

“Quod homini tribuunt vires naturales obediendi Evangelio, ut si non cum Pelagianis saltem cum semi-Pelagianis faciant. Hoc est, si non integras vires statuunt, quales in statu integritatis fuerunt, tamen contendunt, illas licet ægras, ad gratiam oblatam tamen recipendam sufficientes esse.”* The encroachment they make upon the grace of God in the salvation of sinners varies, of course, according to the extent to which they carry out their views, especially in regard to men’s natural depravity, and the nature and necessity of the work of the Spirit in regeneration and conversion; but Arminianism, in any form, can be shown to involve the ascription to men themselves,—more directly or more remotely,—of a place and influence in effecting their own salvation, which the Bible denies to them and ascribes to God.

While this can be shown to be involved in, or fairly deducible from, Arminianism in every form, it makes a very material difference in the state of the case, and it should materially affect our judgment of the parties, according as this fundamental characteristic principle is brought out and developed with more or less fullness. This distinction has always been recognised and acted upon by the most able and zealous opponents of Arminianism. It may be proper to give a specimen of this. Ames, or Amesius,—whose writings upon the Popish controversy, in reply to Bellarmine, cannot be spoken of except in the very highest terms of commendation,—has also written several very able works against the Arminians. He was present at the Synod of Dort, though not a member of it,—was much consulted in drawing up its canons,—thoroughly versant in the whole theology of the subject,—and a most zealous and uncompromising advocate of Calvinism. In his work, “De Conscientia,” under the head De Hæresi, he puts this question, *An Remonstrantes sint hæretici?* And the answer he gives is this, “*Remonstrantium sententia, prout à vulgo ipsis faventium recipitur, non est proprie hæresis, sed periculosus error in fide, ad hæresin tendens. Prout vero a quibusdam eorum defenditur, est hæresis Pelagiana: quia gratiæ internæ operationem efficacem necessariam esse negant ad conversionem, et fidem ingerendam.*”† Ames, then, thought that Arminianism, in its more mitigated form, was not to be reckoned a heresy, but only a dangerous error in doctrine, tending to heresy; and that it should be

* C. xvii., s. xii., tom. iv., p. 528.

† Lib. iv., c. iv., Q. 4.

stigmatized as a heresy, only when it was carried out so far as to deny the necessity of an internal work of supernatural grace to conversion and the production of faith. And the general idea thus indicated and maintained should certainly be applied, if we would form anything like a fair and candid estimate of the different types of doctrine, more or less Pelagian, which have passed under the general name of Arminianism.

Sec. II.—Synod of Dort.

The Synod of Dort marks one of the most important eras in the history of Christian theology; and it is important to possess some acquaintance with the theological discussions which gave occasion to it,—with the decisions it pronounced upon them,—and the discussions to which its decisions gave rise. No synod or council was ever held in the church, whose decisions, all things considered, are entitled to more deference and respect. The great doctrines of the word of God had been fully brought out, in the preceding century, by the labours of the Reformers; and, under the guidance of the Spirit which accompanied them, they had been unanswerably defended against the Romanists, and had been cordially embraced by almost all the churches which had thrown off antichristian bondage. In the beginning of the seventeenth century, some men appeared in different churches, who, confident in their own powers, and not much disposed to submit implicitly to the plain teaching of the word of God, were greatly disposed to speculate upon divine things. They subjected the system of doctrines, which had been generally received by the Reformers, to a pretty searching scrutiny, and imagined that they had discovered some important errors, the removal of which tended, as they thought, to make the scheme of scriptural doctrine more rational, and better fitted to command the assent of intelligent men, and to promote the interests of practical religion. They were men abundantly fitted, by their talents and acquirements, to give to these views, and to the grounds on which they rested, every fair advantage. After these alleged improvements upon the theology of the Reformation had been for some time published, and had been subjected to a pretty full discussion, the Synod of Dort assembled to examine them, and give an opinion upon them. It consisted not only of the representatives of the churches of one

country (the United Provinces), but of delegates from almost all the Protestant churches, except the Lutheran. The Protestant Church of France, indeed, was not represented in it; because the delegates appointed by that church to attend the synod (Peter du Moulin and Andrew Rivet, two of the most eminent divines of the age), were prohibited by the King from executing the commission the church had given them. But the next national Synod of the Reformed Church of France adopted the canons of the Synod of Dort, and required assent to them from all their ministers. The delegates from the Church of England had not, indeed, a commission from the church, properly so called, and therefore did not formally represent it; but they were appointed by the civil and the ecclesiastical *heads* of the church,—the King, and the Archbishop of Canterbury; and there is no reason to doubt that they fairly represented, in fact, the doctrinal sentiments that then generally prevailed among their brethren. While the members of the Synod of Dort thus represented, either formally or practically, the great body of the Protestant churches, they were themselves personally the most able and learned divines of the age, many of them having secured for themselves, by their writings, a permanent place in theological literature. This synod, after full and deliberate examination, unanimously determined against the innovations of Arminius and his followers, and gave a decided testimony in favour of the great principles of Calvinism, as accordant with the word of God and the doctrines of the Reformation. These subjects continued to be discussed during the remainder of the century, very much upon the footing of the canons of the Synod of Dort, and with a reference to the decisions they had given. And in order to anything like an intelligent acquaintance with our own Confession of Faith, it is necessary to know something of the state of theological discussion during the period that intervened between the Synod of Dort and the Westminster Assembly, by which the statements and phraseology of our Confession were very materially influenced.

The influential and weighty testimony thus borne in favour of Calvinism has, of course, called down upon the Synod of Dort the hostility of all who have rejected Calvinistic principles. And much has been written, for the purpose of showing that its decision is not entitled to much weight or deference; and that generally for the purpose of exciting a prejudice against it. The chief

pretences employed for this purpose are these: First, It is alleged that the assembling of the synod was connected with some political movements, and that it was held under political influence,—a statement which, though true in some respects, and as affecting some of the parties connected with bringing about the calling of the synod, does not, in the least, affect the integrity and sincerity of the divines who composed it, or the authority of their decisions; for no one alleges that they decided from any other motive but their own conscientious convictions as to the meaning of the word of God. Secondly, The opponents of the synod dwell much upon some differences of opinion, on minor points, that obtained among members of the synod, and upon the exhibitions of the common infirmities of humanity, to which some of the discussions, on disputed topics, occasionally gave rise,—a charge too insignificant to be deserving of notice, when viewed in connection with the purpose to which it is here applied. And, thirdly, They enlarge upon the hardship and suffering to which the Remonstrants were subjected by the civil authorities, in following out the ecclesiastical decisions of the synod, employing these very much as they employ Calvin's connection with the death of Servetus, as if this at all affected the truth of the doctrines taught, or as if there was any fairness in judging, by the notions generally prevalent in modern times, of the character and conduct of men who lived before the principles of toleration were generally understood or acted upon.

It is quite true, that the divines who composed the Synod of Dort generally held that the civil magistrate was entitled to inflict pains and penalties as a punishment for heresy, and that the Arminians of that age—though abundantly subservient to the civil magistrate when he was disposed to favour them, and, indeed, openly teaching a system of gross Erastianism—advocated the propriety of both the civil and the ecclesiastical authorities practising a large measure of toleration and forbearance in regard to differences of opinion upon religious subjects. The error of those who advocated and practised what would now be reckoned persecution, was the general error of the age, and should not, in fairness, be regarded as fitted to give an unfavourable impression of their character and motives, and still less to prejudice us against the soundness of their doctrines upon other and more important topics; while the views of the Arminians about toleration and forbear-

ance—at least as to be practised by the ecclesiastical authorities, in abstaining from exercising ecclesiastical discipline against error—went to the opposite extreme of latitudinarian indifference to truth; and, in so far as they were sound and just as respected the civil authorities, are to be traced chiefly to the circumstances of their own situation, which naturally led them to inculcate such views when the civil authorities were opposed to them, and afford no presumption in favour of the superior excellence of their character, or the *general* soundness of their opinions.

The Romanists, too, have attacked the Synod of Dort, and have not only laboured to excite a prejudice against it, but have endeavoured to draw from it some presumptions in favour of their own principles and practices. Bossuet has devoted to this object a considerable part of the fourteenth book of his *History of the Variations of the Protestant Churches*. The chief points on which he dwells, so far as the history and proceedings of the synod are concerned,—for I reserve for the present the consideration of its theology,—are these: that it indicated some diversities of opinion among Protestants, on which no deliverance was given; that it was a testimony to the necessity of councils, and of the exercise of ecclesiastical authority in deciding doctrinal controversies; that the answers of the synod to the objections of the Remonstrants against the way in which the synod proceeded, and in which it treated the accused, are equally available for defending the Council of Trent against the common Protestant objections to its proceedings; and that the results of the synod show the uselessness and inefficacy of councils, when conducted and estimated upon Protestant principles. Upon all these points Bossuet has exhibited his usual unfairness, misrepresentation, and sophistry, as has been most conclusively proved by Basnage, in his *History of the Religion of the Reformed Churches*.*

It can be easily proved that there was nothing inconsistent with the principles which Protestants maintain against Romanists, on the subject of councils and synods, in anything that was done by the Synod of Dort, or in any inferences fairly deducible from its proceedings; that there was no analogy whatever between the claims and assumptions of the Council of Trent and those of the Synod of Dort, and the relation in which the Protestants in

* Basnage, P. iii., c. v.

general stood to the one, and the Remonstrants stood to the other; that, in everything which is fitted to command respect and deference, the Synod of Dort contrasts most favourably with the Council of Trent; and that the whole history of the proceedings of the Church of Rome, in regard to *substantially the same subjects of controversy*, when agitated among themselves during the whole of the seventeenth century, manifests, first, that her claim to the privilege of having a living infallible judge of controversies is practically useless; and, secondly, that the practical use which she has generally made of this claim has been characterized by the most shameless, systematic, and deliberate dishonesty. It is the doctrine of Protestants in general, as laid down in our Confession of Faith, that “it belongeth to synods and councils ministerially to determine controversies of faith and cases of conscience, and that their decrees and determinations, if consonant to the word of God, are to be received with reverence and submission, not only for their agreement with the word, but also for the power whereby they are made as being an ordinance of God, appointed thereunto in His word.” This is their duty and function; and all this may be claimed and exercised without the possession or the assumption of infallibility.

The Synod of Dort, as a national Synod of the United Provinces, were the legitimate ecclesiastical superiors of the Remonstrants, entitled to try them, to examine into the innovations in doctrine which they had been introducing into the church, to condemn their errors, and, on the ground of these errors, to subject them to ecclesiastical censure,—a position which the Remonstrants usually either deny or evade, but which is undoubtedly true, and which, being true, affords a conclusive answer to the charges of injustice and tyranny which they usually bring against the Synod's proceedings in regard to them; whereas the Council of Trent had no rightful jurisdiction, in any sense, or to any extent, over Protestants in general. It is interesting, and upon a variety of grounds,—and not merely as affording materials for a retort upon Romanists in answer to their attempts to excite prejudices against the Synod of Dort,—to remember that controversies, upon substantially the same topics, divided the Church of Rome, from the time of the dispute excited by Baius, soon after the dissolution of the Council of Trent, down till the publication of the bull *Unigenitus*, in 1713; that the Popes were repeatedly urged to pronounce a decision upon these

controversies, and repeatedly took them into consideration, professedly with an intention of deciding them; that the whole history of their proceedings in regard to them, for 150 years, affords good ground to believe that they never seriously and honestly considered the question as to what was the truth of God upon the subject, and what their duty to Him required them to do, but were supremely influenced, in all that they did, or proposed, or declined to do in the matter, by a regard to the secular interests of the Papacy; and that, in the prosecution of this last object, all regard to soundness of doctrine, and all respect to the dictates of integrity and veracity, were systematically laid aside.* I shall not dwell longer upon the historical circumstances connected with the rise of Arminianism and the Synod of Dort, but must proceed to advert to some of the leading points connected with its theology.

Sec. III.—The Five Points.

The subjects discussed in the Synod of Dort, and decided upon by that assembly, in opposition to the Arminians, have been usually known in theological literature as the *five points*; and the controversy concerning them has been sometimes called the *quintarticular* controversy, or the controversy on the five articles. In the remonstrance which the followers of Arminius presented to the civil authorities in 1610, they stated their own doctrines under five heads; and this circumstance determined, to a large extent, the form in which the whole subject was afterwards discussed,—first at the conference at the Hague, in 1611, and afterwards at the Synod of Dort, in 1618. Of these five articles, as they were originally stated, the first was upon predestination, or election; the second, on the death of Christ, and the nature and extent of His redemption; the third, on the cause of faith,—that is, of course, the power or agency by which faith is produced; the fourth, the mode of conversion, or the kind of agency by which it is effected, and the mode of its operation; and the fifth, on perseverance.

On this last topic,—namely, perseverance,—neither Arminius himself nor his followers, for some little time after his death, gave a decided deliverance. They did not seem quite prepared

* See Hottinger and Weisman.

to give an explicit and positive denial to the doctrine which had been generally taught in the Reformed churches, of the certain perseverance of all believers. Accordingly, in the conference at the Hague, they professed, as Arminius had done in his public declaration the year before his death, that their mind was not fully made up upon this point, and that they must make a fuller investigation into the import of the scriptural statements regarding it, before they could make any confident assertion, either affirmatively or negatively.* It is very manifest, however, that their general scheme of theology imperatively required them, in consistency, to deny the doctrine of the certain perseverance of believers, and to maintain that they may totally and finally fall away; and, indeed, it is rather wonderful that they should have doubted upon this point, when they had rejected every other doctrine of Calvinism; for there is certainly no article in the Arminian creed, which has more *appearance* of countenance from scriptural statements than that of the possibility of the apostasy or falling away of believers. Accordingly, they did not continue long in this state of doubt or indecision, and before the Synod of Dort assembled they were fully prepared to assert and maintain an explicit denial of the Calvinistic doctrine of perseverance.

We have already considered the second article, under the head of the Atonement.

The third and fourth articles are evidently, from their nature, very closely connected with each other; and, indeed, are virtually identical. Accordingly, in the subsequent progress of the controversy, they were commonly amalgamated into one; and in the canons of the synod itself, they are treated of together, under one head, though designated the third and fourth articles. As originally stated in the remonstrance, and as discussed in the conference at the Hague, they referred chiefly, the one to the way and manner in which faith was produced, and the other to the way and manner in which conversion was effected. But these two words really describe what is substantially one and the same process and result. Faith and conversion both describe, in substance,—though in different relations and aspects,—the one great process by which men, individually, are united to Christ,—are turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan

* Amesii Coronis, p. 285.

unto God,—by which they are put in actual possession of the blessings which Christ purchased. Conversion is descriptive more immediately of the process or change itself; and faith, in the sense in which it is here used, of the means by which it is effected. Every one admits that faith and conversion are certainly and invariably connected with each other; and all, except the lowest Socinians, admit that, while they are acts of man,—that is, while it is man himself who believes and turns to God,—these acts are also, in some sense, produced by the grace or gracious operation of God. Now, the dispute upon this point,—and, indeed, upon all the points involved in the Arminian controversy,—turns upon the question as to the way and manner in which God and man are concerned in the production of man's actions; so that the question as to the cause of faith and the mode of conversion is virtually one and the same, they being two parts, or rather aspects, of one and the same process, which must be regulated and determined by the same principles. In the *Acta et Scripta Synodalia Remonstrantium*,—an important work, in which they explained and defended at length the statement of their opinions which they had given in to the synod,—they also join together the third and fourth articles; and the general title which they give to the two thus combined is, “*De gratia Dei in conversione hominis*,”—the general subject thus indicated being, of course, the nature, qualities, and regulating principles of this gracious operation, by which God effects, or co-operates in effecting, the conversion of a sinner.

Sec. IV.—Original Sin.

There is a difference between the title given by the Arminians to their discussion of the third and fourth articles conjointly, and that given by the Synod of Dort to the same two articles, treated also by them as one; and the difference is worth adverting to, as it suggests a topic of some importance in a general survey of the Arminian theology. The title given to these two articles, in the canons of the synod, is this—“On the corruption or depravity of man,—his conversion to God, and the mode or manner of his conversion.”* Here we have prominence given to the corruption or

* *Acta Synodi Nationalis*, p. 263. Ed. 1620.

depravity of man, as a part of this subject, and as in some way the ground or basis of the doctrine which treats of it. If a man possessed some knowledge of what has usually passed under the name of Arminianism in this country,—except as exhibited by the Wesleyans,—but did not know anything of the form in which it appeared and was discussed at the time of the Synod of Dort, he might probably be surprised to find that original sin, or human depravity, did not form the subject of one of the five points. It is a common, and not an inaccurate, impression, that a leading and an essential feature of the Arminian scheme of theology is a denial of man's total depravity, and an assertion of his natural power or ability to do something, more or less, that is spiritually good, and that will contribute to effect his deliverance from the guilt and power of sin, and his eternal welfare. Every consistent Arminian must hold views of this sort, though these views may be more or less completely developed, and more or less fully carried out. The original Arminians held them, though they rather shrunk from developing them, or bringing them into prominence, and rather strove to keep them in the background. Accordingly, they did not introduce, into the original statement and exposition of their peculiar opinions, anything directly and formally bearing upon the subject of original sin or human depravity, and only insinuated their erroneous views upon this important topic in connection with their exposition of the manner in which conversion is effected, and the part which God and man respectively act in that matter.

It holds true universally, that the view we take of the natural condition and character of men, in relation to God and to His law, must materially affect our opinions as to the whole scheme of revealed truth. This is evident from the nature of the case, and it has been abundantly confirmed by experience. The direct and primary object of God's revelation may be said to be,—to make known to us the way in which men may attain to eternal happiness. But the way in which this result is to be attained, must depend upon, and be regulated by, the actual state and condition of men,—the nature and strength of the obstacles, if there be any, which stand in the way of accomplishing this object,—and the power or ability of men to do anything towards removing these obstacles, and thereby effecting the results. The way of salvation, accordingly, revealed in Scripture, assumes, and is based

upon, men's actual state and capacities. The one is, throughout, adapted or adjusted to the other in the actual divine arrangements, and, of course, in the revelation given to us concerning the whole state of the case. If men can attain to eternal happiness only in a certain way, and through certain arrangements, their actual state and character must have rendered *these* arrangements necessary; and these two things being thus necessarily connected, the one must at once determine and indicate the other. Accordingly, we find, in the history of the church, that the views which men have entertained of the natural state and condition of the human race, have always accorded with the opinions they have formed with regard to the scheme of divine truth in general.

Socinians, believing that man labours under no depraved tendency, but is now in the same condition, and possessed of the same powers, in a moral point of view, as when he was first created, naturally and consistently discard from their scheme of theology a divine Saviour, and a vicarious atonement. Calvinists, believing that man is by nature wholly guilty and entirely depraved, recognise the necessity of a full satisfaction, a perfect righteousness, and an almighty and irresistible agency. Arminians occupy a sort of intermediate place between them,—admitting the divinity and atonement of Christ, and the necessity of the agency of the Spirit,—but not assigning to the work either of the Son or of the Spirit, in the salvation of sinners, that supreme place—that efficacious and determining influence—which Calvinists ascribe to them. And, in accordance with these views, they have been in the habit of corrupting the doctrine of original sin, or of maintaining defective and erroneous opinions in regard to the guilt and sinfulness of the estate into which man fell. They have usually denied the imputation of Adam's first sin to his posterity; and, while admitting that man's moral powers and capacities have been injured or deteriorated by the fall, they have commonly denied that *entire* depravity, that inability—without a previous change effected upon them by God's almighty grace—to will or do anything spiritually good, which Calvinists have generally asserted; or, if they have admitted the entire depravity of men by nature,—as Arminius and Wesley did, or, at least, intended to do,—the effect of this admission has been only to introduce confusion and inconsistency into the other departments of their creed. While erroneous and defective views of the natural guilt and depravity

of man have generally had much influence in leading men to adopt the whole Arminian system of theology, their views upon this subject have not always come out earliest or most prominently, because they can talk largely and fully upon men's depravity, without *palpably* contradicting themselves; while by other parts of their system,—such as their doctrine about the work of the Spirit, and the way and manner in which conversion is effected,—they may be practically undermining all scriptural conceptions upon the subject.

This was very much what was exhibited in the development of the views of Arminius and his followers. The statements of Arminius himself, in regard to the natural depravity of man, so far as we have them upon record, are full and satisfactory. And the third and fourth articles, as to the grace of God in conversion, even as taught by his followers at the time of the Synod of Dort, contain a large amount of scriptural truth. It is worthy of notice, however, that on the occasion when Arminius, in the year before his death, made a public declaration of his statements, in the presence of the civil authorities of Holland, his colleague, Gomarus, charged him with holding some erroneous opinions upon the subject of original sin,—a fact from which, viewed in connection with the subsequent history of this matter, and the course usually taken by Arminians upon this subject, we are warranted in suspecting that he had given some indications, though probably not very distinct, of softening down the doctrines generally professed by the Reformers upon this point.* In the third article, the Remonstrants professed to ascribe the production of faith, and the existence of everything spiritually good in man, to the operation of divine grace, and to assert the necessity of the entire renovation of his nature by the Holy Spirit. And, in the fourth article, they extended this principle of the necessity of divine grace, or of the agency of the Spirit, to the whole work of sanctification,—to the whole of the process, by which men, after being enabled to believe, are cleansed from all sin, and made meet for heaven. These statements, of course, did not form any subject of dispute between them and their opponents. The Calvinists held all this, and had always done so. They only doubted whether the Arminians really held these doctrines honestly, in the natural meaning of the words,

* Scott on Synod of Dort; Historical portion.

or, at least, whether they could intelligently hold them consistently in union with other doctrines which they maintained. Ames, after quoting the third article, as stated by the Remonstrants in the conference at the Hague,—and they retained it in the same terms at the Synod of Dort,—says: “De assertionis hujus veritate, nulla in Collatione movebatur controversia, neque nunc in quæstionem vocatur: imo ad magnam harum litium partem sedandam, hæc una sufficeret thesis, modo sinceram eam Remonstrantium confessionem continere constaret, et ex labiis dolosis non prodire. Sed magna subest suspicio, eos non tam ex animo, quam ex arte dixisse multa, quæ continentur in istoc effato. Diruunt enim alibi, quæ hic ædificant: ut ex paucis his inter sese collatis, mihi saltem videtur manifestum.”* He then proceeds to quote statements made on other occasions by the Arminians, who took part in this conference, that are inconsistent with this article, and that plainly enough ascribe to men some power to do what is spiritually good of themselves, and in the exercise of their own natural capacities.

I have quoted this passage, because it contains an accurate description of the course commonly pursued in all ages by Arminians in discussing this subject, and most fully by the Arminians of the Church of England. They are obliged, by the necessity of keeping up an appearance of consistency with their Articles and Homilies, to make large general admissions in regard to the depravity of men, and their inability of themselves to do anything spiritually good; and as these admissions are inconsistent with the general spirit and the fundamental principles of their scheme of theology, they are under the necessity of contradicting themselves, and of withdrawing with the one hand what they had given with the other.

The confusion and inconsistency often displayed by Episcopalian Arminians on these topics, when treating of original sin, regeneration, and the work of the Spirit, is very deplorable, and sometimes appears in a form that is really ludicrous. Bishop Tomline quoted, with disapprobation, as Calvinism, a statement on the subject, which was taken from the Homilies.† Dr Sumner, Archbishop of Canterbury, in his “Apostolical Preaching Considered,”—which, though a poor book, is yet decidedly superior, both in

* Amesii Coronis, Art. iii., p. 170. | Refutation of Calvinism, vol. i., pp.
† Vide Scott's Remarks on Tomline's | 105-6.

point of ability and orthodoxy, to Tomline's “Refutation of Calvinism,”—warned, apparently, by the exposure of Tomline's blunders, adopts a different mode of dealing with the strong statements of the Homilies on this subject. He quotes two passages from the Homilies; one from the Homily on the Nativity, and the other from that on Whitsunday, Part I.,—the second of these being the one denounced by Tomline,—and charges them with exaggeration as containing “strong and unqualified language, which is neither copied from Scripture nor sanctioned by experience.”*

The *first* part of the fourth article,—in which they apply the principle of the necessity of divine grace to the whole process of sanctification,—is to be regarded in the same light as the third,—namely, as sound in itself, but contradicted on other occasions by themselves, because inconsistent with the general spirit of their system. In the end of the fourth article, however, they have introduced a statement, which forms the subject of one of the leading departments of the controversy. It is in these words: “Quoad vero modum operationis istius gratiæ, illa non est irresistibilis.” Calvinists, in general, do not admit that this is an accurate statement of the question, and do not undertake, absolutely, and without some explanation of the principal term, to defend the position here by implication ascribed to them,—namely, that the grace of God, in conversion, is irresistible. Still, the statement points, and was intended to point, to an important subject of controversy between the Calvinists and the Arminians,—one in which a real and important difference of opinion exists. It is usually discussed by Calvinists under the heads of effectual calling and efficacious grace, and it will be necessary to devote to it some portion of our attention.

The way and manner in which faith is produced, and in which conversion is effected, depend somewhat upon the power or capacity which man has, by nature, of doing anything spiritually good and acceptable to God; and that, again, depends upon the entireness or totality of the corruption or depravity that attaches to man through the fall. And hence it was, that though the Arminians had not, in what they laid down upon the mode or manner of conversion, said anything directly about men's natural depravity, the Synod of Dort, in their canons on the third and fourth articles,

* C. iii., pp. 129, 130. Ed. 1850.

included and expounded the doctrine of man's entire depravity by nature, and his inability to do anything spiritually good, and made this the basis,—as the Scripture does,—of their whole doctrine with respect to the cause of faith,—the necessity and nature of regeneration and conversion,—the work of the Spirit,—and the principles by which His operations are regulated, in applying to men individually the benefits purchased for them by Christ.

I have thought it proper to explain why it was that the subject of man's natural depravity did not occupy so prominent a place as might have been expected in the formal discussion of the Arminian controversy, when it first arose, about the time of the Synod of Dort,—at least as it was conducted on the Arminian side,—although it really lies at the root of the whole difference, as was made more palpably manifest in the progress of the discussion, when the followers of Arminius developed their views upon this subject more fully, and deviated further and further from the doctrine of the Bible and the Reformation on the subject of the natural state and character of men. I do not mean, however, in proceeding with the examination of the Arminian controversy, to dwell upon this topic; because I have already considered pretty fully the subjects of original sin and free-will in connection with the Pelagian controversy. The doctrine of most Arminians upon these subjects is, in substance, that of the Church of Rome, as defined by the Council of Trent,—that is, it holds true of them both that they qualify or limit the extent or completeness of the depravity which attaches to man by nature, in consequence of the fall, so as to leave room for free-will, *in the sense* of a natural power or ability in men to do something that is spiritually good as well as to do what is spiritually evil; and thus to represent man as able, in the exercise of his own natural powers, to contribute, in some measure, to the production of faith, and at least to prepare himself for turning to God and doing His will. In discussing this subject, in opposition to the doctrine of the Pelagians and the Church of Rome,—which is very much the same as that of the generality of Arminians,—I took occasion to explain pretty fully the great doctrine of the Reformation and of our own Confession of Faith, about the connection between men's entire moral corruption and the entire bondage or servitude of their will to sin because of depravity, or their inability to will or to do anything spiritually good,—*the only species* of bondage or necessity, or of anything opposed

in any sense to freedom of will, which, upon scriptural grounds, as Calvinists, or because of anything contained in our Confession of Faith, we are called upon to maintain. But, while right views of the entire depravity of man's moral nature, and of the thorough bondage or servitude of his will to sin, because of this depravity,—or, as our Confession says, “his total loss, by the fall into a state of sin, of all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation,”—should, when applied and carried out, settle the questions which have been raised as to the production of faith and the cause of conversion, and the nature and character of the gracious operation of the Holy Spirit in effecting these results,—the topics usually discussed under the head of effectual calling,—the sufficiency, efficacy, and, in some sense, irresistibility of grace,—yet the full exposition of these latter topics was not brought out until the Arminian and Jansenistic controversies arose in the Protestant and Romish churches respectively in the seventeenth century. And, while the chief topics involved in these two great controversies were substantially the same, they present, in regard to the particular topic now before us, this remarkable and interesting contrast, that, while in the Protestant Church the Arminians corrupted the doctrine of the Reformers with regard to effectual calling, and the efficacy of divine grace, or of the work of the Spirit, in regeneration, without, at first at least, formally denying man's depravity and moral inability; on the other hand, the Jansenists in the Church of Rome strenuously maintained what were, in substance, scriptural and Calvinistic views in regard to the efficacy of grace, without formally denying the corrupt doctrine of the Council of Trent in regard to original sin and free-will.

We shall advert to this subject of effectual calling, and the nature and efficacy of divine grace, or of the work of the Spirit, in producing faith and regeneration, as suggested by the third and fourth articles of the Synod of Dort, before we proceed to consider the important subject of the first article,—the great doctrine of Predestination or Election; and we shall follow this order, partly for reasons of convenience suggested by the topics we have already been led to consider, and partly for reasons founded on the nature of the case, and the intrinsic connection of the subjects to which we may afterwards have occasion to refer.*

* *Vide* Owen, Spanheim, Stapfer, Molinæi “Anatome.”

Sec. V.—Universal and Effectual Calling.

We have had occasion, in discussing the subject of the atonement, to explain the distinction which has been generally made by divines between the impetration and the application of the blessings of redemption, and to advert especially to the use, or rather the abuse, of it by the Arminians, in maintaining that impetration and application are not only distinct in themselves, but separable, and often, in fact, separated,—that is, that Christ impetrated the spiritual blessings of reconciliation and forgiveness for many to whom they are never applied, who never actually receive or partake of them,—a position, as we have seen, which can be made to assume something like plausibility only by maintaining that reconciliation and forgiveness are not reconciliation and forgiveness, but merely something preparatory to, or tending towards, them. Calvinists admit that the impetration and the application of spiritual blessings are distinct things,—impetration being the immediate effect of Christ's work, and being completed when Christ's sacrifice of Himself in men's room was presented and accepted; and application, or the actual bestowal of these blessings upon men individually, being the result of the operation of the Holy Spirit, when by Him men individually are united to Christ through faith, so as actually to receive the blessings which He purchased for them, and are created again in Christ Jesus by His almighty power. Arminians hold that spiritual blessings—at least reconciliation and pardon—were impetrated or purchased for all men, but that they are applied only to some; while Calvinists hold that they were purchased only for some, but that they are applied to all for whom they were purchased. This disjunction or separation of impetration and application,—an essential feature of the Arminian scheme,—compels them, as I formerly illustrated, first, to explain away the true scriptural import of the blessings which they admit to have been purchased,—to reduce reconciliation to reconciliability, pardon to a possibility of pardon, salvation to salvability; and, secondly, to deny altogether that other blessings, equally indispensable to the salvation of men individually,—such as faith and regeneration,—are to be regarded as the fruits of Christ's purchase. These are corruptions of Christian doctrine not peculiar to the Arminians. They *must* be held in substance by all who believe in an unlimited atonement, if they

will follow out their principles consistently. This has been already explained, and we have to do now only with the application of the blessings of redemption; and with this, too, not as procured and secured by the work of Christ, but only as actually effected in men individually by the work of the Holy Spirit, the necessity of whose agency in this matter is admitted by all but Socinians.

This whole subject, taken in its widest sense, may be regarded as resolving into this question,—What provision has God made for imparting to men individually the blessings which Christ purchased for them, and which are indispensable to their deliverance and salvation? and what are the principles which regulate or determine the actual results of this provision in the pardon, conversion, and salvation of some men, and in the continued guilt and impenitence, and the everlasting misery, of others? It will be recollected, that, having reserved the subject of predestination for future consideration, we have not, in examining this question, anything to do, in the first instance, with the decree, purpose, or design of the divine mind in regard to individuals, but only with the provision made by God for executing His decrees or accomplishing His purposes, as it is presented to our contemplation, and with the results which flow from it. It is with the providence, not the decrees, of God, that we have at present to do; and in this statement the word providence is not to be understood in the more limited sense in which it is sometimes employed, as contradistinguished from grace, but as including it. God executes *all* His decrees or purposes, with respect to the human race, in His works of creation and providence,—that is, in creating and thereafter regulating all things; and though it is common to employ the word providence as descriptive only of that department of the divine procedure, in regulating and governing the world, which has respect to material, external, and temporal things, and to apply the word grace to that department of the divine actings which bear immediately upon the conversion, sanctification, and salvation of sinners, and is ascribed in Scripture to the special agency of the Holy Spirit; and though it is right that these two departments of the divine procedure should be distinguished from each other, yet this mode of distinguishing them is neither sanctioned by Scripture usage, nor very accurate in itself. All that God does in regard to the world and the human race, after creating them, is comprehended in His providence, or in the

supreme dominion which He *is* ever exercising over all His creatures and over all their actions; and this providence, therefore, comprehends all that He does in the dispensation of the Spirit,—in communicating that grace, or those gracious supernatural influences, on which the actions and the destinies of men so essentially depend.

The general provision which God has made for imparting to men individually the blessings which Christ purchased by the shedding of His precious blood, may be said to consist in these three things: first, the making known to men what Christ has done and suffered for their salvation; secondly, the offering to men the blessings which Christ purchased, and the inviting men to accept of them: and, thirdly, the communication of the Holy Spirit to dispose or enable them to accept the offer,—to comply with the invitation,—that is, to repent and believe, and to effect, or contribute to effect, in them the renovation or sanctification of their natures. Calvinists and Arminians agree in admitting that these things, when stated in this somewhat vague and indefinite form, which has been adopted intentionally for the present, constitute the provision which God has made for imparting to men individually the benefits of redemption; but they differ materially in their views upon some important points connected with the necessity and the nature of the different branches of this provision, and the principles that regulate their application and results. The Arminians, believing in universal grace, in the sense of God's love to all men,—that is, *omnibus et singulis*, or His design and purpose to save all men conditionally,—and in universal redemption, or Christ's dying for all men,—consistently follow out these views by asserting a universal *proclamation* to men of God's purpose of mercy,—a universal vocation, or offer and invitation, to men to receive pardon and salvation,—accompanied by a universal sufficient grace,—gracious assistance actually and universally bestowed, sufficient to enable all men, if they choose, to attain to the full possession of spiritual blessings, and ultimately to salvation. Calvinists, while they admit that pardon and salvation are offered indiscriminately to all to whom the gospel is preached, and that all who can be reached should be invited and urged to come to Christ and embrace Him, deny that this flows from, or indicates, any design or purpose on God's part to save all men; and without pretending to understand or unfold all the objects or ends of this

arrangement, or to assert that it has no other object or end whatever, regard it as *mainly* designed to effect the result of calling out and saving God's chosen people; and they deny that grace, or gracious divine assistance, sufficient to produce faith and regeneration, is given to all men. They distinguish between the outward vocation or calling and the internal or effectual, and regard the real regulating principle that determines the acceptance or non-acceptance of the call or invitation of the gospel by men individually, to be the communication or the non-communication of the efficacious agency of the Holy Spirit; Arminians, of course, resolving this—for there is no other alternative—into men's own free-will, their own improvement or non-improvement of the sufficient grace given to them all.

In investigating these subjects, the first thing to be attended to manifestly is the proclaiming or making known to men God's purpose of mercy or way of salvation; and here, at the very outset, Arminians are involved in difficulties which touch the foundations of their whole scheme of theology, and from which they have never been able to extricate themselves. They can scarcely deny that it is at least the ordinary general rule of God's procedure, in imparting to men the blessings of redemption, that their possession of them is made dependent upon their becoming acquainted with what Christ did for sinners, and making a right use and application of this knowledge. If this be so, then it would seem that we might naturally expect that—if the Arminian doctrines of universal grace and universal redemption are well founded—God would have made provision for securing that a knowledge of His love and purpose of mercy, and of the atonement of Christ,—the great means for carrying it into practical effect,—should be communicated to all men, or at least brought within their reach. And Calvinists have always regarded it as a strong argument against the Arminian doctrines of universal grace and universal redemption, and in favour of their own views of the sovereign purposes of God, that, in point of fact, so large a portion of the human race have been always left in entire ignorance of God's mercy, and of the way of salvation revealed in the gospel; nay, in such circumstances as, to all appearance, throw insuperable obstacles in the way of their attaining to that knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ, which is eternal life.

It is a fact, that a large portion of every successive generation

that has peopled the earth's surface, have been left in this condition,—a fact which we should contemplate with profound reverence and holy awe, but which we should neither turn from, nor attempt to explain away, and which, like everything else in creation and providence, ought to be applied for increasing our knowledge of God, of His character and ways. The diversities in the condition of different nations, with respect to religious privileges or the means of grace, as well as the determination of the condition and opportunities in this respect of each individual, as regulated ordinarily in a great measure by the time and place of his birth, are to be ascribed to the sovereign good pleasure of God. He has determined all this according to the counsel of His own will. We can give no other full or complete explanation of these things. Partial explanations may sometimes be given in regard to particular countries; but these do not reach the root of the matter in any case, and are palpably inadequate as applied to the condition of the world at large. We can assign no reason, for instance, why it is that Great Britain, which, at the time of our Saviour's appearance upon earth, was in a state of thorough ignorance and barbarism, should now possess so largely herself, and be disseminating so widely to others, the most important spiritual privileges; or why we, individually, have been born in this highly favoured land, instead of coming into existence amid the deserts of Africa, which does not resolve itself, either immediately or ultimately, into the good pleasure of God. Arminians have laboured to reconcile all this, as a matter of fact, with their defective and erroneous views of the divine sovereignty, and with their unscriptural doctrines of universal grace and universal redemption; but they have not usually been satisfied themselves with their own attempts at explanation, and have commonly at last admitted, that there were mysteries in this matter which could not be explained, and which must just be resolved into the sovereignty of God and the unsearchableness of His counsels.

We have, however, to do with this topic, *at present*, only as it is connected with the alleged universal proclamation of God's purpose of mercy to sinners, or of a way of salvation. Arminians are bound to maintain, in order to expound with something like consistency the great leading principles of their scheme of theology, that God has made such a revelation to all men, as that, by the right use of it, or if they do not fail in the due improvement

of what they have, they may, and will, attain to salvation. This has led many of them not only to maintain that men may be, and that many have been, saved by Christ, or upon the ground of His atonement, who never had any knowledge of what He had done for men, but also to devise a sort of preaching of the gospel, or proclamation of the way of salvation, without a revelation, and by means merely of the works of nature and providence,—views which are plainly inconsistent with the teaching of Scripture. While they are compelled to admit an exercise of the divine sovereignty—that is, of God's acting in a way, the reasons of which we do not know, and cannot trace or explain—in the different degrees of knowledge and of privilege which He communicates to different nations, they usually maintain, that it is indispensable, in order to the vindication of the divine character, that *all men*—however inferior in degree the privileges of some may be to those of others—should have, at least, such means of knowing God, as that, by the right use and improvement of them, they can attain to salvation. We, of course, do not deny that there are mysteries in this subject which we cannot explain, and which we can only contemplate with profound reverence and awe; or that men's everlasting condition will be, in some measure, regulated by the privileges and opportunities they have enjoyed; or that all who perish shall perish justly and righteously, having incurred real guilt by the ignorance of God which they actually manifested; but we cannot, because of the difficulties attaching to this mysterious subject, renounce the plain scriptural principle, that it is “eternal life to know God, and Jesus Christ, whom He has sent;” or dispute the plain matter of fact, that, as the *certain result* of arrangements which God has made, many of our fellow-men are placed in circumstances in which they cannot attain to that knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ on which eternal life depends.

Some Arminians have been so much impressed with these considerations, as to indicate a willingness to make a sort of compromise upon this subject, by agreeing to exclude from happiness those to whom Christ has not been made known, provided they are not consigned to misery; that is, they have been disposed to cherish the notion of an intermediate eternal state, in addition to the two which the Bible reveals to us, as the ultimate and everlasting abodes of all the individuals of the human race,—heaven

being provided for those who have believed the gospel,—hell for those who have rejected it when it was proclaimed to them,—and an intermediate state, without suffering, for those who never heard it.* This idea is thus expressed by Limborch. After declaring it to be very probable that men who make a good use of the light they have will be graciously saved through Christ, though they have never heard of Him, he adds: “*Vel, si id nolumus, antequam divina bonitas eos ad inferni cruciatus damnare credatur, sicut triplex hominum in hoc ævo est status, credentium, incredulorum, et ignorantium; ita etiam triplex post hanc vitam hominum status, concedendus videtur: vitæ æternæ, qui est credentium: cruciatuum infernalium, qui est incredulorum; et præter hosce, status ignorantium.*”† This awful subject should certainly preclude the indulgence of those feelings which mere controversial discussion is apt to produce,—anything like an approach to an eager contending for victory; but it is right, from a regard to the interests of truth, to observe, that the only evidence he produces for these notions,—and which he seems to think must prove one or other of them,—is the general scriptural principle, that men shall be dealt with according to the opportunities they have enjoyed. This principle is manifestly insufficient to support such notions; so that the whole matter resolves into this,—that Arminians will rather invent theories about subjects of which they can know nothing, than believe what God has plainly told us concerning Himself, when this does not coincide with the previous conceptions they may have formed of His character and His ways.‡

They are usually glad, however, to escape from this branch of the subject, about the universal proclamation of God's grace, and of a way of salvation to all men,—feeling, apparently, that the plain facts of the case, viewed in connection with the plainly revealed, though awful and mysterious, doctrines of Scripture, cannot easily be reconciled with their system; and they hasten on to try their notions of universal vocation, and sufficient grace,

* This was denied by Arminius himself, *Orat. de Objecto Theologiæ*, quoted in *Edwards' Veritas Redux*, p. 432.

† Limborch, *Theol., Lib. iv., c. xi.*, p. 363. Ed. 1686.

‡ Others have supposed that God may extend their probation beyond this life. *Scot's Christian Life*, quoted in *Edwards' Veritas Redux*, p. 444.

in the case of all to whom the gospel is made known. In making this transition, they usually allege that they have no desire to inquire curiously into the condition and destiny of those to whom the gospel is not made known,—that we have to do chiefly with the case of those who have an opportunity of knowing God's revelation, and with the principles which regulate their fate,—and that it is quite sufficient to overthrow the Calvinistic system of theology, if it can be proved that sufficient grace is communicated to all of them. We have no satisfaction, any more than they, in dwelling upon the mysterious subject of the destiny of the innumerable multitudes of our fellow-men who have died without having had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the only name given under heaven or among men whereby we can be saved;—we indulge in no speculations upon their fate, beyond what Scripture sanctions;—we leave them in the hands of the Judge of all the earth, who, we are assured, will do right. But there is nothing in all this to warrant or excuse us in refusing to believe what Scripture teaches, or to contemplate in the light of Scripture what the condition of the world sets before us; and it is the more necessary and important that we should realize and apply—so far as we have clear and certain materials—the doctrines and the facts bearing upon this subject, awful and incomprehensible as it undoubtedly is, when we find that these doctrines and facts afford proofs of the erroneousness of some of the views of the divine character and government, and of the way of salvation, which the Arminians have been accustomed to propound. As to their allegation, that it is sufficient to refute Calvinism, if they can establish their principle as applicable to all who hear the gospel, it is enough, *at present*, to remind them, that they have not only to attack Calvinism, but to defend their own system; and that the survey of the condition of the world at large, taken in connection with doctrines plainly taught in Scripture,—and this is the first subject which naturally presents itself for examination in this department of the controversy,—not only answers many of their common objections against Calvinism, but suggests objections to the Arminian scheme of theology, which its advocates are unable satisfactorily to dispose of.

Let us briefly advert to the application they make of their principles to all who live within the sound of the gospel. The