

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

Arminianism

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Throughout this volume we have interacted with Arminianism as well as Lutheranism, Catholicism, and a few others. Arminianism is the main rival to Calvinism within evangelical Protestantism. A few further comments remain to be made.



HISTORY

Just as Calvinism is named for John Calvin but existed as pre-Calvinism before him and is subsumed under Reformed theology in general, so there was a kind of pre-Arminianism before Jacob Arminius, and there were later variations of this general system.

Few writers in the first three centuries after the New Testament commented at any length on the issues where Calvinists and Arminians disagree. My opinion is that those who did tended to favor the doctrines of free will, predestination by foresight, universal atonement, resistible grace, and the possibility of final apostasy and loss of salvation. This was particularly the case in the east, mainly due to the influence of Origen.¹ There would not be anything resembling Reformed theology in the Eastern churches until Cyril Lucaris in the seventeenth century, and he was severely condemned and left no defenders or successors.

In the west there were a few who advocated a mild pre-Augustinianism, such as Cyprian and Ambrose. Pelagius went further than anyone before him in advocating free will and denying original sin, even more than Origen. Some Calvinists mistakenly have charged Arminianism with being Pelagianism revisited, when in fact some of Pelagius' strongest opponents were Semi-Pelagians, such as Jerome.² Augustine and his followers—both Augustinians like Prosper and semi-Augustinians like Gregory the Great—effectively refuted both Pelagianism and Semi-Pelagianism. The term *Semi-Pelagianism* was not actually coined until the late sixteenth century but has become the accepted term to describe the theology of certain fourth-century Christians in Gaul who rejected both Augustinianism and Pelagianism. They were, in my view, closer to Pelagianism than

¹ See Benjamin Drewery, *Origen and the Doctrine of Grace* (London: Epworth, 1960).

² It would be more precise to describe Jerome as anti-Pelagian than as Augustinian; he seemed to waver between Semi-Pelagianism and semi-Augustinianism.

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they, or later critics, have acknowledged. For example, on the crucial issue of depravity, the Pelagians said man is well, the Semi-Pelagians said man is sick, and the Augustinians said man is dead. A well man and a sick man have more in common with each other than with a dead man, for they are both still alive.

I for one see close similarities between Arminianism and Semi-Pelagianism. Both teach cooperative grace that is resistible rather than operative grace that is irresistible. Both teach free will, election by foresight, the possibility of loss of salvation, universal atonement, and so on. To use what may be a hyperbolic analogy, Semi-Pelagianism taught that man must take the first step toward God, then God responds. Arminianism usually says God first enables man to take the next step. But both Augustinianism and Calvinism teach that God takes the first and second steps to carry man to Himself.

Both Semi-Pelagianism and Augustinianism were entrenched in Roman Catholic sacramentalism for the next millennium. Throughout the Middle Ages theologians wavered between these two poles (there were no Pelagians during that time). Gottschalk was the leading Augustinian until Thomas Bradwardine, John Wycliffe, and Jan Hus, and then Martin Luther.³ Their opponents could be characterized as various forms of Semi-Pelagians, especially the Franciscans such as Duns Scotus and William of Ockham. Bradwardine opposed them in his large tome *De Causa Dei Contra Pelagium*, that is, *The Cause of God Against the Pelagians*. He showed their close affinity with both Pelagianism (which Rome condemned) and Semi-Pelagianism (which Rome allowed).

In the sixteenth century, the leading Catholic anti-Protestants were generally in the line of the previous Semi-Pelagians. They would include Desiderius Erasmus, Johann Eck, and Robert Bellarmine. Most of the Anabaptists were Semi-Pelagians without the sacramentalism. This, then, was the milieu from which there arose a Dutch reaction to the Reformed branch of the Reformation. Arminius was influenced by Dirck Coornhert, and many early Arminians were influenced by the Socinians.⁴ For example, some Arminians taught subordinationism rather than the full and equal trinitarianism, echoing Origen's error that opened the door to Arianism. Other early Arminians were full Trinitarians, but it is significant that almost no Calvinist of any era has advocated subordinationism. One reason is that Reformed theology holds to a higher view of God than Arminianism ever has.

³ See Guido Stucco, *God's Eternal Gift* (Bloomington: XLibris, 2009).

⁴ Martin Mulso and Jan Rohls, eds., *Socinianism and Arminianism: Antitrinitarians, Calvinists, and Cultural Exchange in Seventeenth-Century Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

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It was the more extreme Arminians that John Owen and Pierre du Moulin charged with outright heresy.⁵ Jacob Arminius himself was more evangelical than Simon Episcopius and certainly more so than Philip Limborch. In England, the Arminians William Laud, John Goodwin, Edward Stillingfleet, Jeremy Taylor, John Tillotson, the Cambridge Platonists, and the Latitudinarians vigorously opposed Puritan Calvinism. By the end of the seventeenth century, English Calvinism was in retreat, and Arminianism became a dry moralism which opened the door to Deism. William Whiston and Daniel Whitby were leading Arminians that drifted into Arianism and Socinianism. Whitby in particular was a popular anti-Calvinist who defended the five points of the Remonstrants but was refuted by John Gill and Jonathan Edwards.⁶ Extreme Arminianism took over the Reformed church in Switzerland at that time and spread throughout Europe.

In the next century, John and Charles Wesley produced a considerably more evangelical brand of Arminianism than even Jacob Arminius envisioned.⁷ Perhaps it was due to their Puritan ancestors and strong revulsion to any kind of liberalism. But they and their followers, such as John Fletcher, bitterly opposed Calvinism. In the next generation moderate Arminians such as Richard Watson were leery of more radical Arminians like Adam Clarke. Later William Burt Pope and John Miley guided mainstream British Arminianism through a moderate course as the evangelistic fires died down. As in so many places, it became dry, moralistic, and tending toward whatever liberalism was then in vogue (Deism, the Enlightenment, Romanticism, German liberalism).

Arminianism did not take root in America to any noticeable degree until after the strongly Calvinistic Great Awakening in the mid-eighteenth century. By the turn of the century, Methodist circuit riders preached the gospel and taught Arminianism throughout the new nation. The Second Great Awakening was led in part by Arminians such as Barton Stone, Peter Cartwright, Alexander Campbell, and Charles Finney, who in some areas was more Pelagian than Semi-Pelagian. It was from this soil that much of modern fundamentalism and evangelicalism in America grew later in the century and up to today. Calvinism was initially much involved in the leadership of both movements but gradually declined.

When Calvinist orthodoxy recedes, Arminianism spreads. And when evangelical Arminianism cools off, it usually goes liberal or Pelagian or both. A similar pattern can

⁵ John Owen, *A Display of Arminianism in The Works of John Owen* (London: Banner of Truth, 1967), 10:1–137; Pierre Du Moulin, *The Anatomy of Arminianisme* (Norwood, NJ: Walter J. Johnson, 1976).

⁶ John Gill, *The Cause of God and Truth* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980); Jonathan Edwards, *The Freedom of the Will in The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 1* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957).

⁷ See Herbert Boyd McGonigle, *Sufficient Saving Grace: John Wesley's Evangelical Arminianism* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2001).

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be seen in the history of Lutheranism, Calvinism's closest cousin in the Reformation. Luther was closer to Calvin on the doctrines of grace than many historians realize. As Calvin had his Arminius, Luther had his Melancthon. Arminianism and Melancthonianism substituted semi-Pelagian synergism for Augustinian and Reformed monergism. Hyper-Calvinism went "higher" than Calvin, but no later Lutheran went "higher" than Luther. Melancthonian synergism bore a remarkable resemblance to both Semi-Pelagianism and Arminianism. Later this unchecked trajectory led to the rise of German liberalism.⁸ For centuries conservative Lutherans have been suspicious of both Calvinism and Arminianism. For instance, R. C. H. Lenski, the conservative Lutheran Bible commentator, took regular swipes at Calvinism in his commentaries, such as: "Thank God, Paul is neither an Arminian Calvinist nor Calvinist Arminian. The Arminians and Calvinists do better than that; each holds to only one error instead of combining the two. Paul held to neither error."⁹ Earlier Lutheran dogmatists from the Silver Age of Lutheran Orthodoxy such as Johann Gerhard and Johann Andreas Quenstedt regularly castigated Calvinism in virtually every chapter. Later in the nineteenth century, August Pfeiffer produced a virulent work entitled *Anti-Calvinism*. But for all their denials, historic post-Luther Lutheranism seems closer to Semi-Pelagianism and Arminianism than to Augustinianism and Calvinism.¹⁰

Today, most Lutherans are liberal. Fortunately, the more evangelical Lutherans oppose this disastrous trend. Other liberals were once evangelical Arminians and espouse a liberal Arminianism in theory. A much smaller contingent came from orthodox Calvinism, which we will discuss later. My contention is that just as water runs downhill, unchecked Arminianism tends to lead to theological liberalism. And this is just what orthodox Calvinists have warned about for centuries. We applaud the noble evangelical Arminians who swim against the tide and oppose liberal apostasy, but they need to see that their very theology encourages this tendency.

⁸ There is a need for a detailed comparison of the synergism of Melancthonian Lutheranism, Arminianism, and Semi-Pelagianism. It has been suggested that the term *Semi-Pelagianism* was coined by the authors of the Lutheran *Book of Concord* in the sixteenth century.

⁹ R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to Galatians, Ephesians and Philippians* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1961), 799. Lenski frequently disagreed with Calvinists but rarely with Arminians. A good comparison is Robert Kolb and Carl R. Trueman, *Between Wittenberg and Geneva: Lutheran and Reformed Theology in Conversation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017). A concise presentation of the Lutheran view of election may be found in Thomas Frizelle, *Chosen by God: Why Did God Choose Me?* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1991).

¹⁰ In several respects, such as baptismal regeneration, Luther was closer to Augustine than Calvin was.

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ARMINIAN WEAKNESSES

Just as Socinians and Arians cannot grasp how Christ can be both God and man and therefore must be only man, so Arminians cannot grasp how God can be absolutely sovereign and man be morally responsible, so they tilt the balance toward free will and weaken divine sovereignty. To the degree to which one overemphasizes one, he deemphasizes the other (witness how Hyper-Calvinism does this in reverse). Their protestations to the contrary, Arminianism has at least the appearance of being man-centered rather than God-centered. Has anyone ever made that accusation against any Calvinist?

This relates to the difference in our view of certain attributes of God. Erroll Hulse, the influential English Reformed Baptist, taught me many decades ago that all errors in doctrine and practice can be traced back to an imbalanced view of the attributes of God. Arminianism gives lip service to divine sovereignty, but certainly theirs is a limited and not an absolute sovereignty. For example, they recoil at the idea of an overarching, all-inclusive predestination of all things. They frequently assert that love is the primary attribute of God, though some of a more Wesleyan variety favor holiness. This explains their differences with Calvinism on several issues. They say love is always voluntary, never forced. It is not only undeserved but unconditional. God must love everyone equally, or He does not love anyone at all, argued Dave Hunt in *What Love Is This?* Man is therefore free to choose, and God never interferes. This imbalanced view tends to downplay divine wrath in the more popular and liberal Arminianisms. That results first in eschatological annihilationism and then universalism. History bears this out. Just as many of the early Arminians were friends of the Socinians, so many early American Arminians were friendly to Unitarianism and universalism.

As we have asserted repeatedly, Arminianism lowers God and raises man. God has limited sovereignty, and man has free will. Calvinism, by contrast, has a robust view of the high majesty of divine sovereignty and a far lower view of sinful man, both more so than any other form of theology. By contrast, Arminianism posits a “big man” idea of God and a godlike view of man. This means a finite distance between God and man as well as a qualitative similarity. Calvinism by stark contrast teaches an infinite distance and an utter qualitative difference between Creator and creature.

The seventeenth-century Remonstrants put forth their five points before the anti-Remonstrants responded at Dort with the so-called five points of Calvinism. Semi-Pelagians such as John Cassian and Duns Scotus would probably have been able to sign the Remonstrance, while Augustine, Gottschalk, Bradwardine, and possibly even Luther might have affirmed the Dortian canons.

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Arminianism dominates most of popular evangelicalism in the twenty-first century. Its good points have contributed much good in many areas. But it has also introduced many weaknesses that we have discussed in this volume. Its rejection of the Regulative Principle brought in the widespread acceptance of man-centered entertainment in the place of God-centered, reverent worship. Arminianism is certainly dominant in pop evangelism with its shallow gospel, easy-believism, altar calls, and multiplied false converts. It often promotes different approaches to sanctification, such as perfectionism, the “Higher Life” Keswick model, or the carnal Christian error. Fortunately, many evangelicals are waking up to these dubious trends and want something more biblical. They find it in historic Calvinism.

“YES, BUT”

Arminianism has what I call the “Yes, but” tendency when it comes to answering Reformed theology. Take the five points. “Is man depraved? Yes, but he still has free will. Election? Yes, but it is based on God’s foresight of man’s free will. Atonement? Yes, but it must be equally for all, or God is not loving to anyone. Grace? Yes, but man’s free will can stalemate it. Perseverance and preservation? A good ideal, yes, but man’s free will can veto it.” Free will is repeatedly used as the trump card to counter Calvinism, but Arminianism never investigates whether free will is actually taught in the Bible. It just cannot grasp how evil and horrible mankind really is.

Arminianism is inherently synergistic: God does His part, man does his part, and together they get the job done. Evangelical Arminianism stops short of the implications of synergism—namely, that man is his own co-savior. Evangelical Arminians also detest any suggestion that man’s cooperating free will has any merit in justification, even while asserting that justification is through infused rather than imputed righteousness. But others cross that line into moralism and accept human merit as part of salvation—the very thing condemned by Paul, Augustine, Luther, Calvin, and all Calvinists in every era. Calvinistic monergism alone explains *sola gratia*. Again, we detect the Arminian “Yes, but” objection: “Salvation is completely by grace, yes, but man must do his part.” We reply that if it is not all by God’s grace, it is not by grace at all (see Romans 11:6). The Arminian insistence on free will comes precariously close to merit theology and salvation by works. It was Semi-Pelagianism that gave us merit theology. Dave Hunt’s protests notwithstanding, Arminianism is closer to Catholicism than he realizes.¹¹

¹¹ Hunt wrote against both Roman Catholicism and Calvinism but did not admit Arminianism is similar to Catholic Semi-Pelagianism.

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THE ARMINIAN PANDORA'S BOX

All sorts of theological errors have sprung from Arminianism, such as Pentecostalism. One case in point is Open Theism. This dangerous heresy became popular in the 1980s but is actually a reincarnation of sixteenth-century Socinianism. It came back when certain extreme Arminians such as Clark Pinnock violently reacted to the resurgence of Calvinism. Not satisfied with weakening divine sovereignty, they proceeded to deny divine omniscience—God does not know the future because the future is “open.” This obviously goes beyond the rejection of the all-encompassing decree in which God unchangeably foreordained all that comes to pass. To their credit, some evangelical Arminians such as Norman Geisler have opposed Open Theism. But the major opponents have been Reformed, such as Bruce Ware, John Frame, and Robert Morey. One cannot cross from Calvinism to Open Theism without first becoming Arminian.

A more serious error incipient in Arminianism is its basic objection to point after point of Calvinism—namely, “That’s not fair!” This is not a mere academic objection against absolute divine sovereignty but an immoral rebellion against God who is absolutely sovereign. Job learned the lesson and submitted (Job 42:2, 6). Oh, that our Arminian friends would do the same. We puny and depraved humans are in no place to question the ways of God. Such rebellion proves the Reformed doctrine of depravity and is the very essence of sin.

ANTI-CALVINIST ARMINIANISM

With the resurgence of Reformed theology in recent decades has come a backlash from other quarters, including Arminianism. Curiously, Lutherans and Catholics have not responded much to resurgent Calvinism.¹² The strongest attacks have come from fundamentalist Arminians (see our bibliography). The more serious attempts at refuting Calvinism have come from Norman Geisler, I. Howard Marshall, Dave Hunt, Jack Cottrell, Lawrence Vance, Robert Shank, Robert Picirilli, F. Leroy Forlines, and especially Roger Olson. Jerry Walls and Joseph Dongell’s *Why I Am Not a Calvinist* is friendlier than many others, as is *Whosoever Will*, edited by David Allen and Steve Lemke. Others are extreme, misinformed, and rude and should be distasteful even to other Arminians. Some

¹² Catholic works on predestination and grace sometimes disagree with Calvinism, such as John Cowburn, *Free Will: Predestination and Determinism* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2008); John Salga, *The Mystery of Predestination* (Charlotte: TAN Books, 2010); William G. Most, *Grace, Predestination, and the Salvific Will of God* (Front Royal, VA: Christendom, 1997); and especially Eduardo J. Echeverria, *Divine Election: A Catholic Orientation in Dogmatic and Ecumenical Perspective* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2016).

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rebuttals might be classified as Hyper-Arminian, the overreactive counterpart of Hyper-Calvinism.

Some anti-Calvinists like Clark Pinnock have drifted into Open Theism. Roger Olson has written extensively against Calvinism and admits to holding to “evangelical synergism.”¹³ He rightly points out the differences between the evangelical Arminianism of Arminius and Wesley as opposed to the more extreme Arminianism of Limborch and others. He claims to respect Calvin and Calvinism but pulls no punches in his severest criticism: “What I mean is that if I were a Calvinist and believed what these people teach, I would have difficulty telling the difference between God and Satan.”¹⁴ He admits leaning toward Open Theism and may one day fully embrace it.¹⁵ This proves our point.

C. Gordon Olson, not to be confused with Roger Olson, is typical of another kind of anti-Calvinist Arminianism. In *Beyond Calvinism and Arminianism: An Inductive Mediate Theology of Salvation*, he proposes a truce and a middle way that is neither Reformed nor Arminian. His “inductive exegetical” approach appears to be critical and fair but usually results in the same conclusions as historic Arminianism. This is typical of other writers such as Samuel Fisk. Some claim to be neither, while others claim to be both: thus, “Calminianism.”¹⁶ That is not Amyraldism or even Baxterianism but yet another form of Arminianism.

PSEUDO-CALVINIST ARMINIANISM

There is a strange theological anomaly that perhaps can be best described as “pseudo-Calvinist Arminianism.” It does not openly attack Calvinism so much as pretends to be Reformed when it is not and thereby breeds confusion. There are many modern evangelicals that profess to be Calvinist when they are in fact quite Arminian without knowing it. I do not charge them with deceit—just ignorance. This phenomenon can be seen, for example, in their profession of eternal security, especially in the form of “once saved, always saved.” One hears explanations such as, “Calvinists believe you can’t lose your salvation, and Arminians say you can, so I guess I’m a Calvinist.” They generally do not know that Arminius and many of his early followers left the question open. Too,

¹³ Roger Olson, *Arminian Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 18.

¹⁴ Roger Olson, *Against Calvinism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 23. John Wesley is reputed to have said to Augustus Toplady, “Your God is my Devil.”

¹⁵ “I consider Open Theism a legitimate and Arminian option even though I have not yet adopted it as my own perspective.” Olson, *Arminian Theology*, 198.

¹⁶ Some consider Richard Baxter’s blend of Calvinism, Arminianism, and Lutheranism to be a kind of “Calminianism.” But he denies being Arminian and is closer to Reformed theology than to Arminianism. Amyraldism is also not, as some think, simply “Arminianism in disguise.” Amyraut stringently denied being Arminian.

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many hold to “once saved, always saved” in preservation but deny the Reformed doctrine of perseverance and go on to deny the other four points. The result is four-and-a-half-point Arminianism that claims to be Calvinism!

Others tip their hand on the five points one by one. They profess to believe in total depravity but not moral inability; unconditional election but not reprobation; substitutionary penal atonement, but it is equally for all and guarantees salvation for none; salvation by grace alone, but it is resistible by free will; and of course preservation without perseverance. This is not even Amyraldism but Arminianism.

Curiously, there are large numbers of Christians who claim to be Calvinist yet are in fact Arminian, but the reverse is not true. There are no Calvinists who claim to be Arminian but are really Calvinists. It is like another pattern: Many liberals claim to be evangelical when they are not, but true evangelicals do not go around claiming to be liberal. More importantly, there are millions of pseudo-Christians who profess to be born-again Christians when they are not, but one does not encounter true Christians claiming to be non-Christians except when tortured or backslidden.

This general pattern is seen in Norman Geisler.¹⁷ He insists he is a moderate Calvinist and attacks as “ultra-Calvinist” anyone who holds to any or all of the five points. He displays a serious ignorance of true Hyper-Calvinism as well as mainline Calvinism. In reality, Geisler is not a moderate Calvinist at all but basically a Semi-Pelagian synergist and Arminian, except for preservation. Mainline Calvinists are not Hyper-Calvinists, as he charges, but the real thing. Sadly, Geisler’s approach has spread confusion and ignorance to the debate. Outright Arminians like Roger Olson at least do not claim to be what they are not.

THE REDISCOVERY OF JACOB ARMINIUS

Concurrent with the revival of anti-Calvinist Arminianism is a more respectable appreciation of Jacob Arminius in certain quarters. Keith Stanglin, Carl Bangs, and others have made worthwhile contributions to the study of the life and theology of Arminius. Such writers are favorable to his theology and are not outright hostile to Reformed theology.

Some have suggested that Arminianism should be accepted in the Reformed camp as another variety of Calvinism, even as Hyper-Calvinism is still within the fold. Some consider it to be “liberal Calvinism.” After all, did not Arminius himself study in Geneva under Theodore Beza? Richard Muller and others have refuted this assertion by showing

¹⁷ See especially *Chosen But Free*, 3rd ed. (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2010).

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that the differences are not only on the five points as debated at the Synod of Dort but reveal fundamental differences going back to the Reformation itself.

IS ARMINIANISM EVANGELICAL OR AN ENEMY?

The question that orthodox Calvinists must answer is: Are Arminians true Christians or heretics? Is Arminianism *ipso facto* damnable heresy regardless of whether it is moderate or extreme, or is it a tolerable error that still holds to the true gospel? Most Hyper-Calvinists insist that all Arminians are heretics and in the same damnable class as the cults, Roman Catholics, and Protestant liberals. Mainline Calvinists, however, are not so critical in their estimation.

Iain Murray speaks for many: “[A] person does not have to be a Calvinist to be a Christian. An evangelist of Arminian persuasion preaches the same Saviour as the Calvinist.”¹⁸ He thus agrees with John Newton and Charles Spurgeon.¹⁹ George Whitefield the Calvinist strongly disagreed with John Wesley the Arminian and ceased working with him but still considered him a revered brother in Christ and effective preacher of the gospel. Spurgeon admired D. L. Moody. Many Calvinists such as Martyn Lloyd-Jones respected Billy Graham, his altar calls and ecumenism notwithstanding.

By contrast, some extreme Arminians deny that Calvinists are Christians. Lawrence Vance appears to hold this opinion when he wrote “Calvinism is the greatest ‘Christian’ heresy that has ever plagued the church.”²⁰ Greater than Arianism? Or Pelagianism? Or Catholicism or Mormonism? Perhaps he exaggerates. But many if not most Hyper-Calvinists reply in kind by claiming that anyone who denies any of the five points is not a true Christian. Mainstream Calvinists would calmly remind them that however important the five points are, they are not of the essence of the gospel as recorded in 1 Corinthians 15:1–4 and elsewhere. Evangelical Arminians preach the same basic gospel as historic Calvinists. That does not, of course, apply to the more extreme Arminians who advocate liberalism, Socinianism, Open Theism, or other poisonous heresies and false gospels.

William Ames—Puritan, supralapsarian, and advisor at the Synod of Dort—perceptively observed:

The view of the Remonstrants (Arminians) as it is taken by the mass of their supporters, is not strictly a heresy, but a dangerous error tending toward heresy.

¹⁸ Iain Murray, *Heroes* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2009), 277.

¹⁹ Murray, 102–04.

²⁰ Lawrence Vance, *The Other Side of Calvinism*, Rev. ed. (Pensacola: Vance, 1999), X.

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As maintained by some of them, however, it is the Pelagian heresy: because they deny that the effective operation of inward grace is necessary for conversion.²¹

Extreme Arminianism is not evangelical. It goes beyond Semi-Pelagianism, adds merit to free will, and goes beyond mere synergism into a co-saviorhood with God or even a monergism of man. That clearly is a false gospel deserving damnation (Galatians 1:9). But evangelical Arminians usually condemn it as strongly as we do.

R. C. Sproul put it like this: "People often ask me if I believe Arminians are Christians. I usually answer, 'Yes, barely.' They are Christians by what we call a felicitous inconsistency."²² Many Reformed leaders have respected Arminian leaders such as A. W. Tozer as spiritual giants. Iain Murray, cofounder of The Banner of Truth, wrote a sympathetic biography of John Wesley, which pointed out his numerous errors but also his godliness and orthodoxy on the gospel. Mainstream Calvinists accept evangelical Arminians as brothers. We hope they repay the compliment. Most do.

CONCLUSION

Mainline Calvinists may inadvertently claim, "I am of Calvin," and evangelical Arminians may seem to cry, "I am of Arminius." But deep down, both believe "We are both of Christ." Their differences are real and cannot be ignored, but neither should they be exaggerated beyond measure, or they are in danger of bearing false witness against brothers in Christ.²³

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²¹ Quoted in Alan P. F. Sell, *The Great Debate* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1983), 23.

²² R. C. Sproul, *Willing to Believe* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1997), 25.

²³ Daniel, C. (2019). *The History and Theology of Calvinism* (pp. 700–711). EP Books.