

uses only the hesitating language, "we presume He did." Episcopius, whom the *Christian Guardian* praises, (according to Owen in his display of Arminianism) calls the foreknowledge of God a troublesome question, and writes as if it were a debateable subject whether there were any such thing or not; while Vorstius says that "God in His own manner sometimes fears, that is, with reason suspects, and prudently conjectures, that this or that evil may arise!"

The writer in the *Guardian* of course charges against Calvinism that it involves millions of infants in damnation; we say of course, because this is one of the staple charges advanced by Methodists which they are never weary of repeating. The charge was made by Wesley in language of the lowest ribaldry, when he said that according to Calvinism "God causes infants of a span long to pass through the fire of hell;" it occurs in an address to the devil of most revolting blasphemy; and Wesley's charge and language have to this day the sanction of Methodist conferences, for no better reason, so far as we can discover, than that *he* said so! There is no such doctrine contained in our Standards, nor, so far as we know, has it been advanced by any Calvinistic writer. The truth is that on this subject, as on many others, Calvinism, as a system, is silent, and leaves men to form their own conclusions. The use of creeds and confessions, as every one knows who is at all acquainted with the history of the Christian Church, is to repudiate error, the existence of which alone has rendered them necessary; and had the Westminster Assembly of Divines, by whom our standards were compiled, reckoned the universal salvation of infants dying in infancy a doctrine inconsistent with Calvinism, the principle on which they were acting would have required them to insert a condemnation of that doctrine in these Standards. In the absence of such condemnation, the allegation that the doctrine of the damnation of infants is necessarily involved in Calvinism can only be deemed one of the countless slanders of Arminians, which they persist in circulating with the view of injuring the Presbyterian Church.

A passage in the 10th chapter of the Confession of Faith has, we believe, been sometimes pleaded in support of this charge. The chapter relates to the subject of effectual calling; and after the calling of those who have come to years of understanding has been described as occurring in connection with the ministration of the word, the question naturally arises, can infants, who are incapable of being called in the same way, still be renewed and saved? This is answered, as follows, in the next section: "elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ, though the Spirit, who worketh when, where, and how He pleaseth." From this passage some of our opponents have argued thus: infants dying in infancy are described as elect; therefore others dying in infancy are not so. In this way of reasoning, when John in his second Epistle, addressing the elect lady, speaks of her "elect sister," it would follow that she must have had a sister who was not elect! We need hardly say that the word elect, when used in Scripture with reference to salvation, means chosen, not from a particular family or class, but out of the whole mass of human beings, and, therefore, the expression "elect infants" in the Confession of Faith can only mean infants chosen, not from their own class, but out of the human family, and the passage fairly admits of the interpreta-