

Doctrine #3 Unconditional Election

Written by Calvin Fox

Monday, 29 September 2008 20:47 -

When we talk about Effectual Calling, we are talking about being chosen or the subject of Election. Our next topic is "Unconditional Election", which, in turn, is part of the Doctrine of Predestination.

We have tried to explain that those who chose Christ do so only because they have first been chosen (to do that) by God. Remember why this has to be: the bondage of the will to our Sin Nature. Because of that bondage no one wills to come to God in Christ. If that happens in anyone's life, it is only because God has made it possible by regenerating that person, setting their will free to chose. If the teaching of the will's bondage is an affront to man's assumption that his will is free and if the idea that we do not really have a free choice in the matter of salvation is a stumbling block to most people, than the Doctrines of Predestination and Unconditional Election are really tough to swallow. This in itself is the prime evidence for the nature of Sin as rebellion against God. The insistence on the autonomy of the Self and commitment to the free-will of the Individual conflicts with the very heart of Reformed Theology which is the Sovereignty of God. God is God. We are not.

I know there are Biblical arguments that support Arminian Theology (the most common and popular of our day) as well as Calvinism. I have not included here a list of proof texts, because at the end of the day, what persuades me most that Calvinism is the best System of Sacred Truth, is that it alone truly magnifies the Sovereignty of God. I'll live with apparent paradox and with unanswered questions because, over all, Calvinism, to my mind, brings the greatest glory to God. How does it do that? By saying that ultimately, everything about Salvation is by, from and for God. Even repentance and faith are themselves gifts from Him.

That is Calvinism's greatest affront to the unregenerate mind and the deepest reason non-Calvinists reject Calvinism.

We think salvation is all about the individual (about me, my loved ones and friends). It is not. Salvation, before everything else, is about God, the Almighty Maker of heaven and Earth, having His way with His entire creation and achieving the fulfillment of His purposes which he determined before Creation. Secondly, salvation is about God's creating a world-wide People for Himself- a People (the Elect, the Church) who will live corporately, throughout history, as a witness to Him, seeking His glory in all things. Finally, salvation is about the individual. Everything that happens in my life as an individual happens under God's control to further His sovereign will in the world and to benefit His Covenant People. God, being God, can and will do whatever He wants. We draw comfort from knowing that whatever God does will always be

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according to His nature and character. That means we can trust whatever He does to be good and the best. We may be tempted, but we will not shake our fists at him for what He does. Our experience and conviction throughout life will always be, "God giveth and God taketh away, blessed be the Name of the Lord".

We will never understand or accept the Doctrines of Predestination and Unconditional Election unless we grasp and accept all of this. Predestination merely means that God has decided (chosen or elected), in advance, who is destined to experience Glory with Him. Remember if He did not choose, no one would see Glory. Obviously, if God chooses some to be saved, He allows everyone else to go on their way into a Christ-less eternity. This is known as the Doctrine of Reprobation. Critics insist God, at His merciless whim, sends sinners into Hell. This, they claim is what is meant by "double predestination": some to Heaven, some to Hell. Not so. This is an unfair misrepresentation of Calvinist teaching.

We have stated clearly why people go to Hell: they sin. Hell is not God's punishment for people who are not Christians. God doesn't punish or condemn people because they do not know Christ. People perish because they transgress God's Law. They do that, because they are sinners. Their only hope is the unconditional Election (predestination) of God

"Unconditional Election" means that God has chosen people apart from any conditions whatsoever. If it is true that the heart has reasons of which reason does not know, so does God. He has His reasons, though unknown to our reason, for choosing one person rather than another; but his choosing is not predicated upon any human behavior or upon any foreknowledge of future behavior, including the decision to accept Christ. (God does not choose those people for salvation that He knows will choose Christ). Individuals are chosen for salvation always and only for His Name's sake and that choice allows no "conditions".

It is all of Grace.

God chose or destined or ordained them to this Salvation before the existence of time, space and matter (That is what the words, predestination and foreordination, mean.)

Many evangelicals today are actually "calminians". They want to claim conditional election, with free will, when it comes to getting saved and claim unconditional election when it comes to staying saved. Why? If I am responsible and able to accept Christ of my own free will, am I not also responsible and able to keep Christ of my own free will? If I do not need God to get the process going, how come I need Him to finish the process? I know Arminians will insist that they

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need God at all times, beginning, middle and end. Yes, they need God's assistance (grace, help) to strengthen their free will. Ultimately, even with God's help, they believe in saving themselves. How can this doctrine glorify God or claim to be salvation by grace alone?

The Calvinist believes, if anyone comes to Christ, walks with Christ through life and finally enters into Heaven to be with Christ for Eternity, it has all, from beginning to end, been the work of God alone.

Those of us who are saved and know it are totally indebted to the grace of God alone for that salvation.