the very question is, Will he consent to be saved? Now if it be not the will of a man already in a saved condition, it is the will of a man yet in an unsaved condition. It is the will of an unbelieving and unconverted man, that is, a natural man, and consequently must be a natural will. It is this natural will, then, which finally determines the question whether a possible salvation shall become an actual. It is its high office to settle the matter of practical salvation. In this solemn business, as in all others, it has an irrefragable autonomy. Not even in the critical transition from the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God's dear Son, can it be refused the exercise of its sacred and inalienable prerogative of contrary choice. At the supreme moment of the final determination of soul "for Christ to live and die," the determination might be otherwise. The will may be illuminated, moved, assisted by grace, but not controlled and determined by it. To the last it has the power of resisting grace and of successfully resisting it. To it — I use the language reluctantly — the blessed Spirit of God is represented as sustaining the attitude of the persuasive orator of grace. He argues, he pleads, he expostulates, he warns, he beseeches the sinner's will in the melting accents of Calvary and alarms it with the thunders of judgment — but that is all. He cannot without trespassing upon its sovereignty renew and re-create and

determine his will. This is no misrepresentation, no exaggeration, of the Arminian's position. It is what he contends for. It is what he must contend for. It is one of the hinges on which his system turns. Take it away, and the system swings loosely and gravitates to an inevitable fall.

Now this is so palpably opposed to Scripture and the facts of experience, that Evangelical Arminians endeavor to modify it, so as to relieve it of the charge of being downright Pelagianism. That the attempt is hopeless, has already been shown. It is utterly vain to say, that grace gives ability to the sinner sufficient for the formation of that final volition which decides the question of personal salvation. Look at it. Do they mean, by this ability, regenerating grace? If they do, as regenerating grace unquestionably determines the sinner's will, they give up their position and adopt the Calvinistic. No; they affirm that they do not, because the Calvinistic position is liable to two insuperable objections: first, that it limits efficacious grace to the elect, denying it to others; secondly, that efficacious and determining grace would contradict the laws by which the human will is governed. It comes back to this, then: that notwithstanding this imparted ability, the natural will is the factor which determines the actual relation of the soul to salvation. The admission of a gracious ability, therefore, does not relieve the difficulty. It is not an efficacious and determining influence; it is simply suasion. The natural will may yield to it or resist it. It is a vincible influence.

Now this being the real state of the case, according to the Arminian scheme, it is perfectly manifest that no sinner could be saved. There is no need of argument. It is simply out of the question, that the sinner in the exercise of his natural will can repent, believe in Christ, and so make a possible salvation actual. Let it be clearly seen, that, in the final settlement of the question of personal religion, the Arminian doctrine is, that the will does not decide as determined by the grace of God, but by its own inherent self-determining power, and the inference, if any credit is attached to the statements of Scripture, is forced upon us, that it makes the salvation of the sinner impossible. A salvation, the appropriation of which is dependent upon the sinner's natural will, is no salvation; and the Arminian position is that the appropriation of salvation is dependent upon the natural will of the sinner. The stupendous paradox is thus shown to be true — that a merely possible salvation is an impossible salvation.

If in reply to this argument the Arminian should say, that he does not hold that the merely natural will which is corrupt is the final determining agent, but that the will makes the final decision by reason of some virtue characterizing it, the rejoinder is obvious: first, this virtue must either be inherent in the natural will of the sinner, or be communicated by grace. If it be inherent in the natural will, it is admitted that it is the natural will itself, through a power resident in it, which determines to improve communicated grace and appropriate salvation; and that would confirm the charge that the Arminian makes the final decision to accept salvation depend upon the natural will, which would be to render salvation impossible. If this virtue in the will which determines it to make the final decision be communicated by

grace, it is a part of the gracious ability imparted to the sinner; and then we would have part of this communicated gracious ability improving another part — that is, gracious ability improving gracious ability. Now this would be absurd on any other supposition than that grace is the determining agent, and that supposition the Arminian rejects. To state the case briefly: either this virtue in the will which is the controlling element is grace or it is not. If it be grace, then grace is the determining element, and the Calvinistic doctrine is admitted. If it be not grace, then the will by its natural power is the determining element, and that is impossible, — it is impossible for the natural will, which is itself sinful and needs to be renewed, to determine the question of practical salvation.

Let us put the matter in a different light. There must be some virtue in the natural man to lead him to improve grace — to use gracious ability. Now whence is this virtue? It must be either from God, or from himself. If it be from God, then the cause which determines the question of accepting salvation is from God, and the Calvinistic doctrine is admitted. If it be from himself, then it is the natural will which uses the gracious ability, and determines the appropriation of salvation; and that is impossible.

Further, the Arminian must admit either that the will makes the final decision in consequence of some virtue in it, or that it makes it without all virtue. If in consequence of some virtue, then as that virtue is distinguished from the grace it used, it is merely natural, and the natural will is affirmed to be virtuous enough to decide the all-important question of salvation; which is contrary to the doctrine, maintained by Evangelical Arminians, that the natural man is depraved, and destitute of saving virtue. If the will makes the final decision without all virtue, then the natural will, as sinful, improves grace to the salvation of the soul, which is absurd and impossible. The Arminian is shut up to admit that it is the natural will of the sinner which improves grace and determines the question of personal salvation; and it is submitted, that such a position makes salvation impossible.

There is another mode of showing that, according to the distinctive principles of the Arminian system, salvation is impossible. The Scriptures unquestionably teach that salvation is by grace: “By grace ye are saved.” Not only so, but with equal clearness they teach that none can be saved except by grace; that no sinner can save himself: “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Savior; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” There is no need to argue this point, since it is admitted by Evangelical Arminians as well as by Calvinists. Their common doctrine is that no sinner can save himself. If his salvation depended upon his saving himself it would be impossible. But the distinctive doctrines of Arminianism — the doctrines which distinguish it from Calvinism — necessitate the inference that the sinner saves himself. This inference is illegitimate, the Arminian contends, because he holds that had not Christ died to make salvation

possible and were not the Holy Spirit imparted to induce the sinner to embrace it, no man could be saved. This, however, is no proof of the illegitimacy of the inference from his doctrine that the sinner is after all his own savior. The proof of the legitimacy of the inference is established in this way: According to Arminianism, sufficient grace is imparted to all men. Every man has, consequently, sufficient ability to repent, believe and embrace salvation. This sufficient grace or ability, therefore, is common to all men. But that it does not determine all men to be saved is proved by the fact that some are not saved. This the Arminian holds. Now, what makes the difference between the saved and the unsaved? Why is one man saved and another not saved? The answer to these questions is of critical importance and must be rendered. What answer does the Arminian return? This: The reason is, that one man determines to improve the common grace and another does not. He cannot hold that grace makes the difference, for grace is the common possession of both. The specific difference of their cases is the respective determinations of their own wills, undetermined by grace. He therefore who determines to use the common gift cannot be saved by it, but by his determination to use it. If it be not that which saves him, but the grace itself, then all who have the grace would be saved by it equally with him. No, it is not grace which saves him, but his use of grace. And as he might have determined not to use it, it is manifest that he is saved by the exercise of his own will; in other words that he saves himself. The saving factor is his will; he is his own savior. This is made still plainer by asking the question, Why is another not saved, but ruined? He had the same sufficient grace with him who is saved. His own determination not to use it, it will be said, is the cause of his ruin — he therefore ruins himself. In the same way precisely the determination of the saved man to use it is the cause of his salvation — he, therefore, saves himself. Granted, that he could not be saved without grace; still, grace only makes his salvation possible. He must make it a fact; and beyond controversy, he who makes his salvation a fact accomplishes his salvation. He saves himself.

This reasoning conclusively shows it to be a necessary consequence from the distinctive doctrines of Arminianism, that sinners are not saved by grace but by themselves in the use of grace; and as that position contradicts the plainest teachings of Scripture, the system which necessitates it makes salvation impossible.

To all this it will be replied, that the ability conferred by grace pervades the will itself, and enables, although it does not determine, it to make the final and saving decision. But this by no means mends the matter. Let it be admitted that the will is enabled by grace to decide; if it is not determined by it to the decision, then it follows that there is something in the will different from the gracious ability, which uses that ability in determining the result. What is that different element? It cannot be a gracious power. To admit that would be to contradict the supposition and to give up the question; for in that case it would be grace which determines the decision. What can that be which differs from the gracious ability conferred

and uses it, but the natural power of the sinner's will? But his will, apart from grace, is sinful and therefore disabled. So the Arminian admits. How, then, can a disabled thing use enabling grace? How can it determine to use that grace? Over and beyond the enabling power there is postulated a determining power. The enabling power is grace; over and beyond it is the determining power of the sinful will. The thing is inconceivable. Sin cannot use grace; inability cannot use ability; the dead cannot determine to use life. To say then that grace is infused into the will itself to enable it to form the final volition, which makes a possible salvation actual, does not remove the difficulty. If it does not determine the will, the will determines itself. The very essence of that self-determination is to use or not to use the enabling grace, and therefore must be something different from that grace. The determination is not from grace, but from nature. Again the impossibility of salvation is reached. A doctrine which assigns to grace a merely enabling influence, and denies it a determining power, makes the salvation of a sinner impossible. To say to a sinner, Use the natural strength of your will in determining to avail yourself of grace, would be to say to him, You cannot be saved. For if he answered from the depths of his consciousness, he would groan out the response, Alas, I have no such strength!

The truth is, that a thorough examination of the profile of the Arminian discloses the fact that, in the last analysis, it is not essentially different from that of the Socinian and Pelagian. It is cheerfully conceded that the Arminian soteriology is different from the Socinian and Pelagian. For the former professedly holds that the atonement of Christ was vicarious and that it rendered a perfect satisfaction to the retributive justice of God. But, according to it, the atonement did not secure salvation as a certain result to any human beings; and when it comes to the question how the sinner practically avails himself of the salvation made only possible to all, the Arminian answers it by saying, that the sinner in the exercise of his own self-determining power, which from its nature is contingent in its exercise, makes salvation his own. The connection between his soul and redemption is effected by his own decision, in the formation of which he is conscious that he might act otherwise — that he might make a contrary choice. There is no real difference between this position and that of the Socinian and Pelagian. The Arminian professes to attach more importance than they to the influence of supernatural grace, but, in the last resort, like them he makes the natural power of the sinner's will the determining cause of personal salvation. Every consideration, therefore, which serves to show the impossibility of salvation upon the anthropological scheme of Socinianism and Pelagianism leads to the conclusion that the same consequence is enforced by that of Arminianism. In both schemes it is nature, and not grace, which actually saves.

Still further, the distinctive doctrines of Arminianism not only make salvation impossible by denying that it is by grace, but also by denying that it is by works. Not that it is intended to say that Arminians in so many words affirm this. On the contrary, they endeavor to show that their system is not liable to this charge. We have, however, to deal with their system and the logical consequences which it

involves. The question is, Do the peculiar tenets of the Arminian scheme necessitate the inference that salvation is by works? I shall attempt to prove that they do.

It must be admitted that a system, one of the distinctive doctrines of which is that sinners are in a state of legal probation, affirms salvation by works. The essence of a legal probation is that the subject of moral government is required to render personal obedience to law in order to his being justified. It is conceded on all hands that Adam's probation was of such a character. He was required to produce a legal obedience. Had it been produced it would have been his own obedience. It makes no difference that he was empowered to render it by sufficient grace. A righteousness does not receive its denomination from the source in which it originates, but from its nature and the end which it contemplates. Had Adam stood, he would have been enabled by grace to produce obedience, but it would have been his own obedience, and it would have secured justification on its own account.

Now it will not be denied that Arminian divines assert that men are now in a state of probation. It would be unnecessary to adduce proof of this. They contend that, in consequence of the atonement offered by Christ for the race, all men become probationers. A chance is given them to secure salvation. The only question is, whether the probation which Arminians affirm for sinners be a legal probation. That it is, may be proved by their own statements. If they take the ground that the obedience to divine requirements may be rendered through the ability conferred by grace, and therefore the probation is not legal, the answer is obvious: the obedience exacted of Adam he was enabled by grace to render; but notwithstanding that fact, his probation was legal. That men now have grace enabling them to render obedience cannot disprove the legal character of their probation.

The argument has ramified into details, but it has not wandered from the thing to be proved, to wit, that a possible salvation is an impossible salvation. All the consequences which have been portrayed as damaging to the Arminian theory of a merely possible salvation flow logically from the fundamental position that sufficient ability is given to every man to make such a merely possible salvation actual to himself. One more consideration will be presented, and it goes to the root of the matter. It is, that this ability which is affirmed to be sufficient to enable every man to make a possible salvation actual is, according to the Arminian scheme, itself a sheer impossibility. This may be regarded as an extraordinary assertion, but it is susceptible of proof as speedy as it is clear. The Evangelical Arminian not only admits the fact, but contends for it, that every man in his natural, fallen condition is spiritually dead — is dead in trespasses and sins. The problem for him to solve is, How can this spiritually dead man make his possible salvation an actual salvation? It must not be done by the impartation to him of efficacious and determining grace, for to admit that would be to give up the doctrine of a possible salvation and accept that of a decreed and certain

salvation. Nor must it be done by regenerating grace, for two difficulties oppose that supposition: first, this regeneration grace would necessarily be efficacious and determining grace; and secondly, it could not with truth be maintained that every man is regenerated. A degree of grace, therefore, which is short of regeneration grace, must be conferred upon every man. What is that? Sufficient grace — that is to say, a degree of grace imparting ability sufficient to enable every man to make a possible salvation actually his own. Now, the argument is short: a degree of grace which does not regenerate, would be a degree of grace which would not bestow life upon, the spiritually dead sinner. If it did infuse spiritual life it would of course be regenerating grace; but it is denied to be regenerating grace. No other grace would be sufficient for the dead sinner but regenerating or life-giving grace. How could grace enable the dead sinner to perform living functions — to repent, to believe in Christ, to embrace salvation — without first giving him life? In a word, sufficient grace which is not regenerating grace is a palpable impossibility. An ability sufficient to enable the dead sinner to discharge living functions but not sufficient to make him live, is an impossibility. The Arminian is therefore shut up to a choice between two alternatives: either, he must confess sufficient grace to be regenerating grace, and then he abandons his doctrine; or he must maintain that grace is sufficient for a dead sinner which does not make him live, and then he asserts an impossibility.

If to this the Arminian reply, that the functions which sufficient grace enables the sinner to perform are not functions of spiritual life, it follows: first, that he contradicts his own position that grace imparts a degree of spiritual life to every man; and, secondly, that he maintains that a spiritually dead man discharges functions which cause him to live, which is infinitely absurd.

If, finally, he reply, that sufficient grace is life-giving and therefore regenerating grace, but that it is not efficacious, and does not determine the fact of the sinner's salvation, the rejoinder is obvious: No spiritually dead sinner can possibly be restored to life except by union with Jesus Christ, the source of spiritual life. To deny that position is to deny Christianity. But if that must be admitted, as union with Christ determines the present salvation of the sinner, sufficient grace which gives life determines the question of present salvation. Sufficient grace gives life by uniting the sinner to Christ, and union with Christ is salvation. Sufficient grace which is conceded to be regeneration, is therefore necessarily efficacious and determining, grace.

We are now prepared to estimate the force of the analogy which, under a preceding head, it was supposed that the Arminian may plead between the case of the sinner and that of Adam. Our first father had sufficient grace, but it was not efficacious grace. It did not determine his standing. It rendered it possible for him to stand, but it did not destroy the possibility of his falling. He had sufficient ability to perform holy acts; nevertheless, it was possible for him to sin. In like manner, it may be said, the sinner, in his natural condition, has sufficient grace, but not efficacious grace. It renders it possible for him to accept salvation, but it does not

destroy the possibility of his rejecting it. He has sufficient ability to repent and believe; yet, notwithstanding this, he may continue impenitent and unbelieving.

I admit the fact that Adam had sufficient grace to enable him to stand in holiness, and that it was possible for him either to stand or fall; but I deny that there is any real analogy between his case and that of the unregenerate sinner. It breaks down at a point of the most vital consequence. That point is the presence or absence of spiritual life. Adam, in innocence, was possessed of spiritual life — he was, spiritually considered, wholly alive. There was not imparted to him — to use an Arminian phrase — “a degree of spiritual life.” Life reigned in all his faculties. There was no element of spiritual death in his being which was to be resisted and which in turn opposed the motions of spiritual life. Now let it even be supposed, with the Arminian, that a degree of spiritual life is given to the spiritually dead sinner, and it would necessarily follow that there is a degree of spiritual death which still remains in him. What conceivable analogy could exist between a being wholly alive spiritually and one partly dead spiritually? What common relation to grace could be predicated of them? How is it possible to conceive that grace which would be sufficient for a wholly living man would also be sufficient for a partly dead man? Take then the Arminian conception of the case of the sinner in his natural condition, and it is obvious that there is no real analogy between it and that of Adam in innocence.

But it has already been shown that the impartation by grace of a degree of spiritual life to the sinner which does not involve his regeneration is impossible. Whatever grace and ability the Arminian may claim for the sinner, if it fall short of regenerating grace, if it does not quicken him in Christ Jesus, no life is communicated by it. The sinner is still dead in trespasses and sins. The communicated grace may instruct him, but it does not raise him from the dead — it is didactic, but not life-giving. It is the suasion of oratory, not the energy of life. It operates upon the natural faculties and becomes a motive to the natural will. But it is precisely the natural will, pervaded by spiritual death, which must decide whether or not it will appropriate the spiritual inducements and make them its own. In a word, a dead man must determine whether he will yield to the persuasion to live or not.

The Arminian theory defies comprehension. To hold that sinners are not spiritually dead is to accept the Pelagian and Socinian heresy that the natural man is able to do saving works. This the Evangelical Arminian denies. He admits that the sinner is spiritually dead, and that in his own strength he can do no saving work. What then does grace accomplish for the sinner, for every sinner? The hypothesis put forth in answer to this question is a plait of riddles which no ingenuity can disentangle. First, the sinner is spiritually dead. Then “a degree of spiritual life” is imparted to him enabling him to discharge spiritually living functions. Well then — one would of course infer — the sinner is now spiritually alive: he is regenerated, he is born again. No, says the Arminian, only “a portion of spiritual death is removed from him:” he is not yet regenerated. What then can

sufficient grace be but the degree of spiritual life which is communicated to the sinner? But this grace — this degree of spiritual life he is to improve. He may do so or he may refuse to do so. If he improve it, it follows that as spiritually dead he improves spiritual life, and what contradiction can be greater than that? If that is denied, it must be supposed, that as spiritually alive he improves this grace — this spiritual life, and then it would follow that as he may resist it, he would, as spiritually alive resist spiritual life, which is absurd. What other supposition can be conceived, unless it be this: that he acts at the same time as equally dead and alive — that death and life co-operate in producing saving results, or in declining to produce them? But that is so absurd that no intelligent mind would tolerate it. Will it be said, that if he improve spiritual life he does it as spiritually alive, and if he resist it, he does it as spiritually dead? That would suppose that, in the case of successful resistance, spiritual death is too strong for spiritual life and overcomes it. How then could the vanquished life be said to be sufficient, or the insufficient grace to be sufficient grace? The spiritual life imparted is unable to overcome the spiritual death still existing, and yet it confers sufficient ability upon the sinner. The Arminian hypothesis is susceptible of no other fair construction than this: that the sinner, as spiritually dead, improves the degree of life given him by grace; that, as impenitent and unbelieving, he, by the exercise of his natural will, used the imparted ability to repent and believe. Such ability is just no ability at all; for there is no power that could use it. It is like giving a crutch to a man lying on his back with the dead palsy, or like putting a bottle of aqua vita in the coffin with a corpse.

Let us put the case in another form: The Arminian holds that the sinner is spiritually dead and consequently unable to do anything to save himself. But a degree of spiritual life is imparted to him to enable him to embrace salvation offered to him. It follows that now the sinner is neither wholly dead nor wholly alive: he is partly dead and partly alive. Now, either, first, his dead part used his living part; or, secondly, his living part used his dead part; or, thirdly, his living part used itself and his dead part used itself; or, fourthly, his living part uses both the living and dead part; or, fifthly, the living and dead part co-operate. The first supposition is inconceivable; for death cannot use life. The second supposition violates the Arminian doctrine that it is life which is to be used, not life which uses death; and further, how is it possible for life to use death in performing saving functions? The third supposition involves the concurrent but contradictory acting of life and death, neither being dominant, so that the sinner ever remains partly alive and partly dead. No salvation is reached. The fourth supposition involves the causal and determining influence of the life imparted by grace, and, therefore, the abandonment of the Arminian and the adoption of the Calvinistic doctrine; for the whole man would be ruled by the life-giving grace. The fifth supposition is impossible; for it is impossible that life and death can co-operate to secure salvation.

Let the Arminian account of the unconverted sinner's condition be viewed in every conceivable way, and it is evident that there is no analogy between it and

that of Adam in innocence. The sufficient grace or ability of the two cases is entirely different. In one case, there was total spiritual life, in the other there is partial spiritual life and partial spiritual death. They cannot be reduced to unity, nor can even similarity be predicated of them. Justification was possible to Adam, for, as a being totally alive, he had sufficient ability to secure it; but salvation, according to the Arminian supposition, is impossible to the sinner, for as a being partly dead, he has no sufficient ability to embrace it. It has already been conclusively shown that grace, to confer ability upon the spiritually dead, cannot be anything less than regenerating grace; and the bestowal of that upon the sinner, previously to his repentance and faith, the Arminian denies. An appeal to Adam's ability, in order to support the hypothesis of the sufficient ability of the unregenerate sinner, cannot avail to redeem that hypothesis from the charge of making a merely possible salvation impossible.

Let us now return for a moment to the argument employed under the preceding head. It was argued that God's foreknowledge, as conceded by the Arminian, that a definite number of human beings will be condemned at the last day, involves the absolute certainty of their condemnation, and that what God will do on that day he must have eternally purposed to do. How, it was asked, can the Arminian show that this certainty of the destruction of some men is consistent with the possibility of their salvation? It was supposed that in his attempt to show this, he might contend that although the divine foreknowledge created an extrinsic impossibility of their salvation — that is, an impossibility apprehended in the divine mind, yet there is an intrinsic possibility of their salvation — that is, a possibility growing out of their own relations to the scheme of redemption, and their ability to avail themselves of them. In short, he might contend that although God foreknows that some men will be lost, he also foreknows that these same men might be saved; and to fortify that view, he might appeal to the analogy of the case of Adam, the certainty whose fall God foreknew, but the possibility of whose standing, so far as his intrinsic ability was concerned, he also foreknew. It has now been proved that there is no analogy between Adam's sufficient ability and that which the Arminian vainly arrogates for the unregenerate sinner; and that on the contrary, on the Arminian's own principles, the unregenerate sinner is endowed with no sufficient ability to appropriate a merely possible salvation. Upon those principles, therefore, at the same time that God foreknows the certainty of some men's destruction, he also foreknows the intrinsic impossibility of their salvation. The Arminian, consequently, has the case of the finally lost to harmonize with divine goodness, as well as the Calvinist, and is logically restrained from attacking the Calvinistic doctrine because of its alleged inconsistency with that attribute. The charge recoils, indeed, with redoubled force upon himself, for while the Calvinistic doctrine provides for the certain salvation of some men, his doctrine makes the salvation of any man impossible. A scheme which professes to make the salvation of every man possible, but really makes the salvation of any man impossible, is not one which can glory on being peculiarly consistent with the goodness of God.

The Arminian impeaches the doctrine of unconditional election for representing God as worse than the devil, more false, more cruel, more unjust. No attempt has been made at hostile countercharges; but it has been proved by cold-blooded argument that the distinctive principles of Arminianism, in making the application of redemption to depend upon the self-determining power of a dead man's will, make the actual salvation of any sinner a sheer impossibility. How such a scheme magnifies the goodness of God can only be conceived by those who are able to comprehend how a dead man can use the means of life. The love of the Father in giving his Son, the love of the Son in obeying, suffering, dying for the salvation of sinners, the mission of the eternal Spirit to apply a salvation purchased by blood, — all this infinite wealth of means depends for efficacy upon the decision of a sinner's will, a decision which, without regenerating and determining grace, must, in accordance with the law of sin and death, be inevitably rendered against its employment.

The proposition will no doubt have been regarded as extraordinary, but it is now repeated as a conclusion established by argument, that a merely possible salvation such as the Arminian scheme enounces is to a sinner an impossible salvation. When the argument has been convicted of inconclusiveness, it may be time to resort to the weapons of the vanquished — strong and weighty words.

The objection against the Calvinistic doctrines of election and reprobation that they are inconsistent with the goodness of God has now been examined, and it has been shown, first, that it is inapplicable, and secondly, that the Arminian is not the man to render it.

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