

Pelagian or Procrustean? Weighing Hugh Rock's Reading of George Fox and James Arminius

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Abstract

This article responds to Hugh Rock's recent attempt to locate Quaker theology in relation to Calvinism. Rock conflates George Fox's and James Arminius' doctrines and identifies them with a latter-day Pelagianism in conflict with the Augustinianism of their Calvinist opponents. This article corrects Rock's claims. The first part of the article clearly distinguishes Fox's doctrines from Arminius' and both Fox's (and other early Quakers') and Arminius' doctrines from Pelagianism. The second part of the article locates early Quakers' and Arminius' disagreements with Calvinism within the long tradition of debate between moderate and strict Augustinians.

Keywords

James Arminius, Augustinianism, George Fox, Pelagianism, Quaker soteriology, Hugh Rock

Introduction

Hugh Rock's 2017 article, 'Quakerism understood in relation to Calvinism', identifies the theology of Quaker founder George Fox (1624–91) as a reaction against his Calvinistic context and so as a seventeenth-century recapitulation of 'the ancient stand-off between Augustine and Pelagius', with Quakerism carrying the banner of Pelagianism. Rock's method is as follows: 'four theological propositions taken from the *Journal* of George Fox are first contrasted with propositions from John Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* and then correlated with those of James Arminius to confirm the Pelagian nature of [Fox's] theology'.¹ Rock is right

1 Rock, H., 'Quakerism understood in relation to Calvinism: the theology of George

to seek to locate Quakerism theologically with reference to Augustine and his Calvinistic heirs. He is wrong, though, in conflating Fox's and Arminius' doctrines and in pronouncing them Pelagian. Rather than finding the prototype for the clash of Calvinists against Fox and Arminius in 'the ancient stand-off between Augustine and Pelagius', we must look to the subsequent tension between Augustine's mature theology and that of those who sought to moderate it. This we shall do after examining the weaknesses in Rock's account.

Fox and Pelagianism

Rock rightly notes that Fox had the character of a prophet, not of a systematic theologian.² Nonetheless, he extracts from Fox's *Journal* four theological propositions: 'Salvation by merit' rather than by unconditional divine election; 'Christ died for all' rather than for a limited number preordained to salvation; 'Sanctification and the perfectibility of human nature' rather than the lingering imperfection of sinful human nature; and 'The Light and the subordination of scripture' rather than the subordination of personal revelations to scriptural authority.³

A careful reading of the supporting quotes from Fox's *Journal* raises concerns regarding Rock's handling of the first and third of these propositions. Regarding the first, 'Salvation by merit', Fox himself does not speak of human 'merit' before God, only of the conditionality of divine election upon humans' responses in accepting or rejecting the gospel:

And the priests had frightened people with the doctrine of election and reprobation, and said that the greatest part of men and women God had ordained for hell, let them pray, or preach or sing, and do what they could, it was all nothing if they were ordained for hell ... [But] did not God warn Cain and Balaam and gave a promise to Cain if he did well he should be accepted. For if those called Christians resist the Gospel ... is not here a fault, which fault is in themselves and the cause of their reprobation and not God.⁴

Rock allows that Fox sees this human response as preceded by 'the universal gift of grace'.⁵ But, by granting this point, Rock undermines his own claim of Fox's Pelagian pedigree: the doctrine of a human response enabled by preceding grace differs fundamentally from the Pelagian doctrine that humans by their own nature may do good and initiate (and so merit) salvation, *pace* Rock, who conflates the two.⁶

Fox', *Scottish Journal of Theology* 70 (2017), pp. 333–47 (333). Rock makes the same claim in his 'George Fox and theological liberalism', *Modern Believing* 58 (2017), pp. 29–39 (37).

2 Rock, 'Quakerism', pp. 334–35.

3 Rock, 'Quakerism', pp. 337–42.

4 Nickalls, J. (ed.), *The Journal of George Fox*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952, p. 316, quoted in Rock, 'Quakerism', p. 338.

5 Rock, 'Quakerism', p. 338.

6 Rock, 'Quakerism', p. 339.

Regarding the third proposition, 'Sanctification and the perfectibility of human nature', Fox indeed repeatedly claims that a state of Adamic sinless perfection is available in this life. This claim appears at first glance to agree with similar Pelagian claims. On closer inspection, however, the difference becomes plain. Pelagians asserted that all people are born into a state of Adamic sinless perfection, which they may maintain by choice.⁷ By contrast, Fox teaches that Christ may *restore* sinners to such a state: 'Christ came to destroy the Devil and his works ... and so to cleanse men from sin And Christ saith "be ye perfect even as my heavenly father is perfect" for he who was perfect comes to make man and woman perfect again and bring them again to the state God made them in.' And again: 'They that come to be renewed up again into the divine heavenly image, in which man was first made, will know the same God, that was the first teacher of Adam and Eve in paradise.'⁸

In addition, Rock's use of the second and fourth propositions is problematic for his thesis. The second proposition, 'Christ died for all', has no especially Pelagian connotation but is the common belief of the majority of Christians throughout history, including the majority of Augustinians.⁹ The fourth proposition, 'The Light and the subordination of scripture', likewise has no obvious connection to Pelagianism. Such a doctrine bears a closer resemblance to Montanism's claim that the indwelling prophetic Paraclete supersedes biblical revelation. Unfortunately, Rock's logic here and throughout his article appears to proceed as follows: Calvinism is Augustinian; thus any theology that opposes Calvinism must be Pelagian; Quakerism (and, as we shall see momentarily, Arminianism) opposes Calvinism; thus any and all particulars of Calvinist-opposed theology must be Pelagian. Inherent in this logic is the false dilemma that one's only two theological options are either a Calvinistic version of Augustinianism or Pelagianism. As we shall demonstrate below, such is not the case. This false dilemma is compounded with a fallacy of division that presumes that if one's theology generally conforms to a certain theological tradition, then one's every particular teaching must as well. Such fallacious reasoning neglects the possibility that Fox took doctrinal chickens from more than one henhouse.

Pennington, Penn, Barclay and Pelagianism

Confirmation of the non-Pelagian character of Fox's teachings comes from the writings of his allies in early Quaker leadership, Isaac Pennington (1616–79), William Penn (1644–1718) and Robert Barclay (1648–90). This is not to suggest

7 TeSelle, E., 'Pelagius, Pelagianism', in Fitzgerald, A. D. (gen. ed.), *Augustine through the Ages: an encyclopedia*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999, 2009, pp. 633–40 (633).

8 Fox's *Journal*, pp. 352, 358, 666, respectively, quoted in Rock, 'Quakerism', p. 340.

9 Russell, S., 'Atonement, extent of', in Davie, M., Grass, T., Holmes, S. R., McDowell, J. and Noble, T. A. (eds), *New Dictionary of Theology: historical and systematic*, London: Inter-Varsity; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2nd edn, 2016, pp. 80–81.

that Fox, Penington, Penn and Barclay all thought or spoke alike in every particular. It is to affirm, however, that they all shared a 'single Quaker theological culture'.¹⁰ As Arthur Roberts has concluded,

Despite a diversity of expression and conduct among early Friends, despite cultural and social differences, despite extravagant claims, there yet remains a steady testimony to the nature and work of Christ which commends itself to our serious review, a central conviction that Jesus Christ confronts man experientially, offering the pardon of God for sins and the power of God to cleanse from sin.¹¹

In short, the early Quaker gospel, from Fox forward, proclaimed divine grace toward sinful humanity, not divine recognition of innately good, meritorious humanity. This common theme recurs in works penned by Penington, Penn and Barclay.

Penington's *The Scattered Sheep Sought After* (1659) includes 'Some Propositions Concerning the Only Way of Salvation'.¹² The very first proposition asserts that 'there is no way of being saved from sin, and wrath eternal, but by that Christ alone which died at Jerusalem.' The second proposition teaches that salvation comes 'through receiving him into the heart by a living faith', not through the mere keeping of biblical commandments.¹³ These first two propositions debunk any notions of humanity's native perfection or salvation by merit. But Penington's next two propositions put even more daylight between Quakerism and Pelagianism. He insists that salvation comes into the heart by the sin-convicting 'light' of Christ's Spirit, firmly denying that the Spirit's 'light' is the same as natural human conscience:

The light of the fallen nature is darkness, can teach nothing of God. What any man learns now of the true knowledge of God, he learns by grace Man, by nature, is dead in trespasses and sins; quite dead, and his conscience wholly dark. That which giveth him the sense of his death, and of his darkness, must be another thing than his nature, even the light of the spirit of Christ, shining in his dark heart and conscience.¹⁴

Penington concludes his treatise with a 'Short Catechism' that reiterates how far he is from any thought of natural human sinlessness or ability to merit salvation:

QUESTION. *What is the estate and condition of all men by nature, as they are begotten of the seed of the evil-doer, and come out of the loins of the first Adam?*

10 Dandelion, P., *An Introduction to Quakerism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, pp. 13–79 (13).

11 Roberts, A. O., 'Early Friends and the Work of Christ', *Quaker Religious Thought 3* (1961), pp. 10–20 (19).

12 Penington, I., *The Scattered Sheep Sought After*, in *The Works of Isaac Penington*, vol. I, repr., n.p.; Quaker Heritage Press, 1995. Retrieved 16/06/2018 from <<http://www.qhpress.org/texts/penington/sheep.html>>.

13 Penington, *Scattered Sheep*, p. 111 (italics his).

14 Penington, *Scattered Sheep*, pp. 111–13 (113).

Answer. A state of sin and darkness; a state of death and misery; a state of enmity against God; a state accursed from God; exposed to his wrath and most righteous judgments, both here and hereafter.¹⁵

...

Q. *But can I do any thing toward my own salvation?*

A. Of thyself thou canst not: but in the power of him that worketh both to will and to do, thou mayst do a little at first: and as that power grows in thee, thou wilt be able to will more, and to do more, even until nothing become too hard for thee. And when thou hast conquered all, suffered all, performed all; thou shalt see, and be able understandingly to say, thou hast done nothing; but the eternal virtue, life, and power, hath wrought all in thee.¹⁶

...

Q. *How can I believe in [the Light]? Am not I dead?*

A. There is a creating, a quickening power in the light, which begets a little life, and that can answer the voice of the living power.¹⁷

...

Q. *How will this save me?*

A. By this means; that in thee which destroys thee, and separates thee from the living God, is daily wrought out, and the heart daily changed into the image of him who is light, and brought into unity and fellowship with the light, possessing of it, and being possessed by it; and this is salvation.¹⁸

Similar motifs to Penington's appear in William Penn's *Tender Visitation* (1677).¹⁹ Penn describes the default state of the human soul as 'defiled, and kept in captivity' by the devil, and as an 'evil and corrupt ground, which brings forth all evil and corrupt fruits'.²⁰ Deliverance from this wretched condition arises not from oneself, but from Christ, 'who has visited you with his saving light, whereby he has manifested your state and condition to you, and begotten a holy feeling in you, whereby you are become weary of your evil doings, and raises up a holy thirst in you after better things'.²¹ Penn does not simply ascribe the beginning of spiritual conversion to divine initiative and power, however; he also emphasises their abiding place in the lives of the converted. Quakers recognise this reality in their meetings by waiting in silence upon God, 'resting from [their] own *will* and

15 Penington, *Scattered Sheep*, p. 120 (capitalisation and italics his).

16 Penington, *Scattered Sheep*, p. 123.

17 Penington, *Scattered Sheep*, p. 125.

18 Penington, *Scattered Sheep*, p. 126.

19 Penn, W., *A Tender Visitation in the Love of God*, repr., London: Fry & Son, 1835. Retrieved 16/06/2018 from <<https://archive.org/stream/atendervisitati00penngoog#page/n4/mode/2up>>.

20 Penn, *Tender Visitation*, pp. 4–5.

21 Penn, *Tender Visitation*, p. 6 (Penn reiterates this point on pp. 7–9, 14–15).

workings', knowing that 'men, without Christ, can do nothing, as he has said [Jn 15:5]: for men cannot preach, men cannot pray, men cannot sing, as it ought to be; yea, men, without him, can do nothing to the praise and glory of God. For it is only the Son of God that glorifies the Father through his children.'²² The distinctive Quaker practice of silent waiting in public worship, then, militates against any scheme of salvation by merit rather than by divine grace.

We turn thirdly to Robert Barclay, who, as a trained theologian, systematised early Quakers' beliefs in his *Apology* (1676).²³ Rock nods to this work but does not consult it for light on Fox's doctrines.²⁴ This omission is regrettable, for Fox (and Penn) felt confident enough in the *Apology*'s exposition of their common Quaker faith that they distributed copies during their 1677 tour of Germany.²⁵ Barclay's *Apology* explicitly disavows Pelagianism:

All Adam's posterity ... is fallen, degenerated, and dead; ... from whence it comes that not only their words and deeds but all their imaginations are evil perpetually in the sight of God, as proceeding from this depraved and wicked seed. Man therefore, as he is in this state, can know nothing aright; yea his thoughts and conceptions concerning God and things spiritual, until he be disjoined from this evil seed and united to the Divine Light, are unprofitable both to himself and others. Hence are rejected the Socinian and Pelagian errors in exalting a *natural* light²⁶

Barclay goes on to reject not only 'the Pelagians and Semi-Pelagians of old', who held too rosy a view of the natural powers of fallen humankind, but also those who

run into another extreme, to whom Augustine, among the ancients, first made way in his declining age, through the heat of his zeal against Pelagius, not only confessing men incapable of themselves to do good, and prone to evil; but that in his very mother's womb, and before he commits any actual transgression, he is contaminate with a real guilt whereby he deserves eternal death; in which respect they are not afraid to affirm that many poor infants are eternally damned and forever endure the torments of hell.²⁷

According to Barclay, then, Quakerism agrees with Augustine on fallen humanity's total inability to initiate salvation but parts ways with him on the imputation of original guilt to infants.

22 Penn, *Tender Visitation*, pp. 10–13, 18 (10–11; italics his).

23 Barclay, R., *An Apology for the True Christian Divinity*, repr., Farmington, ME: Quaker Heritage Press, 2002. Retrieved 03/04/2018 from <<http://www.qhpress.org/texts/barclay/apology>>.

24 Rock, 'Quakerism', pp. 335.

25 Dandelion, *Introduction to Quakerism*, p. 53.

26 Barclay, *Apology*, preamble to prop. 4 (italics his); §§2 and 3 expound on these claims at length.

27 Barclay, *Apology*, prop. 4, §1.

Barclay goes on to teach that God, desiring all to be saved, has sent Christ to die for the sins of all. The consequence of Christ's unlimited atonement is that God's grace is operative in the hearts of all to draw them toward salvation, although not irresistibly. This universally operative grace is the 'Light' of Quaker parlance, the source of all positive human knowledge of and response to God.²⁸ Barclay again contrasts this position with, on the one hand, the Pelagians' and Semi-Pelagians' denial of humanity's universal bondage to sin and, on the other hand, Augustine's denial of God's universal will to save.²⁹

Barclay also cautions against the language of human 'merit' in salvation. In his discussion of justification, he critiques the use of the term both among Roman Catholics and by the early church fathers. Yet he does affirm that those who truly are justified will do good works, which God will reward 'of his own free grace'.³⁰

In sum, the early Quaker theology taught by George Fox and his colleagues Pennington, Penn and Barclay is neither Pelagian nor Semi-Pelagian. Nor is it strictly Augustinian, although the early Quaker view of the universal sinfulness and inability of fallen humanity concurs with Augustine's opinion. We move now to Rock's next claim: that Fox's theological propositions correspond with Arminius'.

Arminius, Fox and Pelagianism

To prove the congruence between Fox's doctrines and those of James (or Jacob or Jacobus) Arminius (1560–1609), and so their common Pelagianism, Rock appeals to a few of the section headings in Arminius' *Apology against Thirty-one Defamatory Articles*:

8. Sufficient grace of the Holy Spirit is bestowed on those to whom the Gospel is preached, whosoever they may be; so that, if they will, they may believe: Otherwise God would only be mocking mankind.

12. Christ has died for all men and for every individual.

13 and 14. Original sin will condemn no man.

16. The works of the unregenerate can be pleasing to God.

18. God undoubtedly converts, without the external preaching of the Gospel, great numbers of people to the saving knowledge of Christ He effects such conversions either by the inward revelation of the Holy Spirit, or by the ministry of angels.

29. Believers can perfectly fulfill the law and live in the world without sin.³¹

28 Barclay, *Apology*, props 5 and 6. Jn 1:9 is the key biblical text for the notion of a universal salvific Light.

29 Barclay, *Apology*, props 5 and 6, §9; cf. §17.

30 Barclay, *Apology*, prop. 7, §§2 and 3.

31 Nichols, J. and Bagnall, W. R. (transs), *The Writings of James Arminius*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977, vol. I, quoted in Rock, 'Quakerism', p. 343. In what follows, I shall use a more

Rock apparently takes these section headings to express Arminius' opinions. In point of fact, however, the headings are the accusations (the 'defamatory articles' of this *Apology's* title) made against Arminius and his friend Adrian Borrius.³² With a skilled solicitor's sleight of hand, Rock has presented a list of charges as the defendant's confessions! To ascertain Arminius' own true views, one must read his replies to these accusatory headings in the body of each section.

In his response to the eighth article, 'Sufficient grace ... is bestowed on those to whom the Gospel is preached, whosoever they may be; so that, if they will, they may believe', Arminius is concerned to keep the notion of sufficient grace 'at the greatest possible distance from Pelagianism'. He dislikes the expression 'if they will, they may believe' because it suggests that God's Spirit and grace remain inactive until the human will makes its choice. On the contrary, Arminius stresses that God's grace actively works upon the human will to move it to believe the gospel.³³ Later in his *Apology*, however, he grants that this grace is not irresistible.³⁴

Regarding the twelfth article, 'Christ has died for all men and for every individual', Arminius affirms that scripture plainly teaches that Christ died for the sins of all. This teaching should not be taken, however, to imply that all are already saved, for God has issued a decree of predestination that only believers will be saved (that is, election is conditioned upon grace-enabled faith). As for the next two articles, 'Original sin will condemn no man', they are directed against Borrius and particularly focus on whether infants are damned who die with original sin but without actual sins. Arminius defends his friend not by disputing the reality of original sin but by arguing that God mercifully refrains from imputing its guilt to such infants.³⁵

Arminius declares the sixteenth article, 'The works of the unregenerate can be pleasing to God', to be false if it means that a sinner untouched by saving grace can do good works that please God. If, though, 'unregenerate' means someone in whom God's Spirit has wrought conviction of sin but who has not yet completed the process of regeneration, then surely it is proper to claim that such a person's grace-enabled repentance and confession of sin are pleasing to God.³⁶ Arminius also protests that, in the eighteenth article, 'God undoubtedly converts, without the external preaching of the Gospel, great numbers of people

recent edition: Nichols, J. and Nichols, W. (transs), *The Works of James Arminius*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1986.

32 Arminius, *Works*, vol. I, pp. 733–38.

33 Arminius, *Works*, vol. I, pp. 764–65.

34 Arminius, *Works*, vol. II, p. 52. Den Boer, W., *God's Twofold Love: the theology of Jacob Arminius (1559–1609)*, Gootjes, A., (trans.), Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010, p. 110, perceptively notes that 'Arminius never appears to go farther than a double negative: grace is *not* irresistible. Furthermore, it is not grace itself that is not irresistible, but rather the way in which grace works'.

35 Arminius, *Works*, vol. II, pp. 9–14.

36 Arminius, *Works*, vol. II, pp. 16–18.

to the saving knowledge of Christ', the terms 'undoubtedly' and 'great numbers' are his accusers' exaggerations. Certainly it is possible for God to convert people by extraordinary means, but there are no uncontroversial examples of God's so doing. The ordinary means of conversion is the preaching of the gospel by the Church.³⁷

Lastly, concerning the twenty-ninth article, 'Believers can perfectly fulfill the law and live in the world without sin', Arminius denies that he ever asserted that believers could live sinlessly in the present age. Instead, he quotes from Augustine's anti-Pelagian writings in order to acquit himself of any suspicion of Pelagianism. Augustine himself allows that it is hypothetically possible for God's grace to enable a person to live without sin. Arminius respects Augustine's opinion but prefers to avoid dispute over the possibility or impossibility of perfect sinlessness in this life.³⁸

Now that we have uncovered Arminius' true positions from beneath his antagonists' accusations, let us compare them with Fox's propositions. Both men agree that salvation involves our grace-enabled response (what Rock unhappily calls 'Salvation by merit'). Both also concur on unlimited atonement. But Arminius' cautious treatment of sinless perfection and extra-biblical revelation as hypotheticals stands in the sharpest contrast with Fox's bold assertions that sinlessness and personal revelations should be normative for Christian experience. Rock's claim that 'Fox has stated the main grounds of the theology of James Arminius' is only half true.³⁹

We have also seen that both Arminius and Barclay explicitly distance their theologies from Pelagianism, whilst Fox, Penington and Penn implicitly do so as

37 Arminius, *Works*, vol. II, pp. 20–22.

38 Arminius, *Works*, vol. II, pp. 55–56, quoting Augustine, *De peccatorum meritis* 2.6; *De natura et gratia* 59, 60, 69. Cf. C. T. Bounds, 'Augustine's Interpretation of Romans 7:14–25, His *Ordo Salutis* and His Consistent Belief in a Christian's Victory over Sin', *Asbury Journal* 64/2 (2009), pp. 20–35. Note esp. n.13 (pp. 32–33) on the failure of recent literature (including Fitzgerald, *Augustine through the Ages*) to portray accurately Augustine's belief in Christian sanctification.

39 Rock, 'Quakerism', p. 342. A closer fit obtains between Fox's four doctrines and those of a later Englishman, the Arminian evangelical John Wesley (1703–91), whose doctrines of 'Christian perfection' and the inward witness of the Spirit are similar to Fox's third and fourth propositions. Still, there are differences: Wesley explicitly denies the possibility of Adamic perfection and firmly subordinates personal revelations to Scripture: see his 'A Plain Account of Christian Perfection', in *Works of John Wesley*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 3rd edn, 1986, vol. XI, pp. 366–466 (esp. 414–16) and 'Letter to a Quaker', in *Works of John Wesley*, vol. X, pp. 177–88, respectively. Cf. Findlater, J., *Perfect Love: a study of John Wesley's view of the ideal Christian life*, Edinburgh: Leith, 1914; repr., Salem, OH: Schmul, 1985, esp. ch. 9, 'A Quaker Element'. Barclay's discussion of Christians' perfection (*Apology*, prop. 8) avoids Fox's language of restored Adamic perfection; cf. Dandelion, *Introduction to Quakerism*, pp. 22–24, 37–38, 54–56 on how Quaker perfectionism moderated between Fox and Barclay. When Wesley evaluates Barclay's *Apology* in his 'Letter to a Quaker', he offers no critique of Barclay's account of perfection.

well, thus defeating Rock's primary purpose in comparing Arminius' views with early Quakerism. An end to the stale rumour that Arminius was a Pelagian (or Semi-Pelagian) is long overdue. Thankfully, the recent renaissance in Arminius studies is correcting the old caricature and rightly relocating him within the wider stream of Reformed theology.⁴⁰ Surely a tradition expansive enough to include Karl Barth and T. F. Torrance, whose theologies overlap at key points with Arminius', must have room for him as well.⁴¹

Fox, Arminius and Augustinianism

Rock's efforts to fit Fox and Arminius into the role of latter-day Pelagians to Calvinism's Augustine only succeeds in squeezing them into a Procrustean bed. Yet Rock comes close to the truth of the matter by revisiting Augustine's last days. Rather than lying in the bishop of Hippo's clash with the Pelagians, the real precedent for Fox, his fellow early Quakers, and Arminius appears in its aftermath.

During Augustine's lifetime, Prosper of Aquitaine (c.390–after 455) stoutly defended the bishop's doctrines against views much later classified as 'Semi-Pelagian'.⁴² In time, however, Prosper left off propounding Augustine's positions on God's limited salvific will and unconditional predestination, even whilst continuing to promote the Augustinian stance that enabling grace is necessary for any proper human response to God.⁴³ Prosper became a staff member

40 See, e.g., Clarke, F. S., *The Ground of Election: Jacobus Arminius' doctrine of the work and person of Christ*, Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006; Olson, R. E., *Arminian Theology: myths and realities*, Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2006; van Leeuwen, T. M., Stanglin, K. and Tolsma, M. (eds), *Arminius, Arminianism, and Europe*, Boston: Brill, 2009; den Boer, *God's Twofold Love*; Gunter, W. S., *Arminius and His Declaration of Sentiments: an annotated translation with introduction and theological commentary*, Waco: Baylor University Press, 2012; Stanglin, K. D. and McCall, T. H., *Jacob Arminius: theologian of grace*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012, esp. pp. 6–20; Stanglin, K. D., Bilby, M. G. and Mann, M. H. (eds), *Reconsidering Arminius: beyond the reformed and Wesleyan divide*, Nashville: Kingswood, 2014.

41 Arminius and Barth: Clarke, *Ground of Election*, p. 162; Brian, R. E., *Jacob Arminius: the man from Oudewater*, Eugene: Cascade, 2015, ch. 10. Arminius and Torrance: Van Kuiken, E. J., 'Convergence in the "Reformed" Theologies of T. F. Torrance and Jacob Arminius', in Stanglin, Bilby and Mann, *Reconsidering Arminius*, pp. 113–35. On the question of the boundaries of Reformed theology, see van den Brink, G. and Smits, J., 'The Reformed Stance: distinctive commitments and concerns', *Journal of Reformed Theology* 9 (2015), pp. 325–47.

42 On the invention of this term during the Reformation to describe then-current positions and its subsequent projection back into the fifth century, see Backus, I. and Goudriaan, A., "'Semipelagianism": the origins of the term and its passage into the history of heresy', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 65/1 (2014), pp. 25–46. I thank Dr Thomas McCall of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, USA for alerting me to this article.

43 McHugh, M. P., 'Prosper of Aquitaine', in Fitzgerald, *Augustine through the Ages*, pp. 685–86; Barclift, P. L., 'Predestination and Divine Foreknowledge in the Sermons of Pope Leo the Great', *Church History* 62 (1993), pp. 5–21 (5–10).

and theological advisor to Pope Leo the Great (reigned 440–61), who furthered the shift that Prosper had begun. For Leo, grace is as indispensable as Augustine taught, but God desires the salvation of all and so has showered this grace on all humanity through the work of Christ.⁴⁴ As Philip Barclift has explained,

Grace precedes every act of the will, since grace was infused in the restored will by means of the redemption. Leo postulates a 'general redemption' of all humanity which has created the possibility for everyone to attain salvation. He explains that Christ restored human nature to its original dignity and flooded it with his grace, in such a way that the freedom of the will was also restored. In the aftermath of this marvellous act by the Son of God, every human being now has the freedom and the ability to respond in faith to Christ. Now the onus falls on the human individual to cooperate willingly with God's grace in order to complete that salvation.⁴⁵

Fox, Penington, Penn, Barclay and Arminius would find their own doctrines foreshadowed in Barclift's description. Leo acknowledges divine foreknowledge and predestination, but in the pope's hands these do not predetermine individuals' destinies. God foreknows humans' free choices without causing them, and God predestines the plan of salvation, not the identities of its recipients.⁴⁶ This is just the view that Arminius takes eleven hundred years later.⁴⁷

Prosper and Leo remained firmly Augustinian in their overarching theological commitments even as they modified Augustine's doctrine of predestination, just as in the twentieth century Barth and Torrance kept their Reformed credentials whilst reforming Calvin's doctrine of predestination. The great church historian Philip Schaff has termed Prosper's and Leo's position 'moderate' or 'milder Augustinianism' or even 'Semi-Augustinianism'. Whatever its preferred label, it found conciliar confirmation at the Second Synod of Orange (529) and, through the influence of Pope Gregory the Great (reigned 590–604), entered the mainstream of medieval theology.⁴⁸

Yet this mild Augustinianism has repeatedly faced opponents in stricter Augustinians such as Isidore of Seville (560–636), Bede the Venerable (672–735),

44 Barclift, 'Predestination', pp. 10, 16–18.

45 Barclift, 'Predestination', p. 17, citing Leo's *Sermons* 12.1; 20.3; 22.2; 27.6; 28.3; 30.4; 33.1–2; 53.3; 62.4. For further on Leo's nuanced Augustinianism, the grounding of his universal salvific vision in Christology, and analyses of his sermons and other writings, as well as his historical setting, see Neil, B., *Leo the Great*, London: Routledge, 2009 and esp. the excellent work of Green, B., *The Soteriology of Leo the Great*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

46 Barclift, 'Predestination', pp. 11–16.

47 For Arminius' most systematic exposition of his doctrine of predestination, see his *Declaration of Sentiments I* (*Works*, vol. I, pp. 653–56; now also available in a fresh translation from the original Dutch in Gunter, *Arminius and His Declaration of Sentiments*, pp. 135–38).

48 Schaff, P., *History of the Christian Church*, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996, vol. III, pp. 866, 870. Cf. McHugh, 'Prosper', pp. 685–86; Barclift, 'Predestination', pp. 20–21.

Alcuin of York (c.732–804) and Gottschalk (c.808–67) during the Middle Ages; John Wycliffe and Jan Hus in the fourteenth century; and Calvinists from the sixteenth century to the present.⁴⁹ The clashes of George Fox, his allies and Jacob Arminius with their Calvinistic countrymen must be seen as recent bouts in the millennium-and-a-half-long struggle between milder and stricter Augustinians. Like the original Jacob wrestling with Esau in Rebekah's womb, the contest is fraternal, and one dares to believe that the older (strict Augustinianism) may serve the younger.

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⁴⁹ Schaff, *History*, vol. III, p. 870. Rock, 'Quakerism', p. 347 n.74, lists Nicholas Hemingius (1513–1600), Peter Baro (1534–99) and Moses Amyraut (1596–1664) among those within the Reformed tradition who have sought to move away from strict Calvinism: that is, strict Augustinianism. In point of fact, however, Hemingius (also known by a number of variants, including Niels Hemmingsen) was Lutheran, not Reformed. See 'Hemmingsen, Niels (1513–1600)', *CERL Thesaurus*. Retrieved 11/04/2018 from <<https://thesaurus.cerl.org/record/cnp01365602>>.