Flesherton Advance.

"TRUTH BEFORE FAVOR"—"PRINCIPLES, NOT MEN."

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THE ADVANCE.

The leading Local and Family Newspaper in this section of the County of Grey, is published

Every Thursday,

From the Office,

COLLINGWOOD ST., - - FLESHERTON, ONT.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

[The Editor does not necessarily endorse the opinions expressed by correspondents.]

"What is Arminianism?"

To the Editor of The Advance.

SIR,—I notice in your last issue, a mass of incoherent verbiage on this question from "B." If there be any merit in that style, then I admit B has the vantage ground. I will not repeat at length those incoherencies; but to show how well B is versed with the authors he quotes, and the self-confidence exhibited, let me summarize a little.

First, take his quotations from Milton, to prove the unconditional damnation of a part of the human family. He discovers the phrase, "*His absolute decrees*," and similar expressions in Milton's poems, and at once he bags the game—both the poet and his poems are Calvinistic! It is a corroboration of what I previously stated, that, according to B, these sentences can only be interpreted by Calvinistic keys. Thirty lines closely printed are used to prove him a beloved follower of Calvin, when Milton is nothing of the kind. Channing says: "Milton in his *Treatise on Christian Doctrine*, in treating of God's efficiency, strenuously maintains human freedom, in opposition to the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination. He maintains that God's decrees do not encroach on moral liberty; for our free agency is the very object decreed and predestinated by the Creator." So then Dr. Whedon was correct, but where is my exuberant, egotistic friend, B?

Second: B's incapacity for correct inference is notable in his forced construction of my sentence—"*Not to have answered it would have implied Arminian degeneracy, in polemical acuteness and advantage*"—making it appear, that it was Dr. Whedon who answered Dr. McLaren, when it was definitely stated that Dr. Dewart was the gentlemen who did it in his *stinging* and *unanswerable reply*.

Third: Forty-five lines of irrelevant matter are used to prove diversities among the Fathers on questions aside from the one under discussion, to throw discredit on so well an authenticated fact, that St. Augustine first promulgated the Calvinistic creed. The question is not what the Fathers did in other matters and at different periods; but is it true, that St. Augustine is the originator of the Calvinistic theory? It is true (?) and is susceptible of as easy proof—as much so—as the teachings of John Knox or John Wesley. It may be clearly assumed, that if prior to St. Augustine, Arminian methods of interpretation existed, from the Apostles, B is at a discount and is caught in his own snare; and must, if honest, concede that so far as the historical argument goes the Arminians have it in their favor (?) and though ten thousand more of the Fathers be quoted, this fact remains undisturbed.

Fourth.—Dr. Whedon says that "God plans all futurities," and therefore both the phrase and the Doctor are Calvinistic! O yes, of course!! The admission of B, that the Dr's style is too deep for common minds, must exonerate him from unintentionally quoting the Dr. out of harmony with the text of his argument. Certainly he was not using Calvinistic spectacles, and had no idea of proving unconditional damnation or referring at all as against man's free agency. But though God may and does "plan all futurities," man's *free agency* is one of the very things included in the futurities so planned.(?) The Dr. will feel himself highly complimented by the soft impeachment.

Fifth.—How regretful B is that his "Arminian friends do not take the Bible as their guide." Methodists will be amazed to be so told. If Beta had written such an accusation the whole body politic would have been *insulted*, and the vials of of B's wrath would have been emptied on all, whether *laymen* or *preachers*. It so happens, that Arminians do, most emphatically, take the Bible as their rule and guide; and what is more, B knows it. The trouble is with B, that he allows no possibility of any interpretation incompatible with Calvin—all are dolts beside.

But it is really amusing to read such assumed airs regarding Scripture interpretations. Please be referred to his quotation of this text—"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life." Certainly there is no Calvinism here; it is a Scripture, standing out in bold relief, containing a kernel of pure Arminianism. But B doctors it by placing alongside a Scripture without its context—a sample, certainly, of B's aptitude for contortion. This is it: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him."—John vi. 44v. The context (v. 45) reads: "It is written in the prophets, and they shall be *all* taught of God, every *man* that hath heard and hath learned of the Father *cometh* unto me." Can any man, possessing ordinary intelligence, not discover a beautiful harmony? And instead of qualifying the first grand old text, it intensifies its true Arminian character—*all are taught* of God—and this is the kind of "drawing" God does; and as stated, harmonizes with, "whosoever believeth on him should not perish," &c. The term "drawing" with B, means, force, compulsion, predestination—logging chain fashion—as if there were no characteristics in God's character, works and goodness, to entice and draw the sinner—all sinners—for with God, *there is no respect of persons;* a portion of the Spirit is given to *all men* to profit withal.

B, it must be confessed, is consistent with his creed and agrees with Dr. McLaren—doesn't deny a particle of it notwithstanding the natural and logical deductions from it be so cruel, unjust and terribly dishonoring to God's character; more, he exults in it, and says it is dear to every Presbyterian heart. It is to be hoped it is not. Ask the mothers if they entertain the idea, that God predetermined the infants at their breasts to eternal damnation before they were born, without having done good or evil—their answer would be an emphatic NO; and I presume too much is claimed, and the statement too sweeping, to include all attaches to his church in his category—at least many have so declared to myself and others. Methodism is antagonistic to this ultra Calvinism, and her opinions carry weight and force, unmoved and unmovable by the most potent of the Calvinistic school.

Permit me to say, that Methodism has a *creed* well understood by her people. It is short and comprehensive, viz., "Repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;" or, if you like, "Justification by faith," supported by passages like these,—"By the grace of God, Christ Jesus tasted death for every man;" and, with equal force, the doctrine of the new birth, "Ye must be born again." These privileges are for all to choose or refuse. "Let the wicked forsake his ways and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God for He will abundantly pardon." What abuse such phraseology must receive to make it fit a doctrine which asserts that only a *part* of the human race are redeemed. "*The elect only are redeemed*," says the Calvinist. I know of no tenet of the Methodist community, but that her ministry dare promnulgate. Her cry is,—

> Come all the world, come sinner thou,
> All things in Christ are ready now.

But the Calvinist's call is limited and is doubtful—peradventure his invitation may be addressed to one or more in his congregation, or all, who are predetermined to be damned. What then would be the effect of his preaching upon such? But I may reiterate the sentiment, that their *theory is Calvinistic, their practice is Arminianistic*, and whether my admiration for many of her members, for their godliness and Christian virtues, be sneered at by B or no, it makes but little difference—the truth remains.

It must be the result of constitutional weakness, to charge with insult the trivial circumstances leading to this discussion. I dare say in other hands no acrimony would have been exhibited. All I can say is, none was intended on the part of Beta, and I freely overlook his personal references—for it must be a little irritating to him to find that one at least dare defend the doctrines of the Methodist Church. His closing paragraph is merely a repetition of previous assertions, and re-affirms what no Arminian denies. The Prophecies are all believed in by Arminians, but their mode of fulfilment admits of quite a different interpretation, when the *free agency of the creature* is involved. The God whom the Methodist worships, never compelled a person to sin, and commit tragical actions and punished him for doing it! What think you, my gentle reader? B's crude notions of Foreordination is forcibly expressed regarding the Saviour's garments. He says,—"They were just doing what God had *Foreordained* through Isaiah, 700 years before, they would do."—He confounds a *prophecy* with *foreordination*. Now really, *did God foreordain those circumstances just 700 years before their occurrence?* A school boy knows better.

I must forego the introduction of new matter, as was intended and suggested, because of so much space already used. It will be noticed, I think, that B is proven to be wrong in his quotations! wrong in his logic! weak in his conceptions! Egotistic in his style, he is impatient of truth, and falls in the slough of calling bad names. Dr. Whedin, he says, has a *lie* on the face of his pamphlet, and Beta a "hypocrite." But I suppose what is intolerable in an Arminian, is otherwise in a Calvinist, who arrogates to himself as being "a feather out of the right wing," and Elect according to the foreknowledge of God; and therefore eventually secure.

I cannot help observing the unwarrantable fuss over the reception of Dr. Whedon's pamphlet. He charges Beta with the act—as if it made any difference who sent it—gets into a passion, is insulted at the reception of a little work, which fairly states the doctrines of the two theories; and instead of a criticism of the work, he considered it too deep for limited capacities, abandons it after a miserable attempt to make the Dr. a Calvinist.

Now, to a wiser and better disposed person, his reception of this little *brochure* would have been perused assiduously for its merit, intrinsic or otherwise: and I am sure if he had not proper views on Arminianism before, he would have obtained them there, and maybe it would have rubbed off some of his Calvinistic crustiness.

B's effort is tremendous, to make Beta responsible for this discussion, which is unreasonable. If he received a pamphlet in common with others—Methodists included, as I am informed—surely he need not have rushed pell-mell to the press, with as silly a production as one can well imagine, which Beta at the time termed a catechism.

This *peace-loving* gentleman delights to throw fire-brands into his neighbor's heritage, and escapes the responsibility by vociferating he did it!

Beta hates Romanism quite as much as ultra Calvinism; but what well-balanced mind would hate the person on that account. Sincere followers of either are to be pitied and enlightened, and I suppose in such godly endeavors, Arminians may expect the ravings of men of limited capacities and ultra bias; but at same time all of good that exists, in the individual or church, is admired; and it is a prayer frequently and sincerely offered, that God's watchman may see eye to eye. The present generation is full of evidences in favor of its fulfilment. BETA.

[Since the above was sent to your office a kind friend has sent me the following. Will you kindly print it as it is.—BETA.]

DEAR SIR,—Assuming that you are the author of the letters signed Beta, I take the liberty of pointing out the unfair manner in which your opponent has quoted Milton in this week's reply. Taking out a few lines here and there in Milton's grand poem, he has placed them in such relation as to try to give the impression that Milton was a believer in these fatalistic doctrines. I think you will find that Milton nowhere speaks of God pre-ordaining man's destiny, but ever maintains man's free-will power to choose or refuse, obey or disobey. The words quoted, "pre-ordained and fixed," refer to the work of Christ as the promised seed of the woman pre-ordained ages before the incarnation of the world's Redeemer. Immediately after the lines quoted:—

> .....Other decrees against thee
> Are gone forth without recall,

these words follow:—

> That golden sceptre which THOU DID'ST REJECT
> Is now an iron rod to bruise and break
> Thy disobedience.

I will, for your easier reference, point out the lines quoted, and you will readily see the perversion of language which would make Milton a believer in fatalism ALIAS Calvinism.

PARADISE LOST.

Hear, O ye angels, &c.—Book V, about 600 line.
O alienate from God,—Book V, " 900 "
And if by prayer incessant,—Book XI. about 240 line.

PARADISE REGAINED.

So to the coasts of Jordan,—Book I. about 120 line.

Yours truly, DELTA.

Inspector's Office, South Grey,

To the Editor of the Advance.

SIR,—I would respectfully remind School Trustees and teachers, that while it is allowed to re-open the schools two weeks before the end of summer vacation, yet it is positively unlawful to make any record of attendance at such schools during any part of vacation, on the Register or the Returns, under the heavy penalties referred to on the printed backs of the Half-yearly Returns. Several GLARING, as well as MINOR cases having recently come under my notice, seems to idicate the necessity for thus calling attention to the matter through your widely read journal.

Yours respectfully,
W. FERGUSON, I. P. S.

Money.

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June 1st, 1881.