

THREE FORMS OF FAITH.

CALVINISM.

Enter Calvin, Luther, Hopkins, Prudence, Mercy and Grace.

Calvin. Good evening, Luther; I am glad to meet you—for though I have warmly opposed some of your polished notions, it is a pleasure to see one who adheres to the divine decrees.

Luther. I can readily forgive you, Calvin, for though in some things you have gone farther in opposing the mother church than I have, you have done nobly in defending the sovereignty of God. Our friend Hopkins seems not to agree with us exactly.

Hopkins. You are well, gentlemen, considering your circumstances, but I think that I have made some improvements upon your system; but I believe most fully in your doctrine of decrees.

Calvin. Yes, I know that, and I have been thinking that my opposition to your theory was not wise. The truth is, we cannot see alike in all things, and while we agree that God is a sovereign, and has fixed by his decrees the fate of the world, I do not think that we should contend about minor points.

Luther. You are right, Calvin, and I think we ought to be more lenient towards Br. Hopkins, especially as Arminius is making some noise in world, and is thought to have much more benevolent views of Deity than we have.

Hopkins. By the way, brethren, that brings up a difficulty that has often troubled me. The most benevolent persons that I meet shudder at the doctrine of eternal reprobation. They say it is too horrible to be believed.

Prudence. Why, gentlemen, that is a general feeling among my sex, but I cannot think it prudent to talk as they do. It may be that this very feeling which they have is one of the temptations of Satan. If he can transform himself into an angel of light, why not into an angel of mercy?

Calvin. It is no doubt a suggestion of Satan. He wishes to deceive that he may destroy.

Mercy. He cannot have much shrewdness then, for how can he expect to change the decrees of the infinite God? Do you not all teach that those to be saved are elected to life, and those to be lost reprobated to endless woe? If you are right, then, the elect can be in no danger, and they need not trouble themselves about the wiles of Satan.

Grace. But do you deny that the salvation is of grace? Can any merit heaven?

Mercy. Oh no—it is of God's mercy that we are saved; but then if our doom as Calvin teaches, was fixed before we came into the world, Satan cannot be very wise if he supposes that he can alter it.

Grace. That's just the way Arminius preaches. He is all for works, and expects that works will take him to heaven.

Luther. Yes—and he seems to think that when God made the world he had fixed no design.

Hopkins. Or if he had, that it has been defeated.

Calvin. I cannot endure those squeamish people, who think that God has not a right to do as he pleases with his own.

Prudence. None dispute the right of God to do as he pleases! but does he please to do what you say? I would not do rash, but really I could love God better, if it were not for his decree of reprobation.

Mercy. Such a decree makes God an awful being.

Grace. What of that, salvation must be of grace.

Prudence. On that point there can be no doubt; but because it is of grace, does it follow that some are decreed to ruin?

Calvin. Of course if any are lost, God decreed that they should be, for he had a design with regard to every human being.

Hopkins. Of that there can be no doubt.

ARMINIANISM.

Enter Arminius, Wesley, Clark, Free Grace, Free Will and Compassion.

Calvin. Good heavens! what a troop is here. Arminius and his followers.

Luther. Alas! for the degeneracy of this age. Arminius' friends, here we shall have an encounter, for we have fallen in with the representatives of another age.

Wesley. Indeed we have, and their presence seems to throw dark shadows over us.

Clark. And not only shadows, but a chill which almost freezes my heart.

Calvin. This is Arminius, I believe, the heretic who teaches that salvation is offered to all.

Luther. And who denies election and reprobation.

Hopkins. And makes man greater than God. Arminius I believe in a free salvation, reverend sirs.

Wesley. If it is not, how can the sinner be blamed for not being saved?

Clark. And if God has reprobated some, how can he be good to all?

Compassion. Reprobation! reprobation.. to endless death! The idea distracts me.

Free Will. And in what sense are we free, if some are thus reprobated?

Free-Grace. Reprobation! Is not grace free for all? If you will assist me I will sing one of our sweet hymns to these advocates of stern decrees and partial favor.

Free-Will, Free Grace, and Compassion.

FREE GRACE.

The grace that all are praising, Is just the grace for me, Its favors wide are spreading,

As light o'er land and sea, It is the grace, the heavenly grace, That shines in Jesus' smiling face, Grace, endless, boundless, free, Oh, that's the grace for me.

The grace of God, the Father, Is just the grace for me, The soul needs nothing richer, It saves the bond and free, Its song of sweetest joy and love Shall be our song in world's above, Grace, endless, boundless, free, Oh, that's the grace for me.

Hopkins. I'm sick of this religion of mere feeling—a religion without logic and sense. Its advocates have sung it into favor.

Calvin. Yes, even our sisters joined in the chorus—

Oh that's the grace for me.

Luther. I saw it, and in spite of our logic, all the church may yet sing this fanatical song.

Calvin. (Addressing A., W., and C.) Gentlemen, allow me to ask a few questions. Did God know when he made man, what would be his end? Is it any worse to make a man, knowing that he will be endlessly miserable, than to ordain him to be thus miserable? Is God as good to Heathens who never hear of Christ, as he is to Christians, if the heathen cannot be saved?

Arminius. Man is a free agent.

Calvin. Did God know when he gave man his agency, that it would prove his endless ruin? If so, why did he give it, if he was good?

Hopkins. Are the Heathen free agents? How can they believe on him of whom they have not heard?

Clark. God did not know what use man would make of his agency.

Luther! He did not! Why then, did God give it to him, if he was infinitely good?

Calvin. Mr. Clarke, I have heard much of your great learning—will you be kind enough to inform me how infinite wisdom can grow in wisdom? I was not aware that anything could be added to infinity.

Hopkins. Does not the Bible say, known unto God are all things from the beginning of the world?

Arminius and Wesley. Why Br. Clarke, you reason very strangely. You deny the wisdom of God.

Clark. And you must deny it, or you make God as bad as Calvin does; for it is just as bad to make a man knowing that he will be endlessly miserable, as to ordain him to be thus miserable.

Arminius. Its false.

Wesley. Yes, scandalously false.

Luther. It is not false.

Wesley. It is—you know it is.

UNIVERSALISM.

Enter Murray, Winchester, Barnes, Lovt, Justice and Hope.

Murray. What! what! gentlemen. You seem excited—angry—very angry!

Winchester. Men should never get angry in talking upon religion.

Barnes. Now abide faith, hope charity—these three, but the greatest of these is charity. Do not disgrace charity in discussing your faiths.

Murray. You are both right, gentlemen. Calvin, Luther, and Hopkins believe that all will be saved for whom Christ died; and Arminius, Wesley, and Clark believe that he died for all. Thus you are both right.

Love. Yes, but not right in saying God created some for ruin, or that he created some and exposed them to endless ruin.

Justice. There is no difference in that respect between Calvin and Arminius; both make God the author of endless pain.

Hope. And both destroy hope; for there is no sure ground of hope but the infinite and impartial love of God.

Murray. Calvinism makes God arbitrary and cruel.

Wesley. That is true, Mr. Murray.

Winchester. Arminianism denies both the wisdom and goodness of God.

Calvin. That's true, for God would not have given man the power to make himself endlessly miserable, unless he designed that misery.

Barnes. Human agency is limited, and thus God can do his will in the salvation of all, even though man is a moral agent.

Justice. Yes—and God is just as well as good.

Love. His justice is but the agent of his love. He punishes, not to destroy, but to save.

Hope. We can, therefore, hope for all men.

Prudence, Mercy and Grace. Here, our difficulties are all solved—there is salvation by grace, and yet God is not a cruel sovereign.

Free Will, Free Grace and Compassion. Yes, and all are rewarded and punished according to their deeds, and thus though the will is free and grace is free, God can have compassion on all.

Calvin. There is logic here, Luther.

Hopkins. Yes—and disinterested love.

Wesley. Yes—and grace, full and free.

Arminius. Yes—and justice too.

Clark. If this theory be true, I need not deny the infinite knowledge of God.

Murray. Truth is harmonious.

Calvin. Luther and Hopkins. That idea agrees with our logic.

Winchester. Truth is glorious, too.

Love. Most certainly, for it comes from a God of love.

Hope. Is there anything glorious in endless woe?

Arminius. Wesley, you and Clark believe in the salvation of brutes; I should therefore, suppose that you could believe with Murray. Man

must be of more value in the eye of God than a horse.

Faith and Joy.

Faith. I am delighted friends, with your views Faith in such views works by love and purifies the heart.

Joy. And I am full of joy. Listen while Faith and I sing, and if conscience will permit, unite in our chorus.

THE FATHER OF LOVE.

Mid regions of Glory and heavenly delight, How rich are the splendors of grace and of light, Which beam from the face of the Father of love, And swell the glad hearts in the bright worlds above.

Love! love! free, free Love.

There's no one like Him—the Father of Love. He watches his people with kindness and care, And sends them by streamlets, through the fields, fresh and fair.

When sin overtakes them and rends them with woe, 'Tis fountains of grace with salvation o'erflow. Love, &c.

When night in its gloom brooded wide o'er the world, And grief o'er each home had its banners unfurled, He sent from the skies the blessed Son of his love, To raise the lost world to his glad home above. Love, &c.

Then sin shall be finished, its kingdom shall fall, The millions of earth shall be freed from its thrall, And death, the dread tyrant, no longer bear away, And all be immortal in eternal day. Love, &c.

WILL YOU ANSWER?

CONTINUED FROM FIRST NUMBER.

25. As Jesus "tasted death for every man," Hebrews ii. 9, can it be true that "the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in husband," Isa. liii. 10, if a part are never saved? Phil. ii. 9—11.

26. Can Jesus be the Saviour of any more than he actually saves? Can he be "the Saviour of the world," 1 John iv. 14, if the world be not actually saved by Him?

27. If Jesus be in no sense the Saviour of unbelievers, why are unbelievers called upon to believe in him as their Saviour? If unbelievers are not called upon to believe in Christ as their Saviour, what are they to believe?

28. Must not the thing to be believed be true before it is believed? And must it not continue to be true, whether it be believed or not believed? Can faith create any truth? or unbelief destroy it?

29. "What if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith for promise of God of none effect." Rom. iii. 3. Is it true, that "God hath concluded all in unbelief, that he might have mercy on all." Rom. xi. 32.

30. Can God be especially the Saviour of them who believe, unless He be actually the Saviour of all? Tim. iv. 10. Is it not true now, as it was in the days of Paul, that those who trust in the living God as the Saviour of all men, labor and suffer reproach?

31. Is "faith the substance of things hoped for?" Heb. xi. 1. Do you hope for the truth of the doctrine of endless misery? If endless misery be not a thing hoped for, can it form any part of the Christian faith?

32. Do you pray for the salvation of all men? Do you pray in faith, nothing doubting? Are you aware that "whosoever is, not of faith is sin?"

Would God require us to pray for all men, and to pray in faith, unless He will have all men to be saved? 1 Tim. ii. 4. If you believe endless woe to be an item of the truth of God, why do you hope and pray that it may prove false?

34. Do the righteous desire the salvation of all mankind? Is it true that "the desire of the righteous shall be granted?" Prov. x. 24.

35. If "whosoever believeth praise glorifyeth God," Psalm l. 23, can He be glorified by those who cannot praise Him? If any one be rendered endlessly miserable, will it be possible for him to praise God?

36. Do you believe that endless punishment would, in any sense, rebound to the glory of God? If you can "rejoice in hope of the glory of God?" Rom. v. 2. If any, should, not the doctrine of endless woe be blotted from your creed?

37. Would not the salvation of three-fourths of mankind glorify God more than the salvation of one-half? Can you heartily join the angelic host in singing "Glory to God in the highest," without believing in the salvation of the whole family of man?

38. Is endless misery embraced in the message of "good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people?" Luke ii. 10. If not has that doctrine any proper lot in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ?

39. Is it certain that all who are now alive or yet to be born, will not be doomed to endless woe? If faith or good works, or both, be essential to the happiness of a future life, can it be certain that any of our race will enter that happy state, inasmuch as it is not certain that any one will continue faithful and obedient unto death?

40. If Christianity does not teach a certainty in relation to the future destiny of any soul (our race, is it, not properly a system of chance? What better is chance than Atheism?

41. Is not the goodness of God co-extensive and co-eternal with His wisdom and power? As the wisdom of God can never change to folly

nor His power to weakness, will His goodness ever change to hatred? Can Deity be universally and eternally good, if endless misery be true for a single soul?

42. Is it, true that the tender mercies of the Lord are over all; His works? Psalm cxlv. 9. Will not His tender mercies be always over all His works? If endless misery be true for any of our race, in what respect are the tender mercies of the Lord different from the tender mercies of the wicked?

43. If "the goodness of God leadeth to repentance," why should it be supposed that repentance leadeth to the goodness of God? If "the goodness of God leadeth to repentance," are not the impenitent the objects of His goodness?

44. Can he be a Christian who affirms, that if he believed in the certain salvation of all mankind, he would neither worship God, nor obey the precepts of his heavenly law? A. C. T.

OVERCOME EVIL WITH GOOD.

This is one of the most important commands of inspiration; and cannot be too deeply impressed upon the minds, not only of professed Christians, but all people every where.

Our experience must have taught us this; that while the principle of evil for evil, carried out into practice, only increases evil, the one recommended by Paul results in its destruction. If the man cursed, curses in return, both men will become still more angry and bitter towards each other; but if one returns kind and gentle words, the other will be sure to relent and lose a large portion, if not all his anger. No man can firmly resist the influence of kindness when brought to bear directly upon the mind. It is well compared to fire, which heaped upon the heads of enemies consumes the wood, hay and stubble of their enmity, and subdues and melts their hard hearts.

But why should we be required to overcome evil with good, if God, whom we are commanded to imitate, acts upon an opposite principle? Surely the infliction of infinite evil upon his enemies would not accomplish the great object of his benevolent plans and purposes. It would perpetuate and increase it forever, and thus defeat his own schemes of redemption. Even in this world God could not draw men to himself; and make them his willing and obedient subjects by the application of the principle of retaliation and vindictiveness. He has so constituted the human mind that it cannot be thus forced to love and adore; but it is powerless for evil under the influence of goodness.

If it be said that God does always overcome evil with good, by those who believe in endless evil, I ask why he has set apart a vast Empire of his possessions, in which to perpetuate it in every form of horror? Why decrees that it shall remain the scene of sin and blasphemy, with not the slightest prospect of a termination? Why immortalize that which he has attempted to forever blot out of existence? These are questions which can never be satisfactorily answered on the hypothesis under consideration. God either overcomes evil with good, or he does not. If the first, endless misery is as false as Paganism. The increasing revelations of his goodness—and the brightening displays of his undying and tender love, shall finally subdue and purify all souls, and make good gloriously triumphant over all evil.

There is, then, every encouragement for us to obey the command, "overcome evil with good." We become godlike, and help to carry out and illustrate one of the grandest principles of the divine government. We secure our own happiness, and become successful instruments in the destruction of evil.

It may be hard for a man who is undisciplined in this heavenly work, to bless the man who curses him, and speak mild and kind words to those who utter harsh ones. But a little practice will make the task easy; and the result will encourage to perseverance. The only effectual way to make friends out of enemies is to deal gently with them; and should they at first show but slight symptoms of change, there is no cause for discouragement. They cannot long withstand repeated evidences of friendliness; and those who exercise a forbearing and forgiving spirit will find themselves growing richer and richer in grace and wisdom.

DEATH OF REV. ASA SPAULDING.

Our readers have been prepared to receive the intelligence of the death of Br. Asa Spaulding. He departed this life on Tuesday, the 25th ult., in the town of Walpole, N. H. He was a true and good man. We have known him for several years, and cheerfully bear testimony to the urbanity, benevolence and rectitude of his character. His death is a public loss. He was a good man; his talents were of a high order; his death is a loss to the denomination to which he belonged.—Magazine and Advocate.

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