

**WCF, Ch 10, "Of Effectual Calling"**

1. All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, he is pleased, in his appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by his Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death, in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation, by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God, taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them a heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and, by his almighty power, determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ: yet so, as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace.

**RP Testimony**

1. Preaching the Gospel consists in the offer of salvation through Christ to sinners, accompanied with such an explanation of the various parts of God's Word as may help to persuade men to receive Christ as Savior, and to live and walk in Him.
2. The elect are effectually called by means of the Gospel offer. This offer is not a declaration to any sinner that his name is in the Book of Life. It is founded upon God's command to offer Christ and all His benefits to sinners. There is no inconsistency between the biblical doctrine of particular redemption and the command to offer the Gospel to all men. Deut. 29:29; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-47; 2 Tim. 2:19.
3. We reject the teaching that the Gospel offer of salvation is freely and truly offered only to the elect. We reject the teaching that particular redemption is to be so understood and presented that Christ as ransom and propitiation is not preached or offered to all men indiscriminately.

**I. The Same Objection Applies Against God's Foreknowledge**

*Although the Gospel is offered to many who will not, and who for subjective reasons cannot, accept, it is, nevertheless, sincerely offered to all. The objection so strenuously urged on some occasions by Arminians, to the effect that if the doctrine of Predestination is true the Gospel cannot be sincerely offered to the non-elect, should be sufficiently answered by the fact that it bears with equal force against the doctrine of God's Foreknowledge. We might ask, How can the offer of salvation be sincerely made to those who God foreknows will despise and reject it, especially when their guilt and condemnation will only be increased by their refusal? Arminians admit that God knows beforehand who will accept and who will reject the message; yet they know themselves to be under a divine command to preach to all men, and they do not feel that they act insincerely in doing so.*

**II. The Offer is Sincerely Made**

**Exodus 3:18--19** Then they will heed your voice; and you shall come, you and the elders of Israel, to the king of Egypt; and you shall say to him, 'The Lord God of the Hebrews has met with us; and now, please, let us go three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God.' 19 But I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not even by a mighty hand.

*God commanded Moses to gather together the elders of Israel, to go to Pharaoh and demand that they be allowed to go three days' journey into the wilderness to hold a feast and offer sacrifices. Yet in the very next verse God Himself says, "I know that the king of Egypt will not give you leave to go, no, not by a mighty hand," Ex. 3:18,19. If it is not inconsistent with God's sincerity for Him to command all men to love Him, or to be perfect (Luke 10:27; Matt. 5:48), it is not inconsistent with His sincerity for Him to command them to repent and believe the Gospel. A man may be altogether sincere in giving an invitation which he knows will be refused.*

*When the Gospel is presented to mankind in general nothing but a sinful unwillingness on the part of some prevents their accepting and enjoying it. No stumbling block is put in their way. All that the call contains is true; it is adapted to the conditions of all men and freely offered if they will repent and believe. No outside influence constrains them to reject it. The elect accept; the non-elect may accept if they will, and nothing but their own nature determines them to do otherwise. "According to the Calvinistic scheme," says Dr. Hodge, "the non-elect have all the advantages and opportunities of securing their salvation, that, according to any other scheme, are granted to mankind indiscriminately. Calvinism teaches that a plan of salvation adapted to all men and adequate for the salvation of all, is freely offered to the acceptance of all, although in the secret purpose of God He intended that it should have precisely the effect which in experience it is found to have. He designed in its adoption to save His own people, but consistently offers its benefits to all who are willing to receive them.*

*Arminians object that God could not offer the Gospel to those who in His secret counsel were not designed to accept it; yet we find the Scriptures declaring that He does this very thing. His commands to Pharaoh have already been referred to. Isaiah was commissioned to preach to the Jews, and in 1:18, 19, we find that he extended a gracious offer of pardon and cleansing. But in 6:9-13, immediately following his glorious vision and official appointment, he is informed that this preaching is destined to harden his countrymen to their almost universal destruction. Ezekiel was sent to speak to the house of Israel, but was told beforehand that they would not hear, Ezek. 3:4-11.*

*Matt. 23:33-37 presents the same teaching. In these passages God declares that He does the very thing which Arminians say He must not do. Hence the objection now under consideration has arisen not because of any Calvinistic misstatement of the divine plan, but through erroneous assumptions made by Arminians themselves.*

### **III. The Gospel Proclaimed via Preaching**

*The decree of election is a secret decree. And since no revelation has been given to the preacher as to which ones among his hearers are elect and which are non-elect, it is not possible for him to present the Gospel to the elect only. It is his duty to look with hope on all those to whom he is preaching, and to pray for them that they may each be among the elect. In order to offer the message to the elect, he must offer it to all; and the Scripture command is plain to the effect that it should be offered to all. Even the elect must hear before they can believe and accept (Romans 10:13-17).*

*While the message is preached to all, it is God who chooses among the hearers those to whom He is speaking, and He makes this selection known to them through the inward testimony of the Holy Spirit. The elect thus receive the message as the promise of salvation, but to the non-elect it appears only as foolishness, or if their conscience is aroused, as a judgment to condemnation. As a rule, the non-elect are not concerned about salvation, do not envy the elect their hope of salvation, but rather laugh and scorn at them. And since the secret as to which ones in the audience belong to the elect is hidden from the preacher, usually he does not know who got the message to salvation and who got it to judgment. Among the elect themselves there are so many weaknesses, and on the other hand the evil one is so able to appear as an angel of light and to make such an outward show of good deeds and words, that the preacher usually cannot be sure of the outcome. The effect of the preaching is not in the preacher's hands, but in God's hands; and it often happens that the sermons which seemed unsuccessful were strengthened and made effective by the Holy Spirit.*

#### **WLC Q. 160. What is required of those that hear the word preached?**

*A. It is required of those that hear the word preached, that they attend upon it with diligence, preparation, and prayer; examine what they hear by the Scriptures; receive the truth with faith, love, meekness, and readiness of mind, as the Word of God; meditate, and confer of it; hide it in their hearts, and bring forth the fruit of it in their lives.*

### **IV. Conclusion**

*Yet while it is certain that the non-elect will not turn to God, repent of their sins, and live good moral lives, it is, nevertheless, their duty to do so. Though members of a fallen race, they are still free moral agents, responsible for their character and conduct. God is, therefore, perfectly consistent in commanding them to repent. For Him not to do so would be for Him to give up the claims of His law. We commonly hear the idea expressed that man is under no obligation to do anything for which he has not full and perfect ability in himself. The reasoning, however, is fallacious; for man labors under a self-acquired inability. He was created upright and voluntarily sank himself into sin. He is, therefore, as responsible as is the person who in order to escape military service deliberately mutilates a hand or an eye. If inability canceled obligation, then Satan with his inherent depravity would be under no obligation to do right, and his fiendish enmity toward God and men would be no sin. Sinners in general would then be lifted above the moral law.*

*In conclusion it may be further said that even in regard to the non-elect the preaching is not altogether vain; for they are thus made the objects of general restraining and directing influences which prevent them from sinning as much as they otherwise would.*