

## An Evangelical Conversation

Because conversations between Arminians and Calvinists in the Evangelical camp can get vicious at times, creating not only disunity but bitterness and strife, I thought it might be fun to stage a fictional conversation between two believers that was a bit more civil. I wanted to get underneath the labels, and past the baggage and the straw-man arguments, and discuss the biblical principles involved. This particular conversation points out the similarities and differences between the two camps, and it highlights a number of common misunderstandings between them.

### *Background*

Technically, *Arminianism* refers to the points made in the *Remonstrance Articles* by followers of Jacob Arminius. Those articles were declared heretical by the *Council of Dordt* which met from 1618-1619. This particular conversation is between a *Wesleyan Arminian* and a Calvinist, not a heretic and a “true” believer. There were five primary points on which the original Arminians and the Calvinists disagreed, and they are the points that John Wesley largely adopted. Here is a little chart comparing each of the five points, describing the Arminian view in Wesleyan fashion.

<i>Arminianism</i>	<i>Calvinism</i>
<p><b>1. Free Will or Human Ability</b> Although human nature was seriously affected by the fall, man has not been left in a state of total spiritual helplessness. God graciously enables every sinner to repent and believe, but He does not interfere with man's freedom. Each sinner has the power to cooperate with God's Spirit and be regenerated, or to resist God's grace and perish. He may save himself.</p>	<p><b>1. Total Inability / Depravity</b> Because of the fall, man is unable by himself to believe the gospel in a saving way. The sinner is dead, blind, and deaf to the things of God; his heart is deceitful and desperately corrupt. His will is not free, it is in bondage to his evil nature. Therefore, he will not and indeed he cannot choose good over evil in a way pleasing to God. God must save him by first giving him a new nature.</p>
<p><b>2. Conditional Election</b> God's choice before the foundation of the world to save some individuals was based on foreseeing their saving response to His call. He selected only those whom He knew would freely believe the gospel as the prior and causative condition of their salvation.</p>	<p><b>2. Unconditional Election</b> God's choice rested solely in His own sovereign will. God gives faith and repentance to each individual whom He selected without an prior conditions. These acts are the result, not the cause of God's choice. Faith is a necessary condition but it is given by God.</p>
<p><b>3. Universal Atonement</b> Christ's redeeming work made it possible for everyone to be saved but did not actually secure the salvation of anyone. Only those who believe in Him are saved. His death enabled God to pardon sinners on the condition that they believe. Men were made salvable, but were not actually saved on the cross.</p>	<p><b>3. Particular Atonement</b> Christ's redeeming work was intended to save the elect in particular and fully secured their salvation. Christ's redemption secured everything necessary for their salvation, including the faith which unites them to Him. Faith is infallibly applied by the Spirit to <i>all</i> for whom Christ died, and only them.</p>
<p><b>4. The Holy Spirit Can Be Resisted</b> The Spirit calls inwardly all those who are called outwardly by the gospel invitation; He calls every sinner to salvation, but because man is free, he can successfully resist the Spirit's call and God's grace.</p>	<p><b>4. The Call of the Spirit is Irresistible</b> In addition to the outward call, the Spirit extends to the elect a special inward call that inexorably brings them to salvation. The Spirit graciously frees the elect sinner to cooperate, believe, repent, and willingly come to Christ because his bondage to sin has been ended.</p>
<p><b>5. Falling from Grace</b> Those who believe and are truly saved can lose their salvation by failing to maintain their faith. Arminians are split on this point; some hold that believers are eternally secure in Christ and can never be lost.</p>	<p><b>5. Perseverance of the Saints</b> All who are chosen by God, redeemed by Christ, and given faith by the Spirit are eternally saved. They are kept in faith by the power of Almighty God and thus will persevere in their faith to the end.</p>

John Wesley additionally taught something called *prevenient grace* to account for God's intervention in the lives of the elect. That's why Wesleyan Arminians actually have more in common with Calvinists than the chart above would suggest. His dear friend, George Whitfield (who was a Calvinist) tried to dissuade Wesley from what he considered a misunderstanding of Calvinism, and a misunderstanding of election, but to no avail. Wesley became widely influential in the U.S. through the zeal of the Methodist outreach. Because Wesley's flavor of Arminianism emphasized the American ideals of human liberty and self-determination, it came to dominate the theology of evangelicals in America.

Like Whitfield, I believe Arminianism is mistaken in its biblical interpretation and inconsistent in its conclusions, but that doesn't make it un-Christian. That's because it doesn't impact saving faith. And that's the thrust of this conversation between two Christian brothers who see God's grace differently exercised. I hope the give and take of this conversation is edifying, unifying, and illuminating not only for the fictional participants, but also for you the reader. - WHG

### *The Conversation*

For the Christmas Holiday, a local evangelical church held its annual pot-luck. Over punch and eggnog, a conversation began to brew between an Arminian and a Calvinist. This was typical fare any time the church gathered. Many in the congregation avoided this type of dispute. They didn't want to get entangled in needless bickering over the "finer points" of theology. Often the frustration and bitterness of such conversations produced outright animosity between the contestants, and it thoroughly confused any bystanders.

However, on this particular Christmas Eve the conversation was taking a very different turn. With sincerity, humility, and deference to one another, these two believers set about finding their common ground in Christ. They wanted to identify, if at all possible, how such divergent views might be reconciled in light of Scripture. The rest of the attendees listened nervously, expecting the worst. But these two sparred only with the intent to sharpen their swords, and not to pierce their brother. They chose to edify their listeners with speech that was wholesome and unifying rather than quarrelsome and divisive. Let's listen in.

*Calvinist:* Now, correct me if I'm wrong, but apparently we're agreed first, that we are depraved or corrupt enough that we never would have thought of coming to God if he hadn't put it in our hearts to begin with. Second, we're agreed that nothing we can do would merit God's forgiveness, but only what Christ has done: he has given us his righteousness to meet all the requirements of the Law, and he has offered his blood to atone for our sin so that we are completely forgiven. Third, we agree that we can add nothing to what Christ has done: we cannot earn, merit, or pay back the salvation that he has obtained for us, nor must we maintain our salvation – rather, God saves and keeps us. Fourth, we agree that all our hope for salvation and for an inheritance in the kingdom is dependent upon the grace and mercy of God alone. Is that about right?

*Arminian:* Yes. I think you've stated it correctly and completely. Now let me see if I can articulate where we apparently disagree. I hope I can do this without upsetting anyone. You believe that Christ died only for the elect in particular, while I believe he died for the world in general. You and I agree, however, that his sacrifice is infinite in value and would be perfectly capable of covering all the sins of mankind. We both believe the benefits of Christ's death are applied only to the elect and to no others, but we disagree as to the definition of the elect. You believe that it is a set number, never changing and eternally decreed by God before the foundation of the world. I believe it is a variable number based on whether someone will have Christ as his savior or not. And therefore you believe

that God sovereignly ordained who will and will not be elect, while I believe anyone can be elect; it is the responsibility of each person to respond to the gospel call. So you believe that we cannot lose our salvation, because we never had anything to do with gaining it. I believe that if we can choose to accept Christ as our Lord and Savior, then we can choose to reject Christ at any time. Yet we both agree that it is the work and the responsibility of the Holy Spirit to encourage and enable us to remain faithful. Is that a fair characterization of our similarities and differences?

*Calvinist:* For the most part, yes. I actually agree that it's the responsibility of each person to respond to the gospel call. I would add that we disagree as to the extent of our depravity and the effect of original sin. I would say that we are completely disabled and disinclined to come to Christ, while you believe that anyone has the capacity to respond to the gospel and come to Christ without a prior work of God. I think the difference must be small, because as I said earlier, we agree that God initiates in our hearts the desire to come to him. I think this is probably related to the timing of our regeneration. I believe that I cannot come to Christ, meaning I cannot hear or respond to the Gospel, unless God first unstops my ears, removes the scales from my eyes, and turns my heart of stone to a heart of flesh. Only then may I hear the gospel, see the kingdom, and turn to God for healing. He first makes me alive, and then I turn. As I understand it, you would say that we must first turn to God, and then he will regenerate us, turning our heart of stone to flesh, etc. Would that be accurate?

*Arminian:* Well, that's certainly in the ballpark. I actually agree with you that no one has the capacity to come to Christ without a prior work of God. That prior work is what a Wesleyan Arminian refers to as "prevenient" grace. It is universal in scope but limited in its effect. As you know, we have a number of differing views within the Arminian and Calvinist camps, and some melding of the two, but I think what we have said so far will do nicely for our purposes. I agree with you that Original Sin, Adam's sin, has largely disabled and disinclined us to any good. But Original Sin does not mean we are held accountable for any sin other than our own. The Bible makes it clear that we are no longer condemned for the actual sins of our fathers. As early as the writing of Deuteronomy, such an exemption was made clear; for example, look at Deut 24:16 and Jer 31:30.

*Calvinist:* Well, here's where I'm going to have to disagree. I think the exemption there is restricted to violations of the laws listed in Deuteronomy and Leviticus, and not to the sin of Adam. I say this because Mal 1:2-3 tells us that while they were still in their mother's womb, God hated Esau and loved Jacob, even though neither one had yet done right or wrong. How could that be, if the sin of Adam had not been imputed to each of them, and Jacob had not enjoyed God's favor despite his sin nature? Did God foresee Esau's future rebellion and hate him for it? I don't think so, because Paul quotes this verse in Romans 9:13 to prove his point that God has made a covenant with a chosen seed and not with all seed (Gen 3:15). It is a seed which is *identified* by faith but not *created* by faith.

*Arminian:* Nicely argued, but God's foreknowledge can't be ignored here. It's just as likely that this verse is merely pointing to the omniscience of God. He is not favoring one over the other based on anything these two had done in the womb, but it could definitely be based on something they would do later in their life – something that God foreknows. Specifically, Esau will later despise the spiritual inheritance that God has promised to Isaac's offspring, and so it passes to Jacob who yearned after it. And so this passage actually buttresses my argument that our choice is essential to the equation. It governs the flow of God's grace and blessings.

*Calvinist.* Wow. I didn't see that one coming. It seems to me that it's quite the opposite. Paul defines the elect as those who enjoy God's favor; and God's favor cannot be earned by us, and his favor is not owed to us for anything we have done. "God will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and

he will harden whom he will harden.” (Rom 9:18) Are you saying that our faith is the cause of his favor and mercy, and that our lack of faith is the cause of our hardening and condemnation? If so, then although both of us would say that faith *identifies* the elect, I would say that faith is the result of being elect, while you might say that being elect is the result of faith. I’m probably getting ahead of myself. We obviously differ as to how the elect are chosen. I’ll shelve that for the moment. We still agree that some folks are elect and some are not. I say that God elects us unconditionally, and you say that God elects us conditionally, and faith is the necessary condition. Even so, we both agree that without faith, it is impossible to please God. Faith, we agree, is a necessary *condition* of our salvation but it is not the *cause* of it. So let’s move on from here.

*Arminian:* Well said. And yes, faith is necessary to receive God’s favor and mercy; I don’t believe they are reserved ahead of time for some pre-selected group. Now we come to the encouraging part! Let’s look at our differences to see whether they may both be reconciled to Scripture, pretty much as you demonstrated just now. In other words, has God said something that we both agree has been said, and we merely disagree as to its meaning or its cause? I think we ought to be cautious here. We might be tempted to bend God’s word to make our case, imposing our own views on Scripture. I’m confident that neither of us would do such a thing. Shall we begin?

*Calvinist:* Absolutely. I also agree that there is danger, but I am likewise confident that God’s Spirit will illumine our journey. I think we ought to begin with the condition of man apart from Christ. I’m afraid that our different views of man’s unregenerate condition may lead to different views as to what Christ accomplished on the cross. I am convinced that man has no inclination or interest toward Christ until he has first been regenerated by the Holy Spirit. He is dead in his trespasses and sins. He is deaf and blind to the things of God. Either he wars with God, or he disbelieves God’s existence. How can he respond to the gospel call in this condition? You assert that all men are capable of responding to some degree, but I don’t understand where this capability comes from.

*Arminian:* I would respond, first, that being dead in our trespasses and sins does not preclude hearing the Gospel call. The Gospel itself opens ears and unstops eyes. The Gospel is the word of God, which does not return to him without accomplishing the purposes for which he sent it (Isa 55:11). On the other hand, it is the Holy Spirit who woos us to seek it out, receive it, and believe it. It is effective on some and not on others only because some *choose* not to believe it. But everyone is capable of believing it. You, on the other hand, say there is an un-elected group which is utterly incapable of believing it because God has disinclined or hardened them to the gospel call; and I would assert that he has done so against their will.

*Calvinist:* OK. That’s a good point. But the hardening or inability is not imposed by God in the moment of hearing the Gospel. Hardening is the natural effect of ongoing sin, and the after-effect of original sin. It affects our will as well as our reason. So I would not say that God has done anything to those who are hardened, and certainly nothing against their will. He has chosen not to relieve them of their natural disability. Everyone is born into sin. Over time, all are hardened by living in the bondage of sin. But God graciously chooses to liberate some from that bondage. At that point we are softened and made alive to the Gospel. To contrast that with your view, you say that all men are liberated by prevenient grace and yet only some are successfully wooed by the Spirit. I’m hard-pressed to distinguish the two in any practical way. The reformed view of unconditional election is that only the elect can receive the gospel because only the elect have been set free. The Arminian view of prevenient grace is that everyone has been set free, but only those who are wooed can receive the gospel. The effect seems to be the same. Let me ask you a question. Prior to receiving this prevenient grace, are we all unregenerate – are we all dead in our trespasses and sins? I’m a bit

confused here. You said that receiving such grace does not in itself regenerate us, meaning that our hearts are not changed by this prevenient grace. You say that only accepting Christ by faith will result in regeneration. So it seems to me that where we disagree is the timing of our regeneration, whether it is before or after our conversion. What you call prevenient grace, I would call regeneration. I think we're describing the same process that enables us, but we're using different labels for it. However, your process only provides an opportunity, while mine leads to salvation for the elect every time. Who receives prevenient grace in your view?

*Arminian:* Everyone receives it, but it is effective only for the elect. We both agree that all men are unregenerate prior to regeneration, by definition. You believe that regeneration precedes conversion, while I believe it follows conversion. So, as you suggested, the timing of regeneration is what separates us at this point. As to our need for the Spirit to prepare us, we are in complete agreement. You see, prevenient grace providentially guides us, convicts us of sin, and imparts to us not only the desire, but also the ability, to repent and to exercise faith in Jesus Christ. As such, every step of faith is an active response to God's prevenient action within the "elect." No one can wish to come to God, or even respond to the offered gift of salvation, without God's grace first enabling his response.<sup>1</sup>

*Calvinist:* I see, and we do agree about that. Then in your estimation, how are the elect determined? It seems to me, based on your description, that they are self-elected by coming to Christ. Otherwise, something must be keeping all men from responding to the wooing of the Spirit. Or maybe only some are wooed because hearing the gospel is a prerequisite to his wooing – obviously not everyone gets to hear the gospel. If that's accurate, it puts quite a burden on us to spread the gospel or else some will be lost as a result of our omission. That's a heavy responsibility for men to bear. It also makes God dependent on us to spread the gospel as well as to receive it, or else men cannot be saved. You described man as unable to respond without the help of God, and you said that God imparts to everyone "not only the desire, but also the ability." What then prevents every person from coming to Christ upon hearing the gospel? If all men are capable of responding to the gospel, then why is the Holy Spirit unable to woo everyone to salvation? I understand Arminianism teaches that without us, God *cannot* save us. He only makes us salvable. It is up to us to take advantage of the opportunity. I know that's a bit simplistic, but I'd love to hear your response to what I've just said.

*Arminian:* Wesleyan-Arminians do *not* say that "without us God cannot save us" but only that God "will not" save us. And I suppose you wonder why God won't save us, seeing that he can do what he chooses to do? It's because God desires people who want to live in a relationship of faith with him, and not automatons who have no alternative in the matter. Grace, in our understanding, is not an overwhelming and entirely irresistible gift. While elements of it are irresistible (for example, prevenient grace is received irresistibly), our response to that grace is not irresistible. In other words, grace enables our faith; it does not compel it. If grace were entirely irresistible, it would not be a gift but a commandment. In other words, the Calvinist doctrine of irresistible grace is not very gracious, if you will forgive the bluntness of my statement.

*Calvinist:* Simply because God has ordained some to salvation, it doesn't make them automatons or robots. Calvinism doesn't teach that at all. The Westminster Confession in Chapter 10 says that we come to Christ most freely, being made willing and able by God's grace. That sounds very much like your definition of prevenient grace. I suspect you think that it's illogical that God can inexorably call his people, and yet they come most freely. And I agree that it seems contradictory. Yet we find these kinds of seemingly contradictory statements side-by-side throughout Scripture. "No one comes to me

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.revneal.org/Writings/on.htm> Dr. Gregory S. Neal

unless my Father draws them” (Jn 6:44) “All whom my Father draws will come to me.” (Jn 6:37) “Without faith you cannot please God.” (Heb 11:6). “Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.” (Jms 4:8) “If you seek him, you will find him.” (1Chr 28:9) What are we supposed to make of this? If God is the initiator and finisher of our faith (Heb 12:22), and you clearly agree that he is, then to repeat my earlier question, how does prevenient grace fail to save someone?

*Arminian:* As I said, the universal application of prevenient grace *enables* but it does not *compel* the human response of faith. Christ died for the sins of all. Calvinist arguments which attempt to limit the meaning of the word “all” are unconvincing, it seems to me. There is nothing in 1Timothy 2:5-6, or in other related passages, about Christ dying only for the sins of “all the elect,” but rather for the sins of “all” as in “all people.” *Prevenient grace* flows from universal atonement. When Christ died for the sins of the whole world, the universal gift requires this initial grant of grace which enables the sinner to turn to God. This gift does not, however, involve “entire regeneration.” That is, this gift doesn’t save. It is a first step in the regenerative process, but it is *not* justification; it is not *saving* grace. Universal atonement does *not* require universal salvation. That’s because the application of the blood of Jesus for the sins of any particular, individual sinner does not occur *automatically*. Rather, it requires a human response. In this respect, it is important to differentiate between grace in prevenience and grace in justification: *prevenient grace* is the stage of grace which enables our response, but it does not forgive sin and it *does not save*. It leads to conviction of sin and it enables faith, but it does not compel our faith-response. *Saving grace*, by contrast, is the stage of grace which *actually* forgives sin and *does* save. *Prevenient grace* suspends the effect of the Fall upon the human will, which enables us to conform sufficiently to God’s Will that we can turn to God. *Saving grace*, on the other hand, eradicates the guilt and the effects of the Fall by placing within the believer God’s regenerating presence. The difference between the two stages of grace is found wholly in the recipient. They look different and they have different effects because they impact the believer at different points in the believer’s journey: one is prior to faith, and the other follows faith.<sup>2</sup>

*Calvinist:* This is fascinating! Thank you for being so explicit. You’re saying that there is a grace which makes us capable of hearing the gospel and exercising faith, and yet it is incapable of saving anyone; it is bestowed as a gift on everyone equally as a result of the cross; and what turns the faith that everyone is now able to exercise, into a saving faith, takes place wholly within the person who receives this prevenient grace. To repeat your comment to me, that doesn’t seem very gracious. I can’t think of anywhere in Scripture where it indicates a partial or ineffectual grace. The only idea in the New Testament that touches on that idea is the bestowal of the Holy Spirit as a down-payment or pledge. But if what you say is true, then God must bestow the Holy Spirit on everyone, or at least he acts on everyone. For some people, he might be effective, while for others he would not, depending on the quality or extent of that person’s faith. And so free-will, which I assume was also restored on the cross, makes each of us personally responsible to properly exercise our own faith. Those who do so will be saved, and those who don’t will not be saved. God’s sovereignty has made a path, and our free-will leaves it up to us to walk in it. Is that a correct understanding of your view?

*Arminian:* Well, tentatively, yes. But I’m a little nervous about the way you’ve set that up; I think you’re about to let the guillotine fall somehow (chuckle). You appear to be characterizing it as a doctrine of works, or that we have been returned to Adam’s condition in the Garden prior to the Fall, as Pelagius taught. I don’t mean to suggest that at all. If I may, I think you’re about to say that it sounds like, “Do this and live” (Lev 18:5). I’m not saying that. And yet it’s true in a way, as God tells us in Ezekiel 18:23 “Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked, declares the Lord GOD, and

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid, Neal

not rather that he should turn from his way and live?” And does he not say in Ezekiel 18:32 “For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord GOD; so turn, and live.” You have been suggesting that man has no choice and that only God has the choice. Yet passages such as these would seem to contradict the assertion that we have no choice in the matter. I know you’re fond of saying that “God is completely sovereign, and man is completely responsible,” but frankly, I don’t see how. There must be some point at which God’s sovereignty leaves off and man’s begins, so that man may freely exercise his will. He does come to God most freely, just as you acknowledged.

*Calvinist:* I think this discussion is really helping both of us, and even the folks who are listening. We’re striving to get a clearer understanding of God’s salvation which is held out to us. Maybe it will help us grasp the tension that exists between God’s will and man’s will. It’s hard to wrap our minds around the verse that says, “God works in us both to will and to act according to his good purpose.” (Phil 2:13) Yours is a more flexible or liberated view of that process, while mine could perhaps be described as a more rigid or restrained view of that process. If that’s all that separates us, then we needn’t argue over it. I would have said, very much as you have said, that all men are in bondage, and that God sets us free so that we may exercise our free will to come to him. He enables us to hear his gospel call, and to turn towards him. The difference then is the extent, timing, and effect of that liberation. You say that grace is partial and enabling, while I would say that it is complete and effectual. You say that it is universally granted, while I say that it is limited in its scope, affecting only the elect. But, in point of fact, we both agree that God enables us to hear, repent, and turn to him of our own free will. I say that the responsibility and activity is entirely in God’s hands, while you say that the responsibility and activity is entirely in man’s hands. So we would seem to be joined in a theological dance in which you are on one side of the line and I am on the other; yet the steps we perform, and the music we hear, is the same. Isn’t that a marvelous thing to realize?

*Arminian:* I hadn’t thought of it as being a matter of emphasizing one end or the other of the tension we both agree exists between God’s sovereignty and man’s free-will, but yes, I see that now. If I may go a little further, we could say that it is *because* you emphasize God’s sovereignty and man’s complete inability that you are driven to limit the extent of the atonement – after all, God is completely in charge of the process and man contributes and controls nothing. He simply receives the gift of salvation which is held out to him by exercising his faith; and even his faith is a gift that is bestowed only on the elect. On the other side of it, I emphasize man’s free-will, and so I am driven to establish a condition that limits the effect of the atonement or else everyone would be saved. And I do that because I view God’s sovereignty in the matter as provisional. It bestows an enabling grace and not an efficacious grace. He may offer everyone the gift of salvation, but it is up to men to accept or reject it. And that is the limiting factor.

*Calvinist:* Yes! That’s the difference in a nutshell. But which one is *right*? We agree that the atonement is infinite in value. As such, it is inherently capable of saving all men. But we admit that the Scripture teaches that all men are not saved. What then limits the atonement’s grace from being applied to everyone? Let’s see if I can summarize what we’ve said about that.

- I say that **God is the one who limits its application** to a pre-chosen elect, because man is unable to choose it for himself. God’s grace has completely saved every one of the elect, but only them. And every one of them is willing to be saved, without exception.
- You say that **Man is the one who limits its application** by choosing or rejecting the gift. All men are able to choose it, but only some will. God’s grace has made all men salvable, but he completely saves only those who are willing to be saved.

- In my view, Christ's work on the cross *finally* and *completely* cleared the debt of all the elect.
- In your view, Christ's work on the cross *potentially* clears the debt of all men, but finally and completely clears it only for those who choose to accept the gospel offer; these are the elect.
- I say that the work of the Holy Spirit is not only persuasive, but irresistible. He therefore works only in the elect, and he succeeds for every one of them.
- You say that the work of the Holy Spirit is merely persuasive, and resistible. He therefore works on all men, but he succeeds only in the elect.

In their outward effect alone, I think either view is entirely plausible. They both explain the process in a reasonable way. Our differences come down to our reading of Scripture – and we'll have to save that for another day. *But what would you say about those who cannot choose?* In part, I embrace the view that God's grace is irresistible because it accounts for the salvation of the disabled and those lacking the capacity to choose. And so the aborted fetus, those with profound Down's Syndrome, the mentally ill, the aged with Alzheimer's, those children who die in infancy, and anyone else who lacks the capacity or the opportunity for salvation, are saved by God's hand and not by their own. Their eternal destination is not in my hands as an evangelist, but in God's hands alone. That doesn't absolve me of the obligation to evangelize because I am God's designated means, but I do not and cannot control the outcome.

*Arminian:* That's an excellent point! And I agree!

*Calvinist:* You agree??! How can you agree?? If it's up to man to exercise the potential grace that God has bestowed on him, then how can anyone be saved who lacks the capacity or the opportunity to exercise it?!!

*Arminian:* God is sovereign.

*Calvinist:* But that's my whole point!

*Arminian:* Yes, I know. Curious, isn't it?