

Chapter Six

The Battle of Theologies

Church at large: Repent and Change, or Die Out

The Sad State of Faith in Christianity

The state of the church today in North America is one of weakness in demonstrating God's power; it is ineffectual in making disciples, and lacks real faith to build up body members. Therefore, we see the church fading away.

As Christians, is that what we want? No. Is that what God wants? No. Then what is the problem? If we want God's church to grow, and if God wants His church to grow, why isn't it growing, vibrant, and spiritually powerful? The answer is we are not pursuing Christianity by true faith.

There are at least three areas of faith which suffer: (1) The orthodox theology is only almost true, which needs to be changed to be 100% true; (2) The church lacks unity because of fragmented theology; (3) The church needs to promote God's management of the believers' life; (4) And, committed Christians need to be much bolder in their approach to influencing the society. The church lacking unity and a lack of God's management are a result of not getting our theology right. A lack of boldness is a result of a lack of unity and God's management of our lives. This is why all of practical Christianity is dependent on correct theology. In this chapter I concentrate on how and why the theology must be changed. Calvinism must be abandoned, and Arminianism must be changed.

Calvinistic theory says God unconditionally,

chooses individuals to Heaven and bypasses the rest which go to Hell. Scripture says, "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). This implies that a man can be saved if he decides to believe and be baptized. This difference between theory and the face of scripture is very confusing. The confusion translates to doubt; just like in the Garden of Eden. Do I have an effect on people's lives or does God do it all?

And, with Calvinism, godly men just go through the motions to "walk people through" a salvation program where some are saved and some are not. God alone, without man's help, designates who is saved, and who isn't saved. We just try to save them all but never know who is really saved and who isn't; only God knows.

The result of this theology is the subtle conclusion, "I really have very little effect. Why should I bother?" This effect on people demotivates them. This demotivation is what I see in churches today. Demotivated people don't waste their energy on a cause which is said to do much good but which is only marginally effective. And since God saves, few people getting saved, implies God doesn't want to save more people.

This demotivation, in my opinion, is why the church is so weak and ineffective today.

Churchgoers have no real enthusiasm. They warm a pew but are there because they want to

stay out of Hell. They believe going to church will do it. What else is there? Others with more faith want to do more, and they do some things to help. Church goers are not more enthusiastic because the pastors and leaders are not more enthusiastic. The pastor's faith is affected just like everyone else. Maybe more so; after all they attended the seminaries which teach this theology.

Since christianity is nearly dead in North America, many devoted men are asking why christianity is declining. As they look for answers, where do they look?

In the scriptures, they see Jesus doing miracles which give people reason to believe. God isn't doing many miracles today, at least not enough to be significant in the society. Some say the age of miracles is over. Most just don't know why christianity is declining.

They also look to their systematic theology for answers. Westminster Calvinism is the origin of reformation theology which broke off from the Catholic church. It may not be exactly what Calvin believed, but it is most influential today.

Over the years, since the reformation, it has been changed. Now some people believe various parts of the original, others differ on some parts. Not very many people accept it all as originally defined. But the vestiges live-on in our culture. In modern times, the original doctrine has been changed and manipulated. There is really no cohesive, generally accepted theology that makes sense in total.

Our current Calvinistic orthodoxy, by its God-Alone implications, causes people to think that for some unknown reason, God's Spirit does not want to move in peoples lives. Since He is not saving many people, the orthodoxy suggests He doesn't *want* to save many. After all, it is God alone who saves. That is what the orthodoxy preaches. Therefore, it is reasonable to believe, if people are not getting saved, it is because God doesn't want more people saved. This plays right into the devil's hands. This

idea is completely false. It means nearly everyone is to some degree deceived.

Someone may say, why doesn't God do something? God does not honor wrong theology. Salvation is by faith in all aspects of bridging the separation gap between God and man.

Calvinistic type theology dishonors God in the sense that it's proponents can not accept that God delegates authority to godly men for certain aspects of the salvation process. But the truth is, He has so delegated: and, we need to repent of that unbelief.

Calvinism - A Sovereign Work of God Only

In my personal study, I have looked at scripture honestly trying to discover God's plan for saving mankind. I have looked at Calvinism as a basis for a systematic theology. But I cannot accept it. I believe Arminianism is closer to the truth than is Calvinism. But both concepts have theory that does not match reality. By this I mean that the theory, including the logical conclusions, do not match *all* of the scriptures when you take them at face value.

At the time of the Reformation, when these theories were introduced, the theory of Arminianism caused such a stir that men got together and formed the theory of Calvinism. These opposing theories caused a great controversy which persists even today.

Arminianism suggests that man is responsible for choosing God's salvation offer with the convicting help of the Holy Spirit. However, Arminians miss the idea that God has shared His sovereignty with mankind. This oversight causes them to miss the concept that loving the lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and our neighbor as ourself, is the central purpose for the creation. Arminianism and Calvinism have in common that both believe that God has not shared His sovereignty with man. This is the principle difference between Arminianism and Managed Cooperation Theol-

Theological Differences Contrasted At A Glance

Armianism

(1) Free Will / Human Ability

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 so in such a manner as not to interfere with man's freedom. Each sinner possess a free will, and his eternal destiny depends on how he uses it. Man's freedom consists of his ability to choose good over evil in spiritual matters; his will is not enslaved to his sinful nature. The sinner has the power to cooperate with God's Spirit and be regenerated or resist God's grace and perish. The lost sinner needs the Spirit's assistance, but he does not have to be regenerated by the Spirit before he can believe, for faith is man's act and precedes the new birth. Faith is the sinner's gift to God; it is man's contribution to salvation.

Calvinism

(1) Total Inability

Because of the fall, man is unable of himself to savingly believe the gospel. 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 -- indeed he cannot -- choose good over evil in the spiritual realm. Consequently, it takes much more than the Spirit's assistance to bring a sinner to Christ -- it takes regeneration by which the Spirit makes the sinner alive and gives him a new nature. Faith is not something man contributes to salvation but is itself a part of God's gift of salvation. -- it is God's gift to the sinner, not the sinners gift to God.

Managed Cooperation

(1) Limited Ability

Because of the fall and separation from God, man from the womb is "Natural" and unregenerate, and only possesses finite knowledge and flawed character. However, man goes on forming opinions and making decisions about life, based on what knowledge level, and character traits, he possesses at the time. He doesn't realize he is missing God's infinite knowledge and perfect character. This means, man forms opinions and makes decisions about life and spirituality, that are different from God's. This different thinking is called sin. Sinful thinking is magnified by Satan and His angels. Sinful thinking causes sinful action. Since no man can think like God, all Natural people are sinners. A person's thinking can only be changed by the individual opening himself to the possibility of God's truth not yet known. This truth must be conveyed by godly men who are the spiritual decedents of Jesus. If he so opens himself; exposure to, belief of, and faith in God's truth and ways are probable.

Theological Differences Contrasted

Armianism

(2) Conditional Election

God's choice of certain individuals unto salvation before the foundation of the world was based upon His foreseeing that they would respond to His call. He selected only those whom He knew would of themselves freely believe the gospel. Election, therefore, was determined by or conditioned upon what man would do. The faith which God foresaw, and upon which, He based His choice, was not given to the sinner by God (it was not created by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit) but resulted solely from man's will. It was left entirely up to man as to who would believe and therefore as to who would be elected unto salvation. God chose those whom He knew, of their own free will, would choose Christ. Thus the sinners choice of Christ, not God's choice of the sinner, is the ultimate cause of salvation.

Calvinism

(2) Unconditional Election

God's choice of certain individuals unto salvation before the foundation of the world rested solely in His own sovereign will. His choice of particular sinners was not based on any foreseen response or obedience on their part, such as faith, repentance, etc. On the contrary, God gives faith and repentance to each individual whom He selected. These acts are the result, not the cause of God's choice. Election therefore was not determined by or conditioned upon any virtuous quality or act foreseen in man. Those whom God sovereignly elected, He brings through the power of the Spirit to a willing acceptance of Christ. Thus God's choice of the sinner, not the sinners choice of Christ, is the ultimate cause of salvation.

Managed Cooperation

(2) Conditional Election

God's choice of certain individuals unto salvation before the foundation of the world was based upon His foreseeing that they would love Him. Godly men are believers who are spiritual descendents of those taught by Jesus. For his whole life, the Natural man has seen the "Evil" of men, including his own. As he allows himself to be exposed to God's love, mercy, and grace, he begins to see the "Good" of God. Now a contrast begins to form between the "Good" of God and the "Evil" of men. This contrast provides the perspective that God is good and mankind is evil. The Holy Spirit now has the tools to convict him of: his own sin; the righteousness of God, and the judgement at the end of time. At some point, a paradigm shift in his thinking may take place. His thinking transfers from believing man's way is right to believing that God's way is right. His point-of-view changes. This process is called regeneration, or being "Born Again." He begins to see life from a whole new perspective; God's perspective. This is when that individual inherits the promises of salvation; begins to appreciate God, and begins to act in faith; that is, believing enough to act upon that belief. Jesus saves those who love Him and remain faithful to the end of their life.

Theological Differences Contrasted

Arminianism

(3) Universal Redemption or General Atonement

Christ's redeeming work made it possible for everyone to be saved but it did not actually secure the salvation of anyone. Although Christ died for all men and for every man, only those who believe in Him are saved. His death enabled God to pardon sinners on the condition that they believe, but it did not actually put away anyone's sins. Christ's redemption becomes effective only if man chooses to accept it.

Calvinism

(3) Particular Redemption or Limited Atonement

Christ's redeeming work was intended to save the elect only and actually secured salvation for them. His death was a substitutionary endurance of the penalty of sin in the place of certain specified sinners. In addition to putting away the sins of His people, Christ's redemption secured everything necessary for their salvation, including faith which unites them to Him. The gift of faith is infallibly applied by the Spirit to all for whom Christ died, thereby guaranteeing their salvation.

Managed Cooperation

(3) General Redemption

Christ's redeeming work made it possible for everyone to be saved but it did not actually secure the salvation of anyone. Although Christ died for all men and for every man, only those who believe in Him are saved. His death enabled God to pardon sinners on the condition that they believe, but it did not actually put away anyone's sins. Christ's redemption becomes effective only if man chooses to cooperate with God in the salvation process.

(4) The Holy Spirit can be Effectually Resisted

The Spirit calls inwardly all those who are called outwardly by the gospel invitation; He does all that He can to bring every sinner to salvation. But inasmuch as man is free, he can successfully resist the Spirit's call. The Spirit cannot regenerate the sinner until he believes; faith (which is man's contribution) precedes and makes possible the new birth. Thus, man's free will limits the Spirit in the application of Christ's saving work. The Holy Spirit can only draw to Christ those who allow Him to have His way with them. Until the sinner responds, the Spirit cannot give life. God's grace, therefore, is not invincible; it can be, and often is resisted and thwarted by man.

(4) Irresistible Grace

In addition to the outward general call to salvation which is made to everyone who hears the gospel, the Holy Spirit extends to the elect a special inward call that inevitably brings them to salvation. The external call (which is made to all without distinction) can be, and often is, rejected; whereas the internal call (which is made only to the elect) cannot be rejected; it always results in conversion. By means of this special call the Spirit irresistibly draws sinners to Christ. He is not limited in His work of applying salvation by man's will, nor is He dependent upon man's cooperation for success. The Spirit graciously causes the elect sinner to cooperate, to believe, to repent, to come freely to Christ. God's grace, therefore is invincible; it never fails to result in the salvation of those to whom it is extended.

(4) The Holy Spirit Convicts if allowed

The Holy Spirit's function is to convict men of sin, righteousness, and judgement. God allows sin in the world to show the "Evil" of men without God. God wants to show man the "Good"ness of God through the Law and Gospel. The contrast between "Good" and "Evil," indicates to man his need for God's knowledge, character, and salvation. Then, the Holy Spirit has the tools to convict a man of his previous folly, and that he should turn to God in faith. The people who do not open themselves to the "Goodness" of God, don't achieve knowledge of "Good." Thus, they can't compare it with their "Evil" point of view to see a contrast. They remain ignorant of God. Thus, they don't perceive the draw of the Holy Spirit or the worth of God; and they die in their sins.

Theological Differences Contrasted

Armianism

(5) Falling from Grace

Those who believe and are truly saved can lose their salvation by failing to keep up their faith. All Armenians have not been agreed on this point; some have held that believers are eternally secure in Christ -- that once a sinner is regenerated, he can never be lost.

Calvinism

(5) Perseverance of the Saints

All who were 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 persevere to the end.

Managed Cooperation

(5) Failing and Persevering Faith

A "believer," is one who has come to faith, and has the *promise* of salvation. The promise is conditional, in that one must have faith at the end of life, as well as when one first believed. Growing closer to Jesus allows you to gradually take on the divine nature. As you take on the divine nature, God feeds back to you that He is there; and that He knows and loves you. A "believer" is susceptible to deception until he becomes a "knower." If relationship with Jesus is neglected, one may cease to be a "believer," and may again, become, an unbeliever. Unbelievers are unsaved and pay the ultimate price. As you experience God more, you transcend from a "believer" to a "knower." A "knower" is positively sure that God loves and knows him. Once you are a "knower," deception is no longer possible because you have experienced Him. Faith to the end of life is assured.

Summation

Salvation is accomplished through the combined efforts of God (who takes the initiative) and man (who must respond) -- man's response being the determining factor. God has provided salvation for everyone, but His provision becomes effective only for those who, of their own free will, "choose" to cooperate with Him and accept His offer of grace. At the crucial point, man's will plays a decisive role; thus man, not God, determines who will be the recipients of the gift of salvation.

Summation

Salvation is accomplished by the almighty power of the Triune God. The Father chose a people, the Son died for them, the Holy Spirit makes Christ's death effective by bringing the elect to faith and repentance, thereby causing them to willingly obey the gospel. The entire process (election, redemption, regeneration) is the work of God and is by grace alone. Thus God, not man, determines who will be the recipients of the gift of salvation.

Summation

Salvation is accomplished by both God and man working together to bring each new soul to faith and eventual maturity in love for God. God has provided salvation for everyone, but His provision only becomes effective for those who open their heart to the truth of the gospel. The Holy Spirit and godly men lead people to faith. "Believing" becomes "knowing" with experience. Thus, the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit, other Godly men, and the individual being saved, all have a part in salvation.

ogy.

Calvinism is inconsistent with the scriptures where God delegates authority to man for the Reconciliation of man to God.

Calvinism has become orthodox theology. Even today, many learned men still cling to the theory of Calvinism even though they have modified many of its strict tenets to better match the reality of the face of scripture. In my opinion, these modifications still don't make the theology viable.

Since Calvinism seems to dominate the evangelical fundamentalist theology, even in my own church, I will confine my remarks to that theory as I understand it. John McArthur jr. seems to be a very outspoken proponent of this popular theory so I would like to use some of his words as representative of what many people believe about Calvinism and salvation. I will also use "The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination" by Loraine Boettner, as representative of Westminster theology.

The most blatant problem I see with Calvinism is the insistence that salvation, in theory, is a sovereign work of God only;¹ man has no part in it. The Westminster Confession states,

“. . . some men and angels are predestinated to everlasting life, and others are foreordained to everlasting death.”²

This means all peoples destinies were determined before creation. This also means we really have nothing to do with our own, or anyone else's, salvation.

This conclusion is very interesting and informative because it fits right into one of only four possible fundamental theologies between a personal God and Man.

1. "We must remember above all that salvation is a sovereign work of God." John McArthur Jr., "The Gospel According to Jesus", p.39.

2. The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination, p.84.

Three Possible Theologies

In considering who is involved in the salvation process, there are only four possibilities; three viable possibilities. These possibilities are all mutually exclusive. By definition, only one possibility can be true. If one is true then the others are not true. A brief outline follows.

(1) *With neither God nor Man* - This alternative is not viable. No one else is involved.

(2) *With Man Alone* - The specific assumption is that God is *not* involved in salvation. The logical conclusions are that man accepts or rejects salvation by his own choice.(3) *With God Alone* - The specific assumption is that Man is *not* involved in salvation. The logical conclusions are that God insures that some are saved, and prevents many from being saved.

(4) *With God and Man* - The specific assumption is that God neither insures or prevents. The logical conclusions are that God influences but not to the point of insuring or preventing, and Man accepts based on the influence of God and godly men. Man rejects based on willing ignorance of God.

The explanation of each option.

With neither God nor man. Absurd. By definition, this option is not God's plan for mankind. Therefore, the issue involves God, Man, or both.

With man alone. This is the Unitarian view. This option assumes that God has no influence on salvation. If this is true, it means that man accepts by his own choice. But this notion is inconsistent with the scriptures which teach that the Holy Spirit convicts people. “. . . And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgement; . . .”³ If the Holy Spirit convicts, which is a part of salvation, then God *is* involved. Therefore, this option cannot possibly be true.

With God alone. This is the Calvinist view.

3. John 16:8

Managed Cooperation Theology

Who is Involved in the Salvation Process? Only Four Possibilities

Possibility # 1 - With Neither God nor Man

Nonviable alternative. No other Who's.

Possibility # 2 - With Man Alone

Specific Assumption: God has no influence on Salvation.

*Unitarianism
(Socinianism)*

Logical Conclusion: Man accepts by his own choice

Possibility # 3 - With God Alone

Specific Assumption: Man has no influence on Salvation.

*Calvinism
(Augustinianism)*

*Logical Conclusion: God insures that some people accept,
and prevents many people from accepting.*

Possibility # 4 - With Both God and Man

Specific Assumption: God neither insures nor prevents

*Managed Cooperation Theology
Arminianism*

Logical Conclusions:

God influences but not to the point of insuring to, or preventing from Heaven.

Man accepts based on the influence of God and other men.

John 6:44 - "No one can come to Me, unless the *Father who sent me draws him*; and I will raise him up on the last day."

John 12:32 - "And I, if I be lifted up from the Earth, will *draw* all men to myself."

John 16:8 - "And He, when He comes, will *convict* the world concerning sin, righteousness, and judgement;"

John 16:13- "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, *He will guide you* into all truth;"

II Cor. 5:20 - "Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though *God were entreating* through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God."

II Peter 1:3 - "... seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, *through the true knowledge of Him* who called us by His own glory and excellence."

Acts 18:4 - "And he was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath and trying to *persuade* Jews and and Greeks."

Acts 28:23b-24 - "... and he was explaining to them by solemnly testifying about the kingdom of God, and trying to persuade them concerning Jesus, from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning until evening. *And some were being persuaded* by the things spoken, but *others would not believe.*"

Romans 6:17 - "But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed."

Romans 10:14, 17 - "How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? An how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? So faith comes from *hearing*, and hearing by the *word of Christ.*"

Romans 14:22 - "The faith which you have, have as *your own conviction* before God." (context is doubt, see verse 23)

I Cor. 2:13 - "In Him, you also, after *listening* to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation -- having also *believed*, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,"

II Cor. 5:20 - "Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though *God were entreating* through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, *be reconciled to God.*"

James 4:8 - "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you."

This option assumes that man has no involvement in salvation.

The logical conclusions are that God insures that some people go to Heaven, and He prevents many people from going to Heaven.

It is very important, at this point, to emphasize what salvation by God alone means. It means God by Himself, no other involved, singularly single, no people. I emphasize this because the Westminster Confession theorizes God alone,⁴ and says it is God alone but involves people anyway. This is contradictory. I will demonstrate that in the proof section.

Calvinism says that God predestines some people to Heaven. Which is the same as insuring they go there. In either way of saying it, God does it by Himself without influence or involvement of man.

Calvinism also says that God foreordains people to Hell. That is the same as preventing them from going to Heaven. In either way of saying it, God does it by Himself without influence or involvement of man.

With both God and man. This option assumes that God neither insures that people are saved nor prevents them from being saved. Because if He insures or prevents, it is God alone doing it; not God and man doing it together.

The logical conclusions are that God influences salvation but not to the point of insuring or preventing.⁵ And, man accepts salvation based on the influence of God and godly men.⁶ Man rejects salvation based on his own choice to ignore or reject God.

This option I have called “Managed Cooperation Theology (MCT). The primary issue between Calvinism and MCT centers around control. Since God is all powerful, in any case, He is the one in control. Thus, if He wants to share control with men, via this option, He must restrict Himself to influencing but not to the

4. “The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination,” p.84.

point of insuring or preventing. If He does not restrict Himself, going to Heaven and Hell are His doing alone.

And, if He wants to share control, He must allow godly men to influence in the salvation process. Why, because there is no one else besides angels, and they already have an influence, therefore men must do it.

This also means that man accepts based on the influence of other men. “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.”⁷ This is consistent with the face of scripture. This is also consistent with the concept that man is persuaded⁸ to love God.

Let’s look at this situation another way, does anyone ever get saved without hearing the gospel? Without a preacher, do they have any hope of salvation by faith? None. This means faithful men *must* work at reconciliation by true faith, or else people don’t get saved. Therefore, salvation is a work of both God and man working together.

Since salvation cannot be a work of God alone, by Himself, and also be a work of God and man together, by definition; one of the alternatives must be wrong.

5. John 6:44 - “No one can come to Me, unless the *Father who sent me draws him*; and I will raise him up on the last day.”

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II Peter 1:3 - “. . . seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, *through the true knowledge of Him* who called us by His own glory and excellence.”

Unconditional Election Doesn't Match the Facts

In this section I want to show that Unconditional Election doesn't match the facts of Scripture because of: (1) adherence to pretemporal predestination (God alone saving the elect before the foundation of the world), and: (2) men having no part in their own or others salvation.

My comments will be in reference to the chart, on the next page, that starts out with what we all can agree on; that God is sovereign over all. From there on we have differences. The differences all center around the two issues I mentioned above.

Issue # 1. The conflict of these two theologies come out of the concepts each hold with respect to predestination. Managed Cooperation Theology conceives of predestination as the natural outgrowth of the foreknowledge, mercy, grace and love of God, and Calvinism conceives of God arbitrarily controlling who goes to

6. Acts 18:4 - "And he was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath and trying to *persuade* Jews and Greeks."

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James 4:8 - "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you."

Heaven and who goes to Hell before the foundation of the world.

Issue # 2. The conflict is further irritated by the Managed Cooperation position that God has delegated some of His sovereignty to man, and the Calvinistic belief that God has not delegated any sovereignty to man but has retained all sovereignty for Himself.

Even people who adhere to the Calvinistic type theology agree that God touches people, and after touching them, they accept the call by hearing, believing, acting in faith, and loving God. They do it in the same way which I describe; except they say God provides the "touch" which causes the hearing, believing, etc.

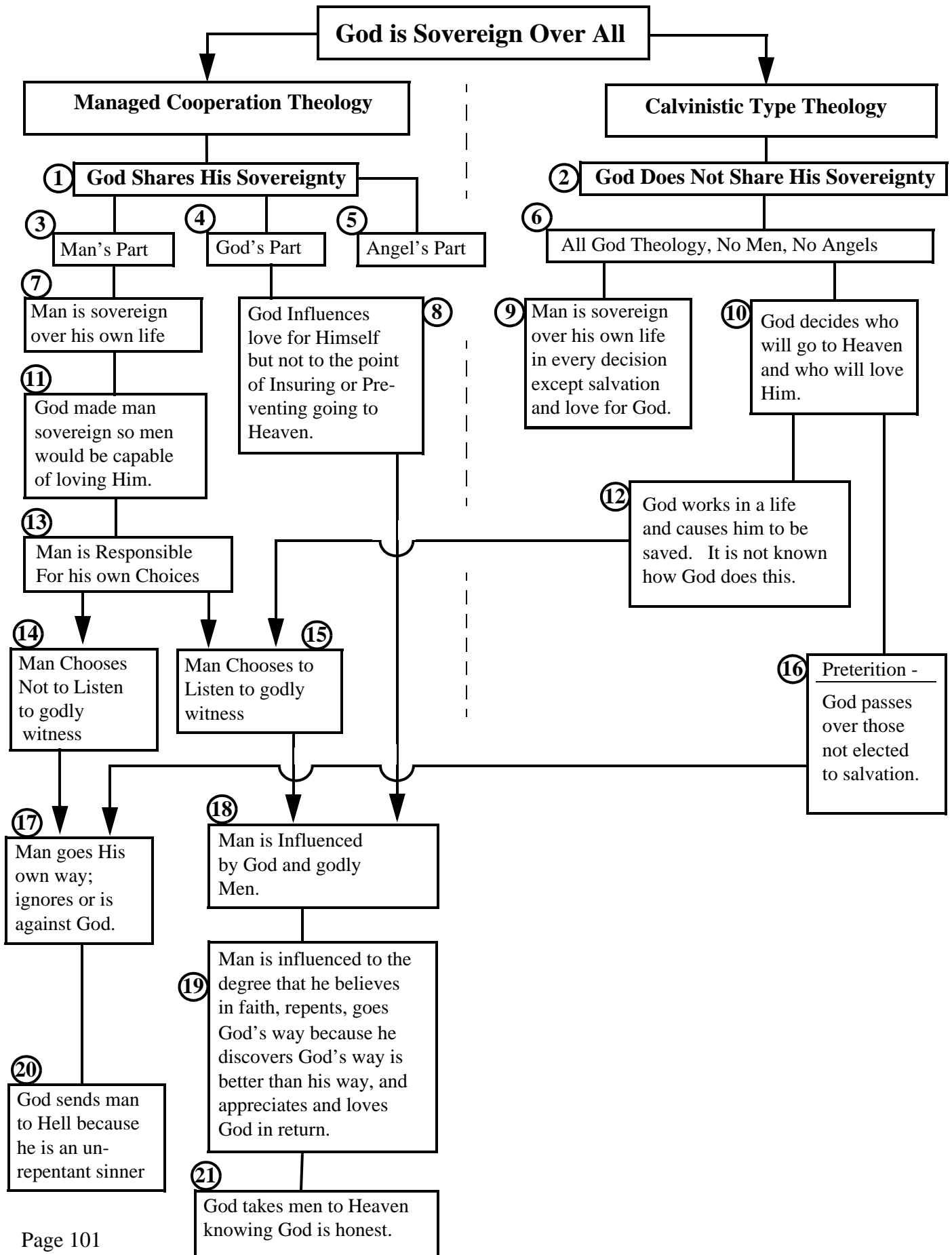
On the other hand, I say man voluntarily allows himself to listen, allows himself to believe, etc. This means man allows himself to be influenced right from the start. This is because God shared His sovereignty; which gave man the capacity to make decisions for himself; so he would be capable of love and accountability.

But on the Calvinistic side, after God gives the "touch," they say men go through the same process as if they had sovereignty over their own life. The person makes a decision, for themselves, to hear, believe, etc. How is it possible for a person to make a decision to hear, believe after a "touch," and not be able to hear, believe, etc. before a touch? Even though man does so in every other decision making situation. It must be something the Holy Spirit does. But that is what I am saying! The Holy Spirit convicts regarding sin, righteousness and judgment. To make a decision, any decision, regardless of the motivation, requires sovereignty over ones own life. Thus people needing a "touch" to make a decision for Christ is so much nonsense.

God either saves alone, or He saves using

7. Romans 10:17. Here is another example: Gal.3:2;

8. Luke 16:31; Acts 18:4-5, 18:13, 19:26, 28:23; II Cor.5:11.



men. God has no lying, convoluted theology, or any other shadow of a plan. God is straight-forward and completely honest.

These two presuppositional issues call for very different beliefs in practical theology. They see God differently, and thus produce religious practices which are more effective or less effective in leading people to Christ. These next sections show the differences between sharing and not sharing sovereignty.

Box One- God Shares His Sovereignty

God sharing His sovereignty means that God has chosen to release part of his authority to man. He has relinquished some control. The part He has given to man is the capability and authority to make choices over ones own life. This is most obvious in the intuitive sense.

You and I make decisions and form opinions every day concerning our life. What we shall eat, what we shall wear for the day; and which direction we will turn our car; to go where we want the car to go. We can also see that our decisions and opinions carry us closer or further away from God.

On Sunday morning, we may choose to go to church, or we may choose to recreate at the race track. Some may sleep-in to recover from a hangover. People who don't know God usually choose to please themselves. They don't see why they shouldn't. The point is each makes their own decision. No one tells you or them, as adults, what to do. Neither does God. God only asks this or that. God gives powerful incentives but you still get to choose.

Box Two - God Does Not Share His Sovereignty

God not sharing His sovereignty means that God has *not* given man authority over his own life. It means that God retains all right and capacity to make the decision of who goes to Heaven. He allows people to make all other decisions about

life except that one.

This idea came from the Westminster Confession. It is referred to as double predestination, where God predestines some people to Heaven and foreordains many people to Hell.

The suggestion was added, that God decided who would go to Heaven and who would go to Hell, before the creation of the world; this is known as pretemporal predestination.

The problem with these two ideas is that they are not clearly presented in the scripture. There is some reason to believe these notions but not good enough reason to base a whole theology on it.

Dr. Ryrie, in his book, "Basic Theology," page 17-18, has this to say about evidence to believe:

"In a word, the limitations of a theological system must coincide with the limitations of biblical revelation. In an effort to present a complete system, theologians are often tempted to fill in the gaps in the biblical evidence with logic or implications which may not be warranted.

"Logic and implications do have their appropriate place. God's revelation is orderly and rational, so logic has a proper place in the scientific investigation of that revelation. When words are put together in sentences, those sentences take on implications which the theologian must try to understand.

"However, when logic is used to create truth, as it were, then the theologian will be guilty of pushing his system beyond the limitations of biblical truth. Sometimes this is motivated by the desire to answer questions which the scripture does not answer. In such cases, (and there are a number of crucial ones in the Bible) the best answer is silence, not clever logic, or almost invisible implications, or wishful sentimental-

ity. Examples of particularly tempting areas include sovereignty and responsibility, the extent of the Atonement, the salvation of infants who die.”

Somehow these predestination ideas have filtered down through time to become the current orthodox theology. Since there is not good biblical evidence for this kind of predestination, and there is much better evidence for God sharing His sovereignty; christians should abandon Calvinist type theology and embrace what I have termed, “Managed Cooperation Theology.”

Box Three - Man’s Part

God gives man a part so he can choose his destiny. God gives man a part so that when man loves God, it is truly man loving God; and not God imposing onto man’s heart, a love for God not his own doing; not his own conclusion. God gives man a part so that in a man’s decision to not love God, the man can be held accountable for his own decision to not love God.

God allows man to choose the path which will guide the direction of his destiny. If a man chooses not to listen to godly witness, unknowingly he chooses Hell. If he chooses to listen to godly witness, he is on a path that leads to Heaven. The issue here is the truth.

Does one want to know the truth? If one is a “know-it-all,” he may not choose to listen. If he is honest with himself, he may realize he doesn’t know all about God and therefore needs to listen.

Box Four - God’s Part

God has a vested interest in obtaining a people who love Him. He will have fellowship with them forever. It is to His advantage to influence them to love Him. That is all He gets out of the creation. See Chapter Two of this book.

It is necessary that God influence, but not to the point of insuring or preventing salvation. If He insures or prevents, He is taking responsibility and accountability from the individual whose

life is in question. God is accountable and responsible because He is in control. He is always in control unless He gives some part of His control to men. Let me give you an example.

If two big men, against your will, forcibly throw you into the middle of a lake, and you drown trying to swim back to shore. Who is accountable for your death? You, because you weren’t a good enough swimmer? Or the men, because they forced you to swim beyond your capability? Everyone would say the two big men. Why? Because they were in control.

This example may make it easier to see that whoever has the control has the accountability. If God is in control of your decisions, then He is accountable for the outcome. If He has given you control of your decisions, then you are accountable for outcome of those decisions.

Nobody believes God influences people toward evil. He would be working against Himself if He did. Because, He would have fewer people in Heaven with Him later. This means He always influences for good.

Box Five - Angel’s Part

God uses angels as messengers. God also uses godly angels to influence people for good. He allows Satan and his demon angels to influence men toward evil. This means God has delegated to angels certain authority allowing them to effect the lives of people. He limits the power of demons and good angels. Nevertheless, they have some authority delegated to them to influence.

Box Six - All God Theology, No Men, No Angels

All God theology means that God does it all. Men and angels are not involved in salvation. God saves men all by Himself with no involvement of anyone else. This is what Calvinist type

theology suggests.

Box Seven - Man is Sovereign Over his Own

Life

God has given man sovereignty over his own life which means that God will not override man's decisions. God will not override against what a man wants to do. God will try to influence man's decisions but will not dictate any decision.

God allowed man to make decisions over his own life to accommodate man being able to love God. Love is voluntarily given. It cannot be extracted. See Chapters Two and Three of this book.

Us getting to choose was demonstrated by God in the Garden of Eden. He told Adam that if he ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he would die. Adam chose to eat. God obviously gave Adam the choice. It was his decision to eat or not eat, just like it is our choice to turn our car right or left. For more details on choosing, see Chapter Three, How People Make Decisions. The ultimate choice is the following.

Mark 16:16 - "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned."

This and other scriptures like it, imply that we have the ability and responsibility to choose.

John 4:42 - "and they (samaritans) were saying to the woman, 'It is no longer because of what you say that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the savior of the world.'"

The samaritans heard and chose to believe. This is the simple truth of the gospel. A man hears and chooses to believe or not believe. Many men choose not to hear. But mankind gets to choose which path he will follow. Therefore, God can rightly make him responsible for his own decisions.

Box Eight - God Influences Love

God knows that to truly love God, one must be able to choose to love God freely. This means that God had to persuade man to love Him. He would do so by loving man through Jesus Christ and other ways shown throughout the bible. He would do so through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Since God made man capable of loving God, and He wants all men to love Him; He does not insure that some people will love Him, or prevent others from loving Him. That idea is completely foreign to Him, and is a false man-made idea.

II Peter 3:9 - "The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance."

Since God truly wishes none to perish, and all to come to repentance, He gives ample time for all to do so. He will allow who-so-ever-will to come. He wants all to come but will not force them.

Box Nine - Man is Sovereign

Man is sovereign over his own life in every decision except salvation and love for God. This is what Calvinist type theology theorizes.

I say, if God has not given me sovereignty over my own life, then me giving lordship back to Him has no meaning. And if anybody is a proponent of Lordship and Calvinism, it is John McArthur. So, God must have given me sovereignty, in the first place, if I need to give back Lordship to Him.

Intuitively, I know I make all my decisions over my own life. But, if God has not given me authority over my own life, which decisions that I seemingly have made, are mine; and which are God's, that He made; and that just seems like I made? What kind of a God is the Calvinist following?

It is insulting to me to think that the perfect character of God would be impugned by the thought that He would manipulate my thoughts and decisions. It doesn't matter if it is for my good. That notion is simply not honest.

James 1:17 - "Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation, or shifting shadow."

Since this verse teaches that God does not do anything that is suspicious or vaguely not true, it also teaches He is completely honest and straight-forward.

Therefore, if I am making decisions over my life, then God does not, and will not, override them. He may influence, but not to the point of insuring or preventing salvation; or any decision.

This all means that if the scripture implies that I choose, then I do. If Calvinism type theology says otherwise then it must be abandoned because it makes God out to be a liar. And, I will show that later.

Box Ten - God decides Who will go to Heaven and who will love Him.

God, according to Calvinist type theology, decided, before the foundation of the world, who as individuals, would go to Heaven and who would be passed over and not go to Heaven.

Then, after the creation, God made it happen, presumably by doing something in the life of the elect (one chosen to Heaven).

Box 11 - God made man sovereign so men would be capable of loving Him.

As I have said before, to love requires the capability to choose. Agape love is a choice to love on the part of the lover because of attributes within the lover. Love is voluntary. It cannot be extracted. Since man begins his life not knowing or loving God, man must have choice

to choose to love God later in life.

Therefore, God had to give man capability of choice in order to get agape love. See Chapter Two of this book.

Box 12 - God Works in a Life and causes him to be saved.

Calvinistic type theology postulates that one is saved first by God's choosing, then the one listens to godly witness, is called, caused to believe, caused to remain in faith, be sanctified, and caused to love God.

This belief means that God actually does the reconciling, which causes belief, faith, sanctification, and glorification. But that is not what the scripture teaches. The scripture teaches that godly men have been given the ministry of reconciliation (II Cor.5:20). Godly men *start* the "Natural Man" onto the path to knowing God and admiring Him for His attributes. After the process is started, man comes to realize he should listen to the Holy Spirit (God). Prior to introduction by godly men, he doesn't even know there is any such thing as the "Holy Spirit." Yet this theology would have us believe that God does the reconciling not godly men.

Managed Cooperation Theology suggests just the opposite. Man chooses to listen first. Then he is called by the Holy Spirit. Then he believes. Then he acts in faith, and the progression follows and finishes.

Box 13 - Man is Responsible for His Own Choices

Another reason God delegated some of His authority to man is so He could, without a doubt, hold man accountable for his own actions in this life. And everyone, including all people going to Heaven, would agree. If I choose for good, I get a reward. If I choose for evil, I also get a reward but a negative one. One I don't want.

Giving man choice is to give him the ability to love his wife, love his children and parents; not to mention loving God. With choices come responsibility; responsibility to God and to the society. The law protects the society. Christianity stands up for God. Man's responsibility to both is common knowledge. Only a few say different.

Box 14 - Man chooses not to listen to godly witness

I am saying man has 100% choice to listen or not listen to godly witness. He can make decisions over his own life, and *all* those choices are his own; not just 99.99% of them. God is straightforward and does not hide anything. If anything gets hidden, it is Satan who does the hiding.

Satan certainly hides the truth whenever possible. Since he does, many men make choices which lead them away from God. One of those choices is whether or not to listen to godly witness. The demons discourage and deceive listening to godly witness. Since it is a choice, men who don't listen are willingly ignorant, and thus many times, they pay the ultimate price.

Box 15 - Man chooses to listen to godly witness

I am saying that man has 100% choice to listen or not listen to godly witness.

I listened because I realized I did not know much about God. I realized some were saying there was a Heaven and a Hell. I didn't know if there was or not, but if there was a Hell, I sure didn't want to go there. So I started listening so I could make an intelligent decision.

I believe I made a decision to be open to the possibility, and God and godly men did the rest. Me being open, paved the way for all the other work by God, and godly men, in my life.

Box 16 - Preterition

God passes over those not elected to salvation. This is a word coined by scholars to summarize the idea that God does not send people to Hell, He just "passes over" (ignores) them. The purpose of the word is to exonerate God from any accountability of sending people to Hell. Let me offer an illustration.

In my view of preterition, life is like God making a conveyor belt with everyone on it. It is traveling from birth on the left, to Hell on the right, with life in between. People move around on the belt but can't get off it. God is standing over the conveyor belt with a cross in His hand, touching those He chooses to Heaven. At the end of the belt, people not touched drop off into Hell, while people who are touched, God takes up to Heaven. Preterition says, God is not accountable for the destiny of people not touched. Those not touched just continue to drop off into Hell without God doing anything. Nevermind that God made the conveyor and put everyone on it.

When God created people with their natural ability to sin, it was like putting them on a conveyor. Without intervention, they will go to Hell. According to preterition, there is no intervention.

To me, God not being accountable for people dropping into Hell is absurd. Its His system of dealing with all people. How can anyone else be accountable?

Lets change the illustration a little bit. Let's say God installs lots of crosses on the conveyor such that people can touch the crosses when they pass by. Some other people, who have already passed the crosses and touched one, tell the ones who have not passed, to touch a cross. God encourages the witnesses and ones receiving testimony. If you touch a cross, you will go to Heaven; if you don't touch a cross, you will go to Hell.

These two illustrations demonstrate the difference between Managed Cooperation Theology and Calvinistic type theology.

In the one case, God controls all, with no

choice, so He is accountable. In the other case, He has delegated some choice for touching to men. So if they touch, and continue touching, they may go to Heaven. He decides who has touched enough.

Box 17 - Man goes his own way; ignores or is against God

Man lives out his life going his own way and doing his own thing. This doesn't mean that God ignores him, it means he ignores God. I believe God gives lots of opportunities for men to listen.

Box 18 - Man is influenced by God and Godly men

As a man allows himself to be influenced by the Holy Spirit and godly witness, man becomes more influenced by the mercy, grace and love of God. Thus, God draws Him. Conversely, the closer a man draws to Jesus, the more he wants to get away from the evil of sin. The negatives of sin drive him away from it.

Box 19 - Man is influenced to the degree that he believes in faith,

And, he repents, confesses his sin, believes to the degree that he acts in faith, and goes God's way, because he discovers that God's way is better than his way. Saved men appreciate God for His wisdom, mercy, grace and love. God's attributes and his own growth in love, cause him to love God in return.

Box 20 - God sends man to Hell because he is an unrepentant sinner

If he is unrepentant, that assumes that he had the

opportunity to repent and didn't.

If a man has choice to listen; and, he has personal choice such that he can choose the path to love God, or choose the path to not love God; and the man chooses not to listen, then that man is unknowingly choosing Hell. Hell is the consequence of choosing the wrong path; but only if a choice is present.

If a man does *not* have personal choice; such that he can choose the path to love God or to choose the path not to love God, then it is God who is choosing the paths for everyone. As in my illustration, the man is up a conveyor without a cross!

Box 21 - God takes men to Heaven knowing God is honest.

And not just honest, but completely honest. There is not a hint of dishonesty or hint of lying in anything that God says or does.

This means that when people get to Heaven, and they look back through the years of human history, they will not find any incident where God was not completely honest, forthright and above reproach in everything He ever said or did. To find such an incident would produce some doubt.

If a question comes up about ones own love for God, can everyone say without a doubt, my love for God is my own love; or will someone think he is not sure. If a man thinks God artificially inseminated love into him, might that individual doubt the veracity of ones own love for God? I am sure that would produce doubt. It would in me.

To avoid that particular doubt, and any other doubt about God, is precisely why God has to be perfect in character. Satan produced the original sin, in the Garden, by producing doubt in Adam and Eve about God. See Chapter Three, Man's Sovereignty and His Fallen Nature..

A Proof that Calvinism is Incorrect

First, the situation. Next, the doctrine of Unconditional Election, Section One. Third, I will assume that Section One doctrine is true and correct, then demonstrate that if it is true and correct, God is a liar. The same format for Sections Two, Three and Four. Then, the conclusion.

Section One

The doctrine of “Unconditional Election” is the foundation of Calvinism. The other four points hang on its truth.

“The Westminster Confession states the doctrine thus:

‘By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestined to everlasting life, and others are foreordained to everlasting death.

‘These angels and men, thus predestined and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished.’”⁹

There is more to the confession but for now, I want to focus on this section.

This is the common meaning.

(I) The first sentence clearly states that God predestines some people to Heaven.

and,

(II) foreordains many people to Hell.

(III) They continue to say that God specifically designs each individual to unchangeably fulfill their appointed destiny.

(IV) They continue to say that the number of people going to Heaven is unchangeable, and the number of people going to Hell is unchangeable.

II Peter 3:9, “The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.”

This passage teaches that God is willing to give people ample time to repent, and thus go to Heaven, because He has no desire for people to go to Hell.¹⁰

Proof # 1 Since before the foundation of the world, God foreordained (II), unchangeably (IV), many people to Hell; and then, after the world was created, He also says that He wishes none to perish, He is a liar. He is a liar because His willful act of foreordaining many to Hell, without the opportunity to be different, contradicts His later words alleging desire that *none* should perish.

Conversely,

Proof # 2 Since before the foundation of the world, God chooses to predestine (I), unchangeably (IV), only a specific number of people to Heaven; and then, after the world is created, He also says He desires *all* to come to repentance, He is a liar. He is a liar because His willful act of predestining *certain* people to Heaven, without opportunity for all others to be different, contradicts His later words alleging desire for *all* to come to repentance.

Proof # 3 Since before the foundation of the world, God specifically designed each individual to fulfill their appointed destiny (III); and then, after the world was created, He also teaches that people can change from perishing to being saved, means God is a liar. He is a liar because He created people such that they *cannot* change,

9. “The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination,” P. 84.

10. See also Matt.18:14

then later says *they are able* to change if they repent.

Mark 16: 16, “He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.”

Proof # 4 Since before the foundation of the world, God said the number of people in Heaven and Hell is unchangeable (IV); and then, after the creation of the world, He also said in Mark 16: 16 the numbers are indeed changeable; means, God is a liar. He is a liar because He created *unchangeable* numbers of people in Heaven and Hell; then later, alleges the numbers are *changeable* by believing.

Section Two

The Westminster Confession on Unconditional Election (cont'd):

‘Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to His immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of His will, hath chosen in Christ, unto everlasting glory, out of His mere grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions, or causes moving Him thereunto; and all to the praise of His glorious grace.’

This is the common meaning.

For those He predestined to Heaven, God, before the foundation of the world, decided; on His own, without regard to any attributes of man, to save them. This was to the praise of His glorious grace.

I find no fault with this paragraph.

Section Three

The Westminster Confession on Unconditional Election (cont'd):

‘As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath He by the eternal and most free purpose of His will, foreordained all means thereunto. Whereby they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ by His Spirit working in due season; are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by His power through faith unto salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only.’

This is the common meaning.

Although God has appointed certain people to Heaven for reasons unknown to us, He has also given them all the tools needed to go through the process of salvation. That is: being fallen in the way of Adam, redeemed by Christ, called to faith in Christ by His Spirit in due time, such that each individual is justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by His power through faith unto salvation. No one else is saved.

Proof # 5 Since God, before the foundation of the world, predestined some people to Heaven (I), then after the world was created, projected the message to mankind that they were saved by love, forgiveness, mercy and grace, makes God a liar. God is a liar because they were actually saved by the special something that God gave them, which He withheld from the unsaved. Which means, love, forgiveness, mercy, and grace have nothing to do with actual salvation but are merely stage props that deceive.

Section Four

The Westminster Confession on Unconditional Election (cont'd):

“The rest of mankind, God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of His will, Whereby He extendeth or withholdeth mercy as He pleaseth, for the glory of His sovereign power over His creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of His glorious justice.”

This is the common meaning.

For the rest of mankind (group going to Hell), God was pleased with sending them there, because He gives or withholds mercy for His own reasons. He demonstrates His power over these creatures by sending them to Hell for their sin, to the praise of His glorious justice.

Proof # 6 Since before the foundation of the world, God foreordained (II), unchangeably (IV), many people to Hell, and He designed each individual to unchangeably fulfill their destiny (III), means God designed sinners; not people who do or do not sin. Since God specifically made them that way, it is unjust for God to eternally punish the sinner for doing what God designed him to do. Therefore, God is responsible for their sin. Since God is responsible for their sin, and tries to pass it off as the man's responsibility, God is a liar.

Proof # 7 Since God predestines some to Heaven (I), and foreordains many to Hell (II), means salvation, or a lack of it, is a work of God alone. Since God sends people to Hell because of their sin (Section Four), the sinner is involved with the process. If they are involved with the process, then God is not in the process alone. This means the doctrine is inconsistent, and therefore flawed.

I have cited two inconsistencies and five

proofs which demonstrate that Unconditional Election opposes scripture. There are many more scriptures which oppose Unconditional Election which could be cited. The number cited is sufficient.

Since it is impossible for God to lie (Hebrews 6:18), nor is there any hint of lying in Him (James 1: 17), means Unconditional Election must be an incorrect doctrine; and therefore, Calvinism an incorrect theology.

Boettner himself, speaking about the five points of Calvinism, says the following:

“Prove any one of them true and all the others will follow as logical and necessary parts of the system. Prove any one of them false and the whole system must be abandoned.”¹¹

Since the doctrine of Unconditional Election accuses God of lying, and we know God is not a liar, means the doctrine is incorrect. Since the doctrine of Unconditional Election is the backbone of Calvinistic type Theology, and it is incorrect, means Calvinism is incorrect, and should be abandoned.

An Additional Inconsistency

Since before the foundation of the world, God chose to predestine (I), unchangeably (IV), and He foreordains (II), unchangeably (IV), people to Heaven or Hell, means He alone is responsible for everyone's destiny. He alone is responsible because no one else is involved in the predestination and foreordination process. It is a done deal *before* creation when man comes to the Garden of Eden.

Man cannot possibly be involved because he did not exist at the time predestination and foreordination occurred. And since God alone is sovereign; therefore, God alone is accountable and responsible for salvation or lack of it.

11. “The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination,” p. 59.

Since God alone is responsible for the predestination of the elect and foreordination of the non-elect, He would have to create the elect fundamentally different, in some respect, from the non-elect. Otherwise the two might operate similarly, and He would lose control. He could not be sure they would act differently as appointed. There is another possibility.

God could create the elect and non-elect fundamentally the same but intervene in their life. This intervention would cause their destiny to be fulfilled. The Confession is not clear on which case they believe.

In Section Three of the Confession, it says the elect were foreordained with everything needed to be saved. That is: God calling them, and them hearing; God asking them to believe, and them believing; God calling them to faith, and them acting in faith; God calling them to love Him, and them loving Him. This section of the confession, obviously, involves the cooperation of the elect.

Since God employs the cooperation of the elect as a part of salvation; whether or not He causes the cooperation, Section Three still demonstrates that Calvinists believe salvation is a work of God and man together.

Since the Confession teaches in Section One, that salvation is by God alone, and in Section Three it teaches that salvation is by cooperation of God and man together, the Confession is inconsistent and therefore, flawed.

The Confession is inconsistent because, as I pointed out earlier in this chapter, salvation by God alone is fundamentally different than salvation by cooperation of God and man together.

Since Calvinism is flawed with inconsistencies and contradictions with the scripture, it should be abandoned. In its place should be Managed Cooperation Theology.

Modern Day Calvinism

Originally, Westminster Calvinism postulated that God both predestined the saved to Heaven and foreordained the unsaved to Hell. Many modern Calvinists have changed the hypercalvinism of the Westminster type to something less hyper. One of those changes is negating the foreordination of people to Hell by God.

Predestination without Foreordination

They suggest that God allows the unsaved to go to Hell on their own because He pays no attention to them. They never receive the “something” which gets them saved; that God gives to the elect.

This is called preterition. Ryrie says it is the passing over of those not elected to salvation.¹² As I understand it, God does not do anything special to save them, so they all go to Hell without exception.

Theologians have suggested this as truth because they still want to believe Pretemporal (before creation) Predestination of believers but abhor the idea that God might destine many to Hell.

They try to relieve God of His being accountable for sending people to Hell, by suggesting God just overlooks the unsaved. According to them, this would mean He allows them to sin as everyone has done and when they die, God sends them to Hell; because they were unsaved sinners. Nevermind, that it was not possible for them to be anything else. I refer you to the conveyor illustration.

If God predestines people to Heaven, by giving them something in their life, that He does give to the unsaved, then by not giving the “something” to the unsaved, He still controls who goes to what destiny. Passing over them does not relieve God of any accountability.

12. Basic Theology, p.313.

This is because withholding the “something” is a conscious act, just like giving the “something” is a conscious act.

I can understand abhorrence to the idea that God foreordains to Hell for two reasons. It does not seem to serve any good purpose. It is a waste of people that God says He loves. It is not loving on God’s part. If Preterition is true, this demonstrates that God’s sovereignty is more important to Him than is His love to Him. In other words, this is how a sovereign God administers His love. This is not the God I serve.

The answer to the Pretemporal Predestination issue is that if you want to believe God predestines people to Heaven; Ok. But at the same time, you must also accept with it, that God also foreordains many to Hell. To not take them together is intellectually dishonest. The reformers recognized this fact; which is why they postulated it.

Psalm 145: 17 - 20

17) The Lord is righteous in all His ways, and kind in all His Deeds.

This means God is straight-forward in all that He does. He does not use innuendo, trickery, implication, inference, or says one thing when He really means something else. He is loving in all that He says and does.

18) The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth.

This means God is near to all who call on Him with a sincere heart.

19) He will fulfill the desire of all who fear Him; He will also hear their cry and will save

them.

This means God will fulfill the desire of *all* who fear Him; He will also hear their cry for relief from disaster, or cry for Heaven, and will save them. He will save them if they cry out with a sincere heart.

This passage teaches that *all* men have the capability to call on God and be saved. This passage does not teach that the *elect only* have the capability to call on God and be saved. Since the elect is a more restricted group of members than all men, if the elect was in view, the passage would have to include the word "elect" to convey the truth that it is just the elect that is saved.

Since the word "elect" is not present, the promise must apply to all men. Therefore, it’s all men who are capable of being saved; not just the elect that is capable.

20) The Lord keeps all who love Him; but all the wicked, He will destroy.

This means that God keeps as a possession *all* who love Him. This implies that love of God is of great value to Him. It implies that He will take them to Heaven; unless of course, He is only going to keep them for a short time. This teaches that one who loves God will be saved.

Conversely, this means God will not keep the wicked as a possession. This implies that the wicked is of not much value to Him, and He will destroy them. In other scripture, we see that the wicked will be separated from Himself permanently.

What does this passage teach about the difference between the two groups? One group loves God, and one group does not. God values highly one group, the other group He values very little. Before there was two groups there was one group containing both people who will eventually love God and people who will eventually not love God. Before they chose the route

of their destinies, they were one group which God loved enough to die for them.

Salvation, which Calvinist type believers see as the issue of life, is really not the issue. The primary issue of life is love for God. Glorification is the reward for loving God, destruction is the reward for not loving God. Salvation could be thought of as the primary issue of life from man's point of view, but love for God is the primary issue of life from God's point of view.

Problems With Arminianism

Managed Cooperation Theology is nearly the same as Arminianism. Both are a work of God and man interacting with each other; relationship is very important. When I talk about initial cooperation, belief, and faith; I could be talking about either one. Some issues like eternal security we may not believe the same but most issues we agree on. Where we don't agree, is on the issue of God sharing His sovereignty with man, such that man can properly be accountable and responsible before God. I think it makes a theological difference whether or not God has actually delegated such sovereignty.

The difference in theologies involves the question of who is accountable and responsible for man's actions. Is man accountable and responsible, or is God accountable and responsible? If God has not given man sovereignty over our own lives, then He is accountable for our actions, and responsible for our choices. As an example, if you, as a parent, allow your toddler to run out into the street and he is injured, who is accountable and responsible; the child or the parent? Everyone would say the parent; because they are sovereign over the child, and they are therefore accountable before the law, and morally responsible for the child.

However, if the child is actually twenty-one years old, runs across the street and gets hit by a car; none would hold the parent accountable at law, nor responsible for injuries sustained,

because now the child is grown up and sovereign over his own person. It is the same between God and man.

It seems clear to me that God has ordained a Heaven and a Hell, and we are all going to one place or the other. If God has not delegated sovereignty, accountability and responsibility to man; then; Arminianism is right, and God chooses where we will go based on grace and faith. But then it also follows: if God retains sovereignty, he also retains accountability and responsibility for man and man's actions. Just like the parents of the toddler. And, if God is sovereign, accountable and responsible for man's actions, why is God sending men to Hell for that which God is sovereign over, accountable for, and for which He is responsible? Good question. The answer, I believe, is that He is not doing that at all.

This means God has not retained sovereignty, but given sovereignty, accountability, and responsibility to mankind. If that's the case, then God sees man as sovereign over his own life, accountable for his own actions, and responsible for his own choices. Therefore God can rightly send man to Heaven because he has chosen to allow himself to see God, be forgiven, and come to love God. That is the blessing. And, conversely, He can rightly send man to Hell because man has not *chosen* to allow himself to see God, be forgiven, and come to love God. That is the curse. This man's own choices, for which he is responsible, gets him to Hell just like the murderer; rightly, gets the death penalty for his crime.

The theological point which Arminians miss, I believe, is God delegating sovereignty, accountability, and responsibility to mankind for his own life. This makes man accountable and responsible to God's larger program which encompasses more than just what goes on in the person's own life; namely Heaven and Hell, and life and death.

Implications of Not Delegating Sovereignty

If God does not delegate sovereignty, then sending men to Hell when God is responsible for their actions, is unloving. And if there is anything that God is; its loving. And since God is loving; therefore, God must have delegated personal sovereignty to man. This makes man accountable and responsible for his own actions.

For what does God hold man accountable and responsible? Only one thing; being open minded enough to cooperate with godly men to learn about God and His mercy, grace, and love. Then God steps in to convict of sin, righteousness and judgement. Thus God and man work together such that man comes to love God.

But what if you believe that God has not delegated sovereignty to men but retains it. That means you probably see God as accountable and responsible for producing love in people; not a joint effort. People's responsibility is just to do as instructed and modeled by Jesus; that is, make disciples. That's what Christians are doing all over the country and world; trying to make disciples. We are failing at it. That's why Christianity is in such a pitiful state. Arminians and Calvinists alike have missed the point. *Loving God* is the point. Making disciples is a result not a cause. *Loving God* is the cause. We make disciples because we love God; not making disciples to show that we love God. I believe Arminian Christianity is going downhill because the theology supports making disciples but *supports less* the idea of loving God as a reason for existence. However, if man is accountable and responsible to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, and your neighbor as yourself; it would give an entirely new focus to Arminianism. The goal of making disciples would be replaced by the goal of loving God and neighbor. This is exactly what Managed Cooperation Theology is trying to say.

If Arminian theologians could see their way clear to believe that God has delegated some of his sovereignty to man, then it becomes man's job to cooperate to love God as the foremost

commandment says. Then, we make disciples because we love God. Then we become like Jesus; He made disciples because He loved the Father, and was directed by Him to do so.

Summation

I have shown, at the beginning of this chapter, that there are only three possible theologies; assuming there is only one God, the God of the Bible. That is man alone, God alone, or God and man working together. Unitarianism is a classic example of "Man Alone" theology. Calvinism is a classic example of "God Alone" theology. Arminianism is a classic example of "God and man working together." Arminianism, with a change in view of the sovereignty of God; and Managed Cooperation Theology, I believe, is the correct message of the Bible.

I have offered seven proofs which indicate that if Unconditional Election is valid, God is a liar. That alone should be enough to abandon Calvinistic type theology.

Then I offered Psalm 145:17-20 which demonstrates that:

- (1) God is straight-forward in all His ways.
- (2) God is near to all who would call on Him with a sincere heart.
- (3) God will save all who will cry out to him with a sincere heart.
- (4) Salvation is offered to all men, and not just the elect.
- (5) God keeps all who love Him, and destroys all the wicked.

Lastly, through the "Theological Differences Chart," I have demonstrated how Pretemporal, Double Predestination, and God delegating some sovereignty to man, are the two principle differences between Calvinism type theology and Managed Cooperation Theology. Calvinistic type theology leads to the conclusion that the sovereignty of God is more important to Him

than love is to Him. Managed Cooperation Theology leads to the conclusion that love is more important to Him than is His sovereignty to Him.

Walls and Dongell, in their book, "Why I am not a Calvinist," pp. 219-221, provide the following conclusion, which will be my conclusion for this chapter.

"As we saw in chapter five, Calvinist John Piper recognizes the possibility that God may not choose his son for salvation, but he insists that he would adore God even in that case. We acknowledged that we have a certain admiration for Piper, although we profoundly disagree with his understanding of the character of God. This, we suggest, serves as a good test case for those who may still may be trying to make up their mind on Calvinism. Does Piper's attitude reflect piety at its best, or is it deeply at odds with God's character revealed in Scripture? Interestingly, the title of the article in which Piper insists on adoring a God who might consign his sons to Hell is 'How Does a Sovereign God Love?' We believe Piper has the question backward and that his article reflects the unfortunate subordination of love to will that Gunton identifies. Given the full revelation of God in Scripture, the question we should be asking is, how would a God of perfect love express his sovereignty?"

"When love is subordinated to will, then the fatherhood of God, which is emphasized in the Trinity (Mk 1:11; Jn 1:18; 5:19-20; 17:20-26; 20:17; I Cor 15:20-28), takes a back seat to the image of God as King or Ruler.¹³ God's essential relational nature as a being who exists in three persons becomes secondary to the notion that God is a sovereign

monarch whose will cannot be thwarted.

Without the benefit of the New Testament, such a perspective is perhaps understandable. This is not to deny that God's love is revealed in the Old Testament (Lam 3:22; Hos 11:1). However, the full meaning that God is love was revealed in its clearest light only with the incarnation (Rom 5:8; Gal 2:20; Ijn 3:16; 4:9). In the brilliant light of the incarnation, we learn that from all eternity there was love between the Father and the Son (Jn 17:24, 26). Moreover, the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost revealed that God's eternal dance of love included the third person of the Trinity as well (Rom 5:5; Gal 4:6; Eph 3:16-19). That is why love is not merely an activity of God --- it is his very essence. In a nutshell, our case against Calvinism is that it doesn't do justice to the character of God revealed in Scripture. It does not accurately portray the holy One who is "compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love" (Ps 103:8), the God for whom love is not merely an option or a sovereign choice, but who is such that his eternal nature is love (I Jn 4:8).

"In the introduction, we posed the question this way: Does God love all of us and desire our well being? We have shown that Calvinists cannot answer this question in the affirmative without equivocation and inconsistency. The breathtaking vision of God's trinitarian love is obscured by the Calvinist claim that God passes over persons he could just as easily save and thereby consigns them to eternal misery. The exhilarating message of the gospel that should be good news to all sinners is muted by the Calvinist claim that only the elect are truly able to join the dance. While Scripture teaches that not all will come, the Calvinist account of why this is so ultimately goes back to God's choice not

13. For an insightful study of the various roles of God in Scripture and their relation to each other, see Allan Coppedge, portraits of God (Doweners Grove, Ill.: Intervarsity Press, 2001).

to save those persons rather than their refusal to accept the invitation. Indeed, Calvinists hold that God's sovereign choice not to save some sinners enhances his glory.

“God is truly glorified when his nature is brought to clearest light and he is properly worshiped and adored. It is noteworthy that in the Old Testament when the temple was dedicated, the Levites praised God by singing of his goodness and everlasting love and mercy. As they did, the temple was filled with the glory of God (2 Chron 5:11-14; 7:1-4). This glory was shown most fully when the Son of God took on a temple of flesh and lived among us (Jn 1:14-18; 14:8-11; Phil 2:5-11; Jn 4:1-12).

“By subordinating love to will, Calvinism fails to glorify God as he has revealed himself in History and ultimately in the incarnation of his Son. The love of God as revealed in the incarnation is not a matter of mere *words* but of the *word made flesh* who actively seeks the well being of his fallen children. A love that truly and passionately promotes the well being of the beloved, even when it is costly, is the sort of love that has existed from all eternity in the Trinity and was revealed in the life of Jesus. This is the kind of love, moreover, that God commands in his children to demonstrate by following his example (1 Jn 3:16-18). Because God loves all sinners in this fashion and actively works to promote their eternal well being, there is rejoicing in heaven when one of them repents (Lk 17:7, 10). A God who commands this sort of love and who positively delights in the repentance of sinners surely has no desire to show his sovereign power by passing over some fallen humans, nor would he truly glorify himself by doing so.

“This is why we are not Calvinists.

Our reasons are not merely autobiographical or personal, but rather they are theological, philosophical, and most of all biblical. As such, we believe they are also good reasons why our readers should reject Calvinism.