

BALANCE OF TRUTH

Many major conflicts in theology stem from a failure to see truth in proper perspective. All too often the relationship between two theological concepts is seen as antithetical.

	View A	View B
(Truth)	(Error)	
Unless one view is clearly and totally false they may well have a complementary relationship.		
	View A	Teaching C
<i>"It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter."</i>	(Truth)	(Full Truth)
<i>(Prov. 25:2)</i>		

Teaching Y		View B
<i>"It is good that you grasp one thing, and also not let go of the other, for the one who fears God comes forth with both of them."</i>		(Truth)
<i>(Ecc. 7:18 - NASB)</i>		

Teaching X (Error)

(See the printout furnished with this diskette to see the manual additions needed for the above)

NOTICE:

- The full truth (C) takes both branches (A and B) into full account.
- The full truth is greater than either branch of it alone.
- The full truth is not a compromise of either branch, but a composite of both.
- Neither branch denies the other, but each places legitimate and necessary limitations on the other.
- Full truth is not achieved by bringing the branches together, but by giving each full

weight in its own sphere and direction.

- Propositions, however "logical" ("X"), drawn from A which deny B, are not truth.
- Propositions, however "reasonable" ("Y"), drawn from B which deny A, are not truth.
- We may not be able to "harmonize" A and B at C, but we must leave this with the God who revealed them both and must not deny, ignore, nor explain away either one.
- When looking at either A or B alone we must be sure we are applying it in its proper sphere and direction.

Some of the truths which must be thus balanced against one another are: state and standing; the unity and trinity of God; the humanity and deity of Christ; the sovereignty of God and responsibility of man; "vertical truth" and "horizontal truth;" etc.

When we speak of a "balanced ministry" it is important what kind of balance is in view. If it is seeking to balance faithfulness to the Word with pleasing men, then such a balance is merely a matter of straddling the fence and is, I am sure, not pleasing to God nor spiritually profitable. There is another kind of balance which I think is very desirable, and seriously attempted by all too few. It is the kind of balance described in Eph. 4:15, "Speaking the **truth** in **love**." In the flesh we tend to be either so zealous for truth that we hit people over the head with it, or so concerned about love that we compromise truth. Only the Holy Spirit can produce this balance in ministry.

The "balance" addressed in this paper, a balance which we desperately need, is a balance between two truths which seem to be antithetical to each other. The preceding "chart" illustrates this theme. I have found it helpful to me in my own ministry. In the flesh we tend to be so enthused with the sovereignty of God, for instance, that we largely ignore, and even to some degree deny, the real responsibility of man. Or, on the other hand, be so zealous to protect the reality of man's responsibility for his choices that the sovereignty of God is ignored or played down. This same kind of thinking is often seen in other areas also. For instance, one of the early fallacies in the church was the denial of the true humanity of Christ. This was answered, specifically, in 1 John 4:2, 3 and 2 John 7. It is interesting that, by many living closest in time to His life on earth, the deity of Christ was so strongly evident they could not see how He could also be true man. As the centuries passed by, the other extreme came into vogue. Today there are very many groups who are so convinced of His humanity that they deny His deity.

It is instructive to notice that even when one is teaching a great truth, fully substantiated by Scripture, if the companion truth is not also taken into consideration two things can easily take place. First of all, true as the presentation may be, the whole truth is not under consideration until both sides of the issue are taken fully into the picture. Also, when the attention is focused on one side of the truth, and the other minimized, there is a strong tendency to allow "logic" to carry one into areas that are not true at all -- which would be avoided if the other side of the truth were given its proper place. Let me be specific. It is true that we are "chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world" -- a wonderful truth. But it is not true that God only loved the elect, that Christ only died for the elect, or that man has no real responsibility to make a decision in the matter. It is also true that God loved the world and that Christ died for all -- wonderful truth. But it is not true that man must **DO any work**¹ **in order to be saved**

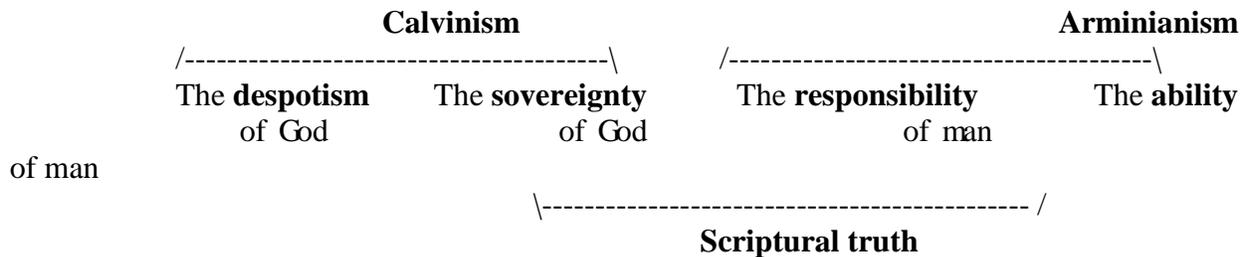
¹Faith is not a work. See Rom. 4:5, "But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness." Here faith is put into contrast with work. Compare Rom. 4:16, "Therefore **it is of faith that it might be according to grace**, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to

Can we understand, with our little minds, how both God's election and man's real responsibility can be true? Probably not. Does that make the two concepts mutually exclusive? Decidedly not. We may not be able to reconcile the two concepts, but both are set forth in the Word of God. What are we to do then? **We must believe them both**, not because we can understand, but because **God has spoken**. Are we to throw up our hands, then, and not try to understand? By no means. The area between the two concepts is that area where we are free, in total subjection to the Word of God and reliance upon the Holy Spirit, to think, meditate, wonder and worship. But we must be careful to keep our thinking and meditation within the bounds of revealed truth. On the topic under consideration it would be much easier to have fellowship with one another -- where the discussion produced light instead of heat -- if we looked upon the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man as complementary rather than antithetical.

Relating to the strong five point Calvinist view, consider an alternative "Tulip," as follows:

- Total recognition of **all** of God's attributes.
- Universal **provision** for man's need for redemption.
- Limited **application** of God's provision.
- Inconceivable **grace**.
- Perseverance of the **Savior**.

Also is it not possible that the relationship between Calvinism and Arminianism, in light of Scripture, may be depicted as follows?



One of the names of God is "Δεσποτης" -- from which we get our word "despot" (Used of God in Luke 2:29; Acts 4:24; Rev. 6:10; and of Christ in 2 Pet. 2:1; Jude 4). However the Greek word means "One who has 'absolute ownership and uncontrolled power'" according to Vines. But when used of God it does not have the connotation the English word so often bears, "a person exercising power abusively, oppressively, or tyrannically" -- as one of the dictionary definitions puts it. It is in this sense the word is used in the figure above. To know that God has absolute and undisputed power is Scriptural -- to believe He used this power to create men

those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all." Here Paul declares that faith is the only thing God could require of man which would not rule out grace in the matter of his justification.

Also faith is not the "gift of God" mentioned in Eph. 2:8, as the Greek of the verse demonstrates. The "gift of God" is the whole package of "salvation by grace through faith." See Kenneth Wuest on this verse.

for the purpose of sending them, without any loving concern or proffered way of escape, to an endless hell is not. A God who chooses the ones to be saved and then **gives** them, and **only** them, faith -- and then condemns the others to eternal punishment because they didn't have faith (2 Thess. 1:7 - 9) would surely be a "despot" in the bad sense, would He not?

It seems that to cling to the teachings of either Calvin or Arminius, to the point that our total theological position may be labeled by their name, rather flies in the face of Paul's warning in 1 Cor. 3:4.

--- William. P. Heath Bible Study # 51 < My Documents\Bible Studies\baltruth > on Microsoft Word
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