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THE CALVINISTIC SYSTEM OF DOCTRINE—MISREPRESENTATIONS
EXPOSED.

Among those who call themselves Christians there is a class who deny altogether the doctrine of the atonement. They tell us, among other things, that the representation which that doctrine gives of the character of God is so monstrous as to be utterly incredible: that it represents Him as thrown into a state of fury by the sins of men, as eager to find some object, however unsuitable, on which He may wreak His vengeance, and as pacified only when His blind rage has been expended on His own Son. They tell us, moreover, that this doctrine ascribes to Him conduct utterly inconsistent with all our notions of justice and of good government; that to punish the innocent, and then acquit the guilty on the ground of that punishment, are acts of gross injustice altogether at variance with the rectitude which Scripture and reason ascribe to the Supreme Ruler; and that to absolve from guilt and dispense rewards on another ground than the character and conduct of those who receive these blessings is subversive of all equity, and an encouragement to every form of iniquity. Socinus (from whom this class of persons take their name), after grossly misrepresenting the doctrine in ways like these, and assuming that his own notions of what is right and becoming must be the rule by which God governs, broadly announces his conclusion to be that, whether contained in the Scriptures or not, the doctrine of the atonement cannot be true.

The system of doctrine set forth in the standards of our church, and which is distinctively called Calvinism, has met with similar treatment at the hands of its assailants. It has been, and is, misrepresented and vilified to a degree never exceeded in the annals of controversy. To put the most charitable construction on this, and impute it to ignorance merely (a thing we certainly cannot do in all cases), will not remove its culpability, for no system has been more clearly and accurately defined, and it is a plain duty to take pains to understand what we assail. Its enemies have alleged that Calvinism makes God the author of sin, that it represents Him as a merciless tyrant who governs all things by mere arbitrary will without regard to justice, as having created a large portion of the human race for the sole purpose of making them miserable, as employing His Almighty power in compelling men to sin that He