

# HERESY OR HEARSAY?

by Kel Good

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It is difficult to know how to respond to those who are concerned regarding the teaching of what has become known as "Moral Government Theology." Many of those concerned see Moral Government's view of the gospel as synonymous with false doctrine. On the one hand it is tempting to say we just understand the gospel differently. On the other hand, since Moral Government is diametrically opposed on many points which these people believe to be "orthodox," it is understandable that they should be concerned about the teaching of that which they consider "heresy." In their definition, I would be forced to consider their teaching heresy as well, since I do not believe they are correct. But rather than hurl the accusation of "false doctrine," I think I would be more tempted to accuse such people of mistaken doctrine, or "hearsay." The accusation of being a false teacher is too strong for someone we perceive to be seeking to lead people into a relationship with God.

A situation like this arose over the teaching of Apollos, who was still teaching John (the Baptist's) baptism after Jesus had come. Priscilla and Aquila did not accuse him of heresy and seek to get people to censor his ministry. Instead, they took him aside and presented "the way of God more perfectly." (Acts 18:26 KJV) He was unaware of the complete message as it had now been developed. Admittedly, not all opposers of Moral Government have failed to approach those who hold to these views, but the failure of such approach to persuade Moral Government advocates they are in error has consistently resulted in their being labeled heretical, rather than mistaken. I wonder what would have happened if for some reason Apollos had not understood the newer, more complete, message, and had felt unable to call people in this way. What if he had continued to call people to repentance for the forgiveness of sins as John had taught? Would he then have been called a heretic? If so, it would be more because he had access to the original apostles' message and could verify its details in a way we cannot. For Apollos not to have done so would have demonstrated his insincerity.

## **Differences Between Then and Now**

While it is true the apostles contended for the truth as it had been revealed to them against men who were seeking to deceive the flock of God, two points are different in our present day situation, compared to its first century counterpart.

The first is the false teachers of Paul's day sought to lead people into sin, usually to benefit themselves in some way. False doctrine was teaching people it was all right not to keep God's moral law. Titus 2:1 shows Paul exhorting Titus to "teach what is in accord with sound doctrine." The chapter then details, not theological dogmas to be accepted, but moral conduct to be maintained in the various stations of life. The message culminates in verse 12 by saying that the purpose of God's grace in our lives is that it "teaches us to say "no" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled,

upright and godly lives in this present age ..." People who teach contrary to this are teaching false doctrine. Such men Paul condemned. They were on a personal glory trip, often just trying to make money.

Where such a situation exists today it must be confronted and condemned. Few theological systems insist on the call to holiness as does Moral Government. It is not alone in this characteristic, but it stands out as a strong representative of this point of the gospel. No one should teach doctrines which lead people to sin. Moral Government is no more immune to individuals espousing its teachings simply to gain a following than any other system. Such individuals, if they appear, must be assessed individually. They do not reflect the truth or falsehood of the theological system any more than other inconsistent believers demonstrate the falsehood of other understandings of Christianity. These people must be assessed as individuals.

The second difference between our situation and that of Paul's day lies in the fact that the apostles' understanding of the gospel and its doctrines was through direct revelation, something which is not the case for us today. While theological dogmas in the sense of revealed doctrine are important along with moral conduct, we must read their writings and, through attempting to allow God's Spirit to guide us, come to an understanding of what they meant. This requires much prayer, sincerity of heart, and diligent study. Such sincere study never guarantees our conclusions will be free from error. Such errors, and Christians who seek to propagate errors which have arisen as mistaken results of sincere study, can hardly be called "heretical" and "false." They are mistaken. How many of us in all sincerity have taken our stand for what we perceived to be God's truth on some point, only to find at a later date we were somehow mistaken and had to change our view? I would be surprised to meet any Christian whose views have never changed.

### **Accountable to Seek the Right View**

No doubt God will hold us accountable for our diligence, or lack thereof, in seeking correct views, but there must be room to differ where we sincerely do not see things the same. Were the advocates of Moral Government refusing to accept as true what the Bible says, they would lose the right to be called Biblical Christians. Moral Government advocates interpret passages differently from their opposers, but they are seeking to understand what the apostles meant. Not one of us has the inside track on this. We must respect others when we do not see things the same. Philippians 4:15-16 says, "All of us who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point, you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. Only let us live up to what we have already attained." In context Paul is denying the claim to have arrived in his knowledge, and not to require any improvement. He recognized he was right in what God had revealed to him, but God had not revealed everything to him. It is dangerous to assume we understand everything and censor others who disagree. What if we are wrong? How will we ever come to know this?

We cannot come to the point of perfect knowledge, at least not in this life, but we can live up to what we see. Doing so is maturity. Failure to live by the light we would be insincere

and chargeable as living by false doctrine since, at this point, we would be deliberately doing what we perceived to be wrong. Deliberate refusal of what the Bible clearly says would also be so chargeable. The problem is, all of its teachings are not as clear as some would have us believe. Even Peter said of the writings of Paul, ". . . in which some things are hard to be understood which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, to their own destruction." (1 Pet. 3:16) Evidently our opposers feel better equipped than Peter. We have seen that to teach people to violate moral law is heretical. We must allow others the space to differ if they see things differently.

Admittedly, the differences between Moral Government and other theologies are not peripheral, but deal with the basic doctrines of the faith. Nonetheless, God is capable of guiding us through even such fundamental differences, knowing the sincerity of our hearts.

### **A Lesson From History**

It seems to me that the principle I have described has functioned between the Arminian and Calvinist branches of the church for years. Each has on occasion hurled the charge of "heresy" at the other, but, in most cases, each has also come to accept the other as a sincere, if mistaken, attempt to describe the gospel. The same attitude seems to be in order with the question of Moral Government. Historically the ideas of Moral Government have always existed in the church, but on the fringes due to the power of ecclesiastical censorship. Calvinism sought to eliminate Arminianism as heresy in its earlier days. It failed. Because Arminianism is too big to "get rid of," Calvinist branches of the church "accept" it today as a sincere understanding of the gospel. This is not tantamount to saying it is right. An examination of these opposing views will show they also differ on major points of soteriology and cannot both be right. One is "heresy," if heresy must be defined as failure to come to the right conclusion, and not as a refusal to love truth. They have sought to find common ground instead of emphasizing differences. There simply are too many sincere people on both sides of this issue for one to effectively eliminate the other. In the past, political pressures were used to attempt such conquests. Today such censorship is more difficult to achieve since our culture is pluralistic and open to people's rights of freedom of conscience.

I suggest since the question of moral sincerity on the part of Moral Government advocates is answerable in the affirmative (Of course, there will always be crackpots wearing every label, be it Calvinist, Arminian, or Moral Government.) Moral Government Theology should be given the same right as its two other historical counterparts. Moral government theology, as a system, seems to be a newcomer on the scene as a way of expressing the gospel. But giving it this right to be heard is not saying it is right, but that it is a sincere attempt to understand the truth of the gospel. While obviously only one of the three views can be true (and I am not saying that there might not be a better way yet of expressing the gospel), we do not need to seek to eliminate each other's influence from the church. Censorship is unnecessary to eliminate error. Truth will be best shown when it is placed beside error. Let the evidence be presented; if we remain unconvinced then let us each respect that our differences do not arise from insincerity and therefore "false" or "heretical" intentions, but from sincere and therefore

"orthodox" attempts to understand the truth. Only those who do not love truth, who deliberately violate the light they have seen, are unorthodox.

If Moral Government is incorrect in its assessment of the gospel, then it is mistaken. If this view of theology is confused, this confusion arises not from motives to lead people astray or away from following God. It arises from a sincere misunderstanding of the light available to us. To this extent it could be said to be "hearsay," This does not make it "heresy."

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A RESPONSE:

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

September 17, 1991

Dear Sir,

Kel Good suggests sincerity of belief as a delineator between simple error, which is to be tolerated in the church, and heresy, which is not. Might he suggest some boundaries beyond which sincerely held error cannot go without defining itself as non-Christian? There are, after all, sincere Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Christian Scientists, and Armstrongites. Interestingly enough, they and other cultists routinely complain that their sincerity is under attack when in reality their doctrines are. The tactic is so common, one could almost call such complaints one of the characteristic marks of the cults.

The point of calling a doctrine or system of doctrine heresy is not to question the sincerity of its advocates allege that it is contrary to the fundamental doctrine of a particular church or Christianity as a whole, regardless of the sincerity of those who believe it. I argued in *The Heresy of Moral Government Theology* that the distinctive system of doctrine promoted today as Moral Government Theology is contrary to the fundamental doctrines of the chief Calvinist, Lutheran, and Wesleyan/Arminian creeds and other doctrinal authorities (e.g., Wesley's *Notes on the New Testament* was officially recognized as authoritative in the resolution of doctrinal and exegetical disputes in Methodist churches until liberalism overran most of them in the past few generations). Since that distinctive system is comprised chiefly of the teachings of Pelagius (against original sin and in favor of human perfectibility), Socinus (against original sin, against vicarious satisfaction in the atonement and in favor of the moral influence view of the atonement, and against the intellectual infinitude and immutability of God), and Grotius (against vicarious satisfaction in the atonement and in favor of the moral influence view), and since from their inception those teachings have been opposed by every branch of Christianity that confronted them, it is reasonable to say that the system is heretical. I also argued that these views are in fact unbiblical because they are contrary to specific and clear passages of Scripture.

Rather than hiding behind complaints of being charged with doctrinal insincerity (which to my knowledge they never have been), proponents of Moral Government Theology should follow the Apostle Peter's injunction and show themselves "always ready to give a defense to everyone who asks...a reason for the hope" they hold (1 Pet. 3:15). That will require hard exegetical, theological, and historical work--something rarely encountered in the writings of Moral Government theology adherents.

One other comment on Good's essay. He insists, "Few theological systems insist on the call to holiness as does Moral Government. "Aside from the fact that there have always been strong emphases on holiness in Calvinism (just think of the caricatures of the Puritans!), Lutheranism, Wesleyanism, and Baptism, Good neglects that a call to holiness may be useless if it is accompanied by an unbiblical message about the means to it. No matter how much a doctrinal system insisted on our being holy, if it taught a means to holiness that Scripture said was impossible, that system would be wrong and would in fact not lead people into real holiness. Instead, it would lead them into a false holiness, which would become in them a root of pride. If, as Good says, "No one should teach doctrines which lead people to sin," and if Moral Government Theology leads people into a false holiness that becomes a source of pride, then, on Good's own criterion, no one should teach Moral Government Theology. Indeed, Moral Government Theology's stern rejection of original sin and total depravity-doctrines common to Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinist, and Wesleyan theology alike--naturally engenders pride. Precisely such pride is what I have encountered time and again, especially among people and institutions that consider themselves well advanced in Moral Government Theology. They tend to think themselves immune to criticism, question, or correction from others in the body of Christ. Hence, for instance, Youth With a Mission's persistent refusal to be held doctrinally accountable by any persons outside itself.

Why not quit the smoke screens and join the battle in earnest? Exegete the key passages of Scripture and see whether they support or oppose your distinctive doctrines; follow your ideas out to their logical conclusions and see whether you're still happy to embrace them; labor through the key theological arguments and see whether yours can stand. See whether, in direct confrontation, you can persuade your critics, or even third parties, that your distinctive doctrines are true, or for that matter even mildly enough mistaken to be treated lightly by the Body of Christ, whether, as Arminius said of the notion that God is "freely good, they are "blasphemy," and whether, as Wesley said of the denial (of-sic) original sin and total depravity, it is "heathenism."

Sincerely,

E. Calvin Beisner  
Pea Ridge, Arkansas

A RESPONSE:

## Letter to the Editor

by Kel Good\*

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**December 5, 1991**

Dear Sir:

This letter is a response to E. Calvin Beisner's letter to the editor regarding my article "Heresy or HearSay?"

My article points to sincere belief as a delineator between heresy and sound doctrine. Mr. Beisner rejects this as a distinction empty of content. Are there not sincere "Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Christian Scientists, and Armstrongites?" Admittedly, my position is open to a kind of ecumenism which could be seen to allow any position. Obviously, not all these contradictory positions could be true. I believe there is one right position, both as a complete view (though I would deny anyone but God knows it) and on individual points of doctrine. It is not my intention to imply that content is irrelevant, but rather that it is not the deciding factor when God assesses a person's life. Sincerity involves not simply honesty to one's present beliefs, but diligence to perfect one's view of reality. This means honestly looking at all the above mentioned Views and having reasons for holding to or rejecting them (as Beisner himself says we should referring to 1 Peter 3:15). but such honesty does not guarantee we will all agree when we are finished, and we are never really finished. How will God decide who is saved and who is lost? Not by anyone having perfect doctrine, since none of us do.

The usual response is, by saving those who accept the essential doctrines. But what are those? What is essential is also a matter of discussion. If correct doctrine decides things, it would appear salvation is a matter of luck and chance, rather than something people can pursue reasonably.

Far from my article complaining Moral Government critics accuse us of Insincerity, as Beisner suggests, I was attempting to steer us straight to sincerity Is the deciding factor on how we should consider our relationship to other people. We need not agree with a system of theology someone holds to, in order o admit his apparent sincerity when we thoroughly discuss issues and differ. Perhaps such sincerity does not exist. Only God knows. But a heretic is someone who teaches people to sin, to be dishonest with what he understands to be required, according to Paul. In the Evangelical/Reformed/Arminian systems those doctrines taught in Scripture constitute correct doctrine, but contrary to Beisner's suggestion, there is no consensus on most points of doctrine. A brief example illustrates the problem in his reasoning. Beisner suggests Catholics, Lutherans, Calvinists, and Wesleyans agree on the doctrine of original sin. This unity is illusory. One need only

investigate these groups' definition of this doctrine to realize what we have are four doctrines, in addition to the fifth one of Pelagius, or sixth one if we recognize the difference between Pelagius' view and the common idea of physical depravity taught by many Moral Government teachers. These groups agree in their opposition to Pelagius (and Moral Government?), this does not mean they agree.

Beisner singles out "the denial of original sin in favor of human perfectibility, denial of vicarious satisfaction in the atonement in favor of the moral influence view, and a denial of the intellectual infinitude and immutability of God" as the distinct Moral Government doctrines which have been "opposed by every branch of Christianity that have confronted them." This begs the question since by definition everyone historically who has held these views must no longer be considered part of the church. Many scholars would still consider Pelagius a part of the church, even if disagreeing with the correctness of some of his views. Beisner refers to Grotius as a source of Moral Government's mistaken view of the atonement. (We will ignore for the time being his confusion of the governmental theory with the moral influence theory.) Grotius was an Arminian and his view has been held by many Arminians not to mention American Calvinists in the last century. It is a very coherent attempt to present a view of atonement which would allow the Arminian position of universal atonement without entailing universal salvation. (Weren't Calvinists and Arminians supposed to have a consensus here?) Wesley taught the doctrine of entire sanctification, also an element of Moral Government teaching, though with different descriptions (Now we've lost the Wesleyan/Arminians too!).

The only Moral Government doctrines which do not seem to have been held by major portions of the church at some point in history are the denial of unlimited foreknowledge and the belief that God's moral character is voluntary. Both of these views have been advocated in history, but not by major groups. Even in Moral Government circles the last mentioned doctrine is debated as to its implications.

The net result of the preceding is that Beisner's historical consensus against Moral Government does not exist. By his own criteria we must discard Wesleyan/Arminians for their sanctification view, yet use them as authority against Moral Government's view of omniscience; we must discard the Catholics because they only view man as born sick (see Luther's attacks on Erasmus) yet use them in our consensus against a view denying any sinful moral inheritance; throw the Arminians who follow Grotius in his view of the atonement, yet claim them elsewhere.

"Yes, Virginia, there really is a historic Christian consensus against Moral Government theology."

No one is hiding behind complaints of being charged with doctrinal insincerity. I am calling people to understand our humanness and realize God is not talking to us like he did to Paul. We have what God told Paul, but we have to interpret it. We can disagree with how to do that, but what right do we have to tell someone he is a heretic, just because he does not come to our conclusions? There is no historic Christian consensus, there is 2000 years of people expressing how they understand Paul and the rest of

Scripture. That history includes Christians who held to every view Moral Government brings together, though they have not been presented in this systematic way before. Beisner says we should carry out the "hard exegetical, theological, and historical work...rarely encountered in the writings of Moral Government Theology adherents." I am tempted to ask what books this gentleman has been reading? More than likely Mr. Beisner simply does not agree with the conclusions he has read by Moral Government teachers as they have exegeted, theologized, and studied history. Does this mean they "haven't done their work? No. It means we disagree. And that is what we should do if we are honest. God would require that we do so.

Beisner last refers to Moral Government's call to holiness, suggesting it fosters pride. Beisner's Wesleyan Arminians have been hearing this longer than Moral Government advocates. I do not deny people who enter this teaching intellectually can become proud. If they do they are sinning and are not living up to what they are professing. Is this new to Christianity? I am sure a few Calvinists convinced of their being one of the elect have sinned this sin in history. That does not make Calvinism wrong. If we are calling people to a false holiness, that is terrible. If people are being taught to expect sin in their life, when God desires their deliverance, that is also awful. I am glad for the call to holiness wherever it occurs, Calvinist circles included. As my article indicates, every camp has its flaws. I also have met some of the most Godly people I have known in Moral Government circles.

The end of the matter concerning Mr. Beisner's view is this. We disagree. His paper *The Heresy of Moral Government Theology* attempts to present a historical/Biblical argument against this theology. The historical argument is the most important as it attempts to create the illusion of historical unity in the church in opposition to Moral Government doctrines. We have seen this is a failure, even at a cursory glance. This leaves us with what the Bible teaches. But here we seem to honestly disagree. That is what has always been the case historically. This disagreement no more makes Whitfield a heretic because Wesley disagreed with him, than Pelagius was a heretic because Augustine had more horses than him to buy people off with before they got to the church council. [Peter Brown in *Augustine of Hippo* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press. 19703, pg. 362, describes how Augustine and Alypius were able to turn Roman court laymen against Pelagius, partially through bribery: "On one mission, Alypius had carried with him the promise of eighty Numidian stallions, fattened on the estates of the church, as douceurs for the cavalry officers, whose views on grace had proved decisive." I am indebted to my sister Phyl Good's unpublished paper, *The Theology of Pelagius* for this reference.]

Neither does this disagreement make E. Calvin Beisner a heretic in my eyes. I think he is wrong, dead wrong, about a number of key theological ideas. If his heart is sincere in those beliefs and he lives honestly in the light he possesses, I expect to see him in heaven.

Thanks,

Kel Good  
Calgary, Alberta, Canada

\* Some typographical errors and punctuation have been corrected. It is believed that they were introduced by the original transcriber of this letter into the electronic media. - Anthony Barbieri

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## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

February 21, 1992

Dear Sir,

I would like to make comments about E. Calvin Beisner's paper *The Heresy of Moral Government Theology* ("Heresy") and his letter to the editor which appeared in the Jan/Feb 1992 issue of "Notes and Quotes".

I consider Mr. Beisner to be generally a sound and gifted scholar. He has done much to defend the doctrine of the Trinity against the errors of cultists and has done solid work in the areas of economics and the environment. However, it seems Mr. Beisner suffers from exegetical and historical tunnel vision when particular reformed doctrines are at issue. Mr. Beisner is not the only scholar to suffer from the tunnel vision affliction. For example, the first edition of the book *The Evangelicals*, edited by Wells and Woodbridge, contained an extremely biased essay on Evangelicalism by Calvinist John Gerstner. Fortunately, Arminian scholars did not let this skewed presentation of history go unchallenged: and the editors included in the revised edition on essay discussing evangelicalism from an Arminian perspective.

First, I would like to challenge Mr. Beisner and the Coalition of Revival ("COR") to decide whether or not they consider Charles Finney to be a heretic. Finney denied original sin and imputed righteousness. He affirmed that God is good by choice and adopted the governmental view of the atonement. He did hold to absolute foreknowledge, but I am not aware that he thought its denial was heretical. I think it only fair that if Beisner and COR consider Finney a heretic they should publicly acknowledge this fact so that the church will be alerted to their theological bias and put the debate in its proper historical context. Despite Finney's belief that the doctrine of a hereditary sinful nature was blasphemy and slander on Jehovah, most Christians believe Finney was a godly servant of Christ even if Wesley may have characterized his views as "heathenism". I think the church generally believes there is room for both Wesley and Finney. It is easy for COR to attack a relatively unknown contemporary theological movement. It will take courage to call Finney and other prominent like-minded Christians heretics.

Space limitations prohibit a thorough discussion of Beisner's assertion that Moral Government theology lacks hard exegetical and historical support. However, some of Beisner's arguments are easily defeated. For example, in "Heresy" Beisner writes "that those who claim that Moral Government Theology is consistent with Wesleyanism and

Arminianism do so in either ignorance or contempt of the facts about the historic doctrines of those systems." Let's examine how accurate his reading of history is with the facts concerning the "Governmental" view of the Atonement. The great Reformed Scholar B. B. Warfield wrote in *The Person and Work of Christ* that, ...the Grotian theory has come to be the orthodox Arminian view and is taught as such by leading exponents of modern Arminian thought whether in Britain or America; and he who will read the powerful argumentation to that effect by the late Dr. John Miley, say, for example, will be compelled to agree that it is, indeed the highest form of atonement doctrine conformable to the Arminian system. But not only is it thus practically universal among Wesleyan Arminians, it has become...the mark also of orthodox Nonconformity in Great Britain and of orthodox Congregationalism in America.

In an article appearing in the March 1888 issue of the *Methodist Quarterly Review* by G. M. Steele entitled *Arminian Theories of the Atonement*, the author recognized the existence of four Arminian atonement theories and named the "purely governmental" and "modified governmental" as two of them. Stanley Gundry, whose name appears on the COR letterhead, acknowledged in his book *The Proclamation Theology of D. L. Moody* that the governmental theory may have been the standard written evangelical expression on the subject in the 19th century.

Although Arminius and Wesley did not teach the governmental theory, the facts show that many of their progeny did. I doubt Beisner believes everything Calvin taught, but I think it is appropriate to characterize his views as Calvinistic. I don't know any Arminians or Wesleyans who elevate Arminius or Wesley to the position of Pope, As Protestants we view scripture as our final authority and are not duty bound to follow the teachings of any man.

Hard exegetical work on original sin and imputation can be found in Moses Stuart's *Commentary on Romans* (Revised 2nd ed.). Less scholarly but still informative is Albert Barnes' *Notes on Romans*. (Both the first and revised editions should be consulted.) Also useful is Forster and Marsden's historical study on original sin found in *God's Strategy in Human History*.

History also reveals that the denial of absolute foreknowledge has always been held by some within Arminian circles and has been recognized as a viable option even though it never achieved majority acceptance. Methodist theologian John Miley in his *Systematic Theology* wrote concerning "Divine nescience" that "...some of the Remonstrants held the same view, although it does not appear with Arminius himself". The revered Methodist expositor Adam Clarke held to limited foreknowledge. A. H. Strong also noted in his *Systematic Theology* that some Arminians deny absolute foreknowledge.

M. S. Terry, author of the widely used book *Biblical Hermeneutics*, wrote in an article for the *Methodist Quarterly Review* in 1899 that, "There is and has been a tendency among Arminian Methodist theologians to look with favor upon the idea that the foreknowledge of God may be limited. Two distinguished names at least will ever be associated with this

thought, Dr. Adam Clarke, the great expositor, and Dr. L. D. McCabe, the able and saintly teacher who has lately gone from among us."

L. D. McCabe was the 19th century's ablest proponent of limited foreknowledge. His views were vigorously debated within the pages of the *Methodist Quarterly Review*. Although his views were opposed by some prominent Methodists, neither McCabe nor his sympathizers were accused of heresy. McCabe and supporters were viewed by their opponents as Christian brothers with whom they disagreed on a point of doctrine.

Additional support that one can adhere to limited foreknowledge and not be cast out from the church comes from an unlikely source. In discussing the theological views of the early church fathers, Loraine Boettner, in a chapter entitled "Calvinism in History" from his book *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*, wrote:

Some of their writings contain passages in which the sovereignty of God is recognized, yet along side of those are others which teach the absolute freedom of the human will. Since they could not reconcile the two, they would have denied the doctrine of Predestination and perhaps also God's absolute foreknowledge. They taught a kind of synergism in which there was a cooperation between grace and free will.

One implication that can be drawn from this quote is that if the early church fathers did deny absolute foreknowledge, they were only involved in error and not egregious heresy. They would still be the early church fathers and genuine Christians and not written off as heretics. More examples could be cited to show that belief in limited foreknowledge has not been universally opposed by the church as serious heresy, but I think the above evidence is sufficient to show that it is a doctrine about which Christians have disagreed in the past.

In recent years several Arminians have acknowledged this option. Robert Shank in his classic Arminian work on election *Elect in the Son* states that the biblical views of election do not require God to foreknow all individuals. However, it is not clear what Shank's own position is. More recently Clark Pinnock edited a book entitled *The Grace of God, the Will of Man: A Case for Arminianism* which included an essay opting for limited foreknowledge.

I hope I have at least established a prima facie case that Beisner's presentation of history is very selective. I look forward to further discussions of these important matters and trust that the result will be a clearer perception of God's truth and a greater desire to know him.

Respectfully,

Tom Lukashow

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