**An Orthodox Response**

**to the Doctrine of Dual Predestination**

**by Metropolitan Bishoy**

The doctrine of dual predestination is a Calvinist doctrine. Calvin is the most dominant protestant figure together with Zwingli, and they are both followed more than Martin Luther himself. In a book entitled *Understanding the Reformation* the issue starts as follows:

**From Orthodoxy to Enlightenment: [[1]](#footnote-2)**

**Predestination and the Synod of Dordrecht**

*The seventeenth century was a period of consolidation for Reformed churches in Geneva, the Swiss cantons, the Netherlands and Germany, where the Reformed faith enjoyed the status of a religion of state. In France, on the other hand, it was a time of persecution, beginning with the revocation of the Edict of Nantes by Louis XIV in 1685, which effectively outlawed the Protestant faith.*

*The century was also a time of controversy over the purity of Reformed doctrine. The countless faculties of theology now established throughout the continent upheld the orthodox doctrines (i.e. the Calvinist theology). The most divisive controversy started in the Netherlands with Jacobus Arminius; it focused on the question of grace and predestination. A former student of Beze, Arminius distanced himself from Calvinist theology (the Calvinitst theology is regarded the orthodox doctrine for the reformed churches till now) by arguing that Christ died not only for the elect but for all people, who could be saved if they made good use of the divine grace offered to all*. *His colleague at the University of Leiden, Franciscus Gomarus, defended the orthodox doctrine: not only did Christ die for the elect only, but one can neither resist nor lose grace once it has been conferred by God. The argument had political repercussions, as the staunchly Calvinist and royalist rural areas opposed the cities who were more sympathetic to both Arminian and republican ideas.*

*In our attempt to resolve this disagreement, the principal Reformed theologians of the time convened in a synod at Dordrecht in 1618. The Synod reaffirmed the orthodox doctrines and condemned the Arminians (also known as Remonstrants)*. *The latter formed semi-clandestine churches in Holland and adopted increasingly radical views on the role of free will in the acquisition of salvation. Their Adversaries despised them as much as they did the Socinus, who fled Italy for Poland (during the sixteenth century), for their questioning of the Trinity represented the ultimate heresy (antitrinitarianism).*

Here we note that the Reformed movement did not always abolish all correct beliefs. There were extremists like Calvin, but there were others who did not accept the infallibility of the Roman Catholic Pope, the indulgences and many other innovations, but at the same time they did not betray all the Christian teaching. There was a great division among reformers but at last the Calvinist conquered and prevailed.

After the abovementioned quote, we see a photo for the synod of Dordrecht, with soldiers guarding the theologians. Under the photo are written the most important words that are considered the summary of that Synod or rather its decision:

***The Synod of Dordrecht (1618-1619): condemned the Arminians (followers of Jacobus Arminius not the Armenian people) and refined the doctrine of Dual Predestination: by his decree, God decides freely- and not based on any foreknowledge of a believer's faith- who will be saved and who will be damned. Dordrecht contributed to the formation of a 'Reformed orthodoxy'.***

This is not orthodoxy, rather it is a great heresy! This we shall explain.

**Book of Systematic Theology:** [[2]](#footnote-3)

In the Arabic book of Systematic Theology, which is the curriculum for the students in the seminary of the Presbyterian church in Egypt, the following is written:

*God predestined all occurrences, both obligatory or voluntary; good or evil.*

But, if God predestined everything even the evil that would be an excuse for homosexuality, murder, etc. and would picture God as though He is an evildoer. How can anyone think in that way; except paganisms who have gods fighting each others?

*All events are absolutely within God’s planed intention*; *and they should occur.* *Those whom God foreknew, He foreknew according to the pleasure of His will and according to His intention and grace, not due of the deeds that they shall achieve. The expressions “afore prepared” “fitted” indicates that God previously prepared His rational creatures or predestined them either to salvation or destruction in order to show His glory.*

God created evil things in order to glorify Himself. By comparing His goodness to the evil, one is supposed to see that evil things are not good but that God is good; so one should glorify him. As if God says you will know how good I am when you see the bad and evil angels and people whom I have created and obliged to be as they are!

*God previously judged some human beings and angels for eternal life while others were predestined for eternal death. Those previously judged and predestined human beings and angels are especially under the intention of God, they do not change and their number is limited, it cannot increase or decrease. Faith, repentance and evagelical commitment are the fruits of election not its cause. It is not right to bring the causes as fruits or to bring the fruits as causes.*

Even faith is a result of the election of God not a cause. God elected this person not because he will believe but he believed because God elected him.

*Faith and repentance are gifts of God and He grants them according to His eternal intention. Thus, it is not proper to count them as conditions related to human beings on which the election of God depends. Believers believe because they are predestined..*

*Election is not based on good deeds at all. Election is just the will of God.* *God by His election to some does not do injustice towards those whom He did not elect because election is an act of mercy to which He is not obliged. Hence, it is left to the preference, of the most high God*. *If God wills to do a special favor to the elect He is not doing injustice to the unelect.* *God in performing His justice does not look to faces, but in performing His mercy He has the right to elect whosoever He chooses and reject whosoever He refuses.* *The choice of God to some is according to His absolute will.*

It is right for Him to choose whosoever He wills to choose and reject whosoever He wills to reject, freely without any reason, neither faith, nor good works, nor repentance, nor accepting God as a saviour etc.. His choice is out of His free absolute will towards some of His creatures.

This Calvinist concept leads to loss of the true understanding of God. The Holy Scriptures will be our source for information. We shall start by the simple teachings of the church without going into deep debate.

Simply: What is our believe?

**1 Timothy 2:3** *For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth*.

How can we dare to oppose the will of God, and His will is that all men be saved and come to the knowledge of truth? How can we twist what God has declared very clearly?

**Romans 8:28** *And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.For whom He foreknew,*

The Synod ofDordrecht says “*not based on any foreknowledge*” which proves to be against the scriptures.

**Romans 8:29-30 *For whom He foreknew,He also predestined*** *to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.*

Therefore, predestination, call, justification and glorification are based on God’s foreknowledge. Justification by the new birth in baptism and glorification by Holy Myron in chrismation. If someone continues in the path of belief, baptism and confirmation and obeying commandments of God they will enter the kingdom of heaven.

**Romans 1:28** *And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting;*

This means thatGod is leaving them to their sins and sharing with the devil because they refuse Him. What is the reason that made God gave them over to a debased mind? To do things not fitting? The answer is that they did not like to retain God in their knowledge and they refused God. By their refusal they lost grace and holiness. The result is destruction. When one refuses God and is in communion with Satan of course he will do evil acts. It is not that God creates evil and obliges creatures to commit it. The most important words in the verse are: *and even as* ***they did not like to retain God*** *in their knowledge*.

**2 Thessalonians 2:10** *and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish,* ***because******they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved***.

Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself said to Jerusalem How often **I wanted**… **but you were not willing:**

**Matthew 23:37** *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often* ***I wanted*** *to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but* ***you were not willing****!*

Our Lord Jesus Himself clarified many times that He tried and they refused. **You** were not willing not **me**.

**Joshua 24:15** *And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD,* ***choose for yourselves*** *this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD*.

It says *choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve*, the Pagan Gods or the real Lord? The term ‘God’ is the English translation for the Hebrew word ‘Eloheim’ while ‘Lord’ is the English translation of ‘Yahweh’ which is the special name of God. Every time the word ‘Lord’ occurs you should have in mind that it is ‘Yahweh’.

Joshua is saying choose for yourselves either the God of Abraham or the pagan gods, but for himself and his house they decided to serve the Lord Yahweh.

God is just enough not to judge anyone whom He had created according to His own intention and obliged or forced to live as a sinner or evildoer. He cannot punish someone if he has created him to become an evildoer. If we said this we accuse God of being unjust.. God forbids...

**The Epistle to the Romans- Chapter 9:**

Chapter nine of St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans is misinterpreted to prove the doctrine of predestination. We should explain the difficult verses with what is clear not the contrary. Furthermore, when reading St. Paul we need to remember St. Peter's advices:

**2 Peter 3:15-16**  *And consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation -- as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you,as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are* ***some*** *things hard to understand, which* ***untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction****, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures*.

We should keep this warning and advice in mind when we read the epistles of St. Paul, though we should understand that St. Peter is not accusing St. Paul at all, on the contrary, he is referring to him as a wise teacher who writes according to the wisdom given to him by God. However, St. Peter is saying that the untaught and unstable people twist to their destruction some things that are hard to understand not only in the epistles of St. Paul but in all the scriptures.

Now, we shall present the disappointing interpretation of the abovementioned chapter, but by the help of the Holy Spirit we will understand what St. Peter called “things hard to understand” and reach their true interpretation. We always need the help of the Holy Spirit in order to understand.

The first mistake of those who misinterpreted this chapter is that they wanted to prove a certain doctrine so they twisted the reality included therein. The second mistake is that they deduced their doctrine from one chapter ignoring the rest of the Holy Scriptures which as a whole is considered as one reality. They used a very special condition to explain the whole religion contrary to all what is written in the scriptures.

We can bring many verses which prove that God wants to bring everyone to salvation.

**Isa 45:22** *Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth*.

**Mat 28:19** *Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*

**Mar 16:16** *He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.*

How can we ignore all these verses and much more similar ones? How?

The following verses are the ones that seem ambiguous to some and need careful understanding. At first some might feel that they are contrary to all what we previously said but in fact they are not.

**Romans 9:14-19** *What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not!* *For He says to Moses, I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion." So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth." Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?"*

He means: Who can resist His will? No one can…

**My first remark here is that St. Paul is putting a question not a statement**. The question is put as follows: “*Is there unrighteousness in God?*” He quickly responds “*Certainly not*”. “*Certainly not*” is a remonstrative or interjectory phrase (a phrase that is inserted in the middle of a sentence to give a quick idea then the sentence is continued). As we sometimes quickly say: God forbid, if someone says that God is unrighteous, then we continue the sentence. But, if we omit this phrase and put the question as follows “*Is there unrighteousness with God… for He says to Moses, I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion*”, we will understand easily what he meant. St. Paul is putting a question to the Jews who refuse the Gentiles. He is questioning them in order to shake their fanatic attitude against accepting Gentiles into Christianity. That is why he is putting a question. Then he continues the question: *So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth." Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.* To prove that this is a question not a statement he continues saying:*You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?"*

He starts with a common question: *Is there unrighteousness with God… for He says to Moses…* then at the end he says: *You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?"*

Hence, It is a question not a statement..

**My second remark is that the clay is not a rational being. The example that St. Paul used does not apply to human beings.** It is a fact that we were created from clay but we were not created as statues but as rational beings. Therefore the example does not hundred percent apply to human beings. The writer has the right to use examples but from our side it is not correct to take an example used to explain something to the Jews and apply it to theology. St. Paul says:

**Romans 9:20-21** *But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, "Why have you made me like this?"Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?*

Nobody was created from clay except Adam. Even Eve was not from clay but was taken from Adam, then their children were all born from them. Where is the choice between ‘*one (vessel)*’ and ‘*another’?* There is no *‘another’*, it was only Adam who was from clay, so the example does not apply to us (human beings). It is true that the potter has the power to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor when making things out of clay but not in referring to human beings. Human beings were created in the image of God and have free will because God has free will, so we are not mere clay.

**Romans 9: 22-24** *What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction,and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory,even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?*

These are only remarks, for the explanation I shall present the following table with both concepts in order to make it clear:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| hard verses to understand | explanatory verse |
| **Rom 9:16** *So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.*  | **Rom 9: 30-32***What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith. But Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. Why? Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone.***Rom 9: 25***As He says also in Hosea: "I will call them My people, who were not My people, And her beloved, who was not beloved".* |

**Romans 9:16** *So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy*.

The Calvinist theology of dual predestination is based on this verse. They say: whatever mercy you wish to have from God you will never reach. If you believe in God, you do good deeds, you obey God’s commandments, and you are not elected by His freewill you will be refused, so you should not try to change your destiny. St. Paul never meant to say this, rather he was discussing with the Jews that they cannot oblige God to choose them and reject the Gentiles. The following verses at the end of the chapter brings it very clearly. He was preparing them all the way to reach this result.

**Romans 9:30-32** *What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith;but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness.****Why?***

“Why” here is a important question. There is a reason and a cause which is not the free will of God. The reason is:

**Romans 9: 32** *Because* ***they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law****. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone*

They were *running* after the law of righteousness but they did not reach it. They were *willing* but did not reach. The reason is that they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. The works of the law like: animal sacrifices, circumcision, etc. but not believing in Jesus Christ.

Why were they not accepted by God? They were not accepted because they wanted to prove themselves, to speak to the Law of Moses and not to accept the grace of God even in His Only-Begotten Son and His act of salvation. That is why St. Paul started his chapter by comparing many things and bringing many examples to show the Jews that they cannot prevent God from accepting the Gentiles. He will be merciful to whom He wants to. **Why** does He want to give mercy to them? Because He gives mercy to those who believe in Him and in His Only-Begotten Son. St. Paul is telling the Jews that God has the right to choose but the choice has reason. Whosoever sticks to animal sacrifices and refuses the true sacrifice of the cross cannot be saved. *So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.*

Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness,but the gentiles accepted the faith therefore God accepted them, in spite of the fact that the gentiles did not pursue righteousness have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith. *As He says also in Hosea: "I will call them My people, who were not My people, And her beloved, who was not beloved. And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not My people,' There they shall be called sons of the living God"* (Rom 9:25).

All the abovementioned verses are in the Epistle to the Romans and in the same chapter.

St. Paul is saying to the Jews that God has the right to judge who deserves to be saved and who do not deserve to be saved. The works of the Law are the reason of the refusal of the Jews and faith in Christ is the reason for accepting the Gentiles.

St. Paul worked too much against the fanatic Jewish movement to the extend that the first synod in the history of the church has convened in Jerusalem with the apostles, St. Peter and St. Jacob the cousin of our Lord, together with many presbyters and leaders, in order to discuss if circumcision necessary for salvation or not? St Paul had a fight with Barnabas on this subject. At last they said: “*For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well*” (Acts 15: 28-29).

Now, let us see the whole subject from the beginning, not from the part where the problem occurred, and by doing that now the picture will be very clear. In chapter 8 he wrote the following:

**Romans 8:29** ***For whom He foreknew, He also predestined.***

Keep this verse in mind…

St. Paul did not say that the freewill of God decides who will be saved and who will be damned but he said that God foreknew who will accept His Only-Begotten Son. He was starting to get into a controversial debate with the Jews or the Jewish Christians. The chapter starts as follows:

**Romans 9:1-3** *I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit,that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart.For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh*,

This shows that he has compassion and love towards the Jews, his people. Can anyone imagine that an apostle of Christ becomes accursed? Doesn’t this prove that we should not take one verse as a base for theological doctrines?!

The subject we are discussing starts as follows:

**Romans 9:4-11** *who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises;of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen. But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, "In Isaac your seed shall be called." That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed.For this is the word of promise: "At this time I will come and Sarah shall have a son." And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, even by our father Isaac for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand****, not of works but of Him who calls.***

What are the works he is against? He is against the works of the law not good deeds. If taken literally then, according to God’s freewill, any pious person may not be saved while a sinner may be saved. Esau was an evildoer so by His foreknowledge God chose Jacob. Why did St. Paul say that? He said it because in the previous chapter he spoke about the foreknowledge of God. He said that while Jacob and Esau were still in the womb of their mother God chose Jacob before doing any deeds. So what is the benefit of the works of the law? St. Paul’s goal was to shake the insistence of the Jews in depending upon the works of the Law.

**Romans 9:12-14** *it was said to her, "The older shall serve the younger."As it is written, "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated."What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not!*

This is where our issue started. Now we come to the conclusion:

**Romans 9:22-24** *What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known,* ***endured with much longsuffering*** *the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory*, even us whom He called, ***not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles****.*

This proves that God did not create evil but*“endured with much longsuffering”* the evil of wicked people!! “A*nd that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy”* because mercy is granted to those who believe in Him, “even us whom He called ***not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles***”. Here is the whole issue! Here he reaches his conclusion and aim. Then he brings the beautiful song of the Prophet Hosea:

***Rom 9: 25-26*** *"I will call them My people, who were not My people And her beloved, who was not beloved.*And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, ['You are] not My people,' There they shall be called sons of the living God*”.*

Also Isaiah said*: “Blessed is Egypt My people” (Isa 19:25).* To the Jews the Egyptians were gentiles so how can they be blessed. He also said: “*In that day there will be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar to the LORD at its border”* (Isa 19:19). For a Jew it is never accepted that an altar is built outside Jerusalem.

**Romans 9:27-33** *Isaiah also cries out concerning Israel: "Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, The remnant will be saved.For He will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness, Because the LORD will make a short work upon the earth."And as Isaiah said before: "Unless the LORD of Sabaoth had left us a seed, We would have become like Sodom, And we would have been made like Gomorrah."What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith;but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness.****Why****? Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone. As it is written: "Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense, And* ***whoever believes*** *on Him will not be put to shame."*

**This is the conclusion and the last sentence in the chapter: that whoever believes on His will not be put to shame.** He continues in chapter 10:

**Romans 10:1-3** *Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and* ***seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God****. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness* ***to everyone who believes***.

He wants Israel to be saved. But when they were seeking to establish their own righteousness, they have not submitted to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to **everyone who believes**. This is a very important verse in our discussion of this subject.

Therefore, the entire goal of St. Paul was to destruct the fanaticism of the Jews.

**QUESTIONS & ANSWERS:**

**Q:** Why do we refuse the doctrine of Jacob Arminius?

**A:** We do not refuse it but it needs some contemplation you cannot take it quickly. He said that *Christ died not only for the elect but for all people who could be saved if they made good use of the divine grace offered to all*. These words can have two different interpretations, one of them is wrong and the other is correct. Christ died for all people and whoever will make use of this grace will be saved because he will become an elect so this is the concept--many are called but few are elected.

The wrong interpretation may be as follows: Christ did not die for only for the elect but for all people so there are two categories; the elect is one category and another are those who will make use of His salvation so those not the elect what can you call them? Additional category? Because even those who will make use of His grace are predestined before creation of the world so if we have them in two groups then it is wrong but if understand that Jesus died for the whole world and is calling all but not all are elected except those who will make use of this grace.

So the sentence is ambiguous. How He not die only for the elect but for those who will make use of His grace? Those who will make use of His grace are also elected.

We can say Christ died for all and is ready to call any person who will accept Him by His foreknowledge. The Holy Spirit is testing people all over the world and whoever is ready to accept the truth will be called and whoever will conquer is considered one of the elect and God by His foreknowledge knows all His elects.

NKJ **Ephesians 1:3** *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, 4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, 5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will*, (How He predestined us? Whom He foreknew He also predestined but the call is offered to many).

The elect are those who will enter the kingdom of God. They are elected because with the foreknowledge of God that they will not only accept Him but abide by Him, conquer and be victorious to the end as written in Revelation.

Therefore Jacob Arminius' speech is not wrong but needs interpretation: he is saying that Christ died for all because He is calling even those who don't accept Him but those who accept Him and make use of His grace will be the elect—this is a rewriting of what he said. Perhaps he said what I am saying but they are saying against him something ambiguous which will put the elect on one side and others who would join Christ and the elect on the another side. Who are the elect? They are the same who accepted Christ and have made use of His grace.

We don't refuse what he said but we rephrase it in a correct way. His intension was that you cannot say God have elected some people by His freewill and other people has no right to be saved so he was striking the concept of the elect by the freewill of God.

Franciscus Gomarus,defended the Calvinist theology saying not only that Christ died for the elect only but one can neither resist nor lose grace when it has been confirmed by God.

**Q:** Would you please comment on the Bible's reference to God hardening heart of Pharaoh?

**A:** He hardened the heart of Pharaoh not in preventing him from repentance but by taking His grace away from him because he did not deserve the grace of God; thereby He hardened his heart not to let the people of Israel leave Egypt. According to Pope Shenouda, he hardened not because God pushed him to be hard but because He has withdrawn His grace from him.

**Q:** The Calvinist produced their concept of predestination as a result of the understanding of St. Paul's writings which are hard to understand at least in the opinion of St. Peter so they should not to be blamed.

**A:** You are blamed and should repent because St. Peter said NKJ **2 Peter 3:15** *as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, 16 as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people* ***twist to their own destruction****, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.* Can you not blame those who are doing for their own destruction? He blamed them in the Scriptures and you the Holy Spirit or what? Don't twist realities otherwise you can be like Max Shamsheer.

**Q:** Sometimes people use a general statement to explain or take comfort during some hard life…of a young individual which uses the concept of predestination like... In the light of tonight's lecture is it good to say as such? Thank you.

**A:** I cannot deny in our Middle East culture this idea sometime is present. If we lose some dear person we say that not one hair can drop without permission of God. If someone is sick it is for his benefit because we can feel the love of God even in our pains and sufferings. St. Paul said I am eager to leave this world and go to Paradise. As children of God we believe that everything He is doing for our good and for our relatives and friends so we accept everything from God--life of submission. However if I sin we cannot say this is the will of God.

1. ***Understanding the Reformation***, An itinerary suggested by the International Museum of the Reformation, p. 48-51. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. *Systematic Theology*, by the House of Christian Culture, Cairo 1971, chapter 8, p. 73 & 74. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)