

THE DOCTRINES
OF
GRACE AND JUSTICE,

EQUALLY

ESSENTIAL TO THE PURE GOSPEL:

WITH

SOME REMARKS

**ON THE MISCHIEVOUS DIVISIONS CAUSED AMONG CHRISTIANS
BY PARTING THOSE DOCTRINES.**

BEING

AN INTRODUCTION TO A PLAN OF RECONCILIATION

**BETWEEN THE DEFENDERS OF THE DOCTRINES OF PARTIAL GRACE, COMMONLY
CALLED CALVINISTS; AND THE DEFENDERS OF THE DOCTRINES OF
IMPARTIAL JUSTICE, COMMONLY CALLED ARMINIANS.**

THE DOCTRINES OF GRACE AND JUSTICE.

SECTION I.

A plain account of the Gospel in general, and of the various dispensations into which it branches itself—The Gospel holds forth the doctrines of justice, as well as the doctrines of grace—An opposition to this capital truth gave rise to the controversy about the Minutes—An answer to an objection of those who suppose that the Gospel consists only of doctrines of grace.

If a judicious mariner, who has sailed round the world, sees with pleasure and improvement a map, which exhibits, in one point of view, the shape and proportion of the wide seas, in crossing of which he has spent some years; a judicious Protestant may profitably look upon a doctrinal map, (if I may be allowed the expression,) which places before him in diminutive proportion, the windings of a controversy, which, like a noisy, impetuous torrent, has disturbed the Churches of Christ for fourteen hundred years, and carried religious desolation through the four parts of the globe; but more especially if this map exhibits, with some degree of accuracy, the boundaries of truth, the crooked shores of the sea of error, the haven of peace, and the rocks rendered famous by the doctrinal wrecks of myriads of unwary evangelists. Without any apology, therefore, I shall lay before the reader a plain account of the *primitive catholic Gospel*, and its various dispensations.

THE GOSPEL, in general, is a Divine system of truth, which, with various degrees of evidence, points out to sinners the way of eternal salvation, agreeable to the mercy and justice of a holy God; and therefore the Gospel, in general, is an assemblage of *holy doctrines of GRACE, and gracious doctrines of JUSTICE*. This is the idea which our Lord himself gives us of it, Mark xvi, 16. For though he speaks there of the peculiar Gospel dispensation, which he opened, his words may, in some sense, be applied to every Gospel dispensation. "Preach the GOSPEL. He that believeth [in the light of his dispensation, supposing he does it 'with the heart unto righteousness'] shall be saved," according to the privileges of his dispensation: here you have a holy doctrine of *grace*. "But he that believeth not shall be damned:" here you have a gracious doctrine of *justice*. For, supposing man has a gracious capacity to believe in the light of his dispensation, there is no Antinomian grace in the promise, and no free wrath in the threatening, which compose what our Lord calls the Gospel; but the conditional promise exhibits a righteous doctrine of *grace*, and the conditional threatening displays a gracious doctrine of *justice*.

THE GOSPEL in general branches itself out into four capital dispensations, the last of which is most eminently called *the Gospel*, because it includes and perfects all the preceding displays of God's grace and justice toward mankind. Take we a view of these four dispensations, beginning at the lowest, viz. *Gentilism*.

I. GENTILISM, which is frequently called *natural religion*, and might with propriety be called, *the Gospel of Gentiles*: Gentilism, I say, is a dispensation of grace and justice, which St. Peter preaches and describes in these words:—"In every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness [according to his light] is accepted of him." These words contain a holy doctrine of grace; which is inseparably connected with this holy doctrine of justice, *In every nation he that feareth NOT God, and worketh NOT righteousness, [according to his light,] is NOT accepted of him.*

II. JUDAISM, which is frequently called the *Mosaic dispensation*, or the law, (that is, according to the first meaning of the Hebrew word *תורה*, *the doctrine*, or *the instruction*,) and which might with propriety be called *the Jewish Gospel*: Judaism, I say, is that particular display of the doctrines of grace and justice, which was chiefly calculated for the meridian of Canaan, and is contained in the Old Testament; but especially in the five books of Moses. The Prophet Samuel sums it all up in these words:—"Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart, [according to the law, i. e. doctrine of Moses,] for consider how great things he hath done for you, [his peculiar people:] but if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed," 1 Sam. xii, 24. In this Gospel dispensation, also, the doctrine of grace goes hand in hand with the doctrine of justice. Every book in the Old Testament confirms the truth of this assertion.

III. THE GOSPEL of John the Baptist, which is commonly called the baptism of John, in connection with *the Gospel*, or baptism, which the apostles preached, before Christ opened the glorious baptism of his own Spirit on the day of pentecost; this Gospel dispensation, I say, is the Jewish Gospel improved into *infant Christianity*. Or, if you please, it is Christianity falling short of that "indwelling power from on high," which is called "the kingdom of God come with power." This Gospel is chiefly found in the four Gospels. It clearly points out the person of Christ, gives us his history, holds forth his mediatorial law; and, leading on to the perfection of Christianity, displays, with increasing light, (1.) The doctrines of *grace*, which kindly call the chief of sinners to eternal salvation through the practicable means of repentance, faith, and obedience. And, (2.) The doctrines of *justice*, which awfully threatens sinners with destruction, if they finally neglect to repent, believe, and obey.

The capital difference between this Gospel dispensation and the Jewish Gospel, consists in this: the Jewish Gospel holds forth Christ *about to come*, in types and prophecies; but this Gospel displays the fulfilment of the Jewish prophecies, and without a typical veil points out Christ *already come*. Again: the *political* part of the Jewish Gospel admits of some temporary indulgences, with respect to divorce, a plurality of wives, &c, which indulgences are repealed in the Christian institution, where morality is carried to the greatest height, and enforced by the strongest motives. But, on the other hand, the *ceremonial* part of the Gospel of Christ grants us many indulgences with respect to Sabbaths, festivals, washings, meats, places of worship, &c. For it binds upon us only the two unbloody significant rites, which the Scriptures call *baptism* and *the Lord's Supper*; freeing us from shedding

human blood in circumcision; and the blood of beasts in daily sacrifices; an important freedom this, which St. Paul calls "the ceremonial liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free," and for which he so strenuously contends against the Judaizing preachers, who would have brought his Galatian converts under the bloody yoke of circumcision and Jewish bondage.

IV. *The perfect Gospel of CHRIST* is frequently called **THE GOSPEL** only, on account of its fulness, and because it contains whatever is excellent in the above-described Gospel dispensations. We may truly say, therefore, that *perfect Christianity*, or the *complete Gospel of Christ*, is *Gentilism*, *Judaism*, and the *baptism of John*, arrived at their full maturity. This perfected Gospel is found then, initially, in the four books, which bear the name of Gospels, and perfectly in the *Acts of the Apostles* and the *epistles*. The difference between this perfected Gospel and the Gospel which was preached before the day of pentecost, consists in this capital article:—Before that day, our Lord and his fore-runner, John the Baptist, foretold that Christ "should baptize with the Holy Ghost;" and Christ promised the indwelling Spirit. He said, "He dwelleth with you, and shall *then* be in you. Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence." But the full Gospel of Christ takes in the full dispensation of Christ's Spirit, as well as the full history of Christ's life, death, and resurrection; comprehending the glad news of the descent of the Holy Ghost, as well as the joyful tidings of the ascension of the Son; and therefore its distinguishing character is thus laid down by St. Peter, "Jesus, being by the right hand of God EXALTED, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. This promise is unto you [that repent and believe.] We are his witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God [since the day of pentecost] hath given to them that obey him:" for, before Christ's ascension, the evangelists could say, "The Holy Ghost is not yet given, [in its Christian fulness,] because Christ is not yet GLORIFIED:" compare Acts ii, 33, &c, with Acts v, 32, and John vii, 39.

This Gospel is the richest display of Divine grace and justice which takes place among men in the present state of things. For Christ's sake "the Holy Ghost is given" as an indwelling, sanctifying comforter. Here is the highest doctrine of grace! He is thus given "to them that obey;" and of consequence he is refused to the disobedient. Here is the highest doctrine of justice, so far as the purpose of God, according to the elections of grace and justice, actually takes place in this life, before the second coming of Christ. These two last clauses are of peculiar importance.

1. I say *in this life*, because, after death, two great dispensations of grace and justice will yet take place, with respect to every man: the one in the day of *death*, when Christ will say to each of us, "Thou shalt be with me in paradise;" or, "Thou shalt go to thy own place:" and the other in the day of *judgment*, when our Lord will add, "Come, ye blessed," or, "Go, ye cursed." Then shall the "*Gospel mystery of God*," which equally displays the doctrines of grace and of justice, be fully accomplished.

2. I have added the clause, *before the second coming of Christ*,

because in the Psalms, Prophets, Acts, Epistles, and especially in the Revelation, we have a variety of promises, that "in the day of his *displayed* power, *Christ will* come in his glory, to judge among the heathen, to wound even kings in the day of his wrath, to root up the wicked, to fill the places with their dead bodies, to smite in sunder *antichrist*, and the heads over divers countries, and to lift up his *triumphant* head," on this very earth, where he once "bowed his *wounded* head, and gave up the ghost:" compare Psalm cx, with Acts i, 11; 2 Thess. i, 10; Rev. xix, &c. In that great day, another Gospel dispensation shall take place. We have it now in prophecy, as the Jews had the Gospel of Christ's first advent; but when Christ shall "come to destroy the wicked, to be *actually* glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe: in that day," ministers of the Gospel shall no more prophesy, but, speaking a plain, historical truth, they shall lift up their voices, as "the voice of many waters and mighty thunderings, saying, Allelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth; the marriage of the Lamb is come; his wife [the Church of the first born] has made herself ready: blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection: he **REIGNS** with Christ a thousand years. Blessed are the meek, for they do inherit the earth. - The times of refreshing **ARE** come, and he **HAS SENT** Jesus Christ, who before was preached unto us; whom the heaven **DID** receive" till this solemn season. But now are come "the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets, since the world began," Rev. xix, xx; Matt. v, 5; Acts iii, 19, &c. May the Lord hasten this Gospel dispensation! And, till it take place, may "the Spirit and the bride say, Come!"

This being premised, it will not be difficult to give the reader a just idea of the grand controversy which has torn the Churches of Christ, from the days of Augustine and Pelagius, and which has lately been revived among us, on the following occasion.

In the year 1770, Mr. Wesley (in the Minutes of a conference, which he held with the preachers in his connection) advanced some propositions, the manifest tendency of which was to assert that the doctrines of *justice* are an essential part of the Gospel; and that, when we have been afraid to preach them, as well as the doctrines of *grace*, we have been partial dispensers of the truth, and have leaned too much toward Calvinism; that is, toward a system of doctrine, which, in a great degree, explains away the doctrines of *justice*, to make more room for the doctrines of *grace*.

Some good people, who imagined that the doctrines of *impartial justice* have little or nothing to do with the Gospel, were not only highly displeased with Mr. Wesley's propositions, but very greatly alarmed at the word *merit*, which he warily used in one of them, to intimate that the doctrines of justice and the day of judgment must fall to the ground, if *every kind* of merit or desert is banished from the Gospel; justice being a virtue which, from an impartial tribunal, "renders to every man according to his works," that is, according to his worthiness or unworthiness, or, as some express it, according to his merit or demerit.

A regard for the doctrines of justice, and a fear lest Antinomian doctrines of grace, and dreadful doctrines of free wrath, should be still entertained by my friends as the genuine doctrines of grace, engaged me

to vindicate those obnoxious propositions, or rather, the doctrines of *justice* held forth therein. And this, I hope, I have done in a series of *Checks to Antinomianism*, or of tracts against an unscriptural doctrine of *grace*, a doctrine of *grace* torn from the Scripture doctrine of *justice*. In order to rescue the doctrine of *justice*, I have endeavoured to prove that no man is born an absolute reprobate in Calvin's sense of the word; that "God is loving to every man" for Christ's sake; and that, of consequence, there is a Gospel dispensation for every man, though it should be only that which is called *Gentilism*. I have shown the cruelty of those opinions which directly or indirectly doom to eternal perdition all the heathens, who never read the law of Moses, or heard the Gospel of Christ. I have evinced, by a variety of arguments, that nothing can be more unscriptural than to represent the law of Moses (i. e. the Jewish Gospel) as a *graceless* doctrine of *justice*; and the law of Christ (or the Christian Gospel) as a *lawless* doctrine of *grace*. By these means I have defended, so far as lay in me, both the Jewish doctrines of *grace* and the Christian doctrines of *justice*. And by demonstrating that the Scripture doctrines of *grace* are inseparably connected with the Scripture doctrines of *justice*, I flatter myself to have opened the way for the reunion of the two partial gospels of the day; the capital error of which consists either in excluding the doctrines of *grace* from the doctrines of *justice*, which is the error of all rigid free willers; or in excluding the doctrines of *justice* from the doctrines of *grace*, which is the mistake of all rigid bound willers.

"What," says one of these partial defenders of the doctrines of *grace*, "will you still persist to legalize the Gospel? Do you not know that the word GOSPEL, in the original, means *good news*, or a *good message*, and therefore must denote doctrines of *grace* abstracted from all the severity of what you call the doctrines of *justice*?" To this plausible objection, which has deluded thousands of simple souls, I answer:—

(1.) A royal proclamation may be called a *good proclamation*, though it does not turn the king's subjects into lawless favourites, and the LAWS of the realm into *rules of life*, as insignificant in judgment as rules of grammar. And the statutes of parliament may be *good statutes*, though they may secure the righteous punishment of offenders as well as the gracious privileges of loyal subjects. (2.) If the hand of God is a *good hand* when it "resists the proud," as well as when it "gives grace to the humble;" and if his arm was a *merciful arm* when it "overthrew *daring* Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea," as well as when it "made *obedient* Israel to pass through the midst of it," see Psalm cxxxvi, why may not a message from God, which requires practical obedience, and is enforced by promises of gracious rewards in case of compliance, and by threatenings of righteous punishments in case of non-compliance; why may not, I say, such a message be called a *good message* or *Gospel*? (3.) Why should not a revelation from God be a *good revelation* or a *Gospel*, when it displays the severity of his justice toward those who reject his gracious offers, as well as the tenderness of his compassion toward those who accept them; especially if we consider that the first intention of the denunciations of his vindictive justice is to excite the godly fear which endears offers of mercy to sinners, and is in them "the beginning of wisdom?" (4.) If, in the Old Testament, the

sweetest and most joyful messages of God's grace are called *law*; and if, in the New Testament, the most terrible denunciations of indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, are called *Gospel*; nothing in the world can be more unscriptural and absurd than the Antinomian Babel erected by some zealous evangelists, who teach that *the law of God* is nothing but the doctrine of *merciless justice*; and that *the Gospel of Christ* is nothing but the doctrine of *lawless grace*.

That the word *LAW*, in the Old Testament, frequently means the sweetest Gospel promises, I prove, *first*, from these sayings of David: "The law of thy mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver," *Psa. cxix, 72*. "He hath remembered his Gospel covenant for ever,—which covenant he made with Abraham, and his oath to Isaac, and confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law," *Psa. cv, 8, &c.* Here the Gospel covenants made with the three chosen patriarchs, are called *a law*. Hence it is that when Isaiah speaks of the brightest display of Gospel grace at the time that "the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains," he says, "Out of Sion shall go forth the law," *Isa. ii, 2, 3*. Agreeably to this view of things we read in Nehemiah, that "all the people gathered themselves together as one man, and spake to Ezra to bring the book of the law of Moses: that the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the law: that the Levites did read in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense: and that all the people went their way, &c, to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared to them: and there was a very great gladness,—the joy of the Lord being *their strength*," *Neh. viii, 1, 3, 8, 10, 12, 17*. Now, if *the law*, which was read and explained to them, contained only the impracticable sanctions of a merciless, thundering justice; were not all the people out of *their senses* when they "went their way with great gladness" after hearing *the law* expounded?

The New Testament confirms this account of the doctrines of grace and justice, and of the words law and Gospel. When our Lord (who undoubtedly knew the exact meaning of the word Gospel) sent his disciples to "preach the Gospel to every creature," he charged them to declare, that "he who believeth not shall be damned," as well as that "he who believeth shall be saved," *Mark xvi, 16*. Whence it evidently appears that our Lord meant by *the Gospel* the severe doctrines of justice, as well as the comfortable doctrines of grace.

St. Paul gives us exactly the same idea of the Gospel. In the *Epistle to the Romans*, where he contends most for the gratuitous election of distinguishing love, he expostulates with those who "despise the riches of God's goodness, and treasure up unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds,—eternal life to them, who, by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory; but indignation and wrath to them that obey not the truth." If you ask St. Paul when God will thus display his merciful goodness and tremendous justice, he directly answers, "When God shall judge the secrets of men according to my Gospel," that is, according to the promises and threatenings,—the doctrines of grace and the doctrines of justice, which compose the Gospel I preach, *Rom. ii, 4-16*.

Hence it is that the apostle calls the Mosaic dispensation sometimes the law, and sometimes the Gospel, while he styles the Christian dispensation sometimes *the law of Christ*, and sometimes *the Gospel of Christ*.

That St. Paul indifferently calls the Mosaic dispensation law and Gospel, is evident from the following texts: "Every man that is circumcised is a debtor to the whole law," Gal. v, 3. Here the word law undoubtedly means the Mosaic dispensation. Again: "To us was the Gospel preached, as well as to them," the Israelites who perished in the wilderness, for not believing Moses, Heb. iv, 2. Whence it follows, that "to THEM [the Israelites, who perished] the Gospel [i. e. the doctrines of grace and justice] was preached as well as to us," Christians, who are saved by obedient faith. Once more: that what Moses preached to them was a doctrine of grace and of justice, is evident from this consideration: had the Mosaic Gospel been a doctrine of mere justice, it could not have been a Gospel like our gracious Gospel; and had it been a mere doctrine of grace, the apostle could never have excited us not to neglect our Christian Gospel, and great salvation, by pointing out to us the fearful destruction of the Israelites, who neglected their Jewish Gospel and salvation; "lest any Christian should fall after the same example of unbelief," Heb. iv, 11.

With respect to the Christian dispensation, the apostle calls it sometimes *the law*: "The doers of the law [i. e. of the preceptive part of the Gospel] shall be justified, when God shall judge the secrets of men according to my Gospel," Rom. ii, 13, 16, compared with Matt. xii, 36, 37. Sometimes he calls it *the law of Christ*: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ," Gal. vi, 2: sometimes *the laws of God*: "I will write my laws [i. e. my evangelical precepts and promises] in their hearts," Heb. viii, 10; x, 16: sometimes *the law of the Spirit*, Rom. viii, 2: and sometimes *the Gospel of Christ*, Rom. i, 16. Hence it is that to be a Christian believer, in St. Paul's language, is "to be under the law of Christ," 1 Cor. ix, 21. As for St. James, he never calls the Christian dispensation *Gospel*; but he simply calls it either *the law*, James iv, 11, 12; ii, 10, *the law of liberty*, James ii, 12, or, *the perfect law of liberty*, James i, 25. St. John uses the same language in his epistles, in which he never mentions the word Gospel, and in which, speaking of the sins of Christian believers, he says, that "sin is the transgression of the law;" whence it follows, that the sin of Christians is the transgression of the law of Christ, or of the holy doctrines of justice preached by Jesus Christ. To deny it, would be asserting we cannot sin; for St. Paul informs us that the Mosaic law is done away, 2 Cor. iii, 11. Now, if no Christian is under the law of Moses, and if Christ never adopted the law of our nature, and never grafted the moral part of the Mosaic law into the Christian dispensation; or, in other terms, if Christ's Gospel is a lawless institution, it necessarily follows that no Christian can sin: for sin is not imputed or charged, (that is, there is no sin,) "where there is no law," Rom. v, 13. Hence it is that Antinomian doctrines of grace represent fallen, adulterous, bloody believers as spotless, or sinless before God, in all their sins. Such is the necessary consequence of a lawless Gospel armed with pointless "rules of life!" Such the dreadful tendency of doctrines of grace torn away from the doctrines of justice.

SECTION II.

Remarks on the two Gospel axioms, or capital truths, upon which the doctrines of grace and justice are founded—Augustine himself once granted both those truths—Rigid Arminians indirectly deny the one, and rigid Calvinists the other—How the partial defenders of the doctrines of justice and grace try to save appearances, with respect to the part of the truth which they indirectly oppose.

So noble and solid a superstructure as the Gospel, i. e. the Scripture doctrines of grace and justice, undoubtedly stands upon a noble and sure foundation. Accordingly we find that the primitive Gospel rests on two principles, the one theological and the other moral. These two principles, or, if you please, these two pillars of Gospel truth, may, for distinction sake, be called Gospel axioms; at least, I beg leave to call them so. Nor will the candid reader deny my request, if he consider the following definitions:—

I. AN AXIOM is a self-evident truth, which at once recommends itself to the understanding, or the conscience of every unprejudiced man. Thus, *two and two make four*, is an AXIOM in every counting house. And that “the absolute necessity of all human actions is incompatible with a moral law and a day of judgment,” is an axiom in every unprejudiced mind.

II. The two Gospel axioms are the two principles, or capital self-evident truths, on which the primitive Gospel, that is, the Scripture doctrine of grace and justice is founded.

III. The first Gospel axiom bears up the holy doctrines of grace, and when it is cordially received, is equally destructive of proud Pharisæism and the unholy doctrines of lawless grace. This axiom is the following self-evident truth, which recommends itself to the mind and conscience of every candid Bible Christian:—“Our first talent or degree of salvation is merely of God’s free grace in Christ, without any work or endeavour of our own; and our eternal salvation is originally, capitally,* and finally† of God’s free grace in Christ; through our not

* A Solifidian would say *entirely*, and by this means he would leave no room for the second Gospel axiom, for the rewardableness of the works of faith, and for the doctrine of remunerative justice. But by saying *capitally*, we avoid this threefold mistake, we secure the honour of holy free grace, and shut the door against its counterfeit.

† By adding *finally*, we show that the top stone, as well as the foundation stone of our eternal salvation, is to be brought with “shouting, Grace! grace! unto it;” because if God had honoured his obedient saints with a sight of his heavenly glory for half an hour, and then suffered them to fall gently asleep in the bosom of oblivion, or to slide into a state of personal non-existence, he would have demonstrated his remunerative justice, and amply rewarded their best services. Hence it appears that God’s giving eternal rewards of glory for a few temporary services, done by his own grace, is such an instance of free grace as nothing but eternal shouts of “Grace! grace!” can sufficiently acknowledge. We desire our mistaken brethren to consider this remark; otherwise they will wrong the truth and us, by continuing to say that our doctrines of grace allow indeed free grace to lay the foundation, but that they reserve to the works of our rectified free will the honour of bringing the top stone of our eternal salvation, with saying, “Works! works! unto it:” a Pharisæic doctrine this, which we abhor; loudly asserting that although our free, un-necessitated obedience of faith intervenes, yet God in Christ is the Omega as well as the Alpha,—the end, as well as the beginning, of our eternal salvation.

neglecting that first talent or degree of salvation. I say through our not neglecting, &c. to secure the connection of the two Gospel axioms, and to leave Scripture room for the doctrines of remunerative justice.

IV. The second Gospel axiom bears up the doctrines of justice, and extirpates the doctrine of free wrath. It is the following proposition, which, I believe, no candid Bible Christian will deny:—"Our eternal damnation is originally* and principally of our own personal free will, through an obstinate and final neglect of the first talent or degree of salvation."

These two Gospel axioms may be thus expressed: (1.) *Our salvation is of God*: or, *there is free grace in God*, which, through Christ, freely places all men in a state of temporary redemption, justification, or salvation, according to various Gospel dispensations, and crowns those who are faithful unto death with an eternal redemption, justification, or salvation. (2.) *Our damnation is of ourselves*: or, *there is free will in man*, by which he may, through the grace freely imparted to him in the day of temporary salvation, work out his own eternal salvation: or he may, through the natural power which angels had to sin in heaven, and our first parents in paradise, choose to sin away the day of temporary salvation. And by thus working out his damnation, he may provoke just wrath, which is the same as despised free grace, to punish him with eternal destruction.

These two truths, or axioms, might be made still plainer, thus: (1.) Our gracious and just God, in a day of salvation begun, sets life or death before us. (2.) As free-willing, assisted creatures, we may, during that day, choose which we please: we may "stretch out our hand to the water, or to the fire." Or thus: (1.) There is holy, righteous, and partial free grace in God. (2.) There is free will in redeemed, assisted man, whereby he is capable of obeying or disobeying God's holy, righteous, and partial free grace. For conveniency's sake, these axioms may be shortened thus: (1.) The doctrine of holy free grace and partial mercy in God is true. (2.) The doctrine of rectified, assisted free will in man, and of impartial justice in God, is true also.

This lovely pair of evangelical propositions appears to me so essential to the fulness and harmony of the Gospel, that I believe if Pelagius and Augustine themselves were alive, neither of them would dare directly to rise against it. Time, or envy, has destroyed the works of Pelagius, the great asserter of free will and the doctrines of justice; we cannot therefore support the doctrines of free grace by his concessions: but we have the writings of Augustine, the great defender of God's distinguishing love, and the doctrine of free grace; and yet, partial as he was to these doctrines, in a happy moment, he boldly stood up for free

* I add the word *originally*, to cut off the self-excusing opinion of those men who charge their eternal damnation upon an absolute decree of reprobation, or upon Adam's first transgression. As for the word *principally*, it secures the part in the damnation of the wicked, which the Scriptures ascribe to the righteous God: it being certain, (1.) That God judicially hardens his slothful and unprofitable servants, by taking from them, at the end of their day of grace, the talent of softening grace, which they have obstinately buried. And, (2.) That he judicially reprobates or damns them, by pronouncing this awful sentence, "Depart, ye cursed," &c. A flame of vindictive justice belongs to the Gospel of Christ, Heb. xii, 29, but not a single spark of free wrath.

will and the doctrines of justice. This appears from the judicious and candid questions which he proposes in one of his epistles:—*Si non est gratia Dei, quomodo salvat mundum? Si non est liberum arbitrium, quomodo judicial mundum?* If there be not free grace in God, how does he *graciously* save the world? If there be not free will in men, how does he *righteously* judge the world?"

To conclude: whoever holds forth these two Bible axioms, "There is free grace in God, whence man's salvation graciously flows in various degrees;" and, "There is free will in every man, whence the damnation of all that perish justly proceeds:" whoever, I say, consistently holds forth these two self-evident propositions, is, in my humble judgment, a Gospel minister, who "rightly divides the word of truth." He is a friend to both the doctrines of partial grace and impartial justice, of mercy and obedience, of faith and good works: in short, he preaches the primitive Gospel, reunites the two opposite gospels of the day, and equally obviates the errors of Honestus and Zelotes, who stand up for these modern gospels.

If you ask what those errors are, I answer, as follows:—Honestus, the Pelagian, seldom preaches free grace, and never dwells upon the absolute sovereignty with which God at first distributes the various talents of his grace: and when he preaches free will, he seldom preaches free will initially rectified and continually assisted by free grace; rarely, if ever, deeply humbling his hearers by displaying the total helplessness of unrectified and unassisted free will: and thus he veils the delightful doctrine of God's free grace, clouds the evangelical doctrine of man's free will, and inadvertently opens the door to self-conceited Pharisaism. On the other hand, Zelotes, the Solifidian, or rigid Calvinist, seldom or never preaches rectified, assisted free will; he harps only on the doctrines of absolute necessity; and when he preaches free grace, he too often preaches, (1.) A cruel free grace, which turning itself into free wrath, with respect to a majority of mankind, absolutely passes them by, and consigns them over to everlasting, infallible damnation, by means of necessary, foreordained sin; and, (2.) An unscriptural free grace, which turning itself into lawless fondness, with respect to a number of favourite souls, absolutely insures to them eternal redemption, complete justification, and finished salvation, be they ever so unfaithful.

By these means Zelotes spoils the doctrine of free grace, undesignedly injures the doctrine of holiness, and utterly destroys the doctrine of justice. For when he denies that the greatest part of mankind have any interest in God's redeeming love; when he intimates that the doctrines of an absolute, necessitating election to eternal life are true; and that God's reprobates are not less necessitated to sin to the end and be damned, than God's elect are to obey to the end and be saved; does he not pour contempt upon the throne of Divine justice? Does he not make the supreme Judge, who fills that throne, appear as unwise when he distributes heavenly rewards, as cruel, when he inflicts infernal punishments?

Honestus and Zelotes will probably think that I misrepresent them. Honestus will say that he cordially believes God is full of free grace for all men, and that he only thinks it would be unjust in God to be partial in the distribution of his free grace. But when Honestus reasons thus

does he not confound grace and justice? Does he not sap the foundation of the throne of grace, under pretence of establishing the throne of justice? If God cannot do what he pleases with his grace, and if justice always binds him in the distribution of his favours, does not his grace deserve the name of impartial justice, far better than the appellation of free grace?

As *Honestus* tries to save appearances with regard to the doctrines of grace, so does *Zelotes* with regard to the doctrines of justice. "The Gospel I preach," says he, "is highly consistent with the doctrines of justice. I indeed intimate that the elect are necessitated to believe and be eternally saved; and the reprobates to continue in sin and be lost: but both this salvation of the elect, and damnation of the reprobates, perfectly agree with Divine equity. For Christ, by his obedience unto death, merited the eternal salvation of all that shall be saved: and Adam, by his first act of disobedience, deserved the absolute reprobation of all that shall be damned. Our doctrines of grace are therefore highly consistent with the doctrines of justice." This argument appears unanswerable to *Zelotes*: but I confess it does not satisfy me. For if the doctrine of absolute necessity be thus foisted into the Gospel, and if Christ make his elect people absolutely and unavoidably willing to obey and go to heaven, while Adam makes his reprobate people absolutely and unavoidably willing to sin and go to hell; I should be glad to know how the elect can be wisely judged according to, and rewarded for their faith and good works; and how the reprobates can be justly sentenced according to, and punished for their unbelief and bad works. I repeat it, the doctrine of absolute predestination to life or death eternal, which is one and the same with the doctrine of an absolute necessity to believe or disbelieve, to obey or disobey, to the last,—such a doctrine, I say, is totally subversive of the doctrines of justice. For reason deposes that it is absurd to give to necessary agents a law, or rule of life, armed with promises of reward, and threatenings of punishment. And conscience declares that it is unjust and cruel to inflict fearful, eternal punishments upon beings that have only moved or acted by absolute necessity: whether such beings are running streams, aspiring flames, falling stones, turning wheels, mad men, bound thinkers, bound willers, or bound agents; supposing such bound thinkers, bound willers, and bound agents, did think, will, and act, as unavoidably as the wind raises a storm, and as necessarily as a fired cannon pours forth flames and destruction. Absolute necessity and a righteous judgment are absolutely incompatible. We must renounce the mistakes of rigid Calvinists, or give up the doctrines of justice.

SECTION III.

By whom chiefly the Gospel axioms were systematically parted; and under what pretences prejudiced, good men tore asunder the doctrines of grace and justice; and rent the one primitive, catholic Gospel, into the two partial gospels of the day.

FROM the preceding section it appears, that to preach the Gospel in its primitive purity, is so to hold forth and balance the two Gospel axioms

as to allow both the doctrines of grace and the doctrines of justice the place which is assigned them in the word of God: it is so to preach holy free grace, and rectified, assisted free will, as equally to grind Pharisaism and Antinomianism (the graceless and the lawless gospel) between these two evangelical mill stones. And thus the Gospel was, in general, preached by good men for above three hundred years after Christ's ascension. If ever the tempter put successfully in practice his two capital maxims, "Confound and destroy,—Divide and conquer," it was in the fourth century, when he helped Pelagius and Augustine, two warm disputants, openly to confound what should have been properly distinguished, and systematically to divide what should have been religiously joined; by which means they broke the balance of the doctrines of grace and justice. Nor did they do it out of malice; but through an immoderate regard for one part of the Gospel; an injudicious regard this, which was naturally productive of a proportionable disregard for the other part of God's word.

Pelagius (we are told by Augustine) preached free will; but, confounding natural free will with free will rectified and assisted by grace, he made too much of natural free will, and too little of God's free grace. The left leg of his Gospel system grew gigantic, while the right leg shrunk almost to nothing. And, commencing a rigid free willer, he insisted upon the sufficiency of our natural powers, and dwelt on the second Gospel axiom, and the doctrines of justice in so partial a manner, that he almost eclipsed the first Gospel axiom and the doctrines of grace.

Augustine, his cotemporary, under pretence of mending the matter, was guilty of an error exactly contrary. He so puffed up the right leg of his Gospel system, as to make it monstrous; while the left grew as slender and insignificant as a rotten stick. To bring this unhappy change about, in his controversial heats he confounded lawful, righteous free grace, with lawless, unscriptural, overbearing free grace; and, to make room for this latter, imaginary sort of grace, he sometimes turned free will out of its place, to give that place to necessity. Thus he commenced a rigid bound willer. The irresistible free grace, which he preached, bound the elect by the chains of an unconditional election to life, absolutely necessitating them to repent, believe, and be eternally saved: while the irresistible free wrath, which secretly advanced behind that overbearing grace, bound the non-elect in chains of absolute reprobation, and necessitated them to continue in sin, and be unavoidably damned. By these means, new, unholy doctrines of grace and wrath jostled the holy, ancient doctrines of grace and justice out of their place. The two Gospel axioms did no longer agree; but the first axiom, becoming like Leviathan, swallowed up the second. For the moment irresistible, lawless free grace, and despotic, cruel free wrath, mount the throne, what room is there for holy, righteous free grace? What room for free will? What room for the doctrines of justice? What room for the primitive Gospel? Absolutely none; unless it be a narrow room indeed, artfully contrived under a heap of Augustinian contradictions, and Calvinian inconsistencies.

From this short account of Pelagianism and Augustinianism, it is evident that heated Pelagius (if the account given us be true) gave a desperate thrust to the right side of primitive Christianity; and that

beated Augustine, in his hurry to defend her, aimed a well-meant blow at Pelagius, but by overdoing it, and missing his mark, wounded the left side of the heavenly woman, who from that time has lain bleeding between these two rash antagonists. "The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water," says the wise man. These "waters of strife," which Pelagius and Augustine let in upon the Church, by breaking the flood gates of Gospel truth, soon overflowed the Christian world, and at times, like the waters of the overflowing Nile, have almost been turned into blood. When streams of self-justifying, rigid, Pelagian free will, have met with streams of self-electing, lawless, Augustinian free grace, the strife has been loud and terrible. They have foamed out their own shame, and frightened thousands of persons, travelling to Sion, out of the noisy ways of a corrupted gospel, into the more quiet paths of infidelity.

For above a thousand years these "waters of strife" have spread devastation through the Christian world; I had almost said also through the Mohammedan world: for Mohammed, who collected the filth of corrupt Christianity, derived these errors into his system of religion: Omar and Hali, at least, two of his relations and successors, became the leaders of two sects, which divide the Mohammedan world. Omar, whom the Turks follow, stood up for bound will, necessity, and a species of absolute Augustinian predestination. And Hali, whom the Persians revere, embraced rigid free will and Pelagian free agency. But the worst is, that these muddy waters have flowed through the dirty channel of the Romish Church, into all the Protestant Churches, and have at times deluged them; turning, wherever they came, brotherly love into fierce contention. For, breaking the evangelical balance of the Gospel axioms is as naturally productive of polemical debates in the Church, as breaking the parliamentary balance between the king and the people is of contention and civil wars in the state. How the plague first infected Protestantism will be seen in the next section.

SECTION IV.

Luther and Calvin do not restore the balance of the Gospel axioms—That honour was reserved for Cranmer, the English reformer, who modelled the Church of England very nearly according to the primitive Gospel—How soon the Augustinian doctrines of lawless grace preponderated—How the Pelagian doctrine of unassisted free will now preponderates.

WHEN the first reformers shook off the yoke of Papistical trumperies, they fought gallantly for many glorious truths. But it is to be wished, that while they warily contended for the simple, Scriptural dress of the primitive Gospel, they had not forgotten to fight for some of its very vitals, I mean the doctrines of holy free grace, and rectified, assisted free will. They did much good in many respects; so much indeed, that no grateful Protestant can find fault with them without reluctance. But, after all, they did not restore the balance of the doctrines of grace and justice. Luther, the German reformer, being a monk of the order of

Augustine, entered upon the reformation full of prejudices in favour of Augustine's Solifidian mistakes. And he was so busy in opposing the pope of Rome, his indulgences, Latin masses, and other monastic fooleries, that he did not find time to oppose the Augustinian fooleries of fatalism, Manichean necessity, lawless grace, and free wrath. On the contrary, in one of his heats, he broke the left scale of the Gospel balances, denied there was any such thing as free will, and by that means gave a most destructive blow to the doctrines of justice: a rash deed, for which Erasmus, the Dutch reformer, openly reprov'd him, but with too much of the Pelagian spirit.

Calvin, the French reformer, who, after he had left his native country, taught divinity in the academy of Geneva, far from getting light, and learning moderation by the controversy of Luther and Erasmus, rushed with all the impetuosity of his ardent spirit into the error of heated Augustine, and so zealously maintained it, that, from that time, it has been called Calvinism.

If Calvin did not grow wiser by the dispute of Luther and Erasmus, Melancthon, another German reformer, did; and our great English reformer, Cranmer, who in wisdom, candour, and moderation, far exceeded the generality of the reformers on the continent, closely imitated his excellent example. Nay, to the honour of this favoured island, and of perfect Protestantism, in a happy moment he found the exact balance of the Gospel axioms. Read, admire, and obey his anti-Augustinian, anti-Pelagian, and apostolic proclamation. "All men be also to be monished, and chiefly preachers, that, in this high matter, they, looking on both sides, [i. e. looking both to the doctrines of grace and the doctrines of justice] so attemper and moderate themselves, that neither they so preach the grace of God, [with heated Augustine] that they take away thereby free will, nor on the other side so extol free will, [with heated Pelagius,] that injury be done to the grace of God." (*Erud. of a Christian Man, sec. on free will*, which was added by Cranmer.) Here you see the balance of the doctrines of grace and justice, which Augustine and Pelagius had broken, and which Luther and Calvin had ground to dust in some of their overdoing moments,—you see, I say, that important balance perfectly restored by the English reformer. With this short valuable quotation, as with a shield of impenetrable brass, all men, and chiefly preachers, may quench all the fiery darts cast at the primitive Gospel by the preachers of the partial gospels of the day; I mean the abettors of the Augustinian or of the Pelagian error.

Mankind are prone to run into extremes. The world is full of men who always overdo or underdo. Few people ever find the line of moderation, the golden mean; and of those who do, few stay long upon it. One blast or another of vain doctrine soon drives them east or west from the meridian of pure truth. How happy would it have been for the Church of England if her first members had steadily followed the light which our great reformers carried before them. But alas, not a few of them had more zeal than moderation. Cranmer could not make all his fellow reformers to see with his eyes. In the time of their popish superstition many of them had deeply imbibed the errors of St Augustine, whom the Church of Rome reveres as the greatest of the fathers, and the holiest of the ancient saints. These good men, finding that his doctrine was

countenanced by Luther, Calvin, Peter Martyr, Bucer, and others, whom they look upon as oracles, soon relapsed into the Augustinian doctrines of lawless grace, from which some of them had never been quite disentangled. Even during Cranmer's confinement (but much more after his martyrdom) they began to renounce the doctrines of justice, which were only indirectly secured in the seventeenth article of our Church; warmly contending for the doctrines of necessitating grace, which are always destructive of the doctrines of justice. Thus, while some of them erected the canopy of a lawless, Solifidian free grace over some men, elected according to Calvin's notion of an absolute election to eternal life; others cast the sable net of free wrath over the rest of mankind; imagining that from all eternity most men were absolutely predestinated to eternal death, according to the Calvinian doctrine of absolute, unconditional reprobation. Thus the balance of the Gospel axioms, which Cranmer (considering the times) had maintained to admiration, was again broken. Rigid Calvinism got the ascendancy; the doctrines of justice were publicly decried as popery and heresy, almost all England over. All the reprobates were exculpated. By the doctrine of necessity, their unavoidable continuance in sin, and their damnation, were openly charged upon God and Adam. Decrees of absolute predestination to necessary holiness and eternal salvation, and statutes of absolute appointment to necessary sin and eternal damnation began currently to pass for Gospel. And the doctrines of justice were swept away, as if they had been poisonous cobwebs spun by popish spiders. Hence it is that the Rev. Mr. Toplady, describing the triumphs of rigid Calvinism in the days of Queen Elizabeth, says, in his letter to Dr. Nowell, p. 45, that "those who held this opinion of God's not being any cause of sin and damnation, were at that time mightily cried out against by the main body of our Reformed Church, as *factors of false religion*," and "that to be called a *free-will man*, was looked upon as a shameful reproach, and opprobrious infamy; yea, and that a person so termed was deemed heretical." A proof this, that Dr. Peter Heylin speaks the truth when he says, "It was safer for any man in those times to have been looked upon as a heathen or publican, than an anti-Calvinist."

Should the judicious reader ask how it happened that the doctrines of unscriptural grace, free wrath, and necessity were so soon substituted for the doctrines of genuine free grace, and rectified, assisted free will, which Cranmer had so evangelically maintained; I answer, that although Thomas Aquinas and Scotus, the leading divines of the Church of Rome, through their great veneration for Augustine, leaned too much toward the lawless, wrathful doctrines of grace; yet Luther, Calvin, and Zuinglius leaned still more toward that extreme. This was soon observed by some of the popish doctors; and as they knew not how to make a proper stand against the genuine doctrines of the reformation, they were glad to find a good opportunity of opposing the reformers, by opposing the Augustinian mistakes which Luther and Calvin carried to the height. Accordingly, leaving the extreme of Augustine, to which they had chiefly leaned before, many of the popish divines began to lean toward the extreme of Pelagius, and commenced rigid and partial defenders of the doctrines of justice, which the German, French, and Swiss reformers had indirectly destroyed, by overthrowing the doctrine of free will, which

is inseparably connected with the doctrine of a day of just judgment. Hence it is, that, at the council of Trent, which the pope had called to stop the progress of the reformation, the Papists took openly the part of the second Gospel axiom; and in the spirit of contradiction began warmly to oppose Augustine's mistakes, which the first Jesuits had ardently embraced, Bellarmine himself not excepted. Party spirit soon blew up the partial zeal of the contending divines. Protestant bigotry ran against popish bigotry; and the effect of the shock was a driving of each other still farther from the line of Scripture moderation. Thus many Papists, especially those who wrote against the Calvinian Protestants, became the partial supporters of the doctrines of justice, while their opponents showed themselves the partial vindicators of the doctrines of grace. Hence it is, that, in the popish countries, those who stood up for faith and distinguishing free grace began to be called heretics, Lutherans, and Solifidians: while, in the Protestant countries, those who had the courage to maintain the doctrines of justice, good works, and uncessitated obedience, were branded as Papists, merit mongers, and heretics.

Things continued in this unhappy state till oppressed truth made new efforts to shake off the yokes put upon her. For the scales, which hold the weights of the sanctuary, (the two Gospel axioms,) hover and shift till they have attained their equilibrium; just as the disturbed needle of a compass quivers and moves till it has recovered its proper situation, and points again due north. This new shifting happened in the last century, when Arminius, a Protestant divine, endeavoured to rescue the doctrines of justice, which were openly trampled under foot by most Protestants; and when Jansenius, a popish bishop, attempted to exalt the doctrines of distinguishing grace, which most divines of the Church of Rome had of late left to the Protestants. Thus Jansenius, overdoing after Augustine, brought the doctrines of unscriptural grace and free wrath with a full tide into the Church of Rome: while Arminius (or, at least, some of his followers) drove them with all his might out of the Protestant Churches.

Many countries were in a general ferment on this occasion. A great number of Protestant divines, assembled at Dort in Holland, confirmed Calvin's indirect opposition to the doctrines of justice, and condemned Arminius after his death; for during his life none dared to attack him; such was the reputation he had, even through Holland, both for learning and exemplary piety! On the other hand, the pope, with his conclave, imitating the partiality of the synod of Dort, injudiciously condemned Jansenius and his Calvinism, and thus did an injury to the doctrines of grace, which Jansenius warmly contended for. But truth shall stand, be it ever so much opposed by either partial Protestants or partial Papists. Therefore, notwithstanding the decisions of the popish conclave, Jansenism and the doctrines of grace continued to leaven the Church of Rome: while, notwithstanding the decisions of the Protestant synod, Arminianism and the doctrines of justice continued to spread through the Protestant Churches.

Archbishop Laud, in the days of King James and Charles the First, caused in the Gospel scales the turn which then began to take place in our Church in favour of the doctrines of justice. He was the chief

instrument, which, like Moses' rod, began to part the boisterous sea of rigid Calvinism. He received his light from Arminius: but it was corrupted by a mixture of Pelagian darkness. He aimed rather at putting down absolute reprobation and lawless grace, than at clearing up the Scripture doctrine of a partial election, doing justice to the doctrines of grace, and reconciling the contending parties, by reconciling the two Gospel axioms. Hence, passing beyond the Scripture meridian, he led most of the English clergy from one extreme to the other. For now it is to be feared that the generality of them are gone as far west as they were before east, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. The *first* Gospel axiom formerly preponderated, and now the *second* goes swiftly down. Free will is, in general, cried up in opposition to free grace, as excessively and Pelagianistically (if I may use the expression) as, in the beginning of the last century free grace was unreasonably and Calvinistically set up in opposition to free will. I say *in general*, because although most of our pulpits are filled with preachers, who Pelagianize as well as Honestus, there are still a few divines, who, like Zelotes, strongly run into the Calvinian extreme.

But however, sooner or later, judicious, moderate men will convince the Christian world that the Gospel equally comprises the doctrines of grace and of justice; and that it consists of promises to be believed, and precepts to be observed; gracious promises and holy precepts, which are armed with the sanction of proper rewards or punishments, and are as incompatible with Pelagian self sufficiency, as with the Calvinian doctrines of lawless grace and free wrath. And as soon as this is clearly and practically understood by Christians, primitive unity and harmony will be restored to the partial gospels of the day.

SECTION V.

What the two modern gospels are—Their dreadful consequences—Arminius tried to find the way of truth between these two gospels, but perhaps missed it a little—The rectifying of his mistakes lately attempted.

By the two modern gospels, I mean Pelagianism or rigid Arminianism, and the doctrine of absolute necessity or rigid Calvinism. The former is a gospel which so exalts the doctrines of justice, as to obscure the doctrines of partial grace: a gospel which so holds forth the second Gospel axiom, as to hide the glory of the first, either wholly or in part. Rigid Calvinism, on the other hand, is a gospel which so extols the doctrines of distinguishing grace, as to eclipse the doctrines of justice: a gospel which so holds forth the first Gospel axiom as to hide the glory of the second, in whole or in part. The fault of these two systems of doctrine consists in parting, or in not properly balancing the doctrines of grace and of justice.

The confusion which this error has occasioned in the Churches of Christ for above a thousand years should, one would think, have opened the eyes of all overdoing and underdoing divines, and made them look out for a safe passage between the Pelagian and the Calvinian rocks. That any good

men should continue unconcernedly to run the bark of their orthodoxy against those fatal rocks of error, is really astonishing; especially if we consider that nobody can look into ecclesiastical history without seeing the marks of the numerous wrecks of truth and love which they have caused. Wide, however, as the empire of prejudice is, candour is not yet turned out of the world. In all the Churches of Christ, there are men who will yet hear Scripture and reason. But many of them, through a variety of avocations, through an indolence of disposition, or through despair of finding the exact truth, tamely submit to what appears to them a remediless evil. They are sorry that Christians should be so divided: but not seeing any prospect of ending our deplorable divisions, they quietly walk in Pelagian or Calvinian ways, without seeking the unbeaten path of truth which lies exactly between those two frequented roads. One of the reasons why they take up so readily with the Pelagian or Calvinian system, is, their not considering the dreadful evils which flow from each, some of which I shall set before the reader. I have already observed that the error of Pelagius (if St. Augustine and his votaries do not wrong him) consists in exalting free will and human powers, so as to leave little or no room for the exertion of free grace and Divine power; and that, on the other hand, the error of Augustine and Calvin consists in so exalting irresistible free grace openly, and irresistible free wrath secretly, that there is no reasonable room left for the exertion of faithful or unfaithful free will, or indeed for any free will at all. Now in the very nature of things, these two opposite extremes lead to the most dangerous errors. I begin with enumerating those which belong to the Pelagian extreme.

Reason and experience show that when the Pelagian error rises to its height, it leads men into *Arianism*, *Socinianism*, *Deism*, and, sometimes, into *avowed fatalism*, or *popish Pharisaism*.

1. By **ARIANISM** I mean the doctrine of Arius, a divine of Alexandria, who lived about the time of Pelagius, and not only insinuated that man was not so fallen as to need an omnipotent Redeemer, whose name is "God with us;" but openly taught that Christ was only an exalted, super-angelical creature.

2. **SOCINIANISM** is the error of Socinus, a learned, moral man, who lived since the reformation, and had such high notions of man's free will and powers, that he thought man could save himself, even without the help of a super-angelical Redeemer. And accordingly he asserted that Christ was a mere man like Moses and Elias, and that his blood had no more power to atone for sin, than that of Abel or St. Paul.

3. **DEISM** is the error of those who carry matters still higher, and think that man is so perfectly able, by the exertions of his own mere free will and natural powers, to recommend himself to the mercy of the Supreme Being, that he needs no Redeemer at all. Hence it is, that, although the Deists still believe in God, and on that account assume the name of Theists or Deists, they make no more of Christ and the Bible, than of the pope and his mass book, and look upon the doctrines of the incarnation and the trinity as wild and idolatrous conceits.

4. **AVOWED FATALISM** is the error of those who believe that "whatever is, is right;" and that all things happen (and of consequence that all sins are committed) of *fatal*, absolute necessity. This is an error into which

immoral Deists are very apt to run : for, when they feel guilt upon their consciences, as they have no idea of a Mediator to take it away, they wish that their bad actions had been necessary, that is, absolutely brought on by the stars, or caused by God's decrees, which would fully exculpate them. And as this doctrine eases their guilty consciences, they first desire that it may be true, and by little and little persuade themselves that it is so, and publicly maintain their error. Hence it is that immoral Deists, such as Voltaire, and many of his followers, are avowed fatalists.

5. **JEWISH PHARISAISM** is the error of those who are such strangers to the doctrines of grace, as to think they have no need of the rich mercy which God extends to poor publicans. Fancying themselves righteous, they thank God for their supposed goodness, when they should smite upon their breasts on account of their real depravity. **POPISH PHARISAISM** is an error still more capital. Those who are deep in it not only take little notice of the doctrines of grace, but carry their ideas of the doctrines of justice to such unscriptural and absurd lengths as to imagine that their penances can make a proper atonement for their sins ; that God is, strictly speaking, their debtor on account of their good works ; and that they can not only merit the reward of eternal life for themselves by their good deeds, but deserve it also for others by their works of supererogation, and through their superabundant obedience and goodness ; a conceit so detestable, that one would think it need only be mentioned to be fully exploded and perfectly abhorred.

Dreadful as are these consequences of Pelagianism carried to its height, the consequences of Augustinianism, or Calvinism, carried also to its height, are not at all better. For the demolition of free will, and the setting up of irresistible, electing free grace, and absolute, reprobating free wrath, lead to *Antinomianism, Manicheism, disguised fatalism, widely reprobating bigotry, and self-electing presumption or self-reprobating despair*. The four first of these errors need explanation.

I. **ANTINOMIANISM** is the error of such rigid Calvinists as exalt free grace in so injudicious a manner, and make so little account of free will, and its startings aside out of the way of duty, as to represent sin, at times, like a mere bugbear, which can no more hurt the believer, who now commits it, than scarecrows can hurt those who set them up. They assert that if a sinner has once believed, he is not only safe, but eternally and completely justified from all future as well as past iniquities. The pope's indulgences are nothing to those which these mistaken evangelists preach. I have heard of a bishop of Rome who extended his popish indulgences, pardons, and justifications, to any crime which the indulged man might commit within ten years after date : but these preached finished salvation in the full extent of the word, without any of our own works, and by that means they extend their Protestant indulgences to all eternity—to all believers in general—and to every crime which each of them might choose to commit. In a word, they preach the inamissible, complete justification of all fallen believers, who add murder to adultery, and a hypocritical show of godliness to incest. Antinomianism, after all, is nothing but rigid Calvinism dragged to open light by plain-spoken preachers, who think that truth can bear the light, and that no honest man should be ashamed of his religion.

II. **MANICHEISM** is the capital error of Manes, a Persian, who,

attempting to mend the Gospel of Christ, demolished free will, made man a mere passive tool, and taught that there are two principles in the Godhead, the one good, from which flows all the good, and the other bad, from which flows all the evil in the world. Augustine was once a Manichee, but afterward he left their sect, and refuted their errors. And yet, astonishing! when he began to lean to the doctrine of absolute predestination, he ran again, unawares, into the capital error of Manes. For if all the good and bad actions of angels, devils, and men, have their source in God's absolute predestination, and necessitating decrees, it follows that vice absolutely springs from the predestinating God, as well as virtue; and, of consequence, that rigid Calvinism is a branch of Manicheism, artfully painted with fair colours borrowed from Christianity.

III. DISGUISED FATALISM is nothing but an absolute necessity of doing good or evil, according to the overbearing decrees, or forcible influences of Manes' God, who is made up of free grace and of free wrath, that is, of a good and bad principle. I call this doctrine *disguised fatalism*: (1.) Because it implies the absolute *necessity* of our actions; a necessity this, which the heathens called *fate*: and, (2.) Because it is so horrible, that even those who are most in love with it, dare not look at it without some veil, or *disguise*. As the words *fatalism*, *evil god*, *good devil*, or *Manichean deity*, are not in the Bible, the Christian fatalists do what they can to cover their error with decent expressions. The *good principle* of their Deity they accordingly call free grace, or everlasting, unchangeable love. From this good principle flow their absolute election and finished salvation. With respect to the *bad principle*, it is true they dare not openly call it free wrath, or everlasting, unchangeable hatred, as the honest Manichees did; but they give you dreadful hints that it is a sovereign something in the Godhead, which necessitates reprobated angels and men to sin; something which ordains their fall, and absolutely passes them by when they are fallen; something which marks out unformed, unbegotten victims for the slaughter, and says to them, according to unchangeable decrees productive of absolute necessity, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire; for I passed you by: my absolute reprobation eternally secured your sin, and your continuance in sin; and now, my unchangeable, everlasting wrath absolutely secures your eternal damnation. Go, ye absolutely reprobated wretches,—go, and glorify my free wrath, which flamed against you before the foundation of the world. My curses and reprobation are without repentance." There is not a grain of equity in all this speech: and yet it agrees as truly with rigid Calvinism as with the above-described branch of Manicheism; it falls in as exactly with the necessitating, good-bad principles of Manes, as with the necessitating, good-bad principle of lawless free grace, and absolute sovereignty—the softer name which some Gospel ministers decently give to free wrath.

IV. WIDELY REPROBATING BIGOTRY is the peculiar sin of the men who make so much of the doctrines of partial grace, as to pay little or no attention to the doctrines of impartial justice. This detestable sin was so deeply rooted in the breasts of the Jews, that our Lord found himself obliged to work a miracle, that he might not be destroyed by it before his hour was come. Because the Jews were the peculiar, and elected people of God, they uncharitably concluded that all the heathens,

i. e. all the rest of mankind were absolutely reprobated, or at least that God would show them no mercy, unless they became proselytes of the gate, and directly or indirectly embraced Judaism. And therefore, when Christ told them that many Gentiles would come from the east and west, and sit with Abraham in the kingdom of God, while many of the Jews would be cast out; and when he reprov'd their bigotry, by reminding them that in the days of Elijah God was more gracious to a heathen widow, than to all the widows that dwelt in Judea, they flew into a rage, and attempted to throw him down from the top of the craggy hill on which the town of Nazareth was built. It is the same widely reprobating bigotry, which makes the rigid Romanists think that there is no salvation out of their Church. Hence also the rigid Calvinists imagine that there is no saving grace but for those who share in their election of grace. It is impossible to conceive what bad tempers, fierce zeal, and bloody persecutions this reprobating bigotry has caused in all the Churches and nations where the privileges of electing love have been carried beyond the Scripture mark. Let us with candour read the history of the Churches and people who have engrossed to themselves all the saving grace of God, and we shall cry out, From such a fierce election, and such reprobating bigotry, good Lord deliver us!

I make no doubt but this sketch of the dangerous errors to which rigid Pelagianism and rigid Calvinism lead unwary Christians, will make the judicious reader afraid of these partial gospels, and will increase his thankfulness to God for the primitive Gospel, which by its doctrines of grace guards us against rigid Pelagianism and its mischievous effects; and, by its doctrines of justice, arms us against rigid Calvinism and its dangerous consequences.

Among the divines abroad, who have endeavoured to steer their doctrinal course between the Pelagian shelves and the Augustinian rocks, and who have tried to follow the reconciling plan of our great reformer Cranmer, none is more famous, and none came nearer the truth than Arminius. He was a pious and judicious Dutch minister, who, in the beginning of the last century, taught divinity in the university of Leyden in Holland. He made some noble efforts to drive Manicheism and disguised fatalism out of the Protestant Church, of which he was a member; and, so far as his light and influence extended, (by proving the evangelical union of redeeming grace and free will,) he restored Scripture harmony to the Gospel, and carried on the plan of reconciliation which Cranmer had laid down. His sermons, lectures, and orations made many ashamed of absolute reprobation, and the bad-principled God, who was before quietly worshipped all over Holland. Nevertheless, his attempt was partly unsuccessful; for, attacking free wrath, (or the bad principle of the Manichean god,) without setting free grace in its full Gospel light, and without properly granting the election of grace which St. Paul contends for, he gave the Calvinists just room to complain. They availed themselves so skilfully of his embarrassment about the doctrine of election, and they pleaded so plausibly for the sovereignty of the good-principled God, as to keep their absolute reprobation, and the sovereignty of the bad-principled God partly out of sight. In short, implacable free wrath escaped by means of Antinomian free grace. The venomous scorpion concealed itself under the wing of the

simple dove ; and the double-principled Deity, the sparingly electing and widely reprobating God, was still held forth to injudicious Protestants as the God of all grace, the God of love, the God in whom is no darkness at all. For, as I have already observed, a number of divines, after the heart of Calvin, assembled at Dort in Holland, and openly condemned there the efforts that Arminius had made to reconcile the doctrines of justice and the doctrines of grace : the clergy who had espoused his sentiments were deprived of their livings ; he himself was represented as the author of a heresy almost as dangerous as that of Pelagius ; and from that time the rigid Calvinists have considered all those who stand up for the two Gospel axioms with any degree of consistency, as semi-Pelagian, or Arminian heretics.

And if Mr. Bayle be not mistaken, the Calvinists did not complain of Arminius' doctrine altogether without reason ; for although he went very far in his discovery of the passage between the Pelagian and the Augustinian rocks, yet he did not sail quite through. Election proved a rock on which his doctrinal bark stuck fast ; nor could he ever get entirely clear of that difficulty.

Among our English divines several have greatly distinguished themselves by their improvements upon Arminius' discoveries, Bishop Overal, Bishop Stillingfleet, Bishop Bull, Chillingworth, Baxter, Whitby, and others. But if I am not mistaken, they have all stuck where Arminius did, or on the opposite rock. And thereabouts we stuck too, when Mr. Wesley got happily clear of a point of the Calvinian rock which had retarded our course, and (so far as he appeared by us to be governed by the Father of lights) we began to sail on with him through the straits of truth. When we left our moorings, the partial defenders of the doctrines of grace hung out a signal of distress, and cried to us that our doctrinal ark was going to be lost against the same cliff where Pelagius' bark went to pieces. Their shouts have made us wary. The Lord has, we humbly hope, blessed us with an anchor of patient hope, a gale of cheerful love of truth, and a shield of resignation to quench the fiery darts which some warm men, who defend the barren rock of absolute reprobation, have thrown at us in our passage. We have sounded our way as we went on ; and looking steadily to our theological compass, the Scriptures, to the Sun of righteousness, the Lord Jesus Christ, and to the stars which he holds in his right hand, the apostles and true evangelists, after sailing slowly six years through straits, where strong currents of error and hard gales of prejudice have often retarded our progress, we flatter ourselves that we have got quite out of those narrow and rocky seas, where most divines have been stopped for a long succession of ages. If we are not mistaken, the ancient haven of Gospel truth is in sight ; and, while we enter in, I take a sketch of it, which the reader will see in a *Plan of Reconciliation* between the Calvinists and Arminians, which these sheets are designed to introduce.