

calculably injurious. Before proceeding further, it is proper to state the sense in which we use the word *grace*. It means favour—that to which the receiver has no claim, and the performer is not bound. There can be no claim to an act of grace on the one hand, nor can there be any obligation to perform it on the other. It enters necessarily and essentially into the idea that it might be withheld and no wrong done. Otherwise it is not grace. When we say, therefore, that salvation is “by grace,” we mean that man has no claim to divine favour; that God is under no obligation to bestow it, and that without this favour he could not obtain eternal life. If the former has a claim, or if the latter is bound, then grace is out of the question. That which we may demand, and He must give, is not grace, but justice.

The correctness of this statement will hardly be denied. And yet we affirm that the avowed principles of Arminianism entirely subvert this idea of grace. According to this system, man in his fallen state had a claim to divine favour; God was bound to provide salvation for him, and give him a measure of grace, (if we can conceive of the term as applying to what God was bound to give) or He could not hold him responsible as an accountable being. Let us look at the proofs.

The first is taken from a volume of “Doctrinal Tracts” issued in their present form “By order of the General Conference.” To show the estimate in which these tracts are held, it may be stated that most of them were formerly bound with the “Form of Discipline” under one cover, but for convenience sake have been separated from it. They still bear the imprimatur of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

On page 25 of this volume, a Calvinist is represented as saying “God might justly have passed by all men;” *i.e.* might justly have left the whole race to perish, without providing salvation for any. To this the writer, John Wesley himself, replies: “Are you sure He might? Where is it written? I cannot find it in the Word of God. Therefore I reject it as a bold, precarious assertion, utterly unsupported by holy Scripture.” But, says the Calvinist, “You know in your own conscience, that God might justly have passed by you.” “I deny it,” says Wesley. “That God might justly, for my unfaithfulness to his grace, have given me up long ago, I grant; but this concession supposes me to have had grace.” This is plain and unmistakable language. “I deny that God might justly have passed by me and all men. I reject it as a bold, precarious assertion, utterly unsupported by holy Scripture.” The opposite affirmation necessarily follows. There is no middle ground between them. God could not justly have left