

# Ephraim Clark

## Arminianism

Thus I have gone through the inquiry, according to the method laid down, in order to know, whether sinners are justified by grace without works, or by works without grace. And upon the whole, it doth fully appear to me, that the doctrine of justification by works is an unreasonable and unscriptural doctrine; but that the doctrine of justification by grace is every way agreeable to sound reason and Divine Revelation. The application of the subject now remains. Use.1. What we have heard teaches us of the blasphemous nature and tendency of the Arminian scheme of doctrine. Let us not be startled at the expression, as being too harsh, until we have considered some of the just consequences of that doctrine, by which it will appear to be big with reproach and blasphemy against God. First. The Arminian scheme opposes the free grace of God in predestinating a definite number of chosen sinners to be heirs of salvation, without being moved to this election by any regard either to their good or bad works. The Arminian doctrine is contrary to Holy Scripture. "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth; it was said unto her, the elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid!" {Rom.9:11-13} So that that scheme which denies the sovereign and free grace of God in the election of some to everlasting life, while others were left; and which, agreeable to such denial, does assert the doctrine of universal redemption, as the Arminian scheme most surely does, is very contrary to, and reflects significantly on the truth of God. Secondly; it charges God with weakness and folly in the contrivance of man's redemption. Here it may be asked, what we mean by the contrivance of man's redemption? To which I answer, God who did foresee from eternity, that man would by transgression become obnoxious to his justice, and that he would be utterly unable to help himself, did out of the mere good pleasure of his rich and free grace towards a number of Adam's guilty race, give his only begotten and incarnate Son to die for them, and through the propitiatory sacrifice of his death, justice satisfied, and the salvation of his elect secured. "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." {Mt.20:28} So that if the Arminian doctrine be true, that man is able by his own obedience to restore himself to the favor of God, what need was there of God's displaying his wisdom in finding out a ransom? It supposes that God was delinquent in this branch of his conduct; which is blasphemy to the highest degree. Thirdly; the Arminian doctrine doth invalidate the death of Christ. The Apostle Paul saith, "if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain;" {Gal.2:21;} that is, if sinful man can by his own obedience to the Law, acquire a righteousness sufficient to justify him before God, then Christ died in vain. And who is he that dare say, that the death of Christ is superfluous, or that there was no need of his giving his life a ransom? And if any should be so daring as to assert any such thing, would not he be justly looked upon as a bold blasphemer? Yes, most certainly. Well, the Arminian scheme, that is so in vogue with many at this day, does imply as much. Fourthly; the Arminian scheme discards Christ's Offices, which he as our Redeemer doth sustain and execute. For if man is able by his personal obedience to produce a righteousness for himself, sufficient to justify him before God, then surely he is able to subdue his corruptions also, and sanctify himself. So that there is no need of Christ's executing his Office, either as Prophet, Priest, or King in order to bring sinners to glory. Fifthly; the Arminian scheme strikes at all the Divine Perfections, and tends to overthrow the Constitution of the Covenant

of Grace. For if we are saved by grace; then it is no more of works; but if we be of works, then it is no more of grace. So that this ungodly scheme justly deserves to be branded with the infamous Title of Blasphemy! Ephraim Clark {Justification by Grace, 1751}