



Debate with ‘Mr. G.’

Topic : ‘Doctrines of Grace’

(August , 2021)

by

Terry Arnold

Subject: Calvinism/Arminianism

The following is a debate/discussion on Calvinism/Arminianism. The writer (Mr. G.) is in *italics* and the editors reply (Terry Arnold) is in **bold**.

Round 1

[Mr. G.] *...I do not believe you are wrong in believing that He chose us (who are saved) before the foundation of the world, or that He predestinated us (who are saved) according to His will, or that He called us (who are saved) and quickened us (who are saved). However, surely this is all after we are 'in Christ'.*

[Editor TA] **Not sure what you mean by 'in Christ' here and what Scripture you have tying this to predestination, etc. However, 'Before the foundation' cannot be 'after' any event. So too, 'predestinated' cannot also be after any event...These terms are all back in the timelessness of God. How can you be 'predestined' to something 'before the foundation of the world' and then have it applied 'only' after you are saved?**

[Mr. G.] *The problem is: 'Why us?' and 'Is anyone predestined to be saved?'*

[Editor TA] **'Why us' is certainly a mystery that you and I will never work out with our finite minds. You ask 'Is anyone predestined to be saved?' The answer has to be yes, by Scripture. The word 'predestinated' is 'proorizo' ('proorizo' - 'before'/'to determine')...'To determine or decree beforehand'. (Acts 4:28; Rom. 8:29, 30; 1 Cor. 2:7; Eph. 1:5, 11). (It is also translated 'ordained').**

In 1Cor. 2:7 The purpose was our glory, i.e., our benefits of salvation.

In Acts 4:28 ('For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done') - The action of Herod and Pontius Pilate in crucifying Jesus Christ is said to have been predetermined or foreordained by the hand and will of God. This shows unequivocally that Christ's mission, His death, was not the result of human will but originated in the eternal counsel of God which decreed the event determining all its primary and secondary causes, instruments, agents, etc.

In Romans 8:29,30, predestination is used of God's actions in eternally decreeing beforehand both the objects and goal of His plan of salvation. The goal of predestination is expressed in the phrase, 'to be conformed to the image of his Son' (this is 'Sanctification').

In Eph. 1:5, 11 this same purpose of foreordination is termed 'adoption'. The basis of this prior decree is 'the good pleasure of His will'. It is what seems good to God - not man.

Similarly, in 1:11 predestination is according to the decision of ‘His will’. (‘His will’ is very much linked to predestination). The word ‘predestinated’ is also used here without ‘foreknowledge’ being mentioned:

Eph.1:11 *‘In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will’.*

[Mr. G.] *The gap in my understanding lies in the problem of reconciling the verses you quoted (the thrust of which is undeniable) with the equally undeniable fact that people can and do still refuse to accept the gift of grace God offers.*

[Editor TA] **They are totally incapable of ‘refusing’ or ‘accepting’ it. To the spiritually dead it is a ‘non issue’. In one sense you are partly right. All men refuse God and refuse to accept the gift of grace...indeed they ‘cannot’ turn! (Rom.8:7)...until...and unless the Holy Spirit draws...some.**

[Mr. G.] *Those verses show that it is only through God’s enablement, grace and ‘election’ (choice) that we can accept it.*

[Editor TA] **Amen**

[Mr. G.] *They don’t say that we can’t refuse it.*

[Editor TA] **This is an argument more from silence. It is not a matter of ‘refusing it’ or being ‘dragged kicking and screaming into the kingdom of heaven’ as Hunt and other writers portray it so wickedly. It is a matter of God rescuing us! We were children of wrath! We were destined to the lake of fire! God’s grace when given is ‘irresistible’ thankfully...because He cannot fail to save. Who would want to refuse eternal life anyway?! Why would one want to ‘resist’ being saved as opposed to being doomed? The unregenerate spirit doesn’t know what it is that should be resisted anyway! An unsaved person hasn’t ‘resisted’ God’s Will...He’s not even aware of it! The following Scriptures might help:**

Ezek.36:26 *‘A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh’.*

John 6:37 *‘All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out’.*

John 3:27 *‘John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven’.*

Eph.2:1-5 *‘And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins. 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: 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. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, by (grace ye are saved);'

[Mr. G.] *Is God's grace then resistible by man's will? Has God 'chosen' some and not others against their will? If "all are called, but few are chosen" (Matt 20:16, and 22:14, 1 Peter 2:9), then Hyper-Calvinism seems true.*

[Editor TA] **The 'call' is general; the 'chosen' is specific. Don't know what your understanding here is of 'Hyper-calvinism'? Hyper-calvinism involves such teachings as God predestines people to Hell ('double predestination'); that we only preach to the 'elect'; that we waste our time evangelising because 'God will save his elect anyway'...all man's logic but not Scriptural.**

[Mr. G.] *What is the difference between 'drawn' (John 6:44) and 12:32 - (note 'all men') and 'chosen' and 'called' (Isa 41:9, Rev 17:14)?*

[Editor TA] **Is the 'all men' every person? If so why are not all saved? - John 6 says *all* that God draws none are lost. The two words 'chosen' and 'called' are very similar: 'Called' is '*kletos*': Called, invited, welcomed, appointed. Originally it was used to designate those invited to a banquet (Septuagint 1 Kings. 1:41, 49). In the Gospels, it is found only in Matt.20:16 and 22:14. Here it is said there is a distinction between the '*kletos*', the called ones, and the '*eklektoi*', the chosen ones, relative to both service (Matt. 20:16) and salvation (Matt. 22:14). 'Chosen' is '*eklektos*': Chosen, select. Selection involves thoughtful and deliberate consideration. But I think best not to make too much difference between these words?**

[Mr. G.] *I understand predestination once we are 'in Christ', but how can anyone be predestined for salvation as such, when there are many verses like John 3:16 which contain words like 'whosoever believeth' - don't we have a choice to believe or not believe?*

[Editor TA] **The 'whosoever' is being grossly misread today because of our preconceived ideas of what this means. It does not mean free will, choice, etc. The following is some notes I have in my files on John 3:16. This is a bit technical but you might pick up the general gist of what 'whosoever' means:**

Greek transliteration: *ina pas o pisteuon*

English: in order that everyone (all) the ones believing (or 'the believing ones')

The KJV English has translated '*pas*' as '*whosoever*'. The literal translation is actually 'all' or '*everyone*'. ('*pas*' is not the commonly translated into 'whosoever' elsewhere).

There is arguably no word that literally equates with ‘whosoever’ in the Greek. The common misconception is that ‘whosoever’ is an indefinite phrase but this is plainly refuted by the definite article ‘ο ‘ (*the*) which is attached to ‘*believing ones*’. The definite article modifies a particular object - the object here is ‘*the believing ones*’. This is a *definite* group of people, not an indiscriminate group. (The plural stands with the article when a definite number is implied, or without the article when the number is indefinite. In this verse it stands beside the definite article, so a definite number is implied). It is literally ‘*the believing ones*’ - a definite and select group. This is how all the past commentators and reformers, etc saw it. The Arminianism of today has unfortunately filtered a different meaning through ‘whosoever’ so that it is ‘free choice’, ‘decision’, etc. which neither the original English meaning, Greek or other Scriptures speak of.

[Mr. G.] *Romans I seems to say that man can choose to ‘glorify him not’ (Vs.21), to ‘change the glory of the incorruptible God into and image...’ (vs.23), and to ignore the threat of God’s judgment (vs.32). My understanding of Calvinism is that it teaches that we don’t have this choice.*

[Editor TA] **I see nothing about man choosing here except to not glorify God. That is ‘Total depravity’! - man ‘choosing’(?) only one way. They simply followed their fallen nature...as man does today.**

[Mr. G.] *...I will obviously have to do a lot more thinking and Bible study to get it straight...I obviously cannot find any error in your writings; but I just can’t see past the above dilemma at the moment. Do you have any recommended reading?...Thank you once again. It is obvious that your heart is, as you say, ‘to teach only Scripture’. Would there were more like you!*

[Editor TA] **I highly recommend a book called ‘Tulip’ by Spencer, available from Koorong or from us. This book is a good primer for people wanting to know exactly what ‘Calvinists’ really teach. I found it very interesting and it once corrected my notions of what I erroneously thought ‘Calvinism’ was.**

But also read this, putting aside any preconceived ideas...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: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ' (Eph.1)

KEY PHRASE: *'Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself'.*

Round 2

[Mr. G.] *...Your reply has helped clarify some ideas for me also, but I am left with a lot of questions...*

Qs.1. You ask 'Is anyone predestined to be saved?' The answer has to be yes, by Scripture...But later: 'Hyper-calvinism involves such teachings as God predestines people to Hell ('double predestination'). How can this be 'double predestination'? If a person is not destined for heaven, he is destined for hell. If not in Christ, then in Adam. If not saved, then unsaved. If not having everlasting life, then condemned to the second death (John 3:18). There needs to be no second determination. If Calvinism teaches the first part, then the second part follows, no 'hyper' about it. I admit I don't have a clear idea of the difference between Calvinism and Hyper-calvinism, but calling the above 'double predestination' makes no sense to me.

[Editor TA] **That is because you have added your logic and extended Scripture beyond what it actually says. Note the number of times you have used the word 'if'. And then compare that with Romans 9 which I have below which addresses your 'if's. There are numerous examples I could give you and you would already understand of where extra-biblical thinking creates new doctrine. This is a real test of whether one is 'Sola Scriptura' or not. The Scriptures simply do not teach a predestination to Hell; but they plainly and obviously teach a predestination to Heaven. We cannot go beyond what the Bible says about predestination to Heaven and add our reasoning or deductions.**

Romans 9:14-23 *'What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, 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, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. 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? What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory'

The important thing to note here is that most of the passage is hypothetical - as shown by '*what if*'. So it is not actually teaching predestination to Hell but it is exposing and rebuking the reasoning that would have man question why God chooses and predestines only some. (This is exactly the thing you are grappling with). Also the passage says what '*if God shows his wrath upon the vessels of destruction...it is that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, (that's you and me) which he had before prepared...*'

But again to use the same kind of logic you use - Were not ALL 'destined' to Hell at one time? The fact that God saves even one – is that not grace? What if God saved none? Would he still be just?...What is your answer? Your answer should be 'yes'! So, in theory and in logic you can go beyond the Bible and see 'double predestination' (or two predestinations) but I can only see one in Scripture - a predestination to Heaven of God's elect saints. We could say the rest are left to justice rather than an unbiblical 'predestination' to Hell.

Do you accept that your logic and reasoning for a predestination to Hell here is literally extra biblical? If not then please show me where it is Biblical.

[Mr. G.] *Qs.2. What is the difference between 'drawn' (John 12:32 - note 'all men')...Is the 'all men' every person? If 'all' doesn't mean 'all' here, does it mean 'all' in Romans 3:23? Does Calvinism (do you) take this (John 12:32) to mean God only draws 'the elect' or 'the chosen', since 'none (of the elect only) are lost'? (Or is it only Hyper-calvinism that teaches this?).*

[Editor TA] Firstly, the context of Jn.12:32 needs to be taken into account. Previously he was speaking of discipleship and about 'wheat' falling to the ground and dying, etc. Also the word '*men*' is not in the Greek and I think some of us are inclined to read into 'all men' the meaning of all mankind that ever lives? But the answer is found in John - Jn.6:37 '*All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out....39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. 40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day...65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father*'.

Obviously from Jn.6 (and other Scriptures) 'all' does not mean every man living, otherwise every one would be saved according to Jn.12:32. Do you accept here that the '*all*' cannot be every man and therefore the '*all*' in your

sense? Scripture interprets Scripture. I personally find this clear but I realise some because of their predisposition to logic and Arminianism might struggle. But the obvious question one needs to answer is - is the '*all*' of Jn.12:32 every man and woman or not? The answer is obviously an emphatic 'no'! Therefore '*all*' must be interpreted correctly. If the '*all*' of Jn.12:32 is every man and women then please answer my question again - why are they not all saved? Your answer to this demands that you correctly interpret the '*all*'.

Scripture clearly teaches in Jn.6 that God draws the elect and saves them '*all*'. ('Hyper-calvinism' goes further and teaches that God damns those who are not the elect)...and thus we need and should only preach the Gospel therefore to the elect only...quite logical? Perhaps yes! But not Scriptural and not 'Sola Scriptura'.

[Mr. G.] *Do you, to be consistent, take the Romans reference [3:23] to mean that only all the unsaved sin?*

[Editor TA] **Of course not. We have to be consistent not in logic or literal words but in interpretation. It is not the unsaved that sin but both the saved and the unsaved here who have sinned in Rom.3:23.**

[Mr. G.] *I find this concept hard to understand, and harder to accept, because then the elect would not sin...and therefore would not need to be saved. ('Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?' Rom 8:33).*

[Editor TA] **I don't see your point here? You are confusing some things here. Rom.8:23 refers to judgement for our sins. No charge can be laid against us because Christ has suffered the judgement for our sin. No one is saying the elect will not sin - that is sinless perfection and heresy.**

[Mr. G.] *But see Psalm 51:5 and Eph 2:3.*

[Editor TA] **Psalm 51:5 is simply speaking of original sin which we are born with; Eph.2:3 is simply speaking of our fleshly natures and that we were children of wrath before we were saved.**

[Mr. G.] *Doesn't this include 'the elect'? Aren't they just as 'dead in sins' (totally depraved) as the rest of mankind?*

[Editor TA] **Yes, it does. And Yes they were.**

[Mr. G.] *How can this statement be made of them in the light of Rom.8:33?*

[Editor TA] **Rom.8:33 simply says no charge will be laid against the elect who have been justified, chosen, called, foreknown and predestined according to the will of God (read the previous verses 28-30)**

[Mr. G.] *Qs.3 John says all that God draws none are lost. All are not saved, because not all choose to 'repent and believe the Gospel'. This is a command made to all, but most disobey it.*

[Editor TA] **That's not what Jn.12:32 says. It simply says He will draw all men! So who are the 'all' men? There is NO ONE that chooses God or chooses to 'repent or believe the gospel' in their unsaved state. Please show me one single Scripture for this. They disobey the call to the Gospel because they are depraved and cannot save themselves.**

In one sense you are partly right. All men refuse God and refuse to accept the gift of grace...indeed they 'cannot' turn! (Rom.8:7)...until...and unless the Holy Spirit 'draws' at least some.

[Mr. G.] *'Some'? Are these the elect/chosen? Is this what 'Calvinism' teaches? I find this hard to accept also, because it means God has not loved 'the world' (John 3:16). He only loved some of the world. Jn.3:16 does not say that he only loved some of the world. He loves his creation.*

[Editor TA] **The Bible clearly says it is the elect and chosen who are saved.**

If Calvinism teaches that then it teaches what the Bible and all the commentaries and reformers, and saints have taught down through the centuries (until mid 19th C?)

Too much is being read into John 3:16. John 3:16 simply says:

- 1. God loved the world (his creation).**
- 2. He gave His son.**
- 3. Those that believe in him will not perish but have everlasting life.**

It says *nothing* about choosing, predestination, etc. It simply says those that believe will be saved! It says *nothing* about the process that caused them to believe either! Also refer to 'the ones believing (or 'the believing ones') that I spoke of in my commentary on Jn.3:16 [See also this study in Study No.3 in the 'Doctrines of Grace Studies']. The common misconception is that 'whosoever' is an indefinite phrase, but this is plainly refuted by the Greek definite article 'ο' ('the') which attaches itself to 'believing ones'. The definite article modifies a particular object - the object here is 'the believing ones'. This is a definite group of people, not an indiscriminate group. This is how all the past commentators and reformers, and the KJV translators saw it. The Arminianism of today has unfortunately filtered a different meaning through 'whosoever' so that it is now 'free choice', 'decision', etc, which neither the original English meaning, Greek, or other Scriptures speak of. Please show me (without added logic) where Jn.3:16 teaches unsaved man's 'free will' to choose or reject salvation.

[Mr. G.] *What bothers me is that God has created a logical universe, so either the logical conclusions drawn are true, or Calvinism, as a premise, is false (since God's word, as a premise, is the truth, and logically defensible in every way).*

[Editor TA] **Yes, but logic can be in many forms - man's, God's, a mixture, philosophical, and plain erroneous logic, etc,...and 'not scriptural' as you have just agreed! The plain meaning of Scripture is our foundation! I can give you many logical arguments for unknown tongues, anointing's, etc, but it does not mean they are Scriptural!**

It is often useful to take an idea to an extreme to test its validity, or show the idea not valid. I often use this technique working with Cults but it is logic against wrong logic; it is only a technique to break a 'mindset', that they may see Scripture as it really is. I beg you to take off your glasses of predisposed logic and accept plainly what the Scriptures say - ie. when it says God chooses us for salvation and we do not choose him, (Jn.15:16; Rom.3:11; Jn.1:11-13; Eph.1:4; Lk.19:10) and when it says he predestinated us, when it says this was before the foundation of the world...etc]

[Mr. G.] *You imply that all our actions are predetermined, like automatons.*

[Editor TA] **Most definitely not! I have freedom to do many things now. If I sin I will pay the consequences of it or God will chastise me, or worse. We are not robots or 'automatons'! This is not what Scripture (or 'Calvinists') teach. This is in fact horrifying to me but sadly is too often thrown at us. Again, you are defining Hyper-calvinism very well. Why is it that to refute Historic 'Calvinism' Arminians attack Hyper-calvinism and use extra-biblical logic?**

[Mr. G.] *I cannot accept this statement even though Acts 4:28 seems to say so: The action of Herod and Pontius Pilate in crucifying Jesus Christ is said to have been predetermined or foreordained by the hand and will of God. This shows unequivocally that Christ's mission, His death, was not the result of human will but originated in the eternal counsel of God which decreed the event determining all its primary and secondary causes, instruments, agents, etc.*

[Editor TA] **You will not accept what the Scripture 'seems to say'? Acts 4:28 uses the same word for 'predestination' ('proorizo') elsewhere - 'to determine before hand' - exactly as the KJV has expanded here. This Scripture says God pre-determined, set in mind, according to His will, that such an event would occur in the future. There is no getting around this. Do you accept the meaning here of the word 'predestination'?**

[Mr. G.] *This is determinism and denies us free will even though we are made in the image of God, who obviously has free will.*

[Editor TA] Yes, we were, but man fell and became depraved. We lost fellowship and relationship with God. We became depraved and unable to choose salvation for ourselves. This is part of the Gospel. And back to Acts 4:28 - 'free will' is not the subject in this Scripture. There is nothing concerning this unless you extrapolate logic again.

[Mr. G.] *I do not in any way deny the sovereignty of God, nor His power to cause His will to be actualized.*

[Editor TA] Yes you do. You have already said you cannot accept the plain meaning of some things. The true test of 'The sovereignty of God' is believing God to do what he wants according to His will and His good pleasure, even if it seemed unfair and illogical!

[Mr. G.] *...but I am convinced that He has the power to do this without compromising man's free will (i.e. He makes prophesies according to foreknowledge about men's choices as well as according to His sovereign plan).*

[Editor TA] Again, please show me one Scripture that speaks of unsaved man having free will to choose God in salvation.

[Mr. G.] *For example, Adam surely chose to sin, by his own free will, since he was not born with a sin nature, which is his legacy to us. God did not predestinate him to do that, even though He foreknew it.*

[Editor TA] Adam had 'free will' *before* he sinned! But after he did not have the same 'free will' as he was depraved and bent towards sinning, justifying it and hiding. His *nature* was changed. Did he seek God after he sinned? NO! He 'hid' and ran from God the best he knew how! He also justified himself and blamed Eve! He had no way of saving himself. Who put the clothes on him? - God!

[Mr. G.] *...This must be the case (i.e. He did not predestinate it) if 'God is not willing that any should perish'...*

[Editor TA] This Scripture (2Pet.3:9) is not to unsaved but to the saved...'to *usward*'. *'But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance'*.

This Epistle is specifically written to the 'beloved': 'beloved, I now write unto you' (vs.1)...'beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing...' (vs.8)...'*Wherefore, beloved, seeing that you look for such things, be diligent that you may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless*' (vs.14)...'*You therefore, beloved, seeing you know these things before...*' (vs.17)

The primary context is about the end of this age and the sureness of the Lord's coming for his 'beloved'.

The rules of grammar and Greek show that the 'any' and the 'all' cannot refer to any other pronoun but to the 'us' previous.

Sadly, this verse 9 is too often quoted to teach that God does not want *any human to perish*. Regardless of whether this premise is true or false, *this particular Scripture* (vs.9) is simply not speaking to or about unsaved men but to the 'us-ward' - the already saved who are called the 'beloved' several times (vs.1,8,14,17). This scripture is in fact promoting the *preservation of the saints in Christ and the sureness of His coming!* The verse has nothing to do with predestination, but rather eternal security.

[Mr. G.] *...unless you take the view that God predestines some to perish (which follows if He predestines some to be saved...)*

[Editor TA] **There is that extra-Biblical logic again...and the attack of the strawman of Hyper-calvinism.**

[Mr. G.] *If He predestined Adam to perish, then He predestined all to perish in his wake.*

[Editor TA] **Note the 'if' concerning 'predestination' to Hell...this is Hyper-calvinism and extra-biblical logic again.**

[Mr. G.] *As you say, (according to Romans 1 and Eph 2:2,3) we continue to make Adam's choice, until we respond to the Gospel. It seems illogical that we cannot choose not to respond.*

[Editor TA] **Yes it may, unless you understand 'Total Depravity' - the inability to save oneself by any means!**

[Mr. G.] *When there is something illogical or humanly incomprehensible in the Bible, such as the saints being both the body and the bride, or the blindness of the Jews (Rom 11:25) or our new bodies (1 Cor 15:51), God admits it is beyond our reasoning by calling it a 'mystery'. He doesn't appear to do this with His sovereignty and our free will. This problem must be faced.*

[Editor TA] **Wrong. He does call his choosing, predestination, etc a 'mystery' in Romans 9 and Ephesians 1:9 'Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself'. All this comes after the mention of predestination, calling...etc!**

It is not a problem to those that understand the doctrines of 'GRACE'. No 'logic' can explain the mystery of election, predestination. It is in 'the counsel of God' and 'before the foundation of the world', etc as Ephesians plainly says.

[Mr. G.] *Don't we preach the Gospel to make people aware of their fallen state and of God's saving grace and of His will that none should perish?*

[Editor TA] **Again you are misusing 2Pet 3:9 (see my notes above). Yes, we preach the Gospel to all men everywhere...and we don't know who the 'elect' are.**

[Mr. G.] *Isn't this when God 'draws' men (when men see Christ 'lifted up')? Isn't God's word sent out 'not to return void'?*

[Editor TA] **It does not return void to the elect. A question to you: Does not God's word effectively return 'void' when people hear the Gospel and later die in their sins?**

[Mr. G.] *Don't we invite men to 'repent and believe the Gospel'? (See Ps.51:13; Mk.1:15, and Paul's commission in Acts 26: 16-18 - why was this commission necessary?*

[Editor TA] **Yes we certainly do invite men to believe, repent. The commission is to *all*. Did not Spurgeon and all the great 'Calvinists' do this so well?**

[Mr. G.] *Are you saying that men cannot refuse/accept this invitation, by their own choice, when it is offered?*

[Editor TA] **It is not a matter of 'choice'. Man is depraved and unable to come, unable to save himself. Romans 8:7 '*Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be*'...**

[Mr. G.] *Isn't the preached Gospel 'the power of God unto salvation'?*

[Editor TA] **Yes, but READ ON! - to who is it 'the the power of God unto salvation'? : ... '*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*'**

[Mr. G.] *Isn't this specifically to those who choose to 'receive him'? (John 1:11,12)*

[Editor TA] **There is absolutely NOTHING about 'choosing' Him here in this Scripture of Jn.1:11,12. And you must read on again!... 12 '*But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, NOR OF THE WILL OF MAN, BUT OF GOD*'.**

[Mr. G.] *...Also see Romans 12:3 - every man is given 'a measure of faith', and so can respond in faith to the Gospel.*

[Editor TA] ...Romans 12 is to the ‘brethren’! The ‘faith’ and the ‘measure’ of - is to the saved here!: *‘I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. 3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. 4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: 5 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.’*

The whole passage is about holiness and dealings *within the body of Christ*.

[Mr. G.] *Now I concede that this line of questioning follows the logic that you point out leads to Hyper-calvinism, which is not Biblical. What then? If all the verses that show God chooses some rather than all mean exactly that (and they must),...*

[Editor TA] **...But I don't think you really believe this?**

[Mr. G.] *and we nevertheless have free will,...*

[Editor TA] **No, unsaved man does not have a will that is ‘free’ in the way you portray. Please show me one Scripture where we have free will to choose God in salvation. If we ‘choose’, we ‘choose’ to sin before we are saved and cannot come to God of our own devices...**

[Mr. G.] *...then there must be another way of thinking about these same verses, or else the Calvinistic extreme automatically follows.*

[Editor TA] **Why do you have to find ‘another way’ of thinking’? ...are these points below really ‘extremes’? :**

- 1. That God chooses us and we do not choose him for salvation?**
- 2. That God predestinated his saints before the foundation of the world according to His good pleasure and His will?**
- 3. That these people in Scripture are called the ‘elect’ and are part of the elect?**

Are these ‘extremes’ when plain Scriptures speak of these things in too many places to mention? If these are ‘extremes’ then please correct me in those many Scriptures I have already mentioned.

[Mr. G.] *Examples of our free will include Acts 7:51*

[Editor TA] **I can find *nothing* about ‘free will’ here. And this is to the Jews!**

[Mr. G.] ...*Ex 25:2, 35:5,21*,...

[Editor TA] **This is to the children of Israel - part of God's elect chosen people. These people were not 'unsaved' - they were *his* nation, *his* people apart from the 'heathen'.**

[Mr. G.] *2Cor.9:7*,...

[Editor TA] **But this is to the 'saints'!**

[Mr. G.] *Ezekiel 13:22, 14:4-6*,...

[Editor TA] **This is to the prophets and to Israel!**

[Mr. G.] *Romans 1:28,32*,...

[Editor TA] **Nothing about 'free will' here except they 'chose' to sin only and not to receive God!**

[Mr. G.] *Jeremiah 18:8-10*.

[Editor TA] **To Israel again - his elect nation.**

[Mr. G.] *Ezekiel 18, from about verse 25 shows how God is just according to man's choices, not His predestination of them.*

[Editor TA] **Absolutely *Nothing* about 'predestination' here. You are 'reading' this in. And the context is to Israel again!**

[Mr. G.] *In verse 32 we see that He has 'no pleasure' in this justice - why then would He ordain it by His own will through making choices in advance? How can he expect anyone to obey His command at the end of verse 32 if some are predestined to disobey it?*

[Editor TA] **Again this is unscriptural logic and Hyper-calvinism.**

[Mr. G.] ...*(See also Acts 3:19 etc)*

[Editor TA] **Don't we preach the Gospel to all as Peter was doing here?**

[Mr. G.] *There has to be free will for us as well as for God, so there HAS to be another way to look at this.*

[Editor TA] **Logic again. Just 'look at it' as Scripture speaks and then believe! You are trying to work out the counsel of God and we cannot.**

[Mr. G.] *Therefore I am going to propose another, quite different, approach. Please try it out, and see what you think. If it is true, it must be able to sustain extreme interpretation, it must be sustainable following logic, and it must concur with every applicable Bible verse - a big ask! I don't see that the Calvinistic approach does this, as I have tried to point out in all the above. It is illogical.*

[Editor TA] **To you it is. To me when the Scriptures tell me God chooses me; He predestinates, etc... I just accept it.**

[Mr. G.] *[it is]...inconsistent, and contravenes too many scriptures.*

[Editor TA] **Please name just one Scripture I have used wrongly.**

[Mr. G.] *To help understand the concept, I would like to use an analogy, even though analogies can be dangerously misleading, and are always limited. Let's picture a bus. Its destination, displayed on the front, could be 'the fullness of the measure of Christ' or 'Everlasting Life', but let's just say 'Heaven' for simplicity. Anyone on this bus is predestined by the driver (the Father) to get to the destination.*

[Editor TA] **Does 'predestined' here mean what it should mean - *prior* determined by God? And what about your 'logic' of people who are not on this bus - are they Predestinated to Hell?**

[Mr. G.] *The bus is, of course, Christ (or salvation by faith in Him), and the bus and driver are for all intents and purposes one and the same. The Gospel is written in large letters all over the bus (the word), and those aboard (the saints) are shouting from the open windows and doorways that the destination is glorious and the fare is paid.*

[Editor TA] **This is not the Gospel! The Gospel includes sin as the cause of the need for a saviour (1Cor.15)**

[Mr. G.] *There is ample room for the whole world to board, but few have.*

[Editor TA] **Agreed.**

[Mr. G.] *Some cling tentatively to the outside, but are not really aboard, because they cling to their skateboards,...*

[Editor TA] **You're joking, right?**

[Mr. G.] *...and will not commit to the journey,...*

[Editor TA] **Error. They can do nothing to be saved. (Rom.8:7) - they cannot 'cling', unless God 'draws' them first. The action is by God, not man. Every tense with 'Justification' in salvation is active by God and passive to man...never once the other way around.**

[Mr. G.] *...so they have not been admitted and sealed by the conductor (the Holy Spirit of Promise). The driver is wonderfully attractive, though powerful and obviously righteous.*

[Editor TA] **Error. The unsaved man is depraved (Read Rom.1!) Salvation is not '*attractive*' to the unsaved until they are saved.**

[Mr. G.] *He looks with infinitely loving eyes at all prospective passengers, and, at the request of the saints, may provide extra opportunities for some to hear the invitation multiple times, but He is a gentleman and will coerce nobody.*

[Editor TA] **Scripture please! This might confuse the character of God with his work in salvation. It is not a matter of ‘coercing’ people. That makes God out to be a bully! God ‘draws’. The word ‘draws’ is a very powerful word. It is used of drawing a net full of fish and occasionally of lovingly ‘dragging’ people to the bar of judgement but for their own good, etc. Your illustration is sheer error in that how will the people outside the bus ever be saved since we cannot do anything of ourselves and are lost in our sin, depraved, unable to come? God has failed, He could have saved all? This is works salvation since the onlookers can do something to be saved! This illustration is horrifying to me - this is a cruel God who cannot save and has his hands tied to the wheel and must rely on his passengers...**

[Mr. G.] *...We could have fun extending the idea but let’s get to the nitty-gritty.*

[Editor TA] **No! Some would see this as near blasphemous to Scripture.**

[Mr. G.] *...this is all after we are ‘in Christ’.*

[Editor TA] **Not sure what you mean by ‘in Christ’ here and what Scripture you have tying this to predestination, etc.**

[Mr. G.] *We are ‘in Christ’ if we are saved; that is, on the bus. We are not ‘in Christ’ until we have been saved, that is, on the bus.*

[Editor TA] **Agree**

[Mr. G.] *Then predestination applies.*

[Editor TA] **Error. Impossible, because the word predestination is *before* the foundation of the world as I have already proved. The word itself means before time; before to determine, etc! This is the plain sense of Scripture also. You cannot ignore this with a ‘story’ that defies this.**

[Mr. G.] *Suddenly, all verses applying to calling, election, choosing, predestinating etc begin to make sense in that they all refer to those predestined from the foundation of the world ‘in Christ’ (i.e. to those on the bus)...*

[Editor TA] **But the bus is in the present! Predestination is literally a ‘prior decree’.**

[Mr. G.] *...and not to any of us as individuals while we are in the world (outside of the bus). We are called when we are ‘in Christ’, not as individuals ‘in the world’. Similarly with ‘chosen’, ‘elected’, ‘predestinated’ etc. This election to glory etc has already taken place, but is not applied to anyone until they are ‘on the bus’.*

[Editor TA] **Ingenious, but not Scripture. Why cannot we just take Scripture for what it says? Maybe there is a problem with your Bible? Other versions might teach what you teach?**

[Mr. G.] *See Acts 10:35 ‘accepted in Him’. All are drawn, but then they choose (‘broad is the way...’ - Matt 17:13-14 – they ‘go in’ by their own choice)*

[Editor TA] **Nothing about ‘free choice’ here.**

[Mr. G.] *This is because ‘the elect’ is not any one of us, but Christ Himself (1Pet.2:4-6, Is.42:1, Matt.12:18, 1Cor.15:22). We are elect in Him only, not in ourselves. Eternal life has been placed in Him by the Father, so we can get eternal life only by being in Him.*

[Editor TA] **You have carefully selected the Scriptures that speak of Christ as the elect. But there are other ‘elects’. Although Christ and Israel are mentioned as ‘elect’; there are numerous Scriptures where the plain sense of the word ‘elect’ is US! Here are some...**

Matthew 24:24 *‘For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect’.*

Matthew 24:31 *‘And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other’.*

Mark 13:27 *‘And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds...’*

Luke 18:7 *‘And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?’*

Romans 8:33 *‘Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth’*

Colossians 3:12 *‘Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering’*

Titus 1:1 *‘Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God’s elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness’*

1 Peter 1:2 *‘Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied’.*

2 John 1:1 *‘The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth’*

2 John 1:13 *‘The children of thy elect sister greet thee. Amen’.*

Are these all not people who God chose, who God predestined ‘before the foundation of the world’ and who are called the ‘elect’?

[Mr. G.] *Your 'literal' translation of John 3:16 helps to make the bus analogy valid. It would read: 'For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son, that all the believing ones should not perish but have everlasting life'.*

[Editor TA] **Exactly! The 'whosoever's believes' is strictly 'the believing ones'. The KJV translators were all in full agreement here! The problem is you are reading into 'whosoever' the concept of 'free will' to choose salvation for oneself which the KJV translators did not have and is contradicted flatly by too many Scriptures.**

[Mr. G.] *Those who choose to believe are predestined to everlasting life, and not to perishing.*

[Editor TA] **There is no 'choosing' or predestination whatsoever in Jn.3:16 either in English or the Greek!**

[Mr. G.] *God loved the world, all of it, with no exceptions (Acts 10:34).*

[Editor TA] **Amen.**

[Mr. G.] *But see Acts 10:35 - remembering that we 'work righteousness' by faith in Christ.*

[Editor TA] **What has this got to do with 'choosing' or 'predestination'?**

[Mr. G.] *We are accepted 'with Him'.*

[Editor TA] **Yes, as saved people. The unsaved are not accepted.**

[Mr. G.] *You are well aware of the many verses that back up the idea that we are predestined to all the things promised in scripture, but these only apply to us once we choose to be 'in Christ'.*

[Editor TA] **Please, show me one Scripture where we choose God! The weight of Scriptures that contradicts this is quite enormous!...'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...' (Jn.15:16)**

'There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God' (Rom.3:11). 'But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God'

(Jn.1:11-13). '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' (Eph.1:4)...etc

(How can you ignore these Scriptures that say we do not choose him but he chose us. It can only be one or the other!)

[Mr. G.] *Examples include Romans 1:12 ‘who first trusted in Christ’*

[Editor TA] **You mean Ephesians, not Romans. And Please read the verse before (verse 11)! *‘In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will’.***

[Mr. G.] *vs.13 ‘after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation...after that ye believed, ye were sealed’.*

[Editor TA] **Nothing about ‘choosing’ here either! It is all about ‘sealing’ at the same time as salvation (the Greek is ‘when you believed’).**

[Mr. G.] *Vs.19 ‘to us-ward who believe’.*

[Editor TA] **To who? - ‘to usward’ - the saints! This has nothing to do with ‘choosing’ again. It is about the saints trusting in Christ.**

[Mr. G.] *On the other hand, being chosen by God in the Calvinistic sense does not assure anyone of heaven. See John 6:70-71.*

[Editor TA] **This is about Judas being chosen as one of the 12! And there are other Scriptures which clearly say Judas was never saved! You really are dealing with Scriptures that have nothing whatsoever to do with us ‘choosing’. Please excuse my frustration here but I am finding it difficult to look at Scriptures that have nothing to do with Calvinism, predestination, us choosing, etc.**

[Mr. G.] *Romans 11:28 (in context, 26-33).*

[Editor TA] **This is about Israel as a nation! Again, nothing to do with predestination or us ‘choosing’ salvation!**

[Mr. G.] *We can’t join the angels (1Tim.5:21).*

[Editor TA] **This says nothing at all about ‘joining’ or not joining the angels! We are just getting so far off the track here that I am almost confused.**

[Mr. G.] *or the Jews (Isaiah 45:4 – but note “hast not known me” – see Matt 7:23)*

[Editor TA] **Matt.7:23 has nothing to do with Israel or Isaiah 45! Isaiah 45 is about backslidden Israel.**

[Mr. G.] *...so we can only be ‘elect’ by being ‘in Christ’ - ‘on the bus’.*

[Editor TA] **You have confused Israel again.**

[Mr. G.] *This letter is already too long, and I don’t want to take up any more of your valuable time. Please read the passages you recommended to me in the light*

of this idea [of the 'bus'] and any other reading you might do over the next little while as you prepare your e-mails, sermons, articles for Diakrisis etc. See if it works consistently - I think it does.

[Editor TA] It will not work because you have ignored the simple dictionary, Strongs, and every other sources of meaning of 'predestination' which means 'before to determine'. You don't need any Greek for that - the English means that and says that!

[Mr. G.] Please don't reply to me until you have reached a clear conclusion and tested this idea rigorously and without prejudice or preconceived ideas, as you requested of me. I hope you are prepared to accept this proposal in the spirit in which it is intended, that is, in humility and with cautious hope that it represents a solution to the problem of God's sovereignty and our free will, and the problem of choice and predestination, while based securely in the word.

[Editor TA] I cannot go any further with you until you accept the plain meaning of the word 'predestination' as in the KJV English and any dictionary you would look at. I am asking you a simple question - where does it say (as unsaved) we have 'free will' to 'choose' God for salvation and would this not contradict the Scriptures I have given you and in my Doctrines of Grace studies No.1? The 'bus' analogy may work for you but it will not work truthfully for me because I will not ignore Scripture and I do not need a make-believe story which not only contradicts Scripture but explains a predisposed idea that man can play a role and choose his own salvation. Every Reformer, church father, revivalist I have read would utterly abhor this attempt to redefine 'Grace' in salvation in man's terms and logic. I know I sound strong here but I am begging you to look at and believe what Scripture plainly says! I am trusting God that you will do this because you would not have put up with me this long unless you were a lover of truth?...

Mr.G, Finally, please read the following Scriptures slowly with an open mind. What does it really say to you at face value?: Ephesians 1:4 *'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; 8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; 9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself 10 That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: 11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the*

counsel of his own will: ...17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: 18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, 19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,...

Eph.2:1 *And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins (before you believed); 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. 11 Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; 12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: 13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ’.*

Round 3

[Mr. G.] *...your teaching is upsetting some cherished interpretations. I would like to be Holy-Spirit-taught directly from scripture, without reading too many commentaries, or delving into ‘the Greek’ (which should be absolutely unnecessary since God has provided the scriptures in English for the average person...)*

[Editor TA] **The Greek is a tool for me. You read English, I use Greek - the original from which the KJV was translated from. The Holy Spirit teaches me the same way from the original Greek as He teaches you from the English.**

[Mr. G.] *I have not deliberately cast up ‘hyper-Calvinist straw man arguments’ as you say because I still don’t have the distinction between Calvinism and Hyper-Calvinism clear in my mind.*

[Editor TA] **Why not? I have explained this ever so clearly. Hyper-Calvinism is extra Biblical.**

[Mr. G.] *All I seem to be confident of at the moment is that you interpret the Scriptures you have quoted to mean that God has selected ('chosen', 'called') some regardless of man's free will whom He has predestinated for salvation and heaven (and that this can be labeled as one aspect of 'Calvinism'), but to say that those not so chosen are therefore predestined to hell is called 'Hyper-Calvinism'. Am I right in this understanding?*

[Editor TA] **Where does scripture state that unsaved man has 'free-will' to choose God in salvation? You still have not answered my questions from the last e-mails.**

Predestination to Hell is not in Scripture and yes, is part of 'Hyper-Calvinism'.

[Mr. G.] *Am I also right to summarize that this latter is so called because the scripture supposedly does not teach predestination (by your definition) to hell?*

Am I right also to believe that you are teaching that man has no free will (choice) in the matter of salvation/acceptance of the gospel?

[Editor TA] **Firstly, my definition of predestination is what the word means in any Strong's concordance or dictionary. Does not 'pre-destined' mean destined beforehand? Does it not mean prior determination? If not, why does the KJV have 'pre'?**

'Free will' is not even in, the question. The Scriptures simply say man *cannot* come to God. Does it not. Again, you have not dealt with the Scriptures I gave you for the last two e-mails.

[Mr. G.] *I have not dealt with specific scriptures so far because I am still grappling with larger concepts within which these scriptures must be interpreted.*

[Editor TA] **Instead of grappling with an 'interpretive' method...why not simply read what the texts are saying? What does Eph.1 & 2 say to you?**

[Mr. G.] *As I explained, these ideas form a web of interdependent concepts and doctrines, all of which stand or fall together. Therefore, to interpret a scripture passage, one needs a clear idea of its connections to other passages (interpreting scripture by scripture). This means I have to change my interpretation of many scriptures all at once, and I am trying very hard to do this.*

[Editor TA] **Sounds like an intellectual argument that avoids taking the plain sense of Scripture? Forget the 'Web', please deal with the Scriptures I gave you.**

Plain scriptural statements such as found in Romans and Ephesians don't require 'interpretation' to be simply understood!

[Mr. G.] *I just want to know what the Bible says.*

[Editor TA] **Then, why not take the plain and literal sense of Ephesians and Romans that I have quoted many times.**

[Mr. G.] *Please understand also that what you are teaching I have never been taught before in all my lifetime of attending sermons and Bible studies in the Uniting, Pentecostal and Baptist churches...*

[Editor TA] **This does not surprise me and it should not surprise you. The church is falling away rapidly and has been for a long time. The old doctrines are almost gone and few teach them. But what of Spurgeon, Whitefield, Tyndale and all the others I mentioned in a previous e-mail?...**

[Mr. G.] *There must be some basic flaw in your teaching...but I can't put my finger on it.*

[Editor TA] **You mean you are being challenged on something...join the club...we have all been through this and me especially personally many years ago. God is showing you your interpretive method is based on pre-conceived notions, logic and a web of ideas foreign to 'the faith once delivered'. I think you would be shocked to read the writings of the many great teachers down through the ages - they held the same position on election, predestination.**

[Mr. G.] *Obviously the flaw is not in the Bible, but in how we interpret the verses we use to uphold a particular position.*

[Editor TA] **Is that not what you've been doing?**

[Mr. G.] *I am praying earnestly for God to lead me to the truth through His word. I agree that it is time I confronted some individual scriptures.*

[Editor TA] **No, just time you believed what you are reading in Ephesians and the other Scriptures I gave you which you have not answered at all. I am being abrupt and blunt here. I love you enough to continue with you and goad you into interacting with Scripture at face value. You must wipe the slate of pre-conceived church ideas and from family and friends, etc. When God says he chose us, predestinated us, etc - accept this even when it defies the web of logic!**

[Mr. G.] *I will stick to the New Testament so there is less danger of confusing the Jewish dispensation with ours. I would like to know your interpretation of the following, because I think they answer the problems above. To me they all mean that it is legitimate to say that someone is condemned to hell if he does not receive the Gospel. (I think that is what you call 'double predestination').*

[Editor TA] **Once again; the Adamic race is already 'condemned'. Whether they 'receive' the Gospel or not!**

[Mr. G.] *John 3:18,19 'He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil'.*

Luke 13: 3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. 4 Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? 5 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

1 Peter 4: 17 'For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? 18 And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?'

These are only some of many. I have found them by myself, simply be reading through the New Testament. How do you read them?

[Editor TA] I don't want to sound abrupt but I need not to be answering this until you deal with the Scriptures and questions from my last two e-mails. I think I deserve answers or else you have me again jumping to more Scriptures. I dealt with all your scriptures in detail but you have not interacted with mine, nor my questions put to you. Please go back and answer things for me. If you do not have copies I will send them to you again. I really think it is time you dealt with the questions and passages I gave before I deal with any more. Please understand.

Round 4

[Editor TA] ...We must nail this discussion down to specifics. So, I have repeated the questions and Scriptures that you have not answered for your benefit here that you would answer them clearly for me. I ask that you would do this for me as clearly and straightforward as possible without reading any logic or ideas into any Scripture. I very much look forward to this:

- John 6:44, 12:32 - note 'all men'...Is the 'all men' every person? If so why are not all saved? John says all that God draws none are lost...Jn.6:37 '*All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out....39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. 40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day...65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father*'

Do you agree that 'all' does not mean every man living, otherwise every one would be saved according to Jn.12:32? Who are the 'all' then?

- How can you be ‘predestined’ to something ‘before the foundation of the world’ and then have it applied ‘only’ after you are saved (according to your words)?

Your words were *‘I cannot accept this, even though Acts 4:28 seems to say so’*. Do you yet accept the plain literal meaning of ‘predestinated’ or ‘ordained’ here or not?

Do you accept the meaning of the word ‘predestination’ according to any dictionary or the Strong’s concordance? Does ‘predestined’ here mean what it should mean - prior determined by God?

- Do you accept that your logic and reasoning for a predestination to Hell is literally extra biblical?

- Please show me one Scripture where man can choose God or choose to ‘repent or believe the gospel’ in their unsaved state.

- John 3:16 simply says:

1. God loved the world (his creation)

2. He gave His son

3. Those that believe in him will not perish but have everlasting life.

Do you accept that this is all the Scripture says?

Do you accept John 3:16 says nothing of man choosing, or predestination...?

Please show me (without added logic) where Jn.3:16 literally teaches man’s ‘free will’ to choose or reject salvation.

- Do the following Scriptures teach that God chooses men and man does not choose God in salvation?: *‘Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit...’* (Jn.15:16). *‘There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God’* (Rom.3:11). *‘He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God’* (Jn.1:11-13). (Is there anything about man choosing God in this Scripture?)

‘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’ (Eph.1:4).

- Does not God’s word effectively return ‘void’ when people hear the Gospel and reject it and later die in their sins?

- Is man unable to come, unable to save himself? What do you read in this Scripture?: Romans 8:7 *'Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be'.*

- Where am I in error if I teach: 1. That God chooses us and we do not choose him for salvation? 2. God predestines us before the foundation of the world by His will

- Are the following Scriptures referring to people as God's elect? Are these 'elect' those who God predestined before the foundation of the world? Matthew 24:24,31; Lk.18:7; Rom.8:33; Col.3:12; Tit.1:1; 1Pet.1:2; 2Jn.1:1; 2Jn.1:13...

Editor's final note: No further response was obtained. What can be learned from this debate is that one's definition of terms often determines how one defends their views. But sometimes what is perceived by the terms is actually not what the plain meaning or the objective meaning says. Sound exegesis and right interpretation will only extrude what is *objectively* in the text.

The other noticeable feature of this debate and others like it, is the inability to grapple with Scripture or to use little or no Scripture for things believed. That is why most debates end with the difficult Scriptures not being grappled with.

For further study see our website section *'Sovereignty of God issues'* under *'Articles'* in the website www.taministries.net



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TA Ministries is a non-denominational and non-profit faith ministry founded in 1989 when the book '*To Catholics Whom I Love*' was written by Terry Arnold. This book went through several re-prints and served as a fruitful outreach to Roman Catholics.

In 1996 the ministry became a full-time operation with the introduction of a free newsletter, later named '*Diakrisis (Australia)*'.

Diakrisis is published bi-monthly to *teach, inform* and *equip* the church of Biblical truths and to warn of false teaching. It has also been a valuable reference aid to hundreds of pastors/elders.