



WHO shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. (Romans 8:33)

YE have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. (John 15:16)

There is much confusion in our day over the matter of orthodox, biblical doctrine. In a world of "me first!" every man and woman desires to read their own understanding into Holy Scripture by picking and choosing those verses which they believe will support that understanding and their personal desires. The old masters and early church fathers, who may even have known our Lord during His ministry and who were willing to lay down their own lives in defense of the Word, are scoffed at and rejected for being either too meticulously zealous of Biblical teachings, or else quaint and out of date with modern social mores. So, the modern church has become virtually a free-for-all when it comes to biblical truth and moral restraint. The Anchor of Truth has been weighed, and the Ancient Landmark has been moved (throwing all landlines of truth into confusion and uncertainty). The "old paths" have been abandoned to the detriment of the souls of our youth.

In the past four hundred years, a new doctrine has permeated Protestant faith called Arminianism. It is a belief that man is the originator of his salvation instead of God. This view is in direct conflict with Augustinian theology of the early church which asserts biblical evidence to claim only God is responsible for a Christians salvation. Though this biblical principle of the Sovereignty of God is sometimes referred to as Calvinism, or Augustinian theology, these references are merely for convenience since both base their understanding on solid biblical truth.

In the leading text of this devotion from Romans 8:33, and in many other places of Scripture, the people of God are referred to as the ELECT. What does that word mean? It

comes from the Greek '*Eklektos*' meaning chosen by God. In this context of Scripture, the term means salvation is to the chosen of God, not salvation of God chosen by the Christian. At the heart of the debate is the will of man – is it independent to choose righteousness, or is it incapable of willing righteousness and choosing Christ as Savior? That debate will not be settled by my opinion, or those of other commentators; but I present this short paper based on my understanding of biblical doctrine as food for thought.

There are many sheep and many different folds; but there is only one over those sheep who follow Christ as Shepherd are claimed by Him. But there are also goats who are mingled with the sheep whose very natures are contrary to the Law of Grace. These have no part in the call and beckon of Christ the Savior. *31 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: 32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: 33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: 36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. 37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? 38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? 39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? 40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. 41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.* (Matt 25:31-41)

The defense of the Sovereignty of God in calling us to salvation far exceeds the scope of this devotion, but consider just a few of the many passages that are explicit in the declaration of this truth. *29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.* (Romans 8:29-30) This is quite clearly stated. So, whom did Christ foreknow? Is it not all who are the called and chosen in salvation through grace and faith? We are told who these called and chosen of God are: *3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: 4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: 5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. 7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.* (Eph 1:3-7)

What was our state BEFORE He called us forth to life? What was the state of poor Lazarus of Bethany while he was laid in a stone tomb in Bethany? He was DEAD! So were we before our Lord called our name forth from the state of the spiritually dead. The dead have no power to make a decision, to move an arm, to see a light – NOTHING! But at the call of Christ, his body and heart were quickened to life. The same is true of the sinner. All have sinned. All deserve eternal death. But God, in His Providence, has called and chosen some to live an eternal life.

1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind;

and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6 *And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: 7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 **Not of works, lest any man should boast.** 10 **For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.** (Eph 2:1-10) Who does the calling and choosing to salvation – the sinner, who lacks any will to do good, or the Lord? *These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.* (Rev 17:14)*

The Sovereignty of God and Salvation by Grace alone has been a landmark doctrine of both the English and Continental Reformation Churches. *Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.* (2 Tim 1:9) The expression of the Grace and Sovereignty of God is our salvation is found in the 17th Article of Religion of the Reformation Church of England:

XVII. Of Predestination and Election

Predestination to Life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) he hath constantly decreed by his counsel secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour. Wherefore, they which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God, be called according to God's purpose by his Spirit working in due season: they through Grace obey the calling: they be justified freely: they be made sons of God by adoption: they be made like the image of his only-begotten Son Jesus Christ: they walk religiously in good works, and at length, by God's mercy, they attain to everlasting felicity. As the godly consideration of Predestination, and our Election in Christ, is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons, and such as feel in themselves the working of the Spirit of Christ, mortifying the works of the flesh, and their earthly members, and drawing up their mind to high and heavenly things, as well because it doth greatly establish and confirm their faith of eternal Salvation to be enjoyed through Christ, as because it doth fervently kindle their love towards God: So, for curious and carnal persons, lacking the Spirit of Christ, to have continually before their eyes the sentence of God's Predestination, is a most dangerous downfall, whereby the Devil doth thrust them either into desperation, or into wretchedness of most unclean living, no less perilous than desperation.

Furthermore, we must receive God's promises in such wise, as they be generally set forth to us in Holy Scripture: and, in our doings, that Will of God is to be followed, which we have expressly declared unto us in the Word of God.