Calvinism
Arminianism or...
Another Option?
A Hubmaierian/Molinist view of Soteriology

James Douglas Lashley
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The Eternal God, to Whose Glory I undertake this Work, guide my mind and my hand in the conduct of the same.

~ Moïse Amyraut
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Preface

The following is the result of a journey I embarked upon awhile back. Propelled by a drive to attempt to understand the nature of salvation and seeking the view that would, first and foremost, align with Holy Scripture and measure up to the character of Almighty God. After having read voluminously, interacting with individuals holding various positions, meditating on the subject, and much prayer, I have come to hold the conclusion found herein.

To be sure, I am only a lay theologian and have no credentials to warrant this small work as being regarded as a professional treatment. Most of the knowledge I have gained is due to self-study and what has been graced to me by way of the Holy Spirit. The ideas and concepts contained and forwarded within this work are not my own, but are the results of much greater and intelligent men blessed by God, on whom shoulders I stand in writing this. My effort here has simply been to effect a simple synthesis of their thought into my personal belief system. If I have erred at any point, it is from the Lord God I ask forgiveness.

That being said, I believe the view I outline within this meager work, to be faithful and correct. I now set it forth for your consideration.

In Christ,

James Douglas Lashley
“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.” (John 3:16-17, ESV)
I. Introduction

For nearly five hundred years a debate has raged within Protestantism. The same relates to the nature of salvation and all the corollaries that entails. Most people who have a basic understanding of theology will recognize this as the Calvinism/Arminianism debate. Numerous books, scholarly thesis papers, and sermons have been dedicated to this issue. I myself have been caught up into it. One side will demonize the other by casting pejoratives, making generalizations, even going so far as to denying Christian fellowship. No doubt there are extremes on both sides that probably cross the line into heresy, but some would blanket the whole soteriological system of the opposing side as such. This is saddening, and one must question the person who would declare heretical a brother or sister who definitely holds to the essentials of the faith.

As stated, I myself became involved in this debate being a proponent of Calvinism. Although, not to the point of being as rabid as I had observed from others. I was more of somewhat passive, as I did view the opposing side as legitimate Christians. I, for the most part, would state it was not one of those hills I was willing to die upon. I have since studied and learned of another option. One I had not even knew existed, and appears more feasible and capable of fitting with scripture to a fuller degree than either Calvinism or Arminianism. Before I reveal this third option, I would like to lay out some particulars regarding the first two beginning with Calvinism.
II. Calvinism

Calvinism is named for the French theologian John Calvin (1509-1564). John Calvin was a contemporary of Martin Luther and Huldrych Zwingli and therefore was one of the Reformers of the Church. Calvin was heavily influenced by Augustine, especially regarding predestination and the absolute sovereignty of God. He developed a vast systematic theology which he composed and published in 1536, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Many denominations are adherents to his theology such as the Presbyterian, Reformed, and some Baptist churches.

Upon Calvin’s death, he was succeeded by Theodore Beza (1519-1605). Beza is credited by some as having taken Calvin’s theology and extending the speculative nature of the same, in particular, the development or articulation of supralapsarianism. *Supralapsarianism* (Supra=before, lapsarian=the Fall) is the view within Calvinism that says, God decreed to save some and reprobate others
before the Fall of Mankind. This view would come to be known as *Hyper-Calvinism*. Needless to say, this was not a very well received idea and there are not very many proponents of this position today. The unpopularity of this teaching would result in a backlash and would lead to the development of another system called Arminianism.
III. Arminianism

Arminianism is named for Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609) who was a Dutch theologian. Arminius studied under Beza in Geneva and it was there he became acquainted with Beza’s supralapsarianism. Arminius had become a pastor in Amsterdam when was approached by city officials, who took issue with Beza’s system. He was asked to make a refutation of the same. Arminius obliged and undertook a study of the Scriptures, to which he concluded Calvinism is not supported by the Bible. Arminius contended predestination and unconditional election made God the author of evil. Arminius and his followers attempted to gain acceptance of their views but were met with resistance by Calvinists.

a. The Five Articles of Remonstrance

Arminius would pass away in 1609; however, his followers would continue his work and furthered his theology. Between 1609 and 1610 these followers drew up a petition called the Five Articles of Remonstrance. These followers, in turn, would
be called the Remonstrants. Within this petition were five points that outlined their theology:

1) *Election is conditional* on foreseen faith. God chooses those whom He foresaw would first choose Him.

2) *The atonement of Christ was unlimited* in extent. Christ bore the sin of the whole world.

3) *The total depravity of mankind*. Meaning, man is not as depraved as possible, but that sin has tainted every aspect of his being and rendered him unable to seek God on his own.

4) *Prevenient (preceding) Grace* that is resistible. Due to man's total depravity, God has extended a preceding grace to all, the same being capable of penetrating the effects of original sin. Thus, making it possible for man to respond to the gospel. Likewise, man can ignore, or resist, the call of the Holy Spirit to Christ.

5) *The possibility of apostasy*. The believer's salvation is contingent upon their continued faith in Christ. It is possible for the true believer to make "total shipwreck of their faith." However, this is a final and complete condition and such an individual will have no future interest regarding their salvation in Christ.

This petition would not sit well with the established Calvinistic church who in turn countered with their own.
IV. **TULIP**

The result would be the *Synod of Dort* (1618-1619) held in the city of Dordrecht, Netherlands. The same included representatives from France, Switzerland, Great Britain, and Germany. From this council would emerge the iconic acronym of TULIP. The Calvinist counter to the Five Articles of Remonstrance:

1) **Total Depravity**, virtually the same as the Arminian position.

2) **Unconditional Election**, God elects individuals to salvation apart from any foreseen works on their part. This includes denying election based upon any foreseen faith of the individual. God, in His sovereignty, has chosen whom He will with regard to salvation.

3) **Limited Atonement**, Christ's sacrifice is sufficient for the world, but it is only efficacious for His elect.

4) **Irresistible Grace**, Those whom God has determined to receive salvation, will be unable to resist the Holy Spirit's provocation to faith in Christ.

5) **Perseverance of the saints**, The elect of God will endure in their faith unto the end and will not, in anywise, completely apostatize from the Christ.

The Remonstrants would also be condemned as heretics during this synod.

So far, we have seen an abbreviated display of the development of both systems. Much more could be stated in regards to these two systems. However, I will now turn to some of the variants within both.

V. **Variants**

With regards to Calvinism, I have already discussed supralapsarianism. However, the majority view within Calvinism would be known as Infralapsarianism. *Infralapsarianism* (Infra=After, lapsarian=The Fall) holds that God allowed the Fall of Mankind to occur, and afterwards elected some to
salvation allowing the rest to go to their own demise. In this way it is posited that God is not the author of evil.

Moise Amyraut

a. Another subset of Calvinism is known as Amyraldism, or Amyraldianism. The same is named after Moise Amyraut, shown above, (1596-1664). Amyraut was a French theologian at the Academy of Saumur in France. Amyrauts’ theology differed in that he did not hold to limited atonement, but deemed it to be universal in scope for any and all who would believe. However, he still held to foreordination in which the elect only received saving (particular) grace.[1] This position created a paradox, which would appear as if God were throwing life preservers to all within a sea of sin, but only retrieving some. Given this paradox, the same is relegated to, “one of God’s mysteries.”
b. The great puritan preacher, Richard Baxter, held to a similar view. Although with a governmental approach to redemption as opposed to the penal substitutionary view, it was an attempt to synthesize between Calvinism and Arminianism. His system came to be known as Baxterianism.

However, Baxter has been charged with erecting a system known as neonomianism, in which the moral law has passed and is now replaced with the law of the Gospel. It is possible to enter into a salvic covenant with God through Christ. But, for the covenant to remain intact, the same is predicated upon the individuals imperfect obedience. Baxter writes in 'Aphorisms of Justification',

"In our first Believing we take Christ in the Relations of a Saviour, and Teacher, and Lord, to save us from all sin, and to lead us to glory. This therefore importeth that we accordingly submit unto him, in those his Relations, as a necessary means to the obtaining of the benefits of the Relations. Our first faith is our Contract with Christ....And all Contracts of such nature, do impose a necessity of performing what we consent to and promise, in order to the benefits....Covenant-making may admit you, but its the Covenant-keeping that must continue you in your privileges."[3]

Today, many who call themselves four point Calvinists would fall into the Amyraldian category.

c. Arminianism, as well, has its variants. The aforementioned form is still in
existence and has recently begun to be referred to as *Classical or Reformed Arminianism*.\(^4\) The same still holds to the Five Articles with the exception of allowing for some deviation from the fifth point (apostasy). One can be a Classical Arminian and still hold to perseverance of the saints. This being that there is appears to be some mediating points in both views, and the possibility of a conflation of the two. Classical Arminians are probably most represented by the Free Will Baptist denomination.

d. The *Wesleyan-Methodist*, or *Methodism*, form of Arminianism had its beginnings with John Wesley (1703-1791) *pictured above*. Wesley was an English Anglican minister who began his ministry in England. He then brought it to America where at first he encountered trouble. However, it would eventually take root and flourish. Particulars with regard to the theology of Wesley were:

1) *Entire sanctification* - Christians could be entirely sanctified in this lifetime and live a holy life.
2) Governmental view of the atonement - Christ’s death was not penal and substitutionary, but an act where God showed His displeasure with our sin. Whoever accepts Christ’s suffering will be saved.

3) Loss of Salvation - Salvation is capable of being lost but then regained. Sin can cause a regenerate believer to lose salvation, but repentance of sin can restore it. This is in contrast to the Classical Arminian approach in which the loss of salvation is a final state.

Two of the larger denominations holding to Wesley's form of Arminianism are the Methodist and Nazarene churches.

(Note: Differentiating between the penal substitutionary view and the governmental view of the atonement. The penal substitutionary view holds that Christ suffered the exact punishment due sinner's. That He voluntarily took the penalty, abiding upon each person, in order for God's justice and wrath to be satisfied. Therefore, each person who comes to faith in Christ has had their individual sin atoned for by Christ in His suffering. To contrast, the governmental view holds that Christ's suffering, although substitutionary and sufficient to merit salvation, was not an exact punishment due sinful man. But rather a demonstration of God's contempt for our sin. Therefore, when one accepts Christ as their savior, God can forgive that person of their sin and accept Christ's equal and real, sacrifice.)

e. A recent view, having surfaced as of late, is known as Open Theism. Open Theism at present time is not a view readily accepted by the majority of Arminians (nor any other orthodoxy) and I would whole-heartedly agree with them. Open Theism holds that God, in order to preserve complete and total libertarian free will of man, has divested Himself of a portion of His omniscience. In turn, God is unable to see who will come to Christ, before an individual actually does come to that point. Essentially, God does not know the future and learns just as we do. Regardless how diminutive one may believe this to be, it is a great error to make sacrifice in respect to God's attribute of omniscience. Especially, when that sacrifice is made in order to inflate man's own sense of sovereignty. Personally, I believe this borders on, if in fact it is not, heresy.
In short, Calvinists often accuse Arminians of placing too much emphasis on man’s free will ahead of, and to the detriment of God’s Sovereignty. Vice versa, Arminians accuse Calvinists of turning God into a moral monster by making Him the author of sin and causing damage to His character.

But...

what if there was another option? An option that maintains both God’s sovereignty and man’s libertarian free will.
VI. Molinism / Middle Knowledge

Middle Knowledge theology, otherwise known as Molinism, was developed by Luis Molina (1535-1600) a Spanish Jesuit theologian. This same position is held by notable persons such as William Lane Craig (Professor of Philosophy at Talbot School of Theology); Alvin Plantinga (Professor of Philosophy Emeritus at Notre Dame University); and Kenneth Keathley (Professor of Theology, Dean of the Faculty, Southeastern Baptist Seminary.) Molina’s goal was to confirm and preserve both the sovereignty of God as well as human freedom. Molina’s contention was God accomplishes His will through His omniscience (ability to know all things) utilizing His middle knowledge (scientia media) as opposed to His omnipotence (nature of being all-powerful). Kenneth Keathley, in his book Salvation and Sovereignty: A Molinist Approach, states it as follows,

“Molinism teaches that God exercises his sovereignty primarily through his omniscience, and that he infallibly knows what free creatures would do in any given situation. In this way God sovereignly controls all things, while humans are also genuinely free. God is able to accomplish His will through the use of what
Molinists label His middle knowledge.⁵

Molina posited that God’s knowledge is comprised of three (3) logical (as opposed to chronological or temporal) aspects:

**Natural Knowledge**: All and every possibility, creature, and event. Everything that could happen; All possible scenarios (possible worlds) God could create, bring into existence, or actualize; Infinite number of possibilities; What any creature *could* do left to their own free choice.

**Middle knowledge (scientia media)**: All counterfactuals (possibilities) that would be true. What results would come about when all the various creatures are placed into the infinite number of scenarios; What any creature *would* do in each scenario left to their own free choice.

**Free Knowledge**: God’s exhaustive, perfect, complete knowledge of the world as he has created and actualized it; What every creature *will* do with their own free choice.

So we have Natural Knowledge, Middle Knowledge, and Free Knowledge. The key comes in between Middle Knowledge and Free Knowledge. The point where God decree’s to create, and actualizes one of these scenario’s based on His Middle Knowledge. So it would look something like this:

**Natural Knowledge** - God knows everything he could create (humans, animals, planets, trees, stars, etc.) and all the possible scenarios (worlds) that include all things. Even all the different choices humans could make regarding anything and everything.

**Middle Knowledge** – God knows exactly what would happen in each scenario (world), including what choices each human would make within each scenario.

-Based upon His Middle Knowledge of what would happen, God then creates and actualizes one of these scenarios (worlds).
Free Knowledge – After having actualized one of these scenarios (worlds) God knows what will occur and what choices humans will freely make.

Worth noting, is this position assumes a common prevenient grace extended and applied, by God, to all individuals. This is to counter and offset the noetic effects of original sin and the resulting depravity of mankind. Without such grace, no one would be capable of coming to faith. This is not to say mankind is now cleansed and without original sin. But rather, God has provided a way for individuals to respond to the gospel.

If this concept is still a little hard to comprehend, I will attempt to simplify it more using an example. This is less than ideal but… A few years back a movie starring Nicolas Cage was released. The name of that movie was “Next”. In this movie, Nicolas Cage was capable of knowing his own future two minutes in advance. In one scene he is at a diner in which Jessica Biel is sitting at a table, whereas he is at the counter. It is his wish to reach a situation that is advantageous for him regarding her. He then proceeds to run through various scenarios, in his mind, in which he tries various tactics to ingratiate himself to her. All fail until he reaches one that is successful, and it is this one he uses to actualize the event. He has middle knowledge and utilizes it to bring about the circumstances he desires. I am indebted to the individual who used this same example in a YouTube video to explain this.

Now, after having established God uses His middle knowledge to bring about a particular scenario, we know God seeks the salvation of all men (2 Peter 3:9). In light of this, we would believe Him to have created a world that yields an optimum number of persons who will come to Him freely. Yet we know not everyone does come to Him. However, had He decided to actualize another world even fewer may have come to salvation.
VII. Transworld Reprobation

*What of those who never believe and come to faith, or are never exposed to the gospel in the first place ...?*

If we are to believe that God desires all to be saved, and He has actualized a world in which the maximum number of individuals will in fact come to Christ of their own free will. It is also posited that those who never come to faith, along with individuals who never hear the message of salvation, suffer from *transworld reprobation*.

Transworld reprobation is a concept forwarded by William Lane Craig in which he has drawn and extended from Christian philosopher, Alvin Plantinga's thought regarding transworld depravity. In Craig's paper *No Other Name, A Middle Knowledge Perspective* he states,

"Years ago when I first read Alvin Plantinga's basically Molinist formulation of the Free Will Defense against the problem of evil, it occurred to me that his reasoning might also help to resolve the problem of the exclusivity of salvation through Christ, and my own subsequent study of the notion of middle knowledge has convinced me that this is in fact so."[6]

Craig posits that regardless of whatever world (scenario) God may have actualized, these same reprobate individuals would continuously and freely reject the gospel of Jesus in each *feasible* possibility,

"we may accordingly speak of the property of transworld damnation, which is possessed by any person who freely does not respond to God's grace and so is lost in every world feasible for God in which that person exists,"[7]

Again, along with unbelievers exposed to the gospel, this is extended and applied to those who have never heard the message of Christ, whether it be due to geographic location or environmental situation. To demonstrate, the question has been posed in regards to the bushman living in the deepest darkest jungle. What is this individual's eternal destiny given he has never had the opportunity to even hear the gospel of Jesus Christ? According to the concept of transworld reprobation, had God actualized an alternate world that was feasible, as opposed to this one, with
our bushman having been placed within the midst of the most Christian family, in
the most Christian city, of the most Christian nation. By his own free will, he
would reject the offer of salvation and forsake Christ, despite all the opportunities
afforded him due to his environment. Thus, continuing in his reprobate state and
ultimate damnation. Christians, when faced with this knowledge, should feel an
urgency in regards to a proclamation of the gospel among the unreached
populations of the world.

The Lord, instead of refraining from creating these poor souls knowing full-well
their future demise and damnation, plants them upon this earth and raises them up
beside the redeemed.

Why...?

I believe it is for the following two (2) reasons:

1) Firstly, these reprobated individuals serve various purposes in God's overall
plan. In a sense, they are cogs in the machine that is this world. Their lives, actions,
and existence in some way, may contribute to future contingencies that fulfill the
Lord's will. This is not to sound calloused but to demonstrate what could in fact be
the reality. Again, Craig states,

"Why did God not create a world in which everyone freely receives Christ and so
is saved? There is no such world which is feasible for God. He would have
actualized such a world were this feasible, but in light of certain true
counterfactuals of creaturely freedom every world realizable by God is a world in
which some persons are lost. Given His will to create a world of free creatures,
God must accept that some will be lost. (ii) Why did God create this world when
He knew that so many persons would not receive Christ and would therefore be
lost? God desired to incorporate as many persons as He could into the love and
joy of divine fellowship while minimizing the number of persons whose final state
is hell. He therefore chose a world having an optimal balance between the number
of the saved and the number of the damned. Given the truth of certain
counterfactuals of creaturely freedom, it was not feasible for God to actualize a
world having as many saved as but with no more damned than the actual world.
The happiness of the saved should not be precluded by the admittedly tragic
circumstance that their salvation has as its concomitant the damnation of many others, for the fate of the damned is the result of their own free choice. “[8]

These particular individuals could/may come to faith in one or more of the potential worlds God could have actualized. However, these resultant possible worlds would not be feasible given God wishes to draw the maximum number of persons to the gospel. If He had in fact created an alternate world, there would arise a negative disparity between the elect and non-elect. There would, ultimately, be fewer people coming to faith in Christ. Hence, such worlds would be untenable, or unfeasible.

2) Second, not only will God be glorified in the salvation of the saints. But, He will also be glorified in the destruction of the wicked. I have no doubt a few other Molinists, and to a greater degree those of the Arminian persuasion, will find this view repugnant and take issue with me regarding the same. However, we do have to wrestle with certain biblical texts, such as Proverbs 16:4,

4 The LORD hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil. (KJV)

and most especially Romans 9:17-23,

17 For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.

18 Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.

19 Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?

20 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?
21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

22 What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:

23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, (KJV)

VIII. A Question of Roman Catholic Origin

No doubt, and I have seen such, there will be those who detract from this position and question its legitimacy. This, given it has arisen from within a Roman Catholic context and forwarded by a Jesuit priest. However, given there is grievous error, heresy, and much wrong with the RCC, the same of which was corrected during the Reformation. It does not mean we should throw out the baby with the bathwater. In spite of its many wrongs, the RCC does have some things right. If we
are to divest ourselves of everything perceived tainted by Catholicism, then we may have to jettison such concepts as the Trinity, original sin, Christmas, and Sunday worship.

Some may also point out that this particular soteriological system was originally constructed by Luis de Molina as a counter to the Reformation and the theology arising out of the same. Therefore, it is to be discounted and relegated to the trash heap on these merits alone. This commits a genetic fallacy. I will concede that Molina's reason for his development of Molinism was part of the RCC's attempt to 'stem the tide' of Protestantism. However, I would posit that although this soteriological system bears his name, Molina was not the first to forward the foundational underpinnings.
About fifty years earlier, the Anabaptist theologian Balthasar Hubmaier (1480-1528), a little known reformer, Christian martyr, and enemy of the papacy himself had written various treatises and works outlining a similar system, albeit, rougher and less sophisticated than Molina's treatment. Hubmaier, would appear to address the same in passing (Disputes with Luther and Zwingli) rather than in a full-on developed exposition.\[9\] It is believed that this was the position taken by the Anabaptists in large. Kirk R. MacGregor has researched and written on this extensively. I believe the same displays an underlying and foundational concept extending back in time, prior to Molina and the Reformer's themselves. I do not believe it to have been merely a spurious and convenient concept, concocted by Molina to undermine the Reformation, despite his personal intent. But, it has a substantiated historical and, even more so, biblical grounding.
One thing of note, with regards to Hubmaier and his soteriology, is that he held to a concept in which God had an **absolute will** (*voluntas absoluta*) and an **ordained will** (*voluntas ordinata*). According to His **absolute will**, God could elect certain individuals, apart from any foreknowledge of that person’s potential belief in Christ. But, instead would draw those chosen individuals to the gospel by His sheer irresistible grace. Such would be a type of particular redemption. However, this would be a minority and the vast majority would fall under God's **ordained will**. Thus, the election of most individuals would be subjected to God's middle knowledge, as has been explained previously. Kirk MacGregor citing other sources states,

"*Then Hubmaier employs these dialectics of the voluntas Dei to address the question de ratione praedestinationis (concerning the basis of predestination). For Hubmaier, God may choose to gratuitously elect a few to salvation apart from any foreknown faith on their part, for whom the ratio praedestinationis is God’s voluntas absoluta. However, God operates according to his voluntas ordinata in electing the vast majority based upon his foreknowledge of their free response to the gospel, which selection principle he has revealed in Scripture.*" [10]

This is an aspect, I have not seen posited in great detail amongst others within the Molinist/Middle knowledge camp, to the exclusion of Dr. MacGregor. I find this concept intriguing and feasible, and perhaps I have only overlooked it within others descriptions. But, I submit it here as a part of my system and a personal belief on this subject. I call it a **Hubmaierian View of Soteriology** (salvation) or **Hubmaierism** for short.

X. A Balanced View

Hubmaierism/Molinism demonstrates its effectiveness in the reconciliation of Divine sovereignty and human freedom. God is the direct cause of certain circumstances coming into being (*He has actualized this world, including miracles and His divine interventions*) and indirectly through free secondary causes. God has allowed the effects of both good acts (*willed approvingly by Him*) and evil acts (*undesired, but permitted by Him*) so as to maintain creaturely freedom. Free
creatures can choose to act however they desire. God already knows how they will act, and so their free choices are interwoven into His grand design.

So, just how does this system line up with scripture?

**Matthew 11:20-24**, Jesus said if Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom had seen His miracles they would have repented;

>20 Then he began to denounce the cities where most of his mighty works had been done, because they did not repent. 21 “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. 22 But I tell you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. 23 And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You will be brought down to Hades. For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. 24 But I tell you that it will be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom than for you.” (ESV)

**1 Samuel 23:7-13**, The Lord knew what would happen to David if he were to stay in Keilah. David subsequently left and was not killed;

>7 Now it was told Saul that David had come to Keilah. And Saul said, “God has given him into my hand, for he has shut himself in by entering a town that has gates and bars.” 8 And Saul summoned all the people to war, to go down to Keilah, to besiege David and his men. 9 David knew that Saul was plotting harm against him. And he said to Abiathar the priest, “Bring the ephod here.” 10 Then David said, “O LORD, the God of Israel, your servant has surely heard that Saul seeks to come to Keilah, to destroy the city on my account. 11 Will the men of Keilah surrender me into his hand? Will Saul come down, as your servant has heard? O LORD, the God of Israel, please tell your servant.” And the LORD said, “He will come down.” 12 Then David said, “Will the men of Keilah surrender me and my men into the hand of Saul?” And the LORD said, “They will surrender you.” 13 Then David and his men, who were about six hundred, arose and departed from Keilah, and they went wherever they could go. When Saul was told that David had escaped from Keilah, he gave up the expedition. (ESV)
Matthew 23:27-32, Jesus tells the Pharisees despite their objection to the contrary, they would have shed the blood of the prophets had they lived during those times;

27 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people’s bones and all uncleanness. 28 So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

29 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the monuments of the righteous, 30 saying, ‘If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’ 31 Thus you witness against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. 32 Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers. (ESV)

Other scriptures include the following:

Luke 22:67-68, The Lord Jesus before the Sanhedrin telling them they will not believe He is the Messiah, after being questioned as to the same;

67 “If you are the Christ, tell us.” But he said to them, “If I tell you, you will not believe, 68 and if I ask you, you will not answer. (ESV)

Jeremiah 38:17-18, The prophet Jeremiah advises King Zedekiah of two separate outcomes depending upon Zedekiah’s choice. The same had been revealed to Jeremiah by God;

17 Then Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, “Thus says the LORD, the God of hosts, the God of Israel: If you will surrender to the officials of the king of Babylon, then your life shall be spared, and this city shall not be burned with fire, and you and your house shall live. 18 But if you do not surrender to the officials of the king of Babylon, then this city shall be given into the hand of the Chaldeans, and they shall burn it with fire, and you shall not escape from their hand.” (ESV)
1 Corinthians 2:6-9, Paul advises of a predestined wisdom beyond men that only God holds. Had the rulers of the age been privy to the same they would not have crucified Christ;

6 Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. 7 But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. 8 None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9 But, as it is written,

“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him” (ESV)

Some, from within the Calvinist camp, may accuse those holding to the Hubmaierian/Molinist view of advocating a synergistic approach to salvation. However, Kenneth Keathley points out the monergistic aspect of this view with what he calls the ‘ambulatory model’. The same serves to illustrate that salvation is all of God while damnation is all of man,

"Imagine waking up to find you are being transported by an ambulance to the emergency room. It is clearly evident that your condition requires serious medical help. If you do nothing, you will be delivered to the hospital. However, if for whatever reason you demand to be let out, the driver will comply. He may express regret and give warnings, but he will still let you go. You receive no credit for being taken to the hospital, but you incur the blame for refusing the services of the ambulance."[11]
XI. A New Acronym

As has been mentioned above, Calvinism utilizes the acronym TULIP. This has been a defining feature, as well as an outline for the theology in general. Kenneth Keathley in his book, *Salvation and Sovereignty: a Molinist Approach*, builds upon a different acronym originated by Timothy George in his book, *Amazing Grace: God’s Initiative – Our Response* (Nashville: Lifeway, 2000) pg. 78-83.

(ROSES)

**R** - *Radical Depravity*: Every aspect of our being is affected by the fall and renders us incapable of saving ourselves or even wanting to be saved. This in lieu of total depravity.

**O** - *Overcoming Grace*: It is God’s persistent beckoning that overcomes our wicked obstinacy. This is the alternative to irresistible grace.

**S** - *Sovereign Election*: God desires the salvation of all, yet accentuates that our salvation is not based on us choosing God, But God choosing us. An option as opposed to unconditional election.

**E** - *Eternal Life*: Believers enjoy a transformed life that is preserved and we are given a faith which will remain. Another way of regarding perseverance of the saints.

**S** - *Singular Redemption*: Christ died sufficiently for every person, although efficiently only for those who believe. This instead of the deterministic option of limited atonement.
XII. An Ordo Salutis and Synthesis of the Hubmaierian/Molinist System

We have thus far, gone into some detail with regards to the alternative view of the Hubmaierian/Molinist view of salvation. I will now attempt to condense and systematize the same.

_Ordo Salutis_ is the Latin for “order of salvation”. It is a way of outlining the stages a believer will go through during the course of their salvation. The same is based upon, and interpreted from Romans 8:29-30,

\[
\text{29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. 30 And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified. (ESV)}
\]

Dependent upon which soteriological system one holds, will dictate the order these stages are placed. A Calvinist will hold to a particular order, as will an Arminian. The following is my gleaning in regards to the ordo salutis.

_Foreknowledge_

God in His omniscience knows all things. He has Natural Knowledge (knowledge of everything He could create and all the possible scenarios (worlds) that include all things. Along with the many different free choices humans could make).

God then consults His Middle Knowledge (knowledge with regards to what, in fact, would happen and occur within each possible scenario if He were to actualize such a scenario. This knowledge encompasses knowing what each individual would freely choose within each scenario to include that individual’s free choice regarding salvation through Christ).

With respect to His middle knowledge, God then chooses the most feasible world to create in which the maximum numbers of individuals come to salvation and decrees the same.

God then has complete and total Free Knowledge of the world He has chosen to actualize, this is not to say He does not have complete and total knowledge with regards to the worlds He did not actualize. But is only to affirm God’s cognizance of what He has created in reality. This is the world in which we live.
Election/Predestination

After God set in motion His universal plan based upon His natural, middle, and free knowledge, He was well aware of how it would all play out. Concerning all individuals who would receive salvation in Christ, it is decreed they will become the elect, just as God foreknew prior to creation. God may also elect a minority of individuals according to His absolute will (voluntas absoluta) apart from His foreknowledge. However, no one would ever know who is and is not a part of this group and speculation regarding identifying those individuals would be an exercise in futility. Those who would not receive the sacrificial Lamb offered by Him would become the reprobate, also just as He foreknew before creation. Those who make-up that segment of humanity known as the reprobate, would never have came to Christ regardless of any feasible situation or possible scenario (à la transworld reprobation). They will however, serve God’s purposes and will ultimately glorify Him.

Prevenient/Overcoming Grace

Due to the fall of man and the effects of original sin, freedom of the will was severely hampered and the Image of God in man was effaced and distorted. Without assistance from God, humanity would be utterly incapable of choosing righteousness. This assistance comes in the form of Prevenient/Overcoming Grace. In which God has divinely bestowed the same upon the world to counter the effects of original sin and make it possible for individuals to repent and come to Christ.

Calling/Evangelism

Individuals are exposed to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Those who are of the elect “before the foundation of the world” (Ephesians 1:4) will respond positively of their own free will through the influence of God's overcoming grace and the Holy Spirit. Those who are reprobate will resist the same, and will thus shut out and blaspheme the Holy Spirit, also, of their own free will.

Faith/Repentance/Regeneration

Those who respond positively to the gospel will come to faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and recognize Him as the only way of salvation (Ephesians 2:8-9). There will also be a grieving over and repentance of their personal sin (Acts 14:15)
along with a regeneration of the individual's spirit. This regeneration will be a renewing of the person (Titus 3:5), which they will be fully aware of. The individual will be cognizant of being born-again.

**Justification**

Upon faith and regeneration by the Holy Spirit, an individual will become justified in the sight of God (Romans 5:1). This means that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to the individual. Thus, relieving them of the penalty of sin and equating to the same as being proclaimed 'not guilty' with respect to judgment and God's wrath.

**Sanctification**

With regards to sanctification there are two aspects. Firstly, the believer upon justification, is positionally sanctified (Hebrews 13:12). Which is to mean, God sets that person apart from sin and they are now one of His children. This is accomplished by the work of Christ. Secondly, progressive sanctification takes place as a work of the Holy Spirit in which an individual’s personal characteristics begin to be changed to reflect their new nature (Philippians 2:12-13). They are being set apart from sin and purified as children of God, and fit for the kingdom. This is not to say that believers reach sinless perfection during this life with regards to sanctification. But, progress is made in anticipation of perfection when the believer arrives home in Heaven.

**Perseverance**

The truly regenerated believer will remain in the faith and will not fall (John 10:27-29). They will display real fruit and evidence of their salvation. Although, it is possible for the true believing individual to encounter a fall it is not an indication that they are without or have forfeited their salvation. Likewise, an individual lacking fruit or evidence can give reason to suspect if regeneration has, in fact, actually occurred.
Glorification

Glorification is the final and completed work of God in the believer at the resurrection. The believer has had all sin removed and is transformed into the likeness of Christ (Romans 8:18).
XIII. Conclusion

Thus, I conclude this presentation, an option apart from the hard determinism of Calvinism and weakened sovereignty of God according to Arminianism. In my opinion Hubmaierism/Molinism is the most coherent view, in that it reconciles human freedom of the will with the sovereignty of God. It also remedies various perceived problems within other systems that are unstated within this work. I would like to echo the same sentiments stated by William Lane Craig in his book *Only Wise God* in regards to middle knowledge. He states it is,

“one of the most fruitful theological ideas ever conceived. For it would serve to explain not only God’s knowledge of the future, but divine providence and predestination as well”.[13]

“It is up to God whether I find myself in a world in which I am predestined; but it is up to me whether I am predestined in the world in which I find myself.”

~ Some French Molinist

God Bless,

_J. Lashley_
Works Cited


[2] Baxter, Richard "Universal Redemption of Mankind by the Lord Jesus Christ"


[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid.


[10] Ibid.


[12] Ibid.

(All scripture taken from either the King James Bible or the English Standard Version.)