Like almost every other segment of Protestantism, Arminianism has had to submit to various divergent movements. The history of theology indicates that there has been an important deviation from the original position which was expounded by James Arminius and his immediate successors. This study is concerned with a comparison of the differences between original Arminianism and that very well-known deviation, Methodistic Arminianism.¹

I

The first consideration is that of the difference between the Arminian theory of original sin and the Methodist theory. "Arminian anthropology accepts the doctrine of Adamic unity, and states it in substantially the same phraseology with the Lutheran and Calvinistic symbols, but it explains the phraseology very differently from them."² The truth of this statement is substantiated in Arminius' conception of the fall of the first man. In good Calvinistic form, Arminius attributed the sin of Adam to disobedience. Essentially it was a denial of one's subjection to God and a willful renunciation of obedience to him. Adam's sin was a transgression of the law by which man fell under the wrath and displeasure of God. "The efficient cause of that transgression was man, determining his will to that forbidden object, and applying his power or capability to do it."³ Because of this sin, our first parents suffered temporal death or the separation of body and soul; they suffered eternal death, or separation from God; and lastly, they suffered the punishment of guilt. Adamic unity involved all men in a similar experience because of Adam's sin.

The Arminians found it impossible to sever completely their relations with Calvinism. From the latter came the Arminian belief in a covenantal relationship between God and man. The condition of the covenant was that if man continued in the favor and grace of God by an unbroken

¹For the purpose of simplification, henceforth, original Arminianism will be referred to as Arminianism. Methodistic Arminianism will be referred to as Methodism.
observance of the law, then the gifts conferred upon him would also be graciously transmitted to his posterity, through the efforts of divine grace. If man was in any way disobedient, he and also his posterity would be denied these gifts and would be liable to evil. This thinking provided a basis for original sin. Because our parents were unworthy, all men propagated from them in a natural way forfeited the particular blessings of God and became liable to temporal and eternal death. "The whole of this sin, however, is not peculiar to our parents . . . whatever punishment was brought down upon our parents, has likewise pervaded, and yet pursues all their posterity." Arminian phraseology exposed a definite similarity with Calvinism.

At what point can the Arminian concept of original sin be classified as contrary to Calvinistic total depravity and Adamic unity? Arminius makes the distinction between that which is called actual sin and that which was the cause of other sin. In this way Adamic unity is shattered. Arminius believed and confidently stated that God could not be angry with us on account of original sin which was born within us, since this would mean that God would be punishing us for that actual sin which was committed by Adam while in the garden. The sin which is derived from Adam is not actual sin, for only Adam can be accused of this. Original sin cannot be that actual sin through which Adam transgressed the law by partaking of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but it is the guilt or corruption which proceeds from actual sin.

As to original sin, Arminius teaches that man, descending from Adam, has been corrupted by Adam's sin, but is not guilty. Adam was both guilty and corrupted. No one will ever be lost in perdition because of Adam's transgression, but all are in the bondage of corruption, because of the sin of the federal head.

This approach implies that original sin is nothing more than a habit which was eventually acquired by man. The evil which has fallen upon man is a misfortune and the posterity of Adam are not truly guilty of the actual sin. There is a uniqueness about the sin committed by Adam in which none other is forced to share or experience. We share in the results of Adam's sin, but not in the sin itself. The sin of man is not such as "intrinsically merits eternal reprobation, so that God would have been just had he provided no redemption from it."

Another crucial matter in this system is that of the imputation of Adam's sin. A later section will illustrate that Arminius is quite consis-

\[4\] Ibid., p. 79.
6 Ibid., pp. 374-375.
tent in his attitude concerning imputation, in both the imputation of Adam's sin and of Christ's righteousness. Arminius continually emphasized the heinousness of Adam's sin. It merited full punishment and because of it Adam experienced the full force of God's wrath. As stated before, Adam was both guilty and corrupted. Moreover, Arminius did seem to advocate a type of imputation to the posterity of Adam, which supported the thesis previously mentioned (note 2). This appears as imputation only in the sense that God has willed the descendants of Adam subject to the very same evil to which Adam subjected himself through willful participation in sin. It is sin only in so far as it is permitted evil. God allows an evil tendency to be imputed. This is the same as that which was inflicted upon the first man as punishment, but is transmitted to his posterity only in the form of a propagated evil and not as true punishment in any sense of the word. Shedd exposed the true nature of Arminian anthropology when he stated: "There is no ground for the assertion, that the sin of Adam was imputed to his posterity in the sense that God actually judged the posterity of Adam to be guilty of, and chargeable with, the same sin and crime which Adam had committed." 9

The words of Arminius concerning the imputation of Adam's guilt to infants indicates that this conclusion by Shedd was no hollow statement.

When Adam sinned in his own person and with his free will, God pardoned that transgression. There is no reason then why it was the will of God to impute this sin to infants, who are said to have sinned in Adam, before they had personal existence, and therefore, before they could possibly sin at their own free will and pleasure. 10

There is a definite distinction exhibited between the corruption of our nature and Adam's guilt. Arminius did not believe any man was condemned to eternal death because of the first sin. When confronted with the aspect of bodily death as a penalty for that sin, Arminius was forced to drive his position to an extreme point. He fell back upon the thought that Adam was created completely mortal, though death would not have been imminent, because of a certain divine prevention. 11

The reason for Arminius' denial of the imputation of guilt has its foundation in his attitude concerning the justice of God. Arminius and his followers held that the imputation of actual guilt was entirely contrary to the justice and equity of God. Shedd fully agreed with such an interpretation when he paraphrased their beliefs in this way: "Imputation is contrary to divine benevolence, right reason, in fact it is absurd and cruel." 12 Episcopius, a successor of James Arminius, presented an excellent summarization of the matter.

9Ibid., pp. 183-184.
12Ibid., p. 185.
Do not regard sin as sin properly so called, which renders the posterity of Adam deserving of the hatred of God; nor as an evil which by the method of punishment properly so called passes from Adam to his posterity; but as an evil, infirmity, injury, or by whatever name it may be called, which is propagated to his posterity by Adam devoid of original righteousness. Whence it results, that all the posterity of Adam, destitute of the same righteousness, are wholly unfit for, and incapable of attaining eternal life ... But that original sin is not an evil in any other sense than this; — that it is not evil in the sense of implying guilt, because to be born is confessedly an involuntary thing, and therefore it is an involuntary thing to be born with this or that stain, infirmity, injury, or evil. But if it is not an evil in the sense of implying guilt, then it cannot be an evil in the sense of desert of punishment, because guilt and punishment are correlated. So far, therefore, as original sin is an evil, it must be in the sense in which the Remonstrants define the term; and is called original sin by a misuse of the word sin.\(^\text{13}\)

The concept of original sin, as expounded by the Methodists, John Wesley and Richard Watson in particular, provides us with several significant changes. This view is so close to classic theology, i.e., that of Augustine, Luther, Calvin, etc., that many students of the movement are led to compare favorably the results with the formulations of John Calvin. Thus G. C. Cell writes "... how Wesley taught from first to last, and with all energy, the doctrine of original sin and total depravity. And he pushed this doctrine to the limit."\(^\text{14}\) The validity of this assertion will be tested in the following paragraphs.

The Methodist position on Adamic unity is developed according to a federal theology. Wesley came about as close to Calvin as one can without actually adopting the Calvinistic position. Wesley spoke about Adam as our representative.

My reason for believing that Adam is a federal head or representative of mankind is this: Christ was the representative of mankind, when God 'laid on him the iniquities of us all, and He was wounded for our transgressions'. But Adam was a type or figure of Christ; therefore, he was also, in some sense, our representative; in consequence of which, 'all died' in him as 'in Christ all shall be made alive.'\(^\text{15}\)

Wesley inferred and advocated a rigid unity. It appeared as a radical departure from Arminianism. The meaning of Wesley's thoughts, as gathered from the context of his entire attitude, indicates that man's state is so dependent upon Adam, that by his first sin all men likewise fell into a state of sorrow, pain and death. Wesley would contend that Adam's sin was so serious that it brought condemnation to his posterity. He was

\(^{13}\)Ibid., p. 181. This quotation of Episcopius is one of the clearest and most concise in all Arminian writing.


quick to state that as sin entered into the world through our representative, so too death and all its attendants converged upon the world.\(^\text{10}\) The representative aspect, as it is set forth by Wesley, was much more inclusive and powerful than that of Arminius.

Richard Watson was not quite so bold as Wesley in his assertions. The representative phase, spoken of by Wesley as existing in a limited sense, was not accepted as a moral unity by Watson. “That Adam and his posterity constitute one moral person, and that the whole race was in him, its head, consenting to his act . . . is so little agreeable to that distinct agency which enters into the very notion of an accountable being, that it cannot be maintained . . .”\(^\text{17}\) This did not throw the Methodist conception back into the realm of Arminianism proper. It merely rejected the unity of moral substance and the fact that there was a unity of will, in the sense that we too sinned because our wills were one with Adam’s will. There still remained a very real, objective, and significant relationship between Adam and all humanity. The relationship was of such a dynamic nature that we are completely involved in the results of Adam’s sin. This notion became normative for most of Methodism. The theory concerning unity was certainly not absolutely identical with that of Calvinism, but it did have greater depth than the Arminian view. Both Wesley and Watson were completely capable of saying that we are guilty of eternal death. Arminius could only say that we possessed an evil tendency which would inevitably lead to death.

The effects of this sin upon man were explicated with little hesitation. Wesley and Watson turned away from Arminius at this point and entered into the periphery of historic theology. Their strongest and most convincing arguments were set forth in the area of total depravity or the effects of the first sin upon man. Opposition to Arminius was expressed in Watson’s discussion on the status of infants.

For there is no more reason to conclude that those children who die in infancy were born with a pure nature, than they who live to manhood; and the fact of their being born liable to death, a part of the penalty, is sufficient to show they were born under the whole malediction.\(^\text{18}\) Wesley contended that man must sin, that he had absolutely no choice because of his totally corrupted nature. This sin spreads to the extent that it infects the entire man, leaving no part untouched. It is total corruption of man’s inmost nature and expresses itself in every power and property contained by and within the soul. Man’s will is completely distorted and perverted.\(^\text{19}\) Actually the difference in this area is quite clear.

\(^{16}\)Ibid., p. 114.


\(^{18}\)Ibid., p. 58.

\(^{19}\)R. W. Burtner and R. E. Chiles, *op. cit.*, p. 120.
Arminius has indicated that this sin refers only to an acquired habit, while the Methodists have declared this sin to be a totally perverse nature. One is capable of doing good, the other (without grace, which in reality is never the case) is bound entirely to that which is evil.

Upon first glance, it would appear that the Methodist position on imputation is quite in line with Arminian thought. Upon closer inspection it is concluded that it moves somewhere between Calvinism and Arminianism. The Methodist system seems to be more profound than the terminology would immediately indicate, although its attitude toward grace does much to neutralize the entire system. The distinction between actual sin and original sin was not so pronounced as was Arminius'. The difference between the two ideas on imputation can readily be seen by noting this characterization:

In what sense is Adam's sin imputed to mankind? In Adam all die, that is,

1.) Our bodies become mortal. (This is opposed to Arminius who believed
that Adam was created mortal and only the preservation of God was lifted
by sin) 2.) Our bodies died; that is, were disunited from God. And hence,
3.) we are all born with a sinful, devilish nature. By reason whereof, 4.)
we are children of wrath, liable to death eternal.20

Watson treads with considerable caution in his approach. He again
takes some of the force from Wesley's evaluation, but by no means did
he reject Wesley's position or his affinity with Arminian thought. Watson
gave Methodism a place of mediation. He indicated that "... when the
sin or righteousness of one person is said to be imputed to another, then
generally those words mean only the result thereof; that is a liableness
to punishment on the one hand, and to reward on the other."21 This
sounds much like Arminianism; nevertheless, the end result is a doctrine
similar to Wesley's. Watson acknowledged a death of the body due to
Adam's sin. There is a spiritual death which makes the heart totally cor-
rupt and naturally wicked and there is eternal death stemming from our
federal head.22 The element of justice upon which Arminius based his
denials of imputation has been noted. The later evangelicals also realized
that justice was an integral aspect of the structure, but this attribute was
never detrimental to their doctrinal construction. The justice of God can
be found in the granting of free will to Adam. Adam was endowed with
sufficient powers with which to resist sin. Justice did not become an ob-
struction to the ways of mercy, as in Arminianism. Original sin remained
compatible with the justice of God.

These are some of the important principles upon which the doctrines
have been constructed. The Arminians paid only lip service to Adamic
unity. They asserted that original sin was an inherited evil tendency and

20 Ibid., p. 117.
22 Ibid., p. 55.
that the imputation of Adam's sin was unjust. Methodism believed in a representative anthropology, total inability or depravity, and a limited type of transference which was designated imputation.

II

At this point it would seem natural to consider the doctrine of grace which is the counterpart of the doctrine of sin. But before this can be fully understood, it is necessary to allude to the atonement, since the thinking on this matter partially conditions considerations on grace, justification, etc.

Arminius himself did not develop any particular theory of the atonement. The Grotian “governmental theory” of the atonement was the first Arminian attempt at a full diagnosis. It did not become the dominant Arminian attitude, but it did have a great influence on later formulations. One of the leading ideas in the governmental theory was the recognition of the nature of man's offence and the necessity for satisfaction. Christ was the true sacrifice in the sense that his penal example is sufficient to present complete satisfaction and to effect a reconciliation. This approach eliminated the concern for justice and replaced it with a satisfaction to God's honor. The only penal reference was that Christ takes on the suffering of the world while on the cross and by this action illustrates God’s attitude toward sin. L. Berkhof presents a good summary of this position as it is related to penal justice.

He [Grotius] maintains that there is no dominant quality of distributive justice in God which demands that the requirements of the law be met in every particular, and which, in case of transgression, makes full satisfaction by punishment imperative. The law with which the sinner is concerned is not a transcript of the inherent righteousness of God, but a positive law (as opposed to natural law), a product of the Divine will, by which God is in no way bound and which he can alter or abrogate as He pleases. Both the law itself and its penalty can be modified or even abolished altogether by the Ruler of the universe.

The early Arminian conception of the atonement was partially derived from the governmental theory of Grotius, and partially from the combined efforts of Limborch and Curcellaeus. This refined theory embraced sacrificial offering as a leading idea, but a sacrifice that was not in the form of a payment of a debt, neither was it a complete satisfaction for justice. The central emphasis was that the sacrifice was a divinely-appointed condition which naturally preceded man's forgiveness from his sin. The passion and death of Christ was not a substituted penalty, but in essence a substitute for a penalty. Shedd contributed three negative statements which clarify their position:

1.) Christ did not endure the full penalty due to man, because he did not endure eternal death, either in degree or in time. 2.) If Christ had completely atoned for our sins by enduring the full penalty, then there is nothing more that Divine grace can do for us. . . . (they continually express a fear that Christ's death will be considered within the context of justice rather than compassion). 3.) If Christ has made plenary satisfaction for us, God has not the right to demand either faith or obedience from us. 25

Probably the most distinctive aspect of Arminian atonement is its opposition to the limited conception as advocated by Calvin and other Reformers, and the acceptance of an unlimited atonement. There was a vehement denial of the view that God can deprive the disobedient of atoning efficacy. The reasoning behind such an assertion was once again founded upon the Arminian attitude toward justice. It is considered an injustice to exact a double punishment from both Christ and man for the same sin. Arminians softened vicarious and expiatory atonement and "represent its direct effect to be to enable God, consistently with his justice and veracity, to enter into a new covenant with men, under which pardon is conveyed to all men on condition of repentance and faith." 26

The Methodist emphasis was more dynamic than its predecessor. Its insight into, and understanding of, Scriptural data, was considerably more profound and true. There is a startling difference between the two formulations and yet the contrast is not complete. Methodism clearly emphasized the substitutionary element in the atonement. It did not concur with the idea of a divine condition. Rather, we find a denial of Christ's death as a mere benefit, and included is the affirmation that Christ died in our stead. Christ offered himself in our stead and by his blood, which is the true symbol of the washing of sin, we receive our eternal redemption. "To die for us means to die in the place and stead of man, as a sacrificial oblation, by which satisfaction is made for the sins of the individual, so that they become remissible upon the terms of the evangelical covenant." 27 Although this emphasis is different in many ways, traces of Arminian thought are still in evidence. A similarity is noticed in the repetition of the term "satisfaction" for a penalty. The two are at complete variance regarding the justice of God. Methodism contended that the vicarious and propitiatory death of Christ was a sacrificial oblation to the justice of God, because of which pardon was offered to men through faith in the Gospel of Christ. Arminianism rejected this sacrifice to the justice of God, as has already been indicated.

The one common point rests in the extent of the effect of atonement. Even though the terminology is somewhat different, the results are some-

25 Ibd., p. 374.
what identical. The Wesleyan adherents also advocated an unlimited atonement. “Christ did not only die for those that are saved, but for all those who do, or may perish.”

In this pertinent specification the two groups stand united against most Calvinistic proclamations. This particular element will be further clarified in the succeeding discussion of grace, to which it is closely connected.

III

The following section includes some of the aspects in the doctrine of salvation. Because it is so difficult to isolate the items completely, the procedure will be to consider this inclusive heading and take up the subjects of grace, faith, and justification, illustrating their relatedness in the whole picture of salvation.

In Arminianism there was a commingling of grace and free will, a condition which has been greatly affected by its attitude toward sin. A concise definition of grace in Arminian theology is hard to come by. The structural form of Arminianism exposed a three-fold definition of grace in which the interrelationship of the other particulars in the doctrine of salvation was also evidenced. Grace was a "gratuitous affection" by which God was kindly disposed toward the sinner and by which he offered his Son as a condition for salvation. Secondly, it was an infusion into the human understanding and will. Without these gifts of faith and hope, man could do no good. It was lastly the perpetual assistance of the Holy Spirit by which he excited and stimulated a man to do that which was good.

It should be mentioned that this excitation to do good was provided only by the Holy Spirit. The conferment of grace included the commencement of good, the continuation of good, and the consummation of all good. There was an utter dependence upon grace in Arminian thought.

The value of the necessity of grace was partially nullified by the fact that God must bestow upon the individual sufficient grace to enable him to have faith. This obligation was inseparably linked with justice. God cannot demand something (in this instance faith) which man has no capability of exerting. “God cannot by any right demand from fallen man faith in Christ which he cannot have of himself except God has either bestowed, or is ready to bestow, sufficient grace by which he may believe if he will.”

Grace was God’s obligation to men. Because sin was not guilt, it was no more than equitable, that God should furnish man with sufficient power to resist his inherited evil tendency. Simply, God cannot demand faith except that he grant grace.

28Ibid., p. 286.
Arminianism is usually recognized by the trademark "resistible grace." This is deduced from the emphasis placed upon man's part in the process of salvation. It is hardly necessary to dispute this characterization, for Arminius was consistently clear in his references to free will. Man can either accept or reject the assistance of the Holy Spirit. Ultimately it reverted to the proposition that man can either be saved, or by his own wickedness, which is immanent in his rejection, refuse to accept that without which he cannot be saved. The Arminian view of grace was synergistic. All men who hear the Word take to themselves a grace sufficient for salvation. If there was no apparent regeneration, it must stem from an exclusion of co-operative willingness on the part of man.

All unregenerated persons have freedom of will, and a capability of resisting the Holy Spirit, of rejecting the proffered grace of God, of despising the counsel of God against themselves, of refusing to accept the gospel of grace, and, of not opening to Him who knocks at the door of the heart, and these things they can actually do, without any difference of the elect and the reprobate.32

This did not necessarily take the work of salvation out of God's hands, but it did relegate a great proportion to the capacity of humanity. God originally granted a "previous" grace, out of justice and offered to all, without which man was lost. The donation allowed man to do certain things that caused God to extend to him a special grace. "To him who does what he can by the primary grace already conferred upon him . . . God will bestow further grace upon him who profitably uses that which is primary."33 This eventually grew into pervenient, proffered, and then sanctifying grace, as they were given by God, and in this order. In all fairness to Arminianism, it should be stated that man, in his natural condition and before the donation of prevenient grace, did not have the capacity to co-operate with the Holy Spirit. "Grace is not the solitary, yet it is the primary cause; for unless the free will had been excited by prevenient grace, it would not be able to co-operate with grace."34 Still, this excluded as much as it allowed. It made the effect of grace one of stimulation or excitation and not necessarily one of change or renovation.

One of the most pronounced differences between Arminianism and Methodism is illustrated in the reason for which grace was offered. The Arminian source was the justice of God (see note 30). The Methodist looked to the love of God. He was not obligated to impart grace to man, because man has freely chosen evil. "The origin of human redemption is always traced to the love of God, which, resting upon undeserving man,

34A quotation of Limborch by W. G. T. Shedd, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 188.
became grace.” Both divisions concur on the necessity for grace, but it possibly has a more virtuous foundation in Methodism.

Concerning resistible grace: the terminology in these two areas was very similar, but Methodism seemed to magnify the power of the Spirit while minimizing the choice of the individual. In this limited sphere it approached Calvinism, but cannot be identified with it, for in the final analysis it considered refusal and rejection of God’s grace possible. Watson contended for an irresistible impulse, but not a permanent one. The Apostle Paul, for example, was subsequently left to improve upon this impulse or not to. There was a powerful and yet resistible force operating within him to keep him faithful. This position partially qualified Arminian freedom of rejection, but must ultimately be classified as a member of the same household, even though it does exist on a different level.

The final consideration under grace illustrates a similarity between the two systems. The work of God was prerequisite for man to be able to work out his salvation, indicating that the differences were nominal and that the results of grace justify the assertion that the two systems were quite similar. Even though Methodists employed the phrase “dead in sins,” it did not allow man an excuse, because there was no man entirely void of the Holy Spirit and therefore no man completely destitute. Man was once destitute, but he was no longer in this state because grace had remedied that situation. These are the essentials constituting the respective doctrines of grace and free will.

Many of the positions of Arminius are guarded and hesitant. This is true in his dissertation on justification, and he was especially hesitant in his presentation of the imputation of Christ’s righteousness. William B. Pope, a Methodist, charged Arminius with Neonomianism: “Because of its supposed introduction of a new law, the law of grace, according to which the legal righteousness forever impossible to man is substituted by an Evangelical righteousness accepted of God, though imperfect, for Christ’s sake.” This implied that Christ has lowered the demands of the law. To add to the confusion, Arminius willingly aligned himself with John Calvin. “I am prepared to give them [the Calvinists] my full approval.” The many conflicting affirmations make it exceedingly difficult to arrive at a conclusive decision. Arminius defined justification in this manner:

Justification is a just and gracious act of God as a judge, by which, from

37Loc. cit.
the throne of his grace and mercy, he absolves from his sins, man, a sinner, but who is a believer on account of Christ, and the obedience and righteousness of Christ, and considers him righteous, to the salvation of the justified person, and to the glory of divine righteousness and grace.\(^41\)

Of the two essential elements in justification, forgiveness of sins and the imputation of righteousness, Arminius fully endorsed forgiveness but only pays lip service to the latter. A completely objective imputation of Christ's righteousness was rejected, yet some degree of it was maintained.

Arminius was convinced that Christ and his obedience remained the object of our faith, but he also contended that they were not the object of justification or divine imputation. God did not impute Christ and his righteousness to us for righteousness.\(^42\) Arminius accepted faith and only faith in the act of imputation. "God imputes faith to us for righteousness, that is, he remits our sins to us who are believers, on account of Christ apprehended by faith, and accounts us righteous in him,"\(^43\) but only in so far as faith is present. This imputation did not signify that faith was righteousness, but that faith was graciously accepted and accounted by God for righteousness.

The righteousness by which we are justified before God may in an accommodated sense be called imputative, as being righteousness either in the gracious estimation of God, since it does not according to the rigor or right of the law merit that appellation, or as being the righteousness of another, that is, of Christ, it is made ours by the gracious imputation of God.\(^44\)

Arminianism does not fully merit the characterization offered by Pope (see note 39), even though there is a seed of truth present, for there are several creditable references concerning the matter.

I believe that sinners are accounted righteous by the obedience of Christ, and that the righteousness of Christ is only the meritorious cause on account of which God pardons the sins of believers and reckons them as righteous as if they had perfectly fulfilled the law. But since God imputes the righteousness of Christ to none except believers, I conclude that in this sense, it may be well and properly said, to a man who believes, faith is imputed for righteousness through grace, because God has sent forth his Son, Jesus Christ, to be a propitiation, a throne of grace or mercy seat, through faith in his blood.\(^45\)

The condition of salvation was faith. It was requisite in those who wished to be partakers of salvation. Arminius also allowed certain election by which God administered the means to faith, though not faith itself. Faith was definitely not accepted as an effect of election nor as an effect of salvation, but the elusive deviation was found in the fact that faith was accepted for righteousness. Indecision also pervaded his thinking on the


\(^{45}\)Ibid., p. 264.
question of the imputation of the active and passive obedience of Christ. A crucial difference rested in the imputation of faith as a state of mind and this difference opened the way for later diversions.

The Methodists accepted the pardon from sin element in justification and differed only nominally in imputation. Faith was the requirement of God and not merely the instrument of justification. "Faith, for Wesley, is really nothing more than grace made conscious in the individual, or grace transformed from its latent stage into one of power and effectiveness." Grace was the source and faith was the necessary and only condition of salvation. There was agreement between Wesley and Watson on the matter of imputation of Christ's righteousness.

But when is this righteousness imputed? When they believe. In that very hour the righteousness of Christ is theirs. But in what sense is this righteousness imputed to believers? In this; all believers are forgiven and accepted, not for the sake of anything in them, but wholly for the sake of what Christ hath done and suffered for them.

H. Lindstrom interprets this as a true reference and proof that Wesley did speak about an objective imputation, but it is evident that this does not imply more than that by virtue of Christ's righteousness man shall obtain forgiveness and acceptance. The difference lay in the Arminian notion of faith acting as a substitute for righteousness and the Wesleyan contention that faith was the condition of imputation. The Methodist idea was also tempered by the fact that it often meant nothing more than forgiveness when referring to imputation.

IV

Undoubtedly the most controversial problem within the earlier movement was predestination. In order of weight of argument and importance, at least among early Arminians, predestination should possibly have been discussed at the outset of this study. In a sense it precipitated the original dispute. The decision to place it here arose from the term "conditional election," election conditioned by elements indicated in the previous sections.

Arminius first directed his opposition to supralapsarianism, but the dispute eventually grew into a wider rejection. He began with a refutation of the twentieth question of the Heidelberg Catechism, rejecting absolute predestination to salvation. According to Arminius predestination was: 1.) Repugnant to the nature of God and his attributes. This

was so because predestination meant God willed to save some with little or no regard to righteousness or obedience, or that he loved justice more than men. Note how justice continued to play an important part in Arminian thought. 2.) It was as contrary to human nature as it was to the nature of God. 3.) It was inconsistent with the nature and properties of sin. Sin was the meritorious cause of damnation. Sin, therefore, since it was a cause, cannot be placed among the means by which God executed his will. 4.) Predestination was repugnant to grace, because it was contrary to free will. 5.) Predestination was injurious to the glory of God. It made God the author of sin, and by the act he made man to sin. His thinking led him to proclaim that if this were the case, then God actually sinned, that God was the only sinner and that man merely followed, consequently reducing sin to something which was not really sin at all. 6.) He also considered predestination dishonorable to Christ, because it excluded Christ from the decree of salvation. 51

Arminius followed this criticism with several positive citations. 1.) The first absolute decree of God concerning the salvation of sinful man, is that by which he decreed to appoint his Son, Jesus Christ . . . who might destroy sin, etc.

2.) The second precise and absolute decree of God, is that by which he decreed to receive into favor those who repent and believe, . . . but to leave in sin, and under wrath, all impenitent persons and unbelievers, and to damn them as aliens from Christ.

3.) The third divine decree is that by which God decreed to administer in a sufficient and efficacious manner the means which were necessary for repentance and faith.

4.) To these succeeds the fourth decree, by which God decreed to save and damn particular individuals. This decree has its foundation in the foreknowledge of God, by which he knew from all eternity those individuals who would, through his preventing grace, believe, and, through his subsequent grace would persevere, according to the before described administration of those means which are suitable and proper for conversion and faith; and by which knowledge, he likewise knew those who would not believe and persevere. 52

The most important element was that the divine decrees were conditioned by faith and obedience as foreseen by God. Election was not a decree to institute faith, but rather, to reward it.

Wesley’s doctrine paralleled the Arminian, but with one minor distinction, the addition of which actually affected the sum total negligibly. Wesley outlined his thought in much the same fashion as did Arminius. Absolute predestination was rejected because it supposedly made God the

51James Arminius, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 221 ff. This is an abbreviated reproduction of only a part of the discussion. It is inserted primarily to show methodology.

52Ibid., pp. 247-8. This quotation was inserted because it is not only typical, but because it illustrates the integral relationship between Arminian election and his other formulations.

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It was injurious to God because it made him revel in the damnation of man and this was contrary to Scripture. Predestination was completely opposed to the fact of Christ as Mediator, thus making much of his redeeming activity valueless. It was contrary to the efficacy of the Word. If predestination were rigid, preaching of the Gospel degenerated into an illusion and it was foolish to proclaim repentance or preach faith.\footnote{This doctrine makes the coming of Christ and his sacrifice on the cross, which Scripture affirms to have been the fruit of God’s love to the world, to have been rather a testimony of God’s wrath to the world, yea, one of the greatest judgments and severest acts that can be conceived of God’s indignation toward mankind.}

There is close affinity between Arminius and Wesley here.

The one peculiar phase of Wesley’s election was that there was a kind of absolute element evident. By divine appointment some men were elected to a specific work in the world. This election was personal, absolute, and unconditional. To exemplify the position, Wesley referred to Cyrus, who was elected to rebuild the temple, and to Paul who was unconditionally elected to be a missionary and to preach the Gospel.\footnote{This type of election was not connected with eternal happiness, because one elected in this sense was still liable to be eternally lost.} This doctrine did agree with the conditional election principle.

I believe election means a divine appointment of some men to eternal happiness. But I believe this election to be conditional, as well as the reprobation opposite thereto. I believe the eternal decree concerning both is expressed in those words; ‘He that believeth shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned’. And this decree without doubt God will not change, and a man cannot resist. According to this, all true believers are in Scripture termed elect, as all who continue in unbelief, are so long properly reprobates, that is, unapproved of God, and without discernment, touching the things of the Spirit.\footnote{It can be concluded that Arminianism and Methodism are quite similar at this point, for they both embrace conditional election based upon faith alone.}

The doctrine of perseverance was never fully exploited or dwelt upon by Arminius, and he never came to the point of either accepting or}

\footnote{\textit{John Wesley, “Predestination Calmly Considered,” Interesting Tracts Explaining Several Important Points of Scripture Doctrine} (New York: Carlton and Phillips, 1854), p. 101. Notice the similarity to Arminianism.}

\footnote{\textit{Loc. cit.}}

\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 14.}

\footnote{\textit{Loc. cit.}}

\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 15.}
rejecting it. He remained in indecision concerning the matter, seeing convincing arguments on both sides. The followers of Arminius did come to a definite stand. The evidence was in the fifth article of the "Remonstrance," which was composed by Uyttenbogaert with the advice of Episcopius, Grotius, and others. The thorough rejection of perseverance was a natural consequence of the Arminian doctrine of resistible grace. If man can once reject the power of the Spirit, he can also lose it. The Remonstrants did not share Arminius' indecision, but clearly taught the possibility of a total and final fall from grace. P. Schaff contends that they denied, with the Roman Catholics, the possibility of assurance except by special revelation, and this revelation was both extra-ordinary and extremely rare.

This attitude eventually evolved into the Methodist position. Most of the Wesleyans taught the possibility of falling from grace. The Methodist approach is illuminated by this question and answer:

Can they [men] fall from it [the condition of Christian perfection]? I am well assured they can. Matter of fact puts this beyond dispute. Formerly we thought, one saved from sin, could not fall. Now we know the contrary. We are surrounded with instances of those, who lately experienced all that I mean by perfection. They had both the fruit of the Spirit and the witness; by virtue of anything that is implied in the nature of the state. There is no such height or strength of holiness, as it is impossible to fall from. If there be any that cannot fall, this wholly depends on the promise and faithfulness of God.

The discussion of perseverance brings this comparison to a close. Some of the conclusions have involved rather radical differences, as in the doctrine of sin; others have been in close harmony, such as that of predestination. Even though differences are evident, these two movements would readily join together in emphasizing these words: "We love him, because he first loved us — This is the sum of all religion, the genuine model of Christianity. None can say more. Why should anyone say less? or less intelligibly?"

60Philip Schaff, op. cit., p. 519.
60Jno. L. Tigert, The Doctrines of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America (New York: Eaton and Main, 1902), Vol. II, p. 112. The article is entitled "Christian Perfection" by John Wesley. The doctrine of perfection is not developed by Arminius; therefore, it has only been mentioned in connection with perseverance.
61Ibid., p. 103.