

CONTINUING THE “GREEN LETTERS”

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CHAPTERS 70-71, pgs. 314-317
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ARMINIAN VIEW

FREE WILL OR 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 not interfere with man’s freedom. Each sinner possesses 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 either 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 sinners gift to God: it is man’s contribution to salvation.

CONDITIONAL ELECTION: *God’s choice of certain individuals to salvation before the foundation of the world was based on 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 on what man would do. The faith whereby he would be saved resulted solely from man’s unaided will. Who would believe is left entirely up to man. God chose those whom He knew would*

CALVINIST VIEW

TOTAL INABILITY OR

DEPRAVITY: *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 (he cannot receive them for they are spiritually discerned and he is dead spiritually); sin has affected him in every part of him: his heart is deceitful and corrupted; his will is bound to his evil heart and therefore he cannot and will not choose good over evil; Consequently it takes more than assistance of the Holy Spirit to bring him to Christ to be saved (justified); it requires regeneration by which the Holy Spirit makes the man alive and gives him a new nature. Faith is not innate to him; it is the gift of God to him, not his gift to God.*

UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION: *God’s choice of certain individuals to salvation before the foundation of the world rested solely on 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 was not determined by or conditioned*

of their own free will, choose Christ. Thus the sinner's choice of Christ, not God's choice of the sinner, is the ultimate cause of salvation.

on 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 sinner's choice of Christ, is the ultimate cause of salvation

UNIVERSAL REDEMPTION OR GENERAL ATONEMENT (UNLIMITED ATONEMENT):

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

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 that unites them to Him. The gift of faith is infallibly applied by the Spirit to all for whom Christ died, therefore guaranteeing their salvation*

THE HOLY SPIRIT CAN BE EFFECTUALLY RESISTED

(RESISTABLE GRACE): *The Spirit calls inwardly all those who are called outwardly by the gospel invitation; He does all 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; man's contribution of faith 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*

THE EFFICACIOUS CALL OF THE SPIRIT OR 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 the 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 on*

can be and often is, resisted and thwarted by man.

man's cooperation for success. The Spirit graciously causes the elect sinner to cooperate, to believe, to repent, to come freely and willingly to Christ. God's grace, therefore is invincible; it never fails to result in the salvation of those to whom it is extended.

FALLING FROM GRACE: *Those who believe and are truly saved can lose their salvation by failing to keep up their faith, etc. The author points out that not all who have Arminian persuasion agree on this point.*

PERSERVERANCE OF THE SAINTS: *All who are chosen of 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 preserved to the end.*

ADDITIONAL NOTES AND VERSES:

Statements found in the Bible directly or by implication:

The saved ones have been written down in the book of life before time

The saved ones were elected by God to be in Christ before the foundation of the world

The saved ones must believe in Jesus Christ to be saved (justified)

God does elect and saved ones must believe

Jesus said that His Father was giving Him people. The Father would draw or bring people to Christ and He would turn none of them away; what's more, He will lose none that the Father gives to Him

All who come to Jesus are in the Hands of the Father and no man can take them away from Him

Paul said that he was persuaded that the One who began a good work in him will complete until the day of Christ.

The apostles said that it was possible that some might apostatize (renounce the faith); some might disqualify themselves (from service?) due to lack of spiritual discipline

Evidence of the disaster of unbelief is found from the example of the Exodus when God was displeased with those who identified with Israel never made it to the promised land due to unbelief; He let them die in the wilderness

Not all of the points of either view of the working of salvation are direct biblical statements; Some of them are derivatives from trying to bridge the gap between two biblical statements in order to logically connect them in creating a consistent flow of thought about our salvation. There is wide controversy about these two positions and extremes have been taken on either side. Both views make valid statements that reflect biblical truth and experience.

