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James Arminius: "Reconciling Religious Dissensions Among Christians"

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Memory, Meaning & Faith

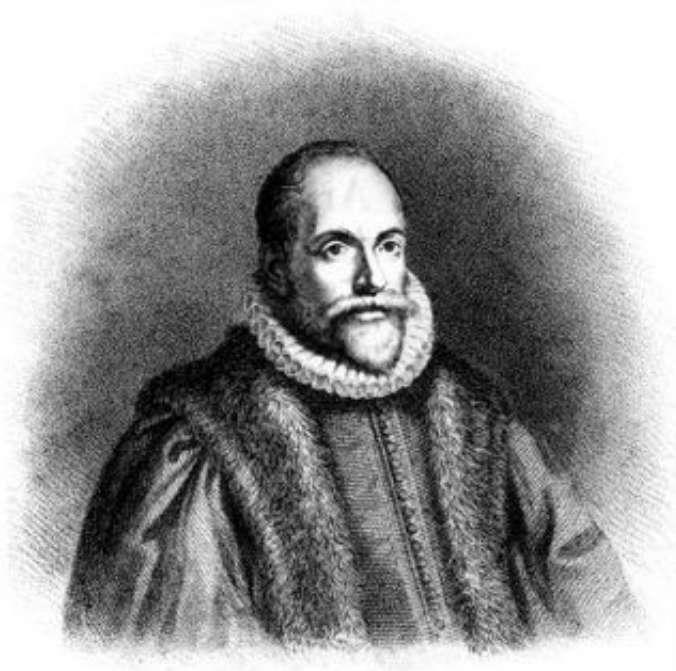
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July 07, 2010

James Arminius: “Reconciling Religious Dissensions Among Christians.”



James Arminius

From the decisions of a Synod . . . agreement will be obtained on all the doctrines . . . supported by clear testimonies from the Scriptures. But if . . . agreement cannot be obtained . . . It must become a matter of deep consideration, whether a fraternal concord in Christ, cannot exist between the two parties, and whether one cannot acknowledge the other for partakers of the same faith If either party refuse to extend to the other the right hand of fellowship, the party so offending shall . . . prove from plain and obvious passages of scripture, that the importance attached to the controverted articles is so great as not to permit those who dissent from them to be one in Christ Jesus. . . . After having made every effort toward producing a Christian and fraternal union, if they find that this cannot be effected, The right hand of friendship should be extended by both parties, and all of them should enter into a solemn engagement, . . . to abstain . . . from all bitterness, evil speaking, and railing; to preach with gentleness and moderation . . . ; and, . . . to let their zeal be under the direction of knowledge and . . . kindness. . . .

But the Synod will not assume to itself the authority of obtruding upon others, by force, those resolutions which may have been passed Though this Synod appears to have done all things conscientiously, it is possible, that . . . it has committed an error Such a diffidence and moderation of mind will possess greater power, and will have more influence, than any immoderate or excessive rigor can have, on the consciences both of the . . . dissidents, and of the whole body of the faithful For these disturbers will either then (1) desist from creating further trouble to the Church by the frequent, unreasonable and outrageous inculcation of their opinions Or, (2) . . . they will scarcely find a person willing to lend an ear to teachers of such a refractory and obstinate disposition. If this should not prove to be the result, then it must be concluded that there are no remedies calculated to remove all evils The mild and affectionate expostulation of Christ our Savior, must also live in our recollections. He addressed his disciples and said, "Will ye also go away," (John 6:67).


Questions

- What are some of the issues discussed in our church on which you think that (1) there is clear biblical testimony or (2) there is no clear biblical testimony?
- Is the denial of the right hand of fellowship the same as a use of force? Are there times when Christians must deny the right hand of fellowship while extending the right hand of friendship?
- Are we sometimes more friendly to persons with whom we disagree when they are not members of our church? Should we be just as friendly when there are disagreements within our church?

[Click here](#) to read Martin Hanna's thoughts on reconciling one of histories longest doctrinal controversies, the nature of the atonement.

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