

us that God hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in His Son, 'according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world,' in order to our being afterwards made 'holy and blameless before Him in love' (Eph. 1).

"Of course, whatever truly and spiritually good thing is found in any person, it is the especial gift and work of God, given and wrought in consequence of eternal unmerited election to grace and glory. Whence the greatest saint cannot triumph over the most abandoned sinner, but is led to refer the entire praise of his salvation, both from sin and hell, to the mere goodwill and sovereign purpose of God, who hath graciously made him to differ from that world which lieth in wickedness."

-- *Absolute Predestination* (Grand Rapids: Sovereign Grace Publishers, 1971), pp. 104-106.

Second, has the doctrine of an unconditional election historically inspired pride in those who hold to the doctrine? Historically, have those who have believed themselves chosen of God manifested, been characterized by, or secretly cherished pride that God chose them and not others; or pride that God elected them to salvation and passed by the rest?

Now it should be recognized that one who believes himself chosen by God to salvation from before the foundation of the world may be expected to have some kind of emotional response. On the one hand, he may experience gratefulness, thankfulness, delight, happiness, appreciation, and great happiness. On the other hand, he may experience a secret glee, an inward smugness, a personal gloating, a private delectation that God has made him the special object of his favor, that God has picked him out of the mass of fallen humanity, that God has chosen to bestow upon him His special love. The former kinds of responses would probably be approved of by most Christians; whereas the latter kinds would probably be strongly disapproved of by most Christians.

As far as the history of corporate bodies who have held to unconditional election is concerned, the author of this syllabus is not aware of any studies which have shown a greater tendency toward or prevalence of pride (spiritual or unspiritual) among these bodies than among other bodies not sharing this theological orientation, but emphasizing other doctrinal distinctives or clusters of distinctives. Of course, those fellowships or loose associations of believers that tend to de-emphasize or neglect the importance of doctrine can take pride in the fact that they manifest no tendencies whatever toward pride in any doctrinal distinctive(s)!

As far as the history of individual believers who have held to unconditional election is concerned, there have doubtless been those who have experienced the latter kinds of emotional responses mentioned above: glee, smugness, gloating, and delectation. Whenever and wherever such responses appear, they should be recognized for what they are -- for they are as much as any other which still clings to them from their old life, and as much a remnant of their old nature as any other.

One who believes that God has sovereignly and graciously chosen him to eternal salvation from before the foundation of the world needs constantly to remember the horrible pit from which he has been dug and the miry clay up from which he has been brought; he needs constantly to remind himself that it is of God's grace that he is in Christ Jesus; he needs constantly