

Arminianism, Hyper-Calvinism, Strawmen...and The Truth

In the current debate surrounding the topic of 'Calvinism' some confusion is being caused by the misrepresentation of Biblical truths and the use of emotive 'strawmen'. This article may help cut through the lies and deceptions currently being perpetrated by some authors.

'Strawmen' argumentation misrepresents the issue and renders one side weak. Rather than attacking the real issue the opponent sets up and knocks down the 'strawman'. This is a favourite method with the cults or those who argue from emotion instead of scripture.

Election:

Arminianism: God's election is based on God's foreknowledge of who would choose to obey Him in salvation.

...Biblical refutation/truth: Scripture teaches unashamedly that God elects, chooses His people of His own determination (Eph.1:5,9,11; 1Thess.1:4; 1Pet.1:2,10; Tit.1:1; Rom.8:33; 11:5,7; Col.3:12; Rom.9:15-18; Gal.1:15,16; Jn.6:37; 5:21...etc). God's foreknowledge is not dependant on man's ability to choose or decide for Christ. If so, this would not be grace but works! (Rom.11:6). God not only foresees a mans salvation but 'ordains' it by His own sovereign act, (Acts 13:48; Eph.2:10).

Strawman: If God elects a people for himself then he must elect and damn the rest to Hell. If so, he unfairly loves only a select group of people.

...Biblical refutation/truth: The Bible does not teach an election of any to Hell. This may be *logically* concluded by some but it is *not in Scripture*. It is the stuff of 'hyper-calvinism' and a malicious *misrepresentation* of the Doctrines of Grace.

Predestination:

Arminianism: God only predestinates those who he foresees will choose or decide of their own 'free will' to follow Christ.

...Biblical refutation/truth: God predestinates a number of people to be sanctified in Christ Jesus. 'Predestination' comes from the Greek word '*proorizo*' ('*pro*' - 'before' / '*orizo*' - 'to determine'). It clearly means to *determine* or decree *beforehand*. Examples are: Acts 4:28; Rom.8:29, 30; 1Cor. 2:7; Eph.1:5,11. The Greek word is also translated '*ordained*' in some passages.

Predestination and foreknowledge are linked. One implies the other. Some interpret Romans 8:29,30 as meaning God predestinates those who choose or decide of their own 'free will'. Thus this foreknowledge becomes the *cause* of the predestination. This is a serious heresy exposed in earlier centuries! It results in God's predestination being based on a work or an *ability* in man. This defies Scripture which clearly states unsaved man *cannot* and *will not* come to God of his own volition, (Rom.8:6,7; Jn.6:44,65). 2Timothy 1:9 challenges any attempt to put conditions on God's predestination and calling: 'Who hath *saved us*, and *called us* with a 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*.'

Strawman: If God predestines people to heaven then he must have also predestined the rest to Hell...

...Biblical refutation/truth: There is no Scripture that

has God 'predestinating' any to hell. If one teaches that God predestinates many to heaven, this does not mean they have to teach God predestinates the rest to hell. This 'double predestination' is again the stuff of 'hyper-calvinism' and a *misrepresentation* of the doctrines of Grace. It is *extrabiblical*.

Free will:

Arminianism: Man has a 'free will' to seek and choose God in salvation. He can choose God of his own ability. He can seek God.

...Biblical refutation/truth: The Bible teaches man has a *will* before and after salvation. However, 'free will' *in salvation* is *never* shown in the Bible *after* the fall of man. Our Adamic natures are *enslaved* and our minds *blinded* by Satan, (2Cor.4:4). Do the following scriptures teach our wills are 'free'? 'Because the carnal mind is *enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be...*' (Rom.8:7,8); 'No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him', (Jn.6:44).

This is why man in his fallen state is described thus: 'There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God', (Rom.3:11). This is why salvation is not 'of the will of man, but of God', (Jn.1:12,13). Salvation is simply 'not of him that willeth...', (Rom.9:16).

Grace is God changing our will when enslaved!

We did not choose God in salvation. He chose us! 'According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world...', (Eph.1:4); 'Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit...', (Jn.15:16).

The doctrine of 'free will' is a part of the *Pelagian heresy* of early centuries and *continued to be a heresy* during the Reformation. Unbelievably, this heresy is now widely accepted and revived in the apostasy of the Nineteenth and Twentieth centuries. It is the very root of Arminian heresy and practise so evident in the modern church.

Strawman: If man has no 'free will' he is a robot or puppet...God just pulls the strings...

...Biblical refutation/truth: God's sovereignty is not Him forceable 'pulling strings' and rendering us like 'robots'! It is about Him mercifully freeing us from our *enslaved* 'wills'!...And who would not be thrilled to have been freed from that?

Conclusion:

We must not allow our logic and emotions to interfere with the plain teaching of Scripture. If we do so the following might become a *rebuke* rather than an encouragement?:

'What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid...I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth...Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?' (Rom.9:14-21)

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