

# *A COMPARISON BETWEEN CALVINISM AND ARMINIANISM*

by  
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## **I. Sovereignty of God**

### *A. Calvin*

1. God as a being reflected in life and experience
2. God working through varying attributes:
  - a. Justice
  - b. Mercy
  - c. Love.
3. God developing history
  - a. Determining the outcome and process of history
  - b. Establishing the elect
  - c. Centering his concern on the elect
  - d. Random determination

(A God having no real set of guidelines for establishing history; Totally free to use men as his toys with no respect to their worth; God/Man Relations: a. Man becomes a puppet, b. Man is placed in slave relationship. A God who is all powerful and all creative: a. God who establishes good and evil, b. God whose creation becomes his anti-type, c. God who predetermined all acts of his creation and controls these acts).

### *B. Aminius*

1. God's essence is spiritual
  - a. It is a spiritual essence denoting perfection (Col. 1.16)
  - b. This differs from corporeal essence

Therefore God cannot be perceived through corporeal senses, God does not have a form or body like man who is corruptible, God is *auarxos kai auastios*: without beginning and without cause either external or internal

  - c. He is without composition because he is without external cause
  - d. He is without component parts because he is without internal cause
2. God is the infinity of Being and is void of all limitation and boundary
  - a- He is infinite with regard to CMC: Eternal
  - b. He is infinite with regard to place: Immensity
  - c. He is infinite with regard to presence: Omnipresent

3. God's Understanding
  - a. He understands all things and everything both past and future as well as present
  - b. He understands the distinct connections and relationships of the universe, including reason, imagination, and enunciation (Rom 11.33)
4. God has infinite knowledge
  - a. This comes from his own essence except for evil which is known indirectly by the opposite of good things.
  - b. His knowledge is certain and cannot be deceived
5. God's will is directed toward a known good (Ps. 5. A, 5)
  - a. God wills his own Essences and Goodness, Himself.
  - b. God wills all things by the extreme judgment of his wisdom: First, He wills to make them, Second, He makes them, Third, He is affected toward them by His will because they have some similitude to His nature (Gen. 1.31; John 12.23)
  - c. Through His will God is the cause of all things, yet so that when He acts through second causes, He does not take from them their peculiar mode of activity but suffers them according to their own mode to produce their own effects

## **II. Free Will or Total Depravity**

### *A. Calvin*

1. Man in his present state despoiled of freedom of will
  - a. Man is a slave, either to sin or to God
  - b. Man can do nothing to improve his condition
2. Man is totally depraved
  - a. This total means the whole of his being is affected by sin
  - b. This relates to his body, soul, mind, and will
3. God made man perfect, with a free will
  - a. Adam in sin destroyed freedom for the entire human race
  - b. Adam's offspring have the ability to make choices, but they do not have the ability to choose spiritual good over evil
  - c. Because of Adam, men are born in sin and start life spiritually dead
4. Man is dead in sin and can do nothing to convert or prepare himself to receive spiritual good.
  - a. Man can have no fellowship with the Creator.
  - b. The reign of sin is universal.
  - c. Man cannot repent or believe on his own.
  - d. Man is a child of the devil.

### *B. Arminius*

1. Man, when created, was given a portion of knowledge, holiness, and power
  - a. This allowed him to understand, consider, will, and perform good
  - b. This could be done only through assistance of Divine Grace
  - c. Man in his fallen state is incapable of doing good. (It is necessary for him to be regenerated, Regeneration comes through God in Christ by means of the Holy Spirit, For this purpose God gave his Son. (John 3.16)
  
2. God's call is a gracious act
  - a. A supernatural life in Christ comes through repentance and faith on man's part.
  - b. If man heeds the call, God and man can be reunited (Man then participates in the glory of God, Man then participates in his own salvation).
  - c. This call is made by the Holy Spirit (Spirit works externally through preaching, Spirit works internally to convict the heart).
  
3. Man may reject grace and resist the Spirit
  - a. This is caused by wickedness and a hardened heart.
  - b. Thus, comes the judgment of God.
  
4. God made d covenant with man dependent on man's acceptance of faith.
  - a. If man accepts he will receive the promise.
  - b. If he rejects he will receive punishment.
  
5. Free will cannot begin without grace.
  - a. Grace is necessary to illuminate the mind.
  - b. Grace sustains man against the flesh, world, Satan.
  
6. God gives man the ability and power to .will his own way.

### **III. Conditional or unconditional Election**

#### *A. Calvin*

1. Man after the fall became sinful, perverse, corrupt
  - a. If man is given free will, he will follow the god of this world.
  - b. Man cut himself off from God and has no right to enter back
  
2. God chose certain individuals before the foundation of the world
  - a. He could have chosen to save all or some
  - b. He determined to save some
  - c. God's choice was not based on any human response
  - d. Man cannot question God's choice (He has no right, He is a sinner, therefore his fallen condition is justified)
  
3. Election should be viewed as an aspect of God's saving purpose and not salvation
  - a. Election saves none.

- b. Election merely marks those destined for salvation (God elects, Christ saves, Spirit secures).
- c. Election is based on the sovereign mercy of God

*B. Arminius*

1. God sought before the foundation of the world to save the elect.
  - a. The elect include all who believe in Christ.
  - b. The believers are foreknown by God but not predetermined.
  - c. They are predestined only in the fact that they have chosen to believe
2. God prepared merited punishment even for the elect.
3. Election is an net- necessary to those who are elect.
4. Christ is the sacrifice for sins—universal.
5. Election can be made only through the blood of Christ.

**IV. General Atonement or Limited Atonement**

*A. Calvin*

1. Christ's redeeming work was of infinite value.
  - a. If God willed, it could have saved all men.
  - b. It requires no obedience of man.
  - c. It is limited not in value but to whom it applies.
  - d. The elect will have faith and repentance because of the Spirit's work.
2. Redemption was designed to bring about God's purpose of election.
  - a. Christ's death guarantees salvation for the elect.
  - b. Man is saved by God, not of himself. Scriptures read: Christ came to save sinners, not sinners to save themselves, Christ enabled people to be reconciled to God.

*B. Arminius*

1. Christ's redeeming work was of infinite value.
  - a. It made it possible for all men to be saved.
  - b. This atonement is based on the covenant of God with man (Man must believe, It is affective only when man chooses to accept its conditions).
2. Atonement is limited.
  - a. Atonement is not universal in respect that -all men shall be saved, just that all men can be saved.
  - b. It is conditional upon belief.
  - c. Christ's death does not guarantee salvation for anyone.

## **V. The Resistible or Irresistible Call**

### *A. Calvin*

1. The call is for all men.
  - a. Only the elect will accept.
  - b. Man is sinful by nature and will not respond.
2. The elect receive an inward call from the Holy Spirit.
3. God is responsible for this call and its success.
  - a. To put part of the responsibility on man would limit divine power.
  - b. God is not dependent on man for success in his work.
4. Man receives a: New. Heart, New walk, New creation
5. Faith and repentance are gifts given to the elect
6. God's grace cannot fail.
  - a. God is perfect.
  - b. It always results in salvation of the elect.

### *B. Arminius*

1. God's Atonement is limited to those who believe.
  - a. Belief is not forced onto man.
  - b. Belief comes through man's will.
2. Man is free to accept or reject the Spirit's call (but not the consequences)
  - a. God limits himself to allow man this freedom.
  - b. God made man a thinking, reasoning creature.
  - c. If man is not free to accept, then God limits his creation, and his glory.
3. Until the sinner responds, the Spirit cannot work in the man.

## **VI. Perseverance of the Saints**

### *A. Calvin*

1. The saints are chosen before the foundation of the world.
  - a. If God elects them, man has not free will, then they will remain elected.
  - b. They are predestined and have no control over their own destiny.
2. Some may profess Christ who are not of the elect.
  - a. This implies that they are not set apart by the Spirit.

- b. These people will indeed fall away, since they never received (They do not fall from grace because they never had grace, They fall because sin continues to separate them and God destined then to the judgment).

*B. Arminius*

1. Christ never claimed eternal security for man.
  - a. Man has free will to accept, to reject, and to accept and then reject.
  - b. Man need not have anxiety concerning falling (Satan, the world, or sin cannot cause his fall unless he willingly yields, Man can fall away only by his own act).
  - c. Those who are on the rock (Church) can fall (While on earth they are being built and founded, Man falls by resisting the continuation and confirmation of the builder).
  - d. The elect can fall but they-cannot be deceived. (Matt. 24.24; 10.32)
  - e. If a man wholly falls away, he cannot be restored is thought by some; however, the branches can be grafted on (Rebaptism is not necessary, If a branch does not bear fruit, it is broken off because of unbelief).
  - f. The seed of God is immortal but can be removed from the hearts of those who receive it.
  - g. Sheep cannot be taken out of the hands of the Shepherd but they can leave of their own accord.

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