

able Talk

College Hill Lutheran Church

Crux Theologorum: Cur alii, alii non? (Why some and not others?)

The Question:

“If God has a plan for everyone, does he have a plan for atheists or nonbelievers and if so, why is not believing in Him part of the plan.”

The Answer:

What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills. You will say to me then, "Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?" But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?" Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use?"
-Romans: 9:14-21



Moses' Staff Becomes Snake
by Julius Schnoor von Carolsfeld

This is the crux theologorum (the burden of theologians). Why, if God desires all men to be saved and His grace is for ALL people, do some believe and others not? Or to sum it up, *cur alii, alii non?* Why some and not others? Answer: We don't know. Thus, it is the crux theologorum.

Welcome to the doctrine of election!

Calvinism—Bad! (Contrary to Scripture)

Calvinism argues very seriously that, since God has elected some to eternal life, He also must have elected others to eternal damnation. In other words, there must be an election of wrath to correspond to the election of grace.

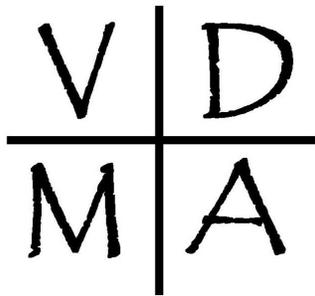
However, Holy Scripture knows of no “reverse side” of God’s eternal grace; for while the one (election unto eternal life) is clearly taught in many passages, the other (election unto eternal damnation) is plainly repudiated.

In Acts 13:48 we are told, “As many as were ordained to eternal life believed,” but this passage does *not* add: “As many as were ordained to eternal damnation believed not.” On the contrary, it cites as the true reason why the others did not believe their willful and perverse rejection of the proffered grace (v. 46: “Since **you thrust it aside** and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles.”) The reason why some do not believe is stated clearly by Christ when He says of them: “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and **you would not!** Matthew 23:37-38 (*my emphasis*).

Lutheranism—Good! (In accord with Scripture)

In accord with this verdict of Holy Scripture the Lutheran Church teaches: All who are saved are saved by grace; but all who are lost are lost through their own perverse opposition to the Holy Spirit, Hosea 13:9. Calvinism indeed declares that also to those whom He from eternity has reprobated to damnation God offers a certain kind of grace (common grace), while to His elect He offers “irresistible grace”; but this is only a new error, designed to confirm the error of eternal reprobation. Calvinism thus teaches contradictory wills in God; for by the outward call, extended to the non-elect, He wills their salvation, while according to His eternal decree of reprobation, by which He reprobated the non-elect to damnation, He does not desire to save them. Scripture, on the contrary, plainly teaches that also those who reject the divine offer of grace are seriously called, Acts 13:38-41; Matt. 23:37-38.

The Word of the Lord Remains FOREVER! – (Not Rationalism)



In conclusion we may say that just as we are not to solve the mystery of election by denying that we are saved by grace alone (God alone saves us by His grace), so we must not solve it by denying that this grace is for all people and ascribe to God, contrary to Scripture, an eternal decree of reprobation. Both “solutions” are equally rationalistic and in direct conflict with the Word of God. The Word of God clearly shows that we are saved purely by grace AND that God desires ALL men to be saved. Why some and not others? This is the crux theologorum.

What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God’s part? By no means! For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy. – Romans 9:14-15

Lord, Have mercy upon us.



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College Hill Lutheran Church
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