

If all men are undeserving, have no claim upon God; and if God is obligated to save no one; then God's choosing of certain fallen individuals unto salvation is not a matter of God's justice, but of His grace!

4. "This doctrine represents God as acting arbitrarily and without reason."

This objection includes two ideas. In the first place, God is said to act arbitrarily in electing some men and in passing by others. Arbitrariness is sometimes associated with decisions made on the spur of the moment, on the basis of a whim, or on no basis whatever. "Reasonless" decisions are spoken of as arbitrary. Arbitrariness is also at times associated with persons considered tyrannical, despotic, or totally inconsiderate of any possibly relevant factors.

Jerome Zanchius, speaking to this second sense of the word, states:

"Nor is the decree of reprobation a tyrannical one. it is, indeed, strictly sovereign; but lawful sovereignty and lawless tyranny are as really distinct and different as any two opposites can be. He is a tyrant, in the common acceptance of that word, who (a) either usurps the sovereign authority and arrogates to himself a dominion to which he has no right, or (b) who, being originally a lawful prince, abuses his power and governs contrary to law. But who dares to lay either of these accusations to the Divine charge?"

-- *Absolute Predestination* (Grand Rapids: Sovereign Grace Publishers, 1971), p. 80.

With respect to the first sense of the term "arbitrariness", we must ask whether God predestines on the basis of whim, or on no basis whatever. Does this doctrine teach that God elects men to salvation haphazardly, without rhyme or reason, or without any thought at all? It does not seem that God's process of selecting certain individuals on whom to bestow His gracious love is adequately or accurately described in such a caricature. Rather, it would seem more appropriate to view God's selection as arising out of inclinations and dispositions the basis of which remain hidden in the heart and mind of God; i.e., unrevealed in Scripture.

In the second idea included in this objection, God is said to act without reason. To this it must be replied that there is certainly no reason in man on the basis of which He elects or passes by (unless, of course, God is a respecter of persons); but this does not mean that God does not have reasons for His gracious, selective choice of some fallen, undeserving, unworthy men unto salvation. If everywhere in Scripture God is portrayed as acting always in accordance with good reasons (or, stated in terms of the popular maxim, God never does anything without a good reason), and always in a way that (sooner or later) makes good sense; and if God is portrayed as reasoning in accordance with sound principles of inference, and in a way that appears (sooner or later) to be sensible and sound; then by analogy it would seem highly probable that He had good reasons for His election of some and passing by of others. Assuming that He did have good reasons, we discover that He simply has not chosen to reveal them to us. Of course, at the same time we realize that there are a number of things the reasons for which God has not chosen to reveal. Perhaps one day in glory He will reveal them to us, when our entirely quickened, entirely enlightened, entirely sanctified hearts and minds will be more able and more ready to receive them!