

# JACOBUS ARMINIUS' THEOLOGY AND ITS INFLUENCE THROUGHOUT HISTORY

BENEAMIN MOCAN \*

**ABSTRACT.** This paper attempts to analyze Jacobus Arminius's theology from a different perspective than usually addressed, in order to stress the merits of his theology. This is especially necessary because theologians like Calvin and Luther, both living in the same century, were given much more credit than Arminius, which in our opinion ill-favours both history and Arminius' theological work. Thus, this paper will mostly deal with the 16 and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries political and religious background, as well as the core of Arminius' theological input. We consider these parts to be essential for a holistic understanding of Arminius, and a proper understanding of these two sides can bring about a better understanding of his theological influence throughout history. These steps will reveal how one could come to appreciate his theological inquiries. The last part of our paper focuses on the influence of Arminius' theology especially on the Pentecostal movement. Although, in general, his theological influence is received pessimistically in contemporary theological circles, the present study strives to show the need to differentiate between Arminius' own theology and that of his successors. This step will hopefully inspire the reconsideration of Arminius' core theology, which, contrary to the popular understanding, does not emphasize the human being, but the person of God.

**KEY WORDS:** Reformed theology, Arminianism, Calvinism, free will, God's sovereignty, predestination

## **Preliminary remarks**

Most probably, Jacobus Arminius (1559/60-1609) Latinized his name after the first century Germanic leader, who is known by his resistance to the Romans. After the death of both his father and mother (Oudewater 1575), Arminius was adopted by Theodorus Aemilius and sent to school in Utrecht. Upon Aemilius' death, Arminius was then sent by Rudolph Snellius to study at Leiden, where he began his studies in 1574, in an atmosphere of a biblical piety, a superstitious sacramentarianism, and from a humanistic perspective. He remained at Leiden University until 1582, whereupon he went to Geneva to study under Theodore Beza.

Arminius returned to the Netherlands when he learned that his relatives were massacred by the Spaniards, soon after moving to Rotterdam, where his theological abilities helped him to gain some friends and support. He studied at Leiden, Geneva (under Beza), Basel, Padua and Rome. In 1588 he was

\* BENEAMIN MOCAN is Ph.D candidate in theology at "Aurel Vlaicu University" in Arad, Romania. E-mail: benimocan@gmail.com.

ordained as a pastor in Amsterdam. Because of his new understanding on the matter of predestination, he was accused of Pelagianism and of disloyalty to the Confession of the Church. Francis Junius, one of his professors in Leiden, as well as William Perkins helped him to better shape his understanding of the doctrine of predestination (Cross and Livingstone 1997: 107). In 1590 he married Lijsbet Reael, an aristocrat, and so entered the circle of the city' leaders.

Arminius believed that exercising pastoral offices, rather than theological wrangling, facilitated the minister's holiness. It seems that his life as a pastor and a dedicated father and husband had some influence upon his theology. This is how Studebaker emphasizes his character:

He had a gentleness and humility of spirit which knew the difference between exploding a faulty argument and attacking the person who expressed it, even while his adversaries persistently practiced the latter art. It was clearly the desire of Arminius to avoid division within the church. He did not want to construct his own brand of theology, but to call the church back to its theological foundations. (Studebaker 2012: 14)

McDonald also holds that Arminius was "a peace-loving man" (McDonald 1967: 840). He was elected president of the University of Leiden, and in 1608 he published his most mature work, the *Declaration of Sentiments*. Although many of those who encounter his work consider him an ignorant when it comes to Calvin and his writings, it seems that Arminius appreciated Calvin's *Commentaries*:

I recommend that the *Commentaries* of Calvin be read... For I affirm that in the interpretation of Scripture Calvin is incomparable, and that his *Commentaries* are more to be valued than anything that is handed to us in the writings of the Fathers... so much so that I concede to him a certain spirit of prophecy in which he stands distinguished above others, above most, indeed, above all. (McDonald 1967: 840)

Arminius was and often is misunderstood, that is why there is a need for a proper understanding of Arminius, the Reformer (Bangs 1961: 156). His appreciation towards Calvin, the Belgian Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism, and the fact that he expressed his loyalty to the Dutch confessions show that Arminius sought harmony in these matters. He wanted to remove the ambiguities in the Dutch confessions, as well as review the Belgian Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism on the basis of what he gathered from his intensive study of Paul's epistle to the Romans. Unfortunately, he never had the chance to do that (Larsen 2003: 19). He stands very close to Calvin on the issue of man's helplessness and desperate need for God's grace and favor in order to be saved. Crucial for his theology was the issue of

predestination. Despite the expectations of many who heard or even read about him, he did not deny predestination; much to the contrary, he held it at the core of his soteriology (Bangs 1961: 163-166).

Arminius has to be considered a Reformed theologian. In the first part the paper has this particular task: to demonstrate that Arminius was a Reformed theologian and not a heretic as he usually is considered to be. Muller also states that "Arminius ought to be considered as a 'Reformed theologian' despite the debates over his theology during his tenure at Leiden and despite the decision of the Synod of Dort" (Muller 2008: 20). He wanted to correct the Reformed theology, not to abolish it. In this respect we have to stress the issue of his adhered to the Reformed faith, and not the theological differences between him and Calvin (Muller 2008:22). Muller's main idea is that Arminius should be appreciated as a Reformed theologian rather than a heretic who eagerly refuted and condemned the Reformed faith. The first step towards understanding the then times is to approach he historical background of the Dutch nation in the second half of 16<sup>th</sup> century and the first half of 17<sup>th</sup> century, as this will unfold an important factor which contributed to the solving of said religious controversy.

### **Netherlands' historical setting in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries**

Between 1520 and 1580 the Low Countries passed through a series of religious influences. The decade of 1520s brought the influence of Lutherans, then the radical Anabaptists in 1530s, and finally in the 1540s the Calvinist influence which lasted longer. Because of the growing of the Protestants, the Council of Trent (1545-1563) proposed a renewal of the Inquisition. Philip II (1556-1581) was summoned to accomplish this throughout the Low Countries, even through the means of persecution (Van Doodewaard 2007: 142). As known, at the time of Arminius' birth, Philip II of Spain was ruler of the Netherlands, and because the Protestants were rapidly spreading, it was felt that they threatened Spain's dominion over the country. Interestingly enough, there was little separation between church and state in those days, and as it happens there was much turmoil between the political and the religious spheres (Aring 2012).

In this period Calvinism spread quickly throughout the country. Because there was a fear of a Protestant domination, a clear delimitation between the northern Protestant side (the Union of Utrecht) and the southern Catholic side (the Union of Arras) appeared. In the Northern part the church shifted from Catholicism to Protestantism, namely Calvinism. This was the religious background in the 1590's when the Arminian/Calvinist controversy arose. The wealthy people from Holland saw that the struggle with Spain caused some economic problems to their trade system. Thus, they were supporters of the reconciliation between their province and Spain. Because of their

understanding and their interest in getting richer, they were more flexible on the matter of theological issues.

The Act of Abjuration (1581) gained their independence. Thus the Reformed faith became the country's official religion. It seems that this attraction of Calvinism for the nation of Holland during the 16<sup>th</sup> century can be motivated by their effort in attaining national independence (McDonald 1967: 839). These efforts, the initial dissatisfaction against the rigid Calvinism, and the variety of views of predestination, all of them are telling that the Netherlands were independent and united not only on religious means, but also on political ones. The church adopted the Presbyterian form of government, which included the separation of the church from state's authority. The Dutch Reformed church subscribed to the Belgic Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism. Moreover, the Reformed faith was foremost promoted in the country through the creation of Reformed universities such as those in Utrecht, Leiden, Franeker, and Groningen (Van Doodewaard 2007: 143).

Arminius was a man of his time. Although he was not a fan of controversies and disputations, the exegesis of Romans did not give him peace. Thus, he began to preach a different teaching than the one which he initially had, i.e., the strict doctrine of Calvinism. His goal was never to disqualify the Reformed faith, but rather to revision the Confessions in the light of this fresh understanding of the Scripture. Arminius wanted a National Synod through which the Confession should be revised in the light of biblical truth, but he and his friend Wtenbogaert "got only two supporters for the idea of a synod that would have the Bible as its sole basis". This was because "to them a revision of the Confession was out of the question" (van Leeuwen 2009: xiv). As expected, Arminius found strong opposition on this matter. The most prominent theologian who opposed him was Gomarus, who hold tight the Calvinistic doctrine of absolute predestination (McDonald 1967: 839). The debate between Arminius and Gomarus lasted until the former's death. The religious battle between these two theologians was therefore long and tough, and it is not the goal of this paper to survey in detail this debate.

However, there is a surprising element which could bring much clearness to the present argument. The debate between Arminius and Gomarus was so heated that the political scene was in danger. There was a constant fear for a beginning of a civil war within some parts of the country. Obviously, this fact threatened the welfare, the stability, and more important, the hardly achieved independence of the country. The "peace and justice" motto was in danger to become history. After securing their independence, they gradually replaced the coins illustrating Philip's portrait, titles, and motto. This firstly happened in Zeeland, Holland, and Utrecht. Though they replaced the coins, for years they continued to use Philip's title and motto, especially

because their belief in the divine right of the kings. However, after the Peace of Ghent (1576), a new was introduced, namely 'Peace and Justice', with reference to the commitment which all the states took, to protect their liberty (Aring 2012). Being conscious of these facts, Gomarus knew what he had to do. Arminius was appreciated by the high public officials, on one hand because of his marriage and on the other hand because he pleaded for a good relationship with Spain. Thus, Gomarus made use of the political tensions that this controversy has caused, and "though Arminius seemingly won the arguments and appeared in a favorable light to those who followed the discussions, Gomarus gave the impression that Arminian doctrines would disrupt the national unity that was being accomplished through strict Calvinistic belief" (McDonald 1967: 839). This political factor was decisive during the controversy, and played a decisive role in the condemnation of the followers of Arminius as heretics. After the death of Arminius, the controversy between Arminians and Calvinists followed its course.

The followers of Arminius, the Remonstrants, encouraged a lot the Erastian understanding of the relationship church-state. Not only they encouraged it, but after 1610 people from the churches began to feel and to see the results of that way of thinking. For example, if they were unhappy with the teachings of the pastor, they found themselves in the situation in which they could not remove him from the office. Or, in other cases the pastor who were devoted to the standards and the confessions of the Reformed Church were forbidden to preach. Two of their representatives were Johannes Uytenbogaert and Hugo Grotius. They assiduously supported the supremacy of the States over the church (Van Doodewaard 2007: 147). This political factor did not do any good towards a solving of the controversy, but it continuously contributed to a growing tension between them.

Conrad Vorstius was a sympathetic of Arminius thought, but he went beyond of it towards Socinianism. He was removed afterwards from the office. Simon Episcopius, a sympathetic to Arminius' thought, succeeded Gomarus as professor of theology in 1612. Meanwhile, in Amsterdam the tensions continued to increase. Because of this, in 1610 the followers of Arminius' stream of thinking, represented by Uytenbogaert and Episcopius, gained official recognition and protection against the Reformed church. They formed a document called *The Remonstrance*, which stated five points in opposition to Calvinism: (1) God had predestined those who live for blessedness; (2) Jesus Christ died for all people; (3) the product of human free will is saving faith; (4) the grace of God is not irresistible; (5) the believers may fall away from their salvation (Van Doodewaard 2007: 148).

The state representatives encouraged a toleration of the Remonstrant movement within the country and among the people. There was a meeting

between six of the leading Remonstrants and six of the leading Calvinists (March 10-May 20, 1611) in which the opposite side presented their response to *The Remonstrance: The Counter-Remonstrance*. Another attempt of the States-General took place at Delft in 1613. It too failed. By 1616 the controversy reached a critical point. Both Arminians and Calvinist were ready to go to war with one another. The tensions were so strong that even Prince Maurice, sustained by Calvinists and King James I, and the statesman Oldenbarnevelt, supported by the Remonstrants, who once were political allies, were ready to fight against each other. Because the situation reached a critical point, the States-General summoned a national synod which would have the main goal to solve the controversy. Holland opposed the States-General vote to call a national synod. As a response, Maurice chose to isolate Holland politically and militarily (Van Doodewaard 2007: 150-151).

The Remonstrants were invited to participate to the Synod of Dort (1618-1619), but because they heard that their contribution will be limited and that they could not have any influence on the decisions of the synod, they refused. This council was not like the meeting from Hague (1611), where both sides had the opportunity to present their teachings and to refute the others. At this synod the Remonstrant side would have had only a succinct presentation of their thought (Van Doodewaard 2007: 153). Foreign theologians were called to attend this synod. Thus, the importance of it was growing since its character was not only national, but international. The refusal of the Remonstrants to participate forced the Calvinists to delegate Johannes Bogerman to present Remonstrant teachings. An important element is the decision that Remonstrant teachings would be analyzed solely in the light of the Scriptures, decision through which the Calvinists wanted to gain even more credibility among the people. Although in appearance all of the participants of that synod were convinced Calvinist, the discussions showed that there was certain lack of homogeneity. William Van Doodewaard states that “there was a substantial and clearly expressed diversity of opinion” (Van Doodewaard 2007: 156). At the end of their one hundred fifty three sessions in which they discussed especially about the *Five Articles of the Remonstrance*, the synod summarized five articles as a response against Remonstrant position. These points are called *The Canons of Dort*, and they were the definitive position of the Dutch Reformed church within the controversy. There were other matters that were discussed at the synod as the translation of the Bible from the Hebrew and Greek, children ministry, mission, church order, preaching and the training of ministers (Van Doodewaard 2007: 156). Most of the Remonstrants were excommunicated from the United Provinces (about eighty), while forty of them would conform their teachings to the Reformed church. The most influential political leaders of Remonstrant side were imprisoned. Oldenbarnevelt was tried by a tribunal and received the

death penalty. After the death of Prince Maurice (1625), the Remonstrants returned from exile, and became a small church in the Netherlands just like Lutherans, Anabaptists or Roman Catholics. Once the Remonstrants were back, the controversy continued, but this time in another way and at another level. The disagreements were related particularly to the topic of history. The 17<sup>th</sup> century marked the beginning of the Dutch Golden Age, when the concerns about the relationship between God and man were of major interest (Van Doodewaard 2007: 158).

The rumors of Arminius's boldness to propose a revision of the Confession had spread throughout Europe. Thus, several well-known theologians aligned against this "outrageous proposal". Among them are Sibrandus Lubbertus, Pareus in Heidelberg, Fayus in Geneva, Trogus in Bern, and the Consistory of the Paris Reformed Congregation. The Bremen delegates pleaded for a moderate understanding of predestination, for example Matthias Martinius. Beside Bremen theologians, another place where a middle course had been preferred was Saumur (in France) with its great theologian M. Amyraut (his "covenant theology"). It is well-known that,

generally speaking, "Arminianism" became the designation for a theology that doesn't put in the forefront the "total depravity" of man and his absolute reliance on divine Grace, but the human capacity to answer positively to God's offer of salvation, and the capacity to approach, at least partially, the mysteries of faith through reason. (Van Leeuwen 2009: xix)

### **Jacobus Arminius' theology**

Most of the people who read the quotation from above would agree with it. This is because most times Arminius is understood through the Arminianism's filter or the Remonstrant one. Because of this, Arminius is seen at least as a semi-Pelagian theologian or as a heretic who wanted to demolish the decrees of Calvinism. There is no doubt that Arminius is often misunderstood. The main reason for this fact is the lack of historical objectivity which usually characterizes those who try to understand him. It is the goal of this part of the paper to go beyond both the Remonstrant and Arminian teachings, and to hopefully give a fresh and different understanding of Arminius's theology.

One of the important doctrines that he discussed was the doctrine of predestination. Those who are not familiar with his writings and who judge him through the means of Arminianism or Remonstratism find the focus of his theology on the free will of humans, and their role in salvation. It is of utmost importance to state that Arminius did not deny predestination. On the contrary, he put it at the core of his soteriology. His *Declaration of Sentiments* reveals his understanding of predestination. Arminius defines predestination as

the decree of the good pleasure of God, in Christ, by which he determined, within himself, from all eternity, to justify believers, to adopt them, and to endow them with eternal life, “to the praise of the glory of his grace”, and even for the declaration of his justice. (Arminius 2008: 76)

It is very important to stress out that the first of these decrees has to do with Jesus Christ. Arminius saw the doctrine of predestination christologically. He speaks about the gracious predestination “according to the benevolent inclination of God in Christ” (Arminius 2008: 76). There are voices suggesting that there is a problem with the fourth decree, the one which introduces the idea of God’s foreknowledge, namely because of the danger of treating the fourth decree separately. This is what Arminianism did, and this is where its system falls short of Arminius’ proper teaching (Bangs 1961: 166-167). This is precisely why

[it] is important to understand that just as it is illogical and inappropriate to hold to the so-called fifth point of Calvinism, the perseverance of the saints, while discarding the four preceding tenets upon which it is based, so it is illogical and inappropriate to profess (or even to attack) the fourth of Arminius’ decrees, predestination based on divine foreknowledge, without understanding the previous three decrees on which it is based and which make it both possible and necessary in his theological system. (Studebaker 2012: 10)

Arminius did not reject the doctrine of predestination. He believed that the supralapsarian understanding of this doctrine magnifies the sovereignty of God in such a way that there is no place for human freedom. Thus he rejected its supralapsarian interpretation. Arminius had the courage to approach a sensitive issue: the relation between God’s absolute sovereignty and humans’ freedom of choice. In his understanding, Romans 7 speaks about man’s state before conversion. This fact evoked accusations of Pelagianism upon him. His praxis (as pastor) drove him to the idea that if the doctrine of predestination is pushed too far, it can easily bring into the life of the believers anxiety or resignation. Arminius distances himself from a so-called “double predestination” and narrows it only to those who will be saved. In his view there is no longer important to speak about infra- or supralapsarianism. Christ is the foundation of this doctrine, and one can speak accurately about it only by having this presupposition clearly established. Finally, he relates it to faith therefore election and salvation is seen as conditional. Arminius understood both predestination and faith as being linked to the will of God in Jesus Christ, or as he puts it “the vocation or calling [of God] to the communion of Christ and its benefits” (Arminius 2008: 79). He explains further on this eternal calling of God:

[...] is the gracious act of God, by which, through the word and his spirit, he calls forth sinful men, subject to condemnation and placed under the dominion of sin, from the condition of natural life, and out of the defilements and corruptions of this world, to obtain a supernatural life in Christ through repentance and faith, that they may be united in him, as their head destined and ordained by God, and may enjoy the participation of his benefits, to the glory of God and to their own salvation. (Arminius 2008: 79)

One can easily see that Arminius depicted God especially as a loving God. Another strong argument in this direction was that the image of God is distorted, if predestination is to be understood in this rigid way. "For him the image of God was at stake: above all he saw Him as a God of love and salvation, and opposed the idea that evil had, from the beginning, been part of God's plans", in his understanding evil being "constituted a human responsibility, but God had decided, 'in Christ', to offer his Grace to sinful Man" (Van Leeuwen 2009: xiii).

Calvin accentuated the following characteristics of God: his sovereignty, his majesty, his justice, his glory, his will, and his power. Viewing God in this way exposed him to some certain dangers in the area of God's relationship with the problem of sin. Many accused Calvin and his followers of making God the author of sin. He defended himself by emphasizing the distinctiveness between the Creator and his creatures. The Lutherans and the Catholics accused the Calvinists that they unintentionally make God the author of sin, and that anyone can deduce that by analyzing either their doctrine of predestination or the doctrine of providence.

Many who are familiar with the teachings of Arminius say that the most important difference between Arminius' thought and Calvinism lies on the matter of human role in salvation. This is indeed a crucial difference between these two theological systems, and it is of utmost importance to stress out that in Arminius' understanding, human's cooperation in salvation means strictly that one does not resist or oppose the grace of God which is freely offered to him/her.

As it was already mentioned, the usual understanding of the core of Arminius's theology is that it lies on the matter of human free-will. In his book, *Arminian Theology: Myths and Realities*, Olson regards this understanding of Arminianism's core as a myth. He says that "the true heart of Arminian theology is God's loving and just character; the formal principle of Arminianism is the universal will of God in salvation" (Olson 2006: 97). Olson states from the beginning that "the claim that all Calvinist believe in predestination and not free will is false, just as the claim that all Arminians believe in free will and not predestination is false" (Olson 2006: 97). He identifies a huge danger in understanding Arminianism as a discussion about free will. Many say that both its beginning and ending are about free will, *i.e.*,

that it is controlled by the belief in free will. This is totally false, because Arminius theology is based on more fundamental beliefs. The revelation of God in Jesus Christ is the hermeneutical key control of Arminius's theology, which ends up in describing the character of God as loving and just. The only thing that true Arminianism rejects is the idea that God absolutely controls all human decisions and choices (Olson 2006: 98).

In this brief analyses of Arminius's thought, the character of God as loving and just is the core of Arminius' theology. Neither the doctrine of predestination nor the free will of humans lies as a fundament of his thinking. In the last section of this paper, the goal will be to succinctly follow through the history this particular element of Arminius' way of thinking.

### **Jacobus Arminius' theological influence**

Olson states that "Arminius's relationship with Arminianism should be treated much as is Calvin's relationship to Calvinism" (Olson 2006: 22). Although they were not far in time from Arminius's death, his first followers, the Remonstrants, proved a slight departure from his teachings. As it was mentioned earlier, Arminius's view of the doctrine of predestination was Christ-centered. The foundation of this doctrine, in his thought, lies on Christ. This particular element was excluded from the Remonstrant document (1610). Because of the tension which existed between them and the Calvinists, the Remonstrants were absorbed by that controversy and took as foundation for their beliefs the same one as their opponents.

The followers of Arminius departed more or less from his theology. For example, John Taylor and Charles Chauncey were the representatives of the Arminianism of the head in New England. They drew close to Pelagianism, universalism and even Arianism. Jonathan Edwards opposed them, but in the same time he added to the habit of equating Arminianism with the liberalism of modern-day theology (Olson 2006: 24). Charles Finney (1792-1875) supported the idea of prevenient grace, but his Arminianism was closer to semi-Pelagianism. Finney denied the Arminian idea of human moral inability in spiritual matters, and maintained that the only thing that a human needs is the Holy Spirit's illumination of his/her reason. In the nineteenth century, Thomas Summers (1812-1882) and William Burton Pope (1822-1903) were the most influential Arminian theologians. Summers also shows (like Watson) the departure of the Remonstrants from Arminius' thought. Pope developed the concept of prevenient grace more fully than any other Arminian theologian before him. John Miley (1813-1895) was a more liberal Arminian theologian. He was confronted by B. B. Warfield.

At the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century, there arose two streams of Arminian movements: the liberal one (Methodists) and the conservative one (Nazarenes, Pentecostals, Baptists and so forth). By far, the most important

theologian who was influenced by Arminius was John Wesley. There exists a difference between Arminius, Arminianism, and Remonstratism. Only by acknowledging this one can accurately say if Wesley was a faithful representative of Arminius (Gunter 2007: 65). It is not clear if John Wesley ever read Arminius' works, but a trace of Arminian theology can easily be found in his works, especially that he himself entitled the Methodist journal *The Arminian Magazine* (1778) (Van Leeuwen 2009: xxi).

John Wesley described his preaching of the goal of Christian perfection as Arminian. His motivation is the rejection of a rigid Calvinism (Fahlbusch 1999: 128). In Olson's understanding Wesley's Arminianism "differ hardly at all from Arminius himself" (Olson 2006: 25). He defended Arminius on specific issues like original sin or justification by faith. Moreover, he wrote a treatise entitled "The Question, 'What is an Arminian?' Answered by a Lover of Free Grace" (1770). He stated at the end of this treatise the following: "How can any man know what Arminius held, who has never read one page of his writings?" There is no hint of Wesley's direct interaction with the works of Arminius (Keefer 1987: 88). There is no hint that Wesley did read at all Arminius writings. On the contrary, there is a strong suspicion that Arminius's works were not available in 17<sup>th</sup> century England. Most probably, Wesley knew about Arminius theology by reading Simon Episcopius and the English writings of the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Keefer 1987: 89).

There could be several links between Arminius's and Wesley's theologies like their understanding of evangelical soteriology, or their anthropology - because both of them speak about the twofold meaning of the image of God, or the issue of prevenient grace. Moreover, it seems that both of them agree on the matter of the free will, which cannot be initiated or exercised without God's grace. The most important link between Arminius and Wesley is without doubt the Christ-centered theology. Gunter sustains that "both Arminius and Wesley are very much christologically centered rather than divine decree centered" (Gunter 2007: 81).

Though there were mentioned several connections between these prominent theologians, it is important to bring into discussion another aspect in regard to Wesley's theology. Keefer specifies this in his article that Wesley's Arminianism is anglicized, personalized, integrative, and pastorally motivated (Keefer 1987: 88-96). It is right to say that Wesley's Arminianism had a distinctive English accent. It was influenced by several elements: religious, political, and theological. Thus, Keefer seems to be right when he states that "the Methodists would call themselves Arminians, but they were more the cousins of Arminius than they were his direct descendants" (Keefer 1987: 90).

## Conclusions

When one speaks about Arminius' influence upon the Pentecostal movement, usually he/she refers to the accent on the free will of men, i.e., his freedom of choice in the matter of salvation. In other words, in this theological way of thinking the human becomes the centre of theologizing, or the core of it. This was not the case of Arminius, because the centre of his theology is not man, but God and his will to save humans in Jesus Christ. He looked to each doctrines of Christianity from this perspective. Besides, those who look at the Pentecostal movement through the lenses of Methodism, fit it into the framework of Arminianism, with special reference to Arminius' theology. In other words, the Pentecostal theology drinks from the streams of Arminius' thought. As we have already seen, Wesley's Arminianism had a distinctive British accent, and the historical data does not sustain otherwise. There are, indeed, certain theological ideas and glimpses extracted from Arminius' theology, but in time they all received a slightly different meaning. This is the reason why there exist an ongoing danger of Pelagianism within Pentecostal theology, and this is certainly why a reevaluation of Arminius' thought is mandatory.

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