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The Place of Arminianism in Protestantism

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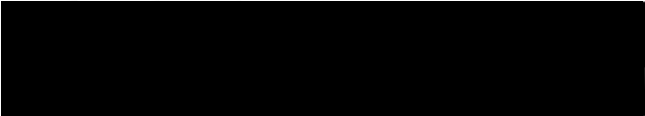
AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF Ottathengil E. Abraham for the
Master of Arts in History presented April 15, 1981.

Title: The Place of Arminianism in Protestantism

APPROVED BY MEMBERS OF THE THESIS COMMITTEE:


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Reformation was one part of that general progress which marked the fifteenth century and the opening of the sixteenth as the period of transition from the Middle Ages to Modern Civilization. The Reformers maintained that authority resided not in the church but in the Bible; they exercised the right of private judgment. In so doing they laid the foundation of that intellectual liberty, that freedom of thought and inquiry, which coming generations were to enjoy. Unquestionably the hero of the Reformation was Martin Luther. Luther's evangelical message made a tremendous impact upon a generation searching for religious assurance. As a prophet

he reached the heart of a people longing for purity and spiritual renewal. Many people were satisfied with Luther's Reformation, but it was not too long, before there developed divisions among the followers of Luther. Some people believed that Luther did not go far enough in Biblical Theology, and Protestantism began to sprout many different views. In this new development in Protestantism Calvin's predestination theology became very prominent. It gained the upperhand in Europe and started open persecution against those who opposed its views. The later development among the Calvinists indicated that there were disagreements among themselves. Some openly questioned the validity of Calvin's theology on the basis of Scripture itself. And thus James Arminius became the foremost opponent of Calvin's predestination theology.

The author's background is not either Calvinistic or Arminian. This study was undertaken because the author felt the need of a better understanding about Arminianism and its place in Protestantism in relation to his future work. The author recognizes that the controversy between Arminianism and Calvinism goes back to the sixteenth century and still continues among Protestants today.

The first chapter is introductory. The Reformation came to the Northern Netherlands in three stages. Around 1520 there were Sacramentarians. They opened the way for the Anabaptists. Menno Simon became their leader and he taught

them Old Dutch biblical piety. Finally they divided and this is the time the Reformed (Calvinists) came in. Historians believe that Calvin's organizational ability brought the Calvinists to this place. Later Calvinism dominated Dutch theology. The life and work of James Arminius is the subject of the second chapter. He grew up as a devoted Calvinist. He lost his family very early in the attack of the Spanish Army. He was taken care of by a foster father. Arminius was trained in pure Calvinism. He had many problems in his life but he never expressed any kind of ill-feeling toward anybody. The long quiet study of Scripture made him a theologian who later questioned the validity of Calvin's predestination theology. In the third chapter we will look into the theological conditions before and at the time of the Arminian controversy. The early church never discussed anything about predestination. Medieval theology was influenced by Augustine. In the early medieval age the Franciscans followed Augustine's theology. The Council of Trent did not discuss this matter but by all implication it rejected the predestination view. Calvin took Augustine's theology and he emphasized the predestination in his theology. Some of the theological subjects are discussed in the fourth chapter. It is not a detailed study but tries to show the fundamental beliefs of Arminians regarding predestination, freedom of the will, assurance of salvation, etc. Arminianism was condemned in Holland but it did not die out; instead it began to spread to other countries.

Many who opposed certain points in Calvinism also joined with the Arminians, and later the Arminian theology became corrupted. But a revival occurred during the time of John Wesley. He purified the Arminian theology and later it was known as Wesleyan-Arminianism. This is the content of the fifth chapter. Chapter six is the concluding remarks of this study.

THE PLACE OF ARMINIANISM IN PROTESTANTISM

by

OTTATHENGIL E. ABRAHAM

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of
requirements for the degree of

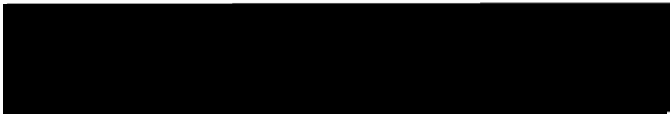
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TO THE OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH:

The members of the Committee approve the thesis of
Ottathengil E. Abraham presented April 15, 1981.



Michael Reardon, Chairman

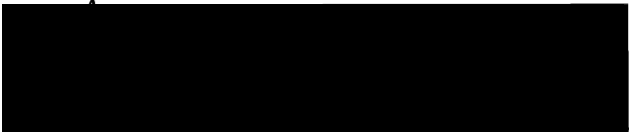


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Arminianism versus Calvinism has been a controversial subject since its beginning. This study was undertaken because I felt the need of a better understanding of Arminianism. It is also true that compared to Calvinistic literature, Arminian literature is very limited. Even some of the encyclopedias give only a paragraph or a page on this subject. So I had only limited sources available for this study.

I am indebted to Dr. Michael A. Reardon for the insights I have received through his class lectures and from his personal counseling and advice in the development of this thesis. I am also thankful to Dr. Nobel V. Sack, one of my former professors, for his suggestions and for the proof reading he has done for me.

I deeply appreciate my wife for her help in my school years and for the typing she has done for this paper. My many thanks are also expressed to the Library staff who helped me in obtaining some resources from other libraries in the United States.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

As for any other country in Europe, the history of Reformation in the Netherlands is a long story. In order to get a better understanding about the Reformation in the Netherlands, we must have some knowledge of its political history. The Netherlands, which came to Philip II of Spain from his father, Charles V, in 1555, comprised seventeen independent provinces. Most of the people engaged in commerce or manufacturing. They resented any force that interfered with existing customs or disturbed trade. Charles V, although hostile to the growth of Protestantism, had largely respected Netherlandish rights and jealousies. But Philip II was not like his father. He decided to secure political and religious uniformity similar to that of Spain. In 1559 he appointed a committee including his sister Margaret of Parma to implement his plans. The leading figure in the committee was Cardinal Granvella, Bishop of Arras. The committee took the power from the old Council of State, in which the high nobles were members. Philip II also attained from the Pope a reconstitution of the ecclesiastical geography of the Netherlands. Now Philip was able to nominate his choice to the State Council or to the Parliament. Thus he used every

opportunity to crush heresy. Because of this many people were forced to emigrate from the Netherlands and trade was disrupted. So the merchants and the middle class opposed him.

The chief opponents of these changes were William of Nassau, nominally now a Catholic, and the Catholic counts of Egmont and Horn. Philip saw them as a hindrance to his plans. And so he sent the Duke of Alva, an able Spanish general, with an army to Brussels. His arrival was followed by hundreds of executions. William of Nassau escaped the execution and worked against the Spanish. Later in 1579, thousands of Protestants left the south to go north and the Catholics went southward. The seven northern provinces declared independence from Spain in 1581. In spite of these struggles the Calvinistic churches of the Netherlands had been developing. The severity of the struggle for national independence and the aid for that cause given by others during this time led the Protestant Netherlands to a larger degree of toleration than elsewhere at that time in Christendom.

The Reformation itself came to the Northern Netherlands in three stages. Around 1520 there were Sacramentarians (they were called thus because they said the Lord's Supper is 'only a sacrament'). The Sacramentists gave way to the Anabaptists. Their radical view originated in Zurich. However, Zwingli finally opposed it. But the common people and some of the magistrates in Holland heard them gladly. Menno Simon became their leader and taught them the Old Dutch biblical piety (be holy and have faith) as the way of life. But they

were persecuted both by Catholic and Protestants. Finally they divided and became small independent groups. This is the time the Reformed (Calvinists) came in. But nobody knows how it happened. Many suggest that Calvin's organizational ability brought the Calvinists to this place. The earliest Dutch Reformed leaders did not seem to be Calvinists at all. There are some indications even before Arminius that the Dutch preachers opposed the predestination theology. "Reformed came to have two meanings, one for the Old Hollanders, another for the new preachers".¹ Later Calvinism dominated the Dutch theology and no one raised any question about the Reformed theology until the time of Arminius.

¹Carl Bangs, Arminius--A Study in the Dutch Reformation (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971), pp. 21-22.

CHAPTER II

THE LIFE OF JAMES ARMINIUS

The age of the Reformation witnessed a power resurgence of evangelical faith and a profound spiritual revolution throughout Europe. In the process of its growth in the West, Christianity had become corrupted by the influence of social and political factors. The Papacy was able to hold the Church together until the Reformation took place in the fifteenth century. Luther was the man of the Reform Movement. As an orator and publicist he enjoyed extraordinary rapport with his public and became the spokesman for all their feelings of frustration, moral indignation, and anger at the Roman hierarchy. The people could not resist a voice so tuned to their thinking. As a prophet he reached the hearts of people longing for purity and spiritual renewal. Luther's evangelical message made a tremendous impact upon a generation searching for religious assurance. It was not too long before divisions developed among the protestants. Some people believed that Luther did not go far enough in Biblical theology. Protestantism very quickly took on the appearance of a banyan tree, sprouting a maze of roots and branches. It produced many radical reformists.

Calvin's emergence as the influential leader of the second generation of the Reformation was in no way predictable, and his evangelical conversion seems almost to have caught Calvin

himself by surprise. The Calvinists gained the upper hand in Central Europe and started open persecution against those who opposed their theology. Jacobus Arminius became the foremost opponent of Calvin's predestination theology. Although living a very pious life as a Calvinist, his study of the scriptures and the experience he had from his Calvinistic background led him to question Calvin's theology.

1. Early Life

James Arminius or, as he is sometimes called, Jacob Hermansson, was born on October 10, 1560, at a town in South Holland called Oudewater. His father's name was Hermann Jacobs and his mother's Angelica, a woman of Dort. His father, a curler, held a respectable position in the town. His father's death, when Arminius was very young, left the family in some degree of hardship, and perhaps Arminius never knew a normal childhood. His mother was hard pressed to support her family.

Oudewater had received permission in 1394 to establish a school. Some suggest that Arminius might have gone to this Latin school, but we do not have any evidence. When Arminius's father died a local Protestant Priest, Theodore Aemilius, cared for him and undoubtedly played an important part in Arminius's early development. It is safe to assume that Arminius spent his early teenage years in Utrecht. This led some writers to suppose that Arminius attended the famous Hieronymus school or St. James school. This school reflected the

biblical piety and humanistic learning which had appeared in the Low Countries in the fifteenth century. Arminius's studies in Utrecht ended with the death of Aemilius, probably in late 1574 or 1575.

Until the death of his foster-father, Rudolph Snellius, a linguist and expert mathematician took him in and moved to Marburg to take advantage of the university. During this year the Spaniards attacked and sacked Arminius's native town of Oudewater and cruelly murdered hundreds of innocent people and hanged its ministers. Hearing this sad news and fearing the worst, Arminius hurried back to the home town to find that his mother, brother and sisters had perished. Overlooking the blackened ruins of his home and town, he was saddened by the hard conditions and feeling that all ties that bound him to this place had been broken, Arminius walked back to Marburg. He never expressed any anger. Only a mysterious overruling providence could now give a future hope. For some unexplained reason he went to Rotterdam where he lived with Peter Bertius, the pastor of a Reformed Church, who sent young Arminius along with his own son, Peter, to the University of Leyden, recently founded by William, Prince of Orange.²

2. Study at Leyden

Arminius enrolled on October 23, 1576, as a student of liberal arts; he was only the twelfth to be registered. Arminius studied mathematics, logic, theology and Hebrew. Money

²Bangs, Arminius--A Study in the Dutch Reformation, pp. 25-44.

for living expenses must have been a serious problem for Arminius. Feuguereus* and Danaeus** were the two theology professors who had a significant influence on Arminius.

Danaeus was a strict Calvinist. Arminius was influenced by another man named Petrus Ramus. He was born near Soissons in 1515 and he died at Paris in 1572. He published two works in 1543, in which he attacked Aristotle. For this reason he was forbidden by Francis I to teach philosophy and his works were burned. But he continued to teach mathematics and rhetoric. After the death of Francis I in 1547, he was free to speak and write and in 1551, he became a professor of rhetoric and philosophy at the Royal College. Ramus broke his traditional methods of teaching and became even more controversial. Petrus Ramus joined in the humanistic reaction against medieval orthodoxy. His religious ideas were essentially Calvinistic but with certain deviations, which brought him into conflict with the Calvinistic leader Beza. Petrus Ramus's logic had a great influence in Arminius's thinking but there is no evidence that he agreed with Ramus's

*He was the first theology professor of Arminius, when Arminius started his studies at Leyden. He was born in Rouen, where he was strongly influenced by a protestant pastor named Augustin Marlorat. At the time of St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre in 1572, Feuguereus fled to London. There he met the widow and the children of Marlorat. There he edited the manuscript of Marlorat's Scripture Thesaurus, a vast topical arrangement of the Old and New Testaments of some 800 pages, which was published in London in 1574. This publication led to his appointment at Leyden.

** Arminius had only little contact with Danaeus who was the first strict Calvinist who taught theology at Leyden while Arminius was there.

conclusions. So it would be wrong to conclude that Arminius derived his doctrine of predestination either from Ramus's theology or from his logic. In later years Arminius wrote,

For the theology which belongs to this world is practical and through faith: Theoretical theology belongs to the other world, and consists of pure and unclouded vision, according to the expression of the Apostle: We walk by faith and not by sight... For this reason we must clothe the object of our theology in such a manner as may enable it to incline us to worship God, and fully to persuade and win us over to that practice.³

Arminius finished his studies at Leyden in 1581, when he was twenty-two years old. He gained a reputation for brilliant scholarship, but he was too young for pastoral duties. So his friends encouraged him to undertake further theological studies. The only Protestant university at this time was in Geneva. The brilliance and attainments of the young Arminius attracted the burgomasters and clergy of Amsterdam. They offered him the necessary financial support for further studies on condition that he would not serve in the church of any other city without their permission. Having accepted the agreement for financial aid, in 1582 Arminius went to Geneva to study theology and fully prepare himself for the work of the church. Geneva was at that time the center of the Reformed Church. Calvin's doctrine of unconditional predestination was taught and vigorously defended by Theodore Beza. Arminius had a profound admiration for Beza. His

³James Nichols, Works of James Arminius, Vol. 1 (London: Printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown and Green, 1825), p. 264.

hard work and intellectual ability made him an excellent student at Geneva. While there he met a student from Holland named Uytenbogaert. Their friendship was lifelong and Uytenbogaert became one of the staunchest advocates of the doctrines promulgated by Arminius. While at Geneva Arminius began to lecture as well as study. He attacked the philosophy of Aristotle and defended Ramus publicly and a number of students asked him to give private lectures on Ramus in his study. This he did without the permission of the authorities. This offended the philosophy professor, Petrus Galesius, who was an Aristotelian. Great opposition was raised against his remaining at Geneva and so he decided to move from there to Basel. In Basel, Arminius became the favorite of Johannes Jacobus Grynacus, professor of sacred literature and dean of the theological faculty. Not much is known about the specific influence of Grynacus on Arminius except that it was under Grynacus that Arminius presented expositions of several chapters of Romans. It was the custom at Basel to permit advanced students to give public lectures during the harvest holidays. Arminius was ready to return to Geneva, when the theological faculty at Basel offered him the title of Doctor, but he refused it on the grounds that his youth would not bring honor to the title. In 1583 Arminius returned to Geneva.

In 1586 Arminius went to Padua to hear the celebrated Professor of Philosophy, Zabarella, and visited Rome and other cities in Italy. Returning to Geneva he completed his studies

and with a good report from Geneva, Arminius returned to Amsterdam in 1587. In 1588 he was ordained in the Reformed Church.⁴

3. Pastor

The classis (the governing body of the Dutch Reformed Church) of Amsterdam received letters of recommendation from Beza and other professors about Arminius and voted unanimously that he be admitted to the ministry as soon as possible. Arminius next appeared before the Consistory of Amsterdam. The minutes of the Consistory record that Arminius was given a friendly reception. He declared his readiness to serve the church of God in Amsterdam. He also requested the burgomasters' permission to make a trip to South Holland to take care of some personal affairs and to visit some friends. In 1586, while he was in Geneva, he wrote to the Consistory of Amsterdam for some financial help. The Geneva merchants who were supposed to give the money to Arminius reported back to Amsterdam that they could not deliver the money to him because Arminius had already left for a trip to Italy. This was without the permission of the Amsterdam Consistory. He was accused of having kissed the Pope's slipper and talked with Catholic Cardinal Bellarmine; consequently, he was asked to give an explanation of

⁴Geo. L. Curtiss, Arminianism in History (New York: Hunt and Eaton, 1894), pp. 15-22.

his trip to Italy. Arminius was now tested and accepted by the leaders of both church and state in Amsterdam, and his life was to be closely bound to the affairs of official Amsterdam.

After his ordination Arminius began his ministry in Amsterdam, officiating each week at the evening services. He delivered a discourse and conducted the prayers. Soon he attracted a large and influential congregation.

He entered upon his public duties in the twenty-eighth year of his age; and already at his youthful period, acted the part of a consummate preacher, and not only fulfilled, but far exceeded the expectations of his patrons. His discourses were masculine and erudite, every word he uttered breathed the theologian--not raw and commonplace, but superior, acute, cultivated and replete with solid acquisitions both in human and in sacred literature. This made him such a favorite both with high and low, that in a short time he attracted towards himself the ears and the hearts of all classes alike. In the general admiration of his talents, some styled him "a file of truth", others, "a whetstone of intellect", others, "a pruning-knife for rank-growing errors", and indeed, on the subject of religion and sacred study, it seemed as if scarcely anything was known which Arminius did not know.⁵

The marriage of Jacobus Arminius and Lijsbet took place in September, 1590. Permission to marry had to be given by the city through its Commission on Matrimony. And thus Arminius for the first time since his boyhood had a

⁵John Guthrie, The Life of James Arminius (Nashville: Published by E. Steven & F. A. Owen Agents, 1857), p. 57.

family circle. Moreover this marriage tied him to the Old Beggars* of the 1560's and to the upper levels of Amsterdam society.

By 1590 Arminius, the orphan from Oudewater, was no longer an isolated individual lacking in supportive relationships and dependent on charity. By his call to the Amsterdam ministry and by his marriage to Lijsbet, he was caught up in an extended network of professional, political, economic and family relationships which extended into every corner of the leading families of Amsterdam. More than once these relationships were to function in his favor in the turbulent years which lay ahead.⁶

By 1600 they had five children born to them. After the disputes of the early years of his ministry, Arminius seemed to have settled into the normal but varied routine of pastoral work. He continued his ministry in favor with the burgomasters. On several occasions the advice, or help, of Arminius was sought by those outside his own church. In the neighboring province, Utrecht, the church was facing some internal strife over issues such as doctrine, worship and church order. They turned to Amsterdam for help,

*In Netherlands first they appeared as a political group who opposed Roman Catholic form of worship. Most of these people were from the lower nobility. In early 1566 about four hundred nobles appeared at Brussels to present a petition to the governess, Margaret of Parma, demanding that King Philip II, abolish the inquisition in the Low Countries. Led by Berlaymont, contemptuously called them 'gueux beggars'. They accepted this name, and the independence movement was provided with a name and a badge, 'beggars and beggars'. Brederode returned to Amsterdam asking money for their cause. He was supported by the Amsterdam nobles and thus the stage was set for a war for independence. They suffered exile rather than compromise their principles. Arminius was supported by this group during his theological studies.

⁶Bangs, Arminius--A Study in the Dutch Reformation, p. 132.

especially to Arminius. They sent their newly elected elders to Arminius and they wanted him to go to their church and give the advice to end their trouble. Another time the Walloon congregation asked Arminius's advice concerning a parishioner who had gone over to the English church at Naarden. We have little information about Arminius's emotions, his contacts with other human beings, his feelings for his family, his joys, griefs, and fears. His letters deal almost entirely with theological matters and church politics.

4. Professor at Leyden

The great plague afflicted many of his church members and friends, but Arminius attributed the miraculous providence of God in his life in saving him from the plague. The plague took the life of many important people in Leyden. Elder Lucas Trelcatius, theology professor at Leyden, died of the plague. Friends (Hugo Grotius, a law student at Leyden; Antonius Thysius, a professor of theology from Harderwijk; and Uitenbogaert who was a chaplain to Maurice's forces in the field in Brabant) of Arminius began to look for a person to fill the vacancy. Uitenbogaert wrote to Arminius proposing his name for the professorship. Arminius enjoyed the relationship he had at Amsterdam with the magistrates and he was not sure whether the Amsterdam church would allow him to leave because of his previous agreement. But Arminius friends were building support for him. At the same

time Gomarus* opposed Arminius. The Curators met on November 9, 1602 to discuss the matter. They heard Gomarus's opposition to Arminius. Then the Curators sought the advice of Oldenbarnevelt and Uitenbogaert. Uitenbogaert made a convincing plea for Arminius's appointment. There were conferences with Arminius concerning his nomination to the professorship. Two deputies of the Curators approached the burgomasters of Amsterdam in order to negotiate with them for the release of Arminius from his pastoral duties. But the burgomasters did not cooperate with representatives of the Curators; not because they were against Arminius, but they did not want to lose a friend and a valuable minister. Finally, after a long negotiation the burgomasters approved the release of Arminius from his pastoral duties. The University deputies expressed their appreciation and went back. The burgomasters absolved Arminius of any obligation to repay the money granted years earlier for his theological studies. Moreover, both the council and the burgomasters made a statement of appreciation in their minutes, and Arminius was given a gift of twenty-five guilders on his departure. Furthermore, they passed a resolution that if he died his widow would get a pension of two hundred guilders a year at the cost of the

*He was one of the professors at Leyden. His view on predestination was different from Arminius's view. Gomarus held to the supralapsarian view, which means that God permitted the sin into this world and He elected some for salvation. Christ was sent to this world to save the elect. Gomarus was aware of Arminius's view and he did not like him in the faculty.

city. Gomarus pointed out his objection against Arminius on the basis of Arminius's exposition on Romans, chapter seven. But no one was able to prove that he was wrong. Finally they accepted him to the professorship. He moved to Leyden with his family in 1603. In a way this move was a difficult one for Arminius because he had five children under the age of ten and his wife was expecting another one at this time.

5. Theologian

Arminius expressed his desire to sustain, with sufficient dignity, the office he had obtained.

I will therefore, with the help of the good God, address myself to this province, and look for success by His abundant blessing. He knows from what motive I have undertaken this office, what is my aim, what object I have in view in discharging the duties of it. He discerns and approves, I know. It is not the empty honor of this world—mere smoke and bubbles, nor the desire of amassing wealth (which indeed were in vain, let me strive to the utmost) that has impelled me hither, but my one wish is to do public service in the Gospel of Christ, and to exhibit that gospel as powerfully and plainly as possible before those who are destined, in their turn, to propagate it to others.⁷

In this spirit Arminius started his theological teachings. He delivered well-prepared lectures on three important subjects. The first one was the object of sacred theology. In Christian theology there are two objects of theology: God and Christ. These two objects are not of such a nature that the one may be separated from the other. Christ is the

⁷Guthrie, The Life of James Arminius, pp. 187-188

mediator in communicating God's benevolence, His gracious decree, and His saving efficacy. Faith in Christ is thus necessary for obtaining salvation from God and for qualifying men to receive this salvation. In his second oration Arminius talked about the author of theology. God and Christ are the authors of evangelical or Christian theology. The Holy Spirit is also the author of theology, but only in the role of the Spirit of Christ the Mediator. The end or purpose of legal theology in its strictest sense is the union of God with man. His third oration was about the certainty of sacred Theology. They were well prepared works, noncontroversial and applauded.

It was not until October 31, 1604, that the theological battle in Leyden began in earnest. Gomarus made a public disputation on predestination and indirectly alluded to Arminius as an opponent of his view. Gomarus then explained his views about predestination which were essentially the same position taken by Beza. (Beza was a disciple of Calvin and appointed as head of the school in Geneva. He held Calvin's view of predestination which is supralapsarianism. Gomarus was a defender of this view in Leyden). Arminius set forth an answer to the theses of Gomarus. But nothing was published at the time. The conflict between Arminius and his opponents continued until his death in 1610. In 1608 both Gomarus and Arminius met with the High Court of Holland, for the court had ordered the two men to submit

their opinions in writing. But Arminius later asked the state of Holland to be permitted to submit his opinions to them not only in writing but in person, and it was granted. Thus he presented his views before the state of Holland. A new name appeared during this time; it was Simon Episcopius* and the theological mantle of Arminius fell on him.

On February 7, 1609 Arminius had a sharp attack of illness. He was attended by Pieter Pauw and, although he experienced a temporary recovery on October 19, 1609, surrounded by his family and friends, Jacobus Arminius of Oudewater died.

*He was a student under Gomarus and Arminius at Leyden. South Holland synod called him to be a minister but it was blocked by Amsterdam. While at his stay in Leyden he became a disciple of Arminius and later an Arminian scholar who defended Arminian theology.

CHAPTER III

THEOLOGICAL CONDITIONS BEFORE AND AT THE TIME OF THE ARMINIAN CONTROVERSY

The truly evangelical system of religious belief, which today is known under the name of Arminianism, acquired that designation not because the Dutch theologian Arminius was the author of it, but because he had gone through the teaching of the Christian fathers and the Bible which have a collateral relation to the doctrine of General Redemption. Arminius gathered the truth and applied it in such a manner as to make it combine in one grand harmonious scheme. If we study the faith of the Christians from the beginning of the Christian Era until the time of Augustine, we will discover that the so-called predestination theology was not an issue at all. The early ecumenical councils never had any questions or doubts about this matter. It was not a point of controversy. It is our purpose in this chapter to review briefly important developments and emphases in the history of Christian doctrine from post apostolic times up to the time of Arminius in order to place him and his views in proper perspective.

1. The Early Church

About 180 A.D. Florinus and some others had expressly

affirmed that God was the author of sin. This assertion was immediately attacked by St. Irenaeus, and he published a discourse called "God, not the author of sin". This doctrine was afterwards proposed in another form by the Manichees, and always was considered by the ancients as the most dangerous heresy. It was a characteristic feature of the early period that the whole system of Christianity must be considered and defended on all sides, rather than a particular doctrine. Still certain doctrines were more discussed, while others received less attention.

The entire Christian community down to the time of Augustine knew in its doctrine no other election and predestination than what was conditional or, what is the same thing, of none which do not refer to the ideal Body of Christ as such. The tendency of the Easterns especially was to lay too much rather than too little emphasis on the foreknowledge of human repentance and faith. Chrysostom says, "not of love alone, but our virtue also. If it sprang from love alone all would have been saved. If from our virtue alone that would be little and all would be lost. It was from neither alone, but from both, for the calling was not of necessity or of force". This sentence represents the sentiment of the Greek Church from Origen to Athanasius, and even John of Damascus, the last of the Oriental Fathers proper. There was a decided leaning to an exaggeration of the human will; at least their doctrine was not sufficiently protected by any reference to the ever-active influence of the Holy Ghost upon our fallen nature.⁸

The theology of the second and third centuries was mainly apologetic against paganism of Greece and Rome, and polemic against the various forms of the Gnostic heresy.

⁸William Burt Pope, A Compendium of Christian Theology, Vol. II (New York: Hunt & Eaton, n.d.), p. 349.

This conflict brought out the principal arguments for the divine origin and character of the Christian religion and outlines the true doctrine of Christ and the Holy Trinity. The doctrine of one God, the Father and Creator, formed the background and indisputable premise of the Church's faith. The problem of Christology was the reason that a definition of the relationship between the divine and human nature of Christ needed to be made. After the Council of Nicea it was the universal Christian conviction that Jesus Christ was divine as well as human. From the study of the Apostolic Fathers and the early church Arminius drew the conclusion that if our sins did not proceed from our own free will, but from some overruling providence which constrained us, then God could not judge and condemn us with His justice. It is also true that the predestination problem was never raised in the Eastern Churches because they followed the understanding and belief of the early church and the church fathers in this matter.

The early church also developed its own views of anthropology. The pagan view went back to a golden age only in theory. When it came to defining man's nature, he was placed very low, and yet but little lower than sinful gods. The Gnostics and Manichaeans taught the sinfulness of the soul from its connection with the body, because of the native evil in matter. The Fathers taught the original perfection of man, and his fall through the abuse of his own liberty.

God was in no sense the author of sin and subsequent guilt, but man, having a free will, chose to do evil.

Both Theophilus of Antioch and Tertullian taught that man can arrive at spiritual excellence by the development of the spiritual faculties through his own choice and the quickening power of the Spirit; his free will, which he first abused, still inheres in him, and he can use this liberty toward his restoration. Justin held that if he had no free will he would be like a tree or a beast, and would have neither praise nor blame for his deeds.⁹

The Greek teachers were united in their view of the complete freedom of the will. It is true that a change developed in early theology by the time of Augustine during the fifth century, concerning the nature of man.

2. The Medieval Period

Augustine's theology had a great influence on medieval Christianity. But the Catholic Church did not make any change in its doctrine; rather the church reaffirmed its belief more earnestly. Augustine's theology helped those who were interested in the reform of the Catholic Church and in the latter years it led them to the reform movement. Augustine is the end of the ancient fathers, and the forerunner of medieval theology. Ancient theology came to a new turning point with him and began to flow from him to the medieval scholasticism and sixteenth century Protestant theology.

⁹ John F. Hurst, History of the Christian Church, Vol.1 (New York: Eaton & Mains, 1897), p. 288.

Questions regarding Augustine's doctrine of grace and predestination were first raised within the circle of his disciples and followers. Among these were some monks of Hadrumentum and a certain Vitalis. The attack of Vincent of Lerins was much more far-reaching. He did not attack Augustine directly, but rather came to the defense of the traditional doctrine over against the anonymous "innovator", who was clearly Augustinian. The synod which gathered at Orange at 529 is usually considered the end of the Semi-Pelagian controversy.

It would be incorrect to say that the synod of Orange was a victory for Semi-Pelagianism. On the contrary, the synod clearly rejected such typical Semi-Pelagian doctrine as that of human 'initium fidei'. It is true, however, that the synod was not truly Augustinian in its true doctrine.¹⁰

In the high medieval age the Franciscans in the Catholic Church followed Augustine's theology. But by thirteen hundred the Dominican school became powerful and Thomas Aquinas was the foremost teacher of the Dominican school. After his death, those who accepted his theological view, which was against the Augustinians, were known as Thomists. Thomism became very popular and it became the doctrine of the Dominicans during the medieval period. Siger of Brabant and his followers accused him of making excessive concessions to traditional theology and in that way abandoning the original sense of Aristotelian philosophy. At the other extreme Augustinian theology accused him of the

¹⁰ Justo L. Gonzalez, A History of Christian Thought, Vol. II (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971), p. 61.

position of extreme Aristotelianism, and of abandoning fundamental aspects of traditional theology. The Franciscan William of LaMare published a correction of Brother Thomas in which he violently attacked the Dominicans. The Dominicans took measures to make sure that members of the order would not attack Thomas and the doctrine was declared the rule of all teaching and study of Dominicans.

John Duns Scotus was another theologian of the middle ages. He was a Franciscan. He opposed the Thomist theology. The chief point of difference was on the question of the relation of grace to the human will. Thomas for the most part followed Augustine, Scotus was inclined to Semi-Pelagianism.

Scotus's theory of redemption included elements derived from the two currents represented by Anselm and Abelard. He was willing to speak of Christ's work both as a great act of love overcoming man's estrangement from God, and as an act of satisfaction for the sins of the mankind. But in the latter case he rejected Anselm's claim that this satisfaction and the way it was offered were somehow directed by the requirements of rational necessity. God could have forgiven man without any satisfaction being offered, it did not have to be from the Godman, and in any case the merits of Christ are the merits of the human will. If a satisfaction was required and offered, and if God accepted Christ's merits and granted them an infinite value, this was not because of some intrinsic rational necessity, but simply because of the

free will of God, who decided to save man in this way. Thus it shows that Duns Scotus was not entirely abandoning traditional views nor claiming that they were in themselves irrational.¹¹

The contribution of Duns Scotus to the development of Christian thought has been evaluated in various ways. For some he is the critic who began the demolition of the medieval synthesis. For others, he is the culmination of the Franciscan school. Some see him as the beginning of the divorce between faith and reason which would gradually spell the downfall of scholasticism. He did believe that all the doctrines were true, but he made it clear that he did so on the basis of authority and not on rational demonstration.

3. The Council of Trent

The Council of Trent played a very important part in the history of the Christian Church. Naturally many protestant reformers simply deny all the decisions taken by the Council on the basis that it was aimed against them. Partially it may be true, but one cannot deny the fact that there are certain key theological points which the Council upheld which are the true teaching of the early church. Some see the decisions of the Council as a counter-reformation move. Through it the Catholic Church defended its failure.

Another obvious result of this Council was the clear-cut affirmation of the position of the Catholic Church in

¹¹Ibid., pp. 310-312.

regard to its doctrine. The doctrinal issues discussed by the Council were basically those raised by the protestant reformation, the authority of Scripture, the nature and consequence of original sin, justification, sacraments, purgatory and the veneration of the saints and their relics. But the decision of the Council in many of these matters was against the views of the Protestant group. We cannot discuss all the doctrines which came up for the consideration in the Council of Trent, but rather take the subject which is relevant for our study to this paper. The Council had different sessions and discussions about doctrine and they drew conclusions on the subject after long debate. The doctrine of predestination was not formally considered by the Council, though Calvinistic opinions of the subject, as in the canons of justification, are condemned. In a congregation held in August 20, 1546, the subject of justification was discussed a second time; also the doctrine of Luther concerning free will and predestination.

After this the decree explains the nature and effects of justification, saying that it does not consist merely in the remission of sin, but also in sanctification and inward renewal. That the final cause of justification is the glory of God and of Jesus Christ and eternal life, the efficient cause is God Himself, who, of His mercy, freely washes and sanctifies by the seal and unction of the Holy Spirit The decree further teaches upon this subject that no man may presume upon the mysterious subject that predestination so as to assure himself of being among the number of the elect and predestinated to eternal life, as if having been justified, it were impossible to commit sin again, or at least as if,

falling into sin after justification, he must of necessity be raised again, that without a special revelation from God, it is impossible to know who are those whom He has chosen.¹²

The Council affirmed the transmission of Adam's sin to all his posterity, that this original sin is taken away only by the merit of one mediator, Jesus Christ. Also the Council held that by His grace God moves men to turn to Him and that one cannot of his own free will, without God's grace take the initiative towards being just in God's sight; men are also free to cooperate with it. Thus by implication the Council rejected irresistible grace.

Arminius, in his writing, also refers to the Council of Trent as a place of tension between the two groups, namely the Dominicans and Franciscans, concerning the subject of decrees.

The most considerable Divines there inclined to the opinion of the great school Divines, St. Thomas Aquinas, Scotus and others who affirmed that God before the creation, out of the mass of mankind did from mere mercy elect some for glory, for whom He hath effectually prepared them means to obtain it, that their number is certain and determined and none can be added to them.... But Franciscans represented it as injurious to the attributes of the Diety, since He would act partially. if without any cause He should elect one, and reject another and unjustly, if He should damn men for His own will, and not for their faults, and create so great a multitude of men to condemn them. Catarinus, who was in favor of a medium between the two opinions, observed that the doctrine of St. Augustine was not heard of before his time and himself has confessed that it cannot

¹²The Rev. John McClintock and James Strong, Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1894), p. 534.

be found in the works of any preceding writer. He added that the warmth with which he opposed Pelagius had transported him too far.¹³

4. After Reformation

The old controversy between the Thomists and Scotists (Dominicans and Franciscans) was revived during the age of the Reformation. While the Council of Trent was in session the controversy broke out between Michael Bajus and his colleagues who were followers of Scotus. Eighteen propositions taken from his lectures were condemned by the Sorbonne, and later by Pope Pius V in 1567. Another seventy-six dogmas were censured and Bajus was compelled to retract. Several of these propositions were taken literally from Augustine's writing. The opinions of Bajus were later accepted by the Jansenists. This originated in the work of Cornelius Jansenius, which was published after his death, in 1640, under the title of Augustinus. This work was condemned by Pope Urban VIII and later by Innocent X. Five propositions were extracted from Jansenius' work and were condemned in these words:

That there are some commands of God which righteous and good men are absolutely unable to obey, though disposed to do it, and that God does not give them so much grace that they are able to observe them. This was condemned in these words, we declare to be rash, impious, blasphemous, worthy of anathema and heretical, and as such we condemn it. The second proposition was that 'no man in this corrupt state of nature can

¹³James Nichols, The Works of James Arminius, Vol. I (London: Printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown and Green, 1825), pp. 86-87.

resist divine grace operating upon the soul'. The third proposition that "in order to a man's being praise or blameworthy before God, he need not be except from necessity, but only from coercion." Of these two propositions the Church said, "We declare them heretical, and as such condemn them". Of the fourth proposition: that the Semi-Pelagians erred greatly by supporting that then human will has the power both of admitting and rejecting the operation of eternal preventing grace, the church declares that it is false and heretical and as such we condemn it. The fifth proposition, that whoever affirms that Jesus Christ made expiation by His sufferings and death for the sins of all mankind is a Semi-Pelagian. We declare it impious, blasphemous, contumacious, and derogating from Divine Love, and heretical and as such we condemn it.¹⁴

For Luther the Word of God is the starting point of theology. By "Word of God" Luther means the Scriptures, but he also means a great deal more. The Word is the eternal second person of the Trinity. Luther's understanding of the work of Christ includes all the themes that became tradition in his time. What is significant is that Jesus Christ liberates us from the bondage of sin, death, and the Devil. "Justification by faith", is the name commonly given to Luther's understanding of justification. The reform movement started by Luther soon gained many adherents and sympathizers in various parts of Europe. In varying degree all the reformers in different parts of Europe were influenced by Luther. But the door opened by Luther could not be controlled by any one person, not even by Luther himself. And thus arose various diverging views that agreed with Luther on

¹⁴H. Orton Wiley, Arminian Dogmatics (Pasadena: Pasadena College, n.d.), p. 24

some points but strongly disagreed on others. Because of these variations an exhaustive description of Protestant theology, after the Reformation would require a separate discussion of at least two dozen significant theologians. But it is possible to classify these various segments into four basic groups or traditions, the Lutherans, the Reformed, the Anabaptist and the Anglican. Among the Lutherans themselves serious dissension broke out. The first controversy is known as the 'Antinomian controversy'--'against law'. Philip Melanchthon emphasized that in order to help the believers the law, especially the Decalog, was to be preached often, but this was objected to by Agricola. The antinomian position was finally rejected in 1577, by the Formula of Concord. The second controversy was about the justification view which Osiander emphasized, which others heard was further away from the historical revelation of God. These two controversies never divided the principal leaders of Lutheranism. Strict Lutherans as well as Philippists agreed in rejecting these two views. The next two controversies were related to the eucharist and predestination. It would be more correct to say these arguments were between Lutherans and the Reformed rather than the Lutherans themselves.

The conflict between Luther and Zwingli began to grow, and finally it led to two different approaches to theology. Martin Bucer tried to effect a compromise between the Lutherans and the Zwinglians but failed. By this time John

Calvin was acknowledged as the reform leader in Geneva. It was left to Calvin to give Reformed theology its characteristic shape. Calvin is well known for his doctrine of predestination.

The Anabaptists, sometimes called the radical reformers, were another group that developed a new theology after the Reformation. They believed that the Reformation must purify not only theology but also the actual lives of Christians, especially in that aspect which had to do with social and political relationships. The church should not be supported by the state, neither by tithes and taxes, nor by the use of sword. Christianity was a matter of individual conviction, which could not be forced on anyone, but rather required a personal decision for it. On that basis infants should not be baptized because they cannot make a decision. They opposed the doctrine of predestination. They opposed the teachings of Zwingli as an abomination and a way to excuse us and blame God for our sin. In no way can God be the cause of evil, for He is good. It is our will, in our rebellion against God, that creates evil. It is because He yields to the human will and does not violate it, that God allows us to continue as we are. The later leader Menno Simon opposed the radical group of the Munster movement. Menno Simon emphasized that Christians cannot lay aside the spiritual weapons and take up the carnal ones.

The fourth major tradition arising from the protestant reformation is the Anglican, which took shape in England

through a complicated process. This started during the reign of Henry VIII and reached its culmination under Elizabeth. What developed as the definitive shape of Anglicanism during the reign of Elizabeth was the promulgation of the thirty-nine Articles of Religion. These were basically a revision of the forty-two Articles of Edward VI, which had been drawn up by Cranmer in the hope that they would strike a balance between Lutheranism and Calvinism. In the article the sole and supreme authority of the Scriptures was emphasized as well as justification by faith. Original sin is the corruption by nature of every descendant of Adam. The doctrine of purgatory, celibacy, were denounced. The Puritans came out from the Anglican Church.¹⁵

¹⁵Justo L. Gonzalez, A History of Christian Thought, Vol. III (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971), pp. 41, 50, 51, 67, 68, 77-79, 87.

CHAPTER IV

WHAT IS ARMINIANISM (ITS THEOLOGY)

The death of Arminius in 1609 did not stop the great controversy between Calvinism and Arminianism. The Calvinists in Holland outnumbered the Arminians several times and theirs was the popular belief in the state. But there were many strong, cultured and conscientious men who embraced Arminianism as the only true explanation of the Divine government in the matter of original sin, freedom of the will, and the salvation of man. The creed of the Arminians was set forth in the five articles of the Remonstrance addressed in 1610, to the State General of Holland and West Friestland. It was drawn by Uytenbogaert and signed by forty-five ministers. The first article asserts conditional election or election dependent on the foreknowledge of God by faith in the elect and of unbelief in those who are left in sin and under condemnation. The second asserts universal atonement in the sense that it is intended, although it is not actually efficient, for all. The third points out the inability of man to exercise saving faith, or to accomplish anything really good without regeneration by the Holy Spirit. The fourth declares that the grace of God is indispensable in every step of the spiritual life, but that it is not irresistible. The fifth was that the grace of the Holy Spirit is sufficient for

continual victory over temptation and sin. But whether believers are capable, through negligence, or forsaking again the first beginnings of their life in Christ, or again returning to this present evil world, or turning away from the holy doctrine which was delivered them or of losing a good conscience, of becoming devoid of grace--that must be more particularly determined out of the Holy Scriptures before we can teach it with the full persuasion of our minds. As it is mentioned earlier, these articles were rejected by the government and many of the Arminians left the country and many were persecuted.

1. Predestination

Predestination was the main issue in this so-called Arminianism. The Calvinist held that it is absolute and unconditional. No ethical difference was discernable between elect and reprobate. The Arminian criticism insisted on the ethical incompleteness of this view. The Divine will is absolutely supreme. But its supremacy is moral. God is not more bound to punish than to forgive. The Divine decree, whether elective or reprobatory, is conditional. Throughout, Arminius rejected the Calvinistic view of predestination. In his writings he points out the reason for his rejection.

It is not the foundation of Christianity. For this predestination is not that decree of God by which Christ is appointed by God to be the Saviour, the Head, and the foundation of those who will be made heirs of salvation. Yet that decree is the only foundation of Christianity. For the doctrine of this predestination is not that doctrine by which, through faith, we as

lively stones are built up into Christ, the only Cornerstone and are inserted into Him as the members of the body are joined to their head.

It is not the foundation of Salvation: For this predestination is not that decree of the good pleasure of God in Christ Jesus on which alone our salvation rests and depends. The doctrine of this predestination is not the foundation of Salvation: for it is not "the power of God to salvation to every one that believeth", because through it the righteousness of God is not revealed from faith to faith. For that is dependent upon this decree--"they who believe, shall be saved", I believe therefore I shall be saved. But the doctrine of this predestination embraces within itself neither the first nor the second member of the syllogism.¹⁶

After rejecting the Calvinistic view Arminius presents his own position on predestination. He asserts that it is not just his own opinion, but rather it is the result of his deep study in the Word of God.

The first absolute decree of God concerning the salvation of sinful man, is that by which he decreed to appoint His Son Jesus Christ for a Mediator, Redeemer, Saviour, Priest and King, who might destroy sin by His own death, might by His obedience obtain the salvation which had been lost, and might communicate it by His own virtue.

The second precise and absolute decree of God, is that in which He decreed to receive into favour those who repent and believe, and in Christ for His sake and through Him, to effect the salvation of such penitents and believers as reserved to the end, but to leave in sin and under wrath all impenitent persons and unbelievers, and to damn them as aliens from Christ.

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; and to have such administration instituted (1) according to the Divine wisdom, by which God knows what is proper and becoming both to His mercy and His severity, and

¹⁶James Nichols, The Works of James Arminius, Vol. 1 (London: Printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown and Green, 1825), pp. 554-555.

(2) according to Divine justice, by which He is prepared to adopt whatever His wisdom may prescribe and put it in execution.

To these succeeds the fourth decree by which God decreed to save and damn certain particular persons. 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 preserve, according to the before-described administration of those means which are suitable and proper for conversion and faith; and by which foreknowledge He likewise knew those who would not believe and preserve.¹⁷

Arminianism rejects the so-called common grace* in the predestination theory. Arminianism holds that the awakened human will will cooperate with the Divine grace in this process. It is the claim of Arminianism to do more justice than Calvinism to faith and repentance as conditions of personal salvation. Arminianism admits the foreknowledge of God, but denies fore-ordination, though it must seem difficult to reduce the foreknowledge of God to such a bare knowledge of the future.

2. Providence of God

The word providence does not occur in the Bible but nevertheless represents truly a biblical doctrine.

¹⁷Ibid. pp. 589-590.

*Common grace is natural, it does not remove sin nor set man free, but merely restrains the outward manifestations of sin and promote outward morality and decency, good order in society and civic righteousness. It works only in the natural, and not in the spiritual sphere. The non-elect receives common grace. Arminians recognize common grace as an integral part of the saving process.

Providence is God's gracious outworking with creation or man. Wiley expresses it in the following sentences:

Providence may be defined as the activity of the Triune God by which He conserves, cares for and governs the world which He has made. The subject may be broadly divided into General Providence by which is meant God's care for the world as a whole and everything in it; and Special Providence which refers more particularly to His care for the human race. In the strictest sense of the term, providence can be revealed only in history, and is concerned with the exigencies arising from the freedom of man's will.¹⁸

Arminius's view was that it is inspection and oversight of God, according to which He exercises a general care over the whole world. It is a care for each of creatures and their actions and passions, in a manner that is benefitting Himself and suitable for His creatures.

3. The Freedom of the Will

The Calvinists held that by the fall man lost his free will. By the fall the nature of man was poisoned at its inmost core, and original holiness and righteousness changed into absolute depravity. Arminianism held that depravity was a bias, which left the will free and man responsible for his own destiny through the choice of faith or unbelief. Arminianism denied that the sin of Adam is imputed to his posterity in the sense of their being guilty of, and chargeable with, the sin Adam had committed. A clear distinction is made between actual and original sin.

¹⁸H. Orton Wiley, Christian Theology, Vol. I (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1940), pp. 477-478.

All response of man to the Divine vocation is the work of grace. The entire process of believing, from initial fear to confirmation, is grace alone. But one result of gracious renewal is the cooperating which man does in believing. The cooperation is not the means to renewal. Arminius expressed his view about the free will as follows.

In his primitive condition as he came out of the hands of his creator, man was endowed with such a portion of knowledge, holiness and power, as enabled him to understand, esteem, consider, will, and to perform. Yet none of these acts could he do, except through the assistance of Divine grace. But in his lapsed and sinful state, man is not capable of and by himself, either to think, to will, or to do that which is really good, but it is necessary for him to be regenerated and renewed in his intellect, affections or will...when he is made a partaker of this generation or renovation. I consider that, since he is delivered from sin, he is capable of thinking, willing, and doing that which is good, but yet not without the continued aids of Divine Grace.¹⁹

4. The Grace of God

All response of man to the divine vocation is the work of grace. The entire process of believing, that is from initial fear to illumination, regeneration, renovation, and confirmation, is by grace. But one result of gracious renewal is the cooperating which man does in believing. When grace has kindled new light and love, man loves and embraces that which is good. He is cooperating now with God. He prosecutes the good which he knows and loves. The cooperation is not the means to renewal, but it is the result of renewal.

¹⁹Nichols, The Works of James Arminius, Vol. I, pp. 595-596.

Arminius explicitly denied Pelagianism which considers grace as a meritorious work. In his writings Arminius expressed his views about the grace of God in the following way.

It is a gracious affection by which God is kindly affected towards a miserable sinner, and according to which he, in first place, gives His Son, that whosoever believeth in Him might have eternal life, and, afterwards, He justifies him in Christ Jesus and for His sake, and adapts him into the right of sons, unto salvation.

It is an infusion (both into the human understanding and into the will and affections) of all those gifts of the Holy Spirit which appertain to the regeneration and renewing of man, such as faith, hope, charity, for without these gracious gifts, man is not sufficient to think, will, or do anything that is good.

It is that perpetual assistance and continued aid of the Holy Spirit, according to which He acts upon and excites to good the man who has been already renewed, by infusing into him salutary cogitations, and by inspiring him with good desires, that he may then will and work together with man, that man may perform whatever he wills.²⁰

In an exposition of the Nicene Creed, which Melancthon sent to Cranmer in 1550, he emphasizes that these fundamental principles must be maintained against the Manichees, that it is possible for all men to be converted to God, that the will does not show itself to be purely passive, but in some measure active, and it can comply with the drawing of God. If we analyze the prevenient grace which was held by the early Arminians, certain things are clear about this matter of grace. Prevenient grace is the grace that which

²⁰Ibid., pp. 599-600.

'goes before' or prepares the soul for entrance into the initial state of salvation. It is the preparatory grace of the Holy Spirit exercised toward man helpless in sin. It is the divine grace which heals the disorders of a corrupt nature. It shows the inability of man as totally depraved. The state of nature is in some sense a state of grace through the unconditional benefit of the atonement. The continuity of grace excludes the Calvinistic distinction between common and officious grace. It also emphasizes the cooperation of grace and free will. It is evident the power of man to finally able to resist the grace of God freely bestowed upon him. Arminius made it clear that according to the scriptures many people resisted the Holy Spirit and rejected the grace that was offered.

5. The Perseverance of the Saints

If there is no present assurance of final salvation, it is because there is the possibility of falling from grace. In the declaration of sentiments Arminius said that those persons who have been grafted into Christ by true faith, and thus been made partakers of His life-giving Spirit, possess sufficient powers to fight against the evils of this world. He also asserts that Jesus Christ also by His Spirit assists them in all their temptations and affords them the ready aid of His hand. Christ preserves them from falling. So that it is not possible for them, by any of the cunning craftiness or power of Satan to be dragged out of the hands of Christ.

But at the same time he cautioned that it is useful and will be quite necessary in our first convention (or synod) to institute a diligent inquiry from the Scriptures, whether it is not possible for some individuals through negligence to desert the commencement of their existence in Christ and to cleave again to the present evil world. He tells that there are many passages in the Scripture that are against the view of unconditional perseverance. In his answer to Perkin's pamphlet he points out that believers are sometimes so circumstanced as not to produce for a season, an effect of true faith. True faith produces confidence or trust in God which is necessary to obtain salvation. For Arminius, a believer who ceases to trust God is no longer a believer. When asked whether believers can decline from salvation, Arminius replied that is a possibility. The Calvinist held the ineffectibility of the saints. Men unconditionally elected, absolutely purchased by the death of Christ, and irresistibly called out of their depraved and lost estate by the direct operation of the Holy Spirit, could not possibly fall from grace. Arminianism completely rejected this view.

6. The Assurance of Salvation

Arminius felt that supralapsarianism* led to either

*According to this view the order God proposed is as follows: (1) to elect some creatable men to life and to condemn others to destruction (2) the decree to create follows next in the accomplishment of this. (3) The fall of man permitted (4) send Christ as redeemer to save the elect (5) send Holy Spirit to apply this redemption to the elect.

unwarranted security or unwarranted despair. So Arminius tried to construct his theology by avoiding these two errors. According to Arminius, it is possible for him who believes in Jesus Christ to be certain that he is a son of God and stands in the grace of Jesus Christ. The assurance of salvation, Arminius describes as the internal witness of the Holy Spirit, which is the basic foundation of this doctrine. The early church considered it as a test of the personal interest which every individual felt in the saving merits Christ applied to his soul. Calvinists did not apply it to the present experience of the people of God, but they employed it to work themselves up to a position of their individual or personal election, which already was determined in the Divine mind. Arminius expressed his view on this matter in the following way.

With regard to the certainty or assurance of salvation, my opinion is that it is possible for whom he believes in Jesus Christ to be certain and persuaded, if his heart condemn him not, he is now in reality assured, that he is a son of God, and stands in the grace of Jesus Christ. Such a certainty is wrought in the mind, as well by action of the Holy Spirit inwardly actuating the believer and by the fruits of faith, as from his own conscience, and the testimony of God's Spirit witnessing together with his conscience. I also believe, that it is possible for such a person, with an assured confidence in the grace of God and his mercy in Christ, to depart out of this life, and to appear before the throne of grace, without any anxious fear or terrific dread; and yet this person should constantly pray, 'O Lord, enter not into judgment with thy servant.... I dare not (on this account) place this assurance or certainty on an equality with that by which we know there is a God, and that Christ is the Savior of the world.'²¹

²¹Ibid., pp. 604-606.

Thus Arminius points out that assurance of salvation is an obtainable thing of this present life.

7. The Perfection of Believers in This World

The perfection of believers in this life, is a doctrine which meets with great opposition from worldly men, and some professors of Christianity. Arminius was accused as a Pelagian* in this matter. In reply to this accusation he says that,

To this I reply, though these might have been my sentiments, yet I ought not on this account to be considered as a Pelagian, either partly or entirely, provided I had only added that, "they could do this by the grace of Christ, and by no means without it". But while I never asserted that a believer could perfectly keep the precepts of Christ in this life, I never denied it, but always left it as a matter which has still to be decided. For I have contented myself with those sentiments which St. Augustine has expressed on this subject, whose words I have frequently quoted in the University, and have usually subjoined, that I had no addition to make to them.²²

Arminius points out that Augustine held the view that it is possible for a man to live in this world without sin. Against Pelagius, Augustine said that man could fulfill the law of God by his own proper strength and ability, but with

²²Ibid., pp. 611-612.

*Pelagianism denied the inherited depravity in the descendants of Adam. "At birth, each man's voluntary faculty, like Adam's, is undermined either to sin or holiness. Being thus characterless, with a will undecided for either good or evil, and not in the least affected by Adam's apostasy, each individual man, after birth commences his voluntariness, originated his own character and decided his own destiny by the choice of either right or wrong". Pelagian emphasized that man can be holy in this life. But Arminius added to this view that "only by the grace of God". Thus he rejected the Pelagian view of the human ability to be holy.

still greater facility by means of the grace of Christ. Arminius emphasizes that humility is the foundation of perfection. The Son of God was manifested for this purpose to destroy the works of the devil. After this grace had been imparted to the believer by the Holy Spirit, he was instructed to exercise himself unto godliness.

8. The Divinity of the Son of God

On the basis of a class discussion some people in the University accused Arminius of denying the Divinity of the Son of God. A disputation was held one afternoon in the University on the subject of the Divinity of the Son of God in which one of the students happened to object "that the Son of God, was autotheos and that He therefore had His essence from Himself and not from the Father". Some professors had different views about this subject. On the basis of the Scripture Arminius objected to their interpretation of the word "autotheos". This became a major point of controversy in the University.

For though God and the Divine Essence do not differ substantially, yet whatever may be predicated of the Divine Essence can by no means be equally predicated of God, because they are distinguished from each other in our mode of framing conceptions, according to which mode all forms of speech ought to be examined, since they are employed only with a design that through them we should receive correct impressions.... Therefore, in no way whatever can this phrase "the Son of God is autotheon" (God of Himself, or 'in His own right') be excused as a correct, or as having been happily expressed. Nor can that be called a proper form of

speech which says, "the Essence of God is common to three persons", but it is improper, since the Divine Essence is declared to be communicated by one of them to another.²³

The early Latin and Greek Church taught that the Son had His Deity from the Father by eternal generation. So Arminius was upholding the teachings of the early church. He also points out that it is the correct Scriptural view of this subject. God is from eternity, possessing the Divine Essence from no one. But the Son is from the Father, having the Divine Essence from the Father.

9. Justification

Arminius was concerned about the salvation of sinful man. For Arminius the justification of man before God was a forensic act whereby God the judge pronounces man righteous and worthy of the reward of righteousness. Since man is a sinner, this judgment must be according to the law of faith, not of works.

Evangelical justification, then, is a justification by which a man who is a sinner, yet a believer, being placed before the throne of grace which is erected in Christ Jesus the propitiation, is accounted and pronounced by God, the judge and merciful judge, righteous and worthy of reward of righteousness, not in himself but in Christ, of grace, according to the gospel.²⁴

²³ Ibid, p. 631.

²⁴ Carl Bangs, Arminius--A Study in the Dutch Reformation (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971), p. 344.

Arminius's enemies (Gomarus and his friends in the University) charged him with denying the doctrine of imputation. Arminius replied that he taught that the righteousness of Christ was imputed to the sinner. The righteousness of Christ is imputed to us, and faith is imputed to us for righteousness. Sinners are accounted righteous solely by the obedience of Christ. In other words, the righteousness of Christ is the only 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. To a man who believes, faith is imputed for righteousness through grace.

There are three great doctrinal systems regarding the salvation of man. They are Calvinism, Arminianism and Universalism. Most of the other subjects in theology are related to the salvation of man. In this chapter we looked into some of the main points of Arminian theology. It was a short study just to see how it differs from Calvinism. Those who want a more detailed explanation about these topics must read some other Arminian theological writers.

CHAPTER V

DEVELOPMENT OF ARMINIANISM

The Reformation made a great impact upon the Netherlands and was intimately associated with a notable struggle for political independence. By the end of the sixteenth century Calvinism was dominant among the Dutch. While political struggle for independence was still in progress, the Dutch Reformed Church was taking shape. All the Protestants in the Netherlands were filled with conflict. Theological disputes became involved in politics. The majority of the people were Calvinists. The Netherlands were divided between the supporters of "state rights", which included the wealthier merchant classes and the national party of which Maurice was the head. Oldenbarneveldt and Grotius were the leaders of the 'state rights' group. The National Party now planned for a Synod to decide the controversy. In 1618, Maurice overthrew the 'states rights' party. Oldenbarneveldt was beheaded in 1619 and Grotius condemned to life imprisonment.

In order to solve the theological problem a national synod was called. This was held at Dort from November 13, 1618, to May 9, 1619. Besides representatives from the Netherlands, delegates from England, the Palatinate, Hesse, Bremen and Switzerland also attended this synod.

The Dutch Churches of the provinces sent thirty-five clergymen and a certain number of elders. The State Generals were represented by six deputies. They were Gomarus and Polyander of Leyden, Thysius of Harderwyk Lubbertus of Franeker and Walaeus of Middelburg. Twenty-seven foreign delegates were present in this synod. The English representatives appointed by King James I were George Carleton, John Davenant, Samuel Ward and Joseph Hall. Jan Bogerman, pastor at Leeuwarden, was elected president. H. Faukelius and J. Rolandus were appointed assessors. F. Hammius and S. Damman were secretaries. The Arminians had chosen sixteen clergymen and the Leyden professor, Simon Episcopiu, to represent them. At its twenty-second session the main business of the gathering was brought in. The Remonstrants were told they could express their views very briefly and then the Synod would pronounce the judgment. They immediately protested against this. They insisted upon having a long discussion on each point to present their view, but the Synod did not accept that. Finally the Synod voted that their views are contrary to the Reform faith and condemned. The Synod of Dort was intended to be a general Council of Calvinistic Churches to sit in judgment on the Arminian theology. The Synod abstained from sanctioning the extreme dogma of Gomarus, at the same time it also condemned the Arminian view of predestination. After the Synod, the Arminians were forbidden to exercise their religion for a while.

Two hundred of their preachers were deposed. The scattering of the exiles had the usual result of disseminating their doctrines, so that persecution only strengthened the heresy it was intended to suppress. The Synod of Dort is said to have cost 100,000 guilders and it stirred up disputes over the subject of predestination far away from the borders of Holland even before its decrees had been published.

The Protestantism of the United Provinces which had done so much for the establishment of a new nation, now divided into two. Before the Synod of Dort was over about ten Remonstrant preachers under the leadership of Grevinehoven, an Arminian, decided to separate from the State Church. On June 19, 1619, the States of Holland confirmed the decision of the Synod against the Arminians. And they agreed to cease both in public and private from all the duties of a preacher, to reside where the States decreed, and to obey the magistrates. They should receive half a year's salary and be left in peace, otherwise they were to be banished from the country. Only one man alone yielded, others were ordered to leave the land. The Act of Cessation was carried round from Synod to Synod, and preachers, professors, schoolmasters and even organists were forced to sign the Dort Canons and to agree to keep silence on all Arminian themes. Within a year about two hundred preachers were expelled. Plans were adopted to suppress all secret gatherings and the collection of funds to support the Remonstrants by the imposition of heavy fines and penalties. Towns pleaded in vain for liberty of worship.

Many were thrown into jail. There were few who openly espoused the Arminian cause, but those who did so were greatly strengthened by the coming of Episcopius and Uitenbogaert to Paris. In spite of all their troubles and persecutions the Arminians continued their work wherever they went.

1. Arminianism Before John Wesley

The Synod of Dort was not able to wipe out Arminianism from the continent. For a while it suffered but later it emerged as a powerful group. In its later development Arminianism entered widely into the thought of the church, both on the continent, in Great Britain and in America. It was welcomed by the Lutheran churches as a relief from the teachings of Augustine and the Reformed Churches. Arminianism was a tolerant group and because of that some of the Socinians and the Pelagians joined them and this opened the way for further criticism. It should be noted that Arminius many times expressed his view that he did not agree with any of their views in regard to Christian theology.²⁵ During the eighteenth century Arminianism was advocated by many of the leading writers of Great Britain. In America Arminianism showed itself as an advocate of freedom of thought and thus of toleration. It emphasized natural human duties rather than speculative theology. It became an outspoken protest

²⁵James Nichols, The Writings of James Arminius, Vol. 3, p. 295-296.

against Calvinism. Because of the writings of Whitby, John Taylor, and Samuel Clarke, its influence greatly increased in the eighteenth century. Later by virtue of its essential truth, and by John Wesley's influence, Arminianism thoroughly leavened the Christian thought of America.²⁶

The Arminian conflict began in England early in the seventeenth century. It started with the Articles of Religion which were drawn up for the Church of England. They have been held by some as being strongly Calvinistic, while a few said that they were designated to be Arminian. Cranmer is sometimes spoken of as an Arminian, since Cranmer had much to do with the shaping of the Articles of Religion of the Church of England. His Arminianism had much influence upon the Calvinistic doctrine there. The Episcopal Arminian divines in this century were among the great theologians of England. Men like Cudworth, Pierson, Heylin, Whitby, Patrick were Arminian in their teaching. These men were making the deep impression about Arminianism in the minds and hearts of the country. The whole of English theology was becoming honeycombed by the doctrine of Arminius. It should also be noted that with Arminianism other ideas were brought into the church which are not truly Arminian. It was purified by John Wesley in the later years, and thus the pure doctrine of Arminianism rose again in England through John Wesley in the seventeenth century.

²⁶ Samuel Macauley Jackson, The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopaedia of Religious Knowledge (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1980), p. 297.

In Holland the Mennonites came into close contact with the Arminian movement. The seminary which the Remonstrants established in 1634 furnished Mennonites the opportunity for a theological training for the ministry before the establishment of the Amsterdam Seminary in 1735. Relations between the two groups have always been friendly. Dutch Mennonitism in the late nineteenth century adopted a modernistic Unitarian theology which went far beyond historical Arminianism. But the Mennonites of West Prussia, Russia, South Germany, France, England, and North America have held to a consistent evangelical Arminian theology. It is also noteworthy that in recent years in North America some Mennonites have come under the influence of Calvinistic theology. In doing so they have departed from historic Arminianism. The Mennonites also claim their early relation with Arminian theology. Originally they were called Anabaptists. By the Reformation of Menno Simons, there came out a group of people cleared from all the old and vile practices. The Mennonites held that the sacrifice of Christ's death is set forth as applicable to all mankind. While there have been two distinct changes in the Confession of Faith of the Mennonites, there has been no change in any phase of the doctrines regarding original sin, predestination, freedom of the will, and the personal salvation of the individual.²⁷

²⁷George L. Curtiss, Arminianism in History (Cincinnati: Cranston and Curts, 1894), pp. 130-131.

A religious revival, with important features in common with the revival in England occurred in America. In New England, as in the old country, Arminianism had widely spread. Preaching was didactic rather than stirring. The New England settlers had made it a point to require proofs of regeneration as a condition of membership in the church. In later years, with the coming of the Wesleyan revival Arminianism became more powerful in America. In Germany the strength of Luther's influence already leaned towards Arminianism. Its influence was also strong in the Reformed Church, and by the time of the Wolfian movement, the Reformed dogmatics were moving from the doctrine of the absolute decrees. Zinzendorf was a man of wealth, and owned a large territory in Germany. He invited the persecuted Christians to come there, settle and engage in lawful business. And these people grew in wealth and religious experience. They believed that Christ Jesus died for all mankind, and it is possible for all to come to Him for salvation. This belief led them to travel to different countries and to preach the Gospel. The theologians who raised up from the Moravians, such as Peter Bohler and Nitschman were strong preachers of pure Arminianism. Another group that was influenced by Arminianism was the Friends or Quakers. This group had its origin in George Fox who was a member of the Anglican Church. From the very beginning George Fox preached that "whosoever would, might come to God by Jesus Christ, and be eternally saved." While he and his

followers did not denounce or attack the doctrine of election and reprobation as held by the Reformed Church, they emphatically taught the freedom of the will and full salvation for all men on the condition of repentance of sin and faith in Jesus Christ. The Society of Friends has been greatly persecuted but it has held to its position in the strong advocacy of the doctrines earlier formulated, which encouraged sinners to venture fully on the merits of a crucified and risen Christ for salvation.

2. Wesleyan Arminianism

As we have seen before, the opposition to Calvinism began to grow in many places. It was evident in England. We have noted that many who opposed certain points in Calvinism also joined with the Arminians and later the Arminian theology became corrupted. But a revival was happened during the time of John Wesley. Later it was known as Wesleyan Arminianism. The most sound and most prudent of the early Arminian theologians after Arminius were Episcopius and Limborch. A few of the Remonstrants, Grotius and Curcellaeus, to some extent expressed a free-thinking towards the doctrine of atonement. The English Arminians carried these freethinking elements to the verge of Socinianism, and thus credence to the charge of Pelagianism with which Calvinistic writers even today brand Arminianism.

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, was of Arminian

stock. His father, Samuel Wesley had broken away from the rigid doctrine of the earlier times. John Wesley found pleasure and profit in the interpretation of Scripture that Jesus Christ had made sufficient atonement for every ruined son of Adam who would come with repentance and faith, and seek the pardon of a reconciled God. The Wesleyans throughout the British Empire, and the Methodists in America, are universally Arminians. Whatever may be their differences in church organization, social sentiments or practical views of evangelical economy, they wholeheartedly opposed the Calvinistic doctrine of God's absolute predestination concerning men's everlasting destiny. In a way, what Wesley did, was to purify Arminianism. Even during the time of Wesley the main point of controversy was centered around the predestination idea in Calvinism. Here we will see the principle features of Wesleyan Arminianism.

The Wesleyans hold that God's foreknowledge is intuitive and absolute, not being a deduction or inference from his purpose. Wesleyan Arminians believe that the divine foreknowledge has reference to the character of the persons contemplated as about to accept the offer of salvation. Thus they truly place the divine foreknowledge as the basis of the divine plan and maintain that such a view is only real foreknowledge. Wesleyan Arminianism holds that predestination is the gracious purpose of God to save mankind from utter ruin. It includes provisionally, all men in its scope, and it is conditioned

solely on faith in Jesus Christ. Predestination is God's general and gracious plan of saving men, by adopting them as children through Christ.

Intimately connected with the foregoing idea is that of the divine foreordination. Wesleyan Arminians hold that while God absolutely and of his own inscrutable purposes foreordain the events in the natural or physical world, he has not done so in regard to occurrences relating to the moral sphere; especially that he has left the everlasting state of human beings contingent upon the result of their own action. They reject the doctrine of unconditional election. They especially object to the doctrine that God has absolutely predetermined the final destiny of individuals in the other world irrespective of their conduct. The Wesleyan Arminians further maintain that although man is universally born with corrupt moral affections and a depraved will, yet by virtue of the general atonement of Christ and the free bestowal of the Holy Spirit every person is graciously enabled so to resist the tendencies to evil as to lay hold upon the proffered means of salvation. They believe that the general convictions resulting from the ordinary influences of the Spirit are sufficient, for encouraging and leading the sinner to Christ. They admit that none will or can come to God without such divine drawings; but they believe that these are never withheld from the sincere and compliant soul. Therefore the ultimate force which determines any person in turning away from sin and towards

God is the human will itself. The self-determinative power of the human will is consequently a fundamental axiom in Wesleyan theology. Saving faith is a conscious surrender of the soul to God and a positive trust in the merits of Christ. This faith is indeed potentially the gift of God, but its exercise is the voluntary personal act of the believer. Conversion is the entire process of change from a state of condemnation and sin to one of pardon and holiness. Regeneration is a change in the moral affections resulting by divine power immediately upon this act of faith. They also teach that justification and adoption are simultaneous, the former being the act of pardon, and the latter the relation of filial acceptance. The man does not save himself, but simply, consents to be saved, depends upon Christ to be saved, and cooperates with God for his salvation.

Wesleyan-Arminianism maintains that this salvation is not only free and present, but also full. It is the privilege of every believer to be entirely sanctified in this life, and to live without actually feeling or committing any known sin. They do not claim Adamic or angelic perfection for any human being since the fall; but they nevertheless insist upon the privilege and duty of complete holiness in heart and life as not only necessary for heaven, but possible indefinitely before death. Holding the above views of the power and co-action of the human will at every stage of the redemptive process, Wesleyans universally believe that it is possible

for any fall from grace and ultimately perish.²⁸

Wesley had to clarify his understanding of the Christian life and process of salvation when he was accused of being an Arminian. To this charge he readily agreed. The three points of issue were whether predestination is absolute or conditional, whether grace is irresistible, and perseverance of the saints. Wesley claimed there is only one issue, that is predestination others are corollaries to predestination. Wesley did not accept unconditional reprobation. It was contrary to the witness of Scripture regarding the nature of God. He avoided the Pelagian view and he said there is a universal prevenient grace. This grace is given to all by the work of this grace and by accepting further grace of belief, which will lead one to justifying faith eventually to the assurance of their salvation. Another important element in Wesleyanism was the doctrine of Sanctification. Sanctification is the effect on the believer of the fact that God pronounces him just at the same time and by the same act by which God justifies the sinner and begins to sanctify him.

If Wesley had been content to preach these doctrines, the Methodist movement would never have become a separate denomination. The reason that led Methodism to become a separate denomination was Wesley's decision to ordain clergymen for his followers. He always insisted that his societies were by no means substitutes for the Anglican church,

²⁸The Rev. John McClintock and James Strong, Cyclopaedia of Biblical and Theological Literature, Vol. X (Grand Rapids; Baker Book House, 1970), pp. 395-397.

but rather were complementary to it. He found the need of leadership in supervising Methodism in the Colonies and he ordained others for this leadership. In the later years they separated and became a new denomination and they followed Wesley's theology.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

In his Disputation, which includes the entire department of Theology, Arminius had clearly and pointedly defined his position and expressed his conviction. On the whole these writings are a fine testimony to his learning and acumen. The doctrine of predestination belonged to the fundamental teachings of the Reformed Church, but Arminius did not accept the view which was asserted by Calvin or his Adherents. Arminius would not follow a doctrinal development which made God the author of sin and of the condemnation of men. He taught conditional predestination and attached more importance to faith. He denied neither God's omnipotence nor His free grace but he believed that it is his duty to express the Biblical teaching of the free will of man and the truth of the doctrine of sin. His followers expressed their convictions in the famous five articles which they set before the state.²⁹

The Arminians were the fathers of toleration. Amongst its earliest representatives are found stalwart advocates of religious freedom and they were ready to suffer for their views. Calvinism was just opposite to toleration. Sometimes

²⁹ Samuel Macauley Jackson, Ed. The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopaedia of Religious Knowledge, Vol. I (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1908), p. 297.

one may get the impression that Calvinism was a militant group at least in the early days. Calvinistic instincts and ideals were aristocratic rather than democratic in relation to ethical authority. Both groups had different connections with the politic also. In England the Laudians were Arminian, and the Parliamentarians Calvinistic. The natural tendencies of Arminianism to toleration can be traced in the Latitudinarian's teaching of the Cambridge Platonists, who were greatly influenced by the writings of Arminian scholars. They were conspicuous for their advocacy of freedom of inquiry, their toleration of diversities of opinion, their genial temper in controversy, their effort to bring about a reconciliation between theology and philosophy; all these are evident. Some people have the notion that Arminianism denies the Divine power because of its emphasis on man. This is not true. Calvin deliberately subordinated ethics to dogmatics. From the Protestant point of view this was fundamentally reactionary; it was scholastic. The true ethics, and the only ethics consistent with the essential Protestant principle, must be based upon the inward compulsion of conscience, not upon any external authority. The fundamental principles of Arminianism have wrought harmoniously with the processes of ethical development, which are based upon the manifold ideals and constraints of the moral consciousness of the individual. The Arminian emphasis on human freedom and personal responsibility, gave a new impulse to the awakening movement towards foreign missions. If the

Atonement was universal, and the salvation of the whole race possible, then it is our responsibility to let others know about it. And thus the missionary emphasis was given priority.

Arminianism took hold of and discussed great religious doctrines which are essential to personal salvation. It cleared away the mystery, the mental and spiritual darkness surrounding the old Calvinistic doctrine of predestination and reprobation. The pious life and the serious study of the Scripture led Arminius to form his theology in line with the early church. Arminius was brought up in Calvinism. But his studies led him to question the validity of that doctrine.

In essence Arminianism was a mediating position between Hyper-Calvinism and Pelagianism with its emphasis on the goodness of man and his ability to save himself. Unfortunately in the course of the succeeding centuries Arminianism in Holland inclined more and more to Socinianism and Pelagianism. It was true in England also. This was a departure from historical Arminianism. One of the less appreciated, but influential services rendered by Arminianism was its advocacy of equity and human freedom.

For some unknown reason, the Augustinian controversy did not cause much interest in the Eastern Church. However, in the seventeenth century, the doctrine of the Eastern Church was fully declared; and the peculiar system of Calvin was expressly condemned as opposed to its belief from the earliest period. Cyrillus Lucaris, a native of Crete, having traveled through Europe, embraced Calvinistic opinions while

outwardly professing the orthodox creed of the Greek Church. He later became patriarch of Constantinople. He then published a confession of faith, or one was published under his name, in which Calvinistic opinions were distinctly avowed. In relation to this new theology two synods were held at Constantinople in which Cyril was anathematized, and it is even said that he denied upon oath that he was the writer of the heterodox creed. His opinions were more fully examined in the Council of Jerusalem in 1672, in which he is accused of the grossest dissimulation and wickedness. The council indignantly denied that light and darkness, or Christ and Belial, have any more concord than the "heresiarch Calvin" and the Eastern Church.³⁰

It is clear from the above summary that the Eastern Church continued to hold its early belief. From this study it is clear that Arminianism maintained the original Catholic faith of the early church. But because of its toleration to other beliefs and its similarity of certain principles with others, the enemies of Arminianism labeled it as heretical. Another thing should be noted in this study is the importance of the life and character of Arminius in relation to the development of theology. His life was entirely different from Calvin and Augustine. He developed his theology not because he was confronted with some heathen ideas as Augustine or

³⁰H. Orton Wiley, Arminian Dogmatics (Pasadena: Pasadena College, n.d.), pp. 24-25.

like Calvin who went to study law and then converted to Christianity. Arminius was brought up in a pious Reformed faith. He lost all his family and relatives because of Catholic and Protestant enmities. But he never expressed any ill-feeling about anyone. I believe that God has used this man to let the world know the truth that "for God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that, whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have Eternal Life." (John 3:16).

God in Jesus Christ made provision fully for the salvation of all those who by repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, accept the terms, and all who do thus accept are eternally saved. All who rebel against God, and refuse to accept Jesus on the terms of proffered mercy, sink under Divine wrath and are eternally lost. The teaching and the promotion of these truths is the place of Arminianism in Protestantism.

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