

Canons of Dort – 1st Head of Doctrine, Art:15-18 – Left Alone: Reprobation

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: Your **election** (拣选) is unconditional, out of grace, and in Jesus Christ. But what about those who are not elected? You will hear about them today. You see, while some are elected to eternal life, some are **reprobated** and condemned to death. These are two types of predestination – **election and reprobation**, to **eternal life and to eternal death**. These two types of election are sometimes called “**double predestination**.” (双重预定)

Our headings are: **Reprobation (遗弃) : What is it.** **Reprobation: How to deal with it.**
Reprobation: Are Christian Children reprobate?

Our goals are: **That seeing the doctrine of reprobation, you will love your election even more, and that you will labor for those who are under the just condemnation of God.**

Reprobation: What is it?

Article 15: Reprobation - Moreover, Holy Scripture most especially highlights this eternal and undeserved grace of our election and brings it out more clearly for us, in that it further bears witness that not all people have been chosen, but that some have not been chosen or have been passed by in God's eternal election—those, that is, concerning whom God, on the basis of God's entirely free, most just, irreproachable, and unchangeable good pleasure, made the following decree: to leave them in the common misery into which, by their own fault, they have plunged themselves; not to grant them saving faith and the grace of conversion, but finally to condemn and eternally punish those who have been left in their own ways and under God's just judgment, not only for their unbelief but also for all their other sins, in order to display divine justice. And this is the decree of reprobation, which does not at all make God the author of sin (a blasphemous thought!) but rather its fearful, irreproachable, just judge and avenger.

第十五条：我们之所以特别注意并推举拣选之永远与白白的恩典，乃是因为圣经明明的见证，并不是所有的人，乃是一些人蒙拣选；而其他人由于永恒的定旨被遗弃，这些人都是出于神的主权，极公义、无可指摘与不变的美意，预定了将他们弃置于他们自愿投入的悲惨境域中，并不将得救的信心与归正的恩典赐给他们；反而在他公正的判断中任凭他们自行己路；最后，为了宣扬他的公义，永远定他们的罪又刑罚他们，这不仅是因为他们的不信，也是因为他们的原罪及由原罪所生的本罪。这就是遗弃的预言，这决不使神成为罪恶之源(连有这种念头也是褻瀆的)，反而宣布他是可畏的、无可指摘和公义的审判者与报复者。

1. All are not saved. Those who are not saved are reprobate (被遗弃). Reprobates are those who have been left alone, passed over by God, from eternity, without any hope of salvation. But don't think that the condemnation (定罪) of reprobates is because of God. God simply passed over them and refused to help them. They are not saved because they continue in their sins, they love their sins, and they do not have the slightest desire to leave their sins behind. This is quite an amazing doctrine. John Calvin wrote that the doctrine of reprobation leaves us in awe.

2. Let's look at the biblical proof (圣经依据) for reprobation. Scripture is the basis of accepting this doctrine. It doesn't matter if you like this doctrine or any doctrine or not. If it is taught in the Word of God, you are bound to accept it.

Romans 9:11 (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), 12 it was said to her, "The older shall serve the younger." 13 As it is written, "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated."

Esau was wicked and rejected God in his life, but God had already determined, without looking forward to what he would do, that he would not save Esau. His rejection was natural. That doctrine seems hard, but it is only if you ignore God's justice.

1 Peter 2:8 and "A stone of stumbling And a rock of offense." They stumble, being disobedient to the word, **to which they also were appointed.**

Trouble makers were appointed to be troublemakers, but are condemned **because it was their choice to be troublemakers.**

Revelation 17:8 "The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the **Book of Life from the foundation of the world,** when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. (你所看见的兽，先前有，如今没有；将要无底坑里上来，又要归于沉沦。凡住在地上名字从创世以来没有记在生命册上的，见先前有，如今没有，以后再有的兽，就必希奇。)

The wicked never had their names in the Book of Life. And left on their own, the wicked walked to hell of their own free will (自由意志) .

3. Arminians are quick to attack this doctrine, claiming that this doctrine makes God unfair or

callous (冷酷无情) . But

reprobation is justice. The wicked are ultimately condemned not for their reprobation, but because of their sins – sins they inherited from their parents, and their actual sins. If all men were innocent and God reprobated some, that would be unfair. But all are guilty before him; none is on neutral ground (中立的立场) . This is why babies can be justly condemned.

Those who reject this doctrine and think that God is wrong to condemn some to death don't understand grace. The elect of God get what they don't deserve (上帝的选民接受了他们所不配得的) . The reprobate gets what he deserves. (被遗弃的人遭受了他们所应得的。) God is not a discriminator (歧视主义者) . He is a generous God who saves some though they do not deserve it.

Those who reject the doctrine of reprobation love injustice (非公义), as they are demanding that God is bound to give a gift to undeserving people.

Reprobation: How to deal with it?

Article 16: Responses to the Teaching of Reprobation - Those who do not yet actively experience within themselves a living faith in Christ or **an assured confidence of heart,** peace of conscience, a zeal for childlike obedience, and a glorying in God through Christ, but who nevertheless use the means by which God has promised to work these things in us—**such people ought not to be alarmed at the mention of reprobation,** nor to count themselves among the reprobate; rather they ought to **continue diligently in the use of the means,** to desire fervently a time of more abundant grace, and to wait for it in reverence and humility. On the other hand, **those who seriously desire to turn to God, to be pleasing to God alone,** and to be delivered from the body of death, but are not yet able to make such progress along the way of godliness and faith as they would like—such people ought much less to stand in fear of the teaching concerning reprobation, since our merciful God has promised not to snuff out a smoldering wick and that a bruised reed will not be broken. However, **those who have forgotten God and their Savior Jesus Christ and have abandoned themselves** wholly to the cares of the world and the pleasures of the flesh—such people have every reason to stand in fear of this teaching, as long as they do not seriously turn to God.

第十六条：那些尚未被神有效地造成以及未经历在基督里活泼的信心、内心有确切把握、良心的平安、象儿子一般诚恳的顺服、和借基督荣耀神以神为乐的人，应当坚持使用神所指定的这些蒙恩之道(法)，在我们里面生发这些恩赐，不该为了以上所提的遗弃而惊慌，也不应该把自己列入被弃者之中，乃当殷勤恒常使用这蒙恩方法，并怀着热望、敬畏谦虚地等候更丰盛恩典的时期来到。凡诚心愿意归向神，惟愿讨神喜悦，并愿身体脱离死亡；还没有到达所盼望圣洁与信心程度的人，更不必因遗弃的教义而惊惧，因为慈爱的神已经应许，将残的灯火他不吹灭，压伤的芦苇他不折断。但是这教义对那些忽视神与耶稣基督，沉溺于世界和肉体快乐，尚未诚恳归向神的人，才真是可怕的。

1. Suppose a believer doesn't have that 100% assurance or confidence that he is a Christian, should he then think that he had better give up hope that he might be elect? Should he entertain the thought that maybe God passed him by? Should he think that he is reprobate with no hope? Not at all. That person must continue learning the Bible, putting the effort to understand who he is and how he can be reconciled to God. He must continue to worship and listen to the preaching of the Word. If he is in a Bible study, he must keep studying. Assurance may be long time in coming, but it will come as the Holy Spirit work through these means. You need to cultivate (培育) faith like you do your plants.

Philippians 1:6 being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;

Matthew 5:3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

2. For the serious seeker (对认真在信仰上寻求者) : Suppose someone is not yet a Christian, but desires to turn to God (meaning, God is already starting to work), should he fear that he is not elected? Should he worry that he doesn't always speak the truth...or that he gets sinfully angry...or that he is tempted to lust...or that he doesn't always want to worship? Not at all. God does not snuff out a smoldering wick6...God does not break a bruised reed (上帝不会折断压伤的芦苇) . God is merciful. Keep at the work. Keep calling on the Lord. Even Christians feel like this some times.

Romans 7:24 O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?

3. For the backsliding brother (对软弱的弟兄) : Suppose someone has abandoned serving God, should he be afraid? Yes. He should fear eternal damnation in hell.

Hebrews 10:31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.落在永生神的手里，真是可怕的

Article 18: The Proper Attitude toward Election and Reprobation - To those who complain about this grace of an undeserved election and about the severity of a just reprobation, we reply with the words of the Apostle, "**Who indeed are you, a human being, to argue with God?**" and with the words of our Savior, "**Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me?**" We, however, with reverent adoration of these secret things, cry out with the Apostle: "Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and how inscrutable his ways! 'For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor? Or who has given a gift to him, to receive a gift in return?' For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever. Amen."

第十八条：对那些因拣选白白的恩典，与遗弃公正的严厉而抱不平的人，我们要象使徒保罗回答说：“你这个人哪！你是谁，竟敢向神强嘴呢？”(罗九 30)又引证我们救主的话说：“我的东西难道不可随我的意思用吗？”(太二十 15)因此，对这些神秘要存圣洁敬仰的心，我们要用使徒保罗的话惊叹说：“深哉！神丰富的智慧和知识，他的判断何其难测！他的踪迹何其难寻！谁知道主的心，谁作过他的谋士呢？谁是先给了他，使他后来偿还呢？因为万有都是本于他，依靠他，归于他。愿荣耀归给他，直到永远。阿们！”(罗十一 33—36)。

4. You have no right to complain about election. You are not to question God. Know your place. You must never accuse God of injustice. And remember, reprobation (leaves them in his sin) shows the greatness of God's mercy.

Romans 9:20 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?" 21 Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor? 22 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, 23 and that **He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy**, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, (20 你这个人哪！你是谁，竟敢向神强嘴呢？受造之物岂能对造他的说：“你为什么这样造我呢？” 21 窑匠难道没有权柄，从一团泥里拿一块作成贵重的器皿，又拿一块作成卑贱的器皿吗？ 22 倘若神要显明他的忿怒，彰显他的权能，就多多忍耐宽容那可怒预备遭毁灭的器皿； 23 又要将他丰盛的荣耀，彰显在那蒙怜悯早预备得荣耀的器皿上；)

The Apostle Paul does not explain more when other questioned why God elected some and reprobated some! And you too need to stand still and listen to God. And never accuse God of sin. James 1. And surely you must not reinterpret God's Word so that it is in line with what you like.

5. Rather, with reverence, cry out the praise of God. The more you get a full sense of your election, the more you will sing out in praise to God. When you get a full sense of reprobation, you will shout out praise to God.

Reprobation: How about young children who die?

Article 17: The Salvation of the Infants of Believers: Since we must make judgments about God's will from the Word, which testifies that the children of believers are holy, not by nature but by virtue of the gracious covenant in which they together with their parents are included, godly parents ought not to doubt the election and salvation of their children whom God calls out of this life in infancy.

第十七条：既然我们是从神的话语来辨明神的旨意，而神的证证明信徒的儿女是圣洁的，不是由于他们的本性，乃是由于他们同父母所承受的恩典之约，所以爱神的父母，当神按其美意将他们的子女于婴孩时期召去时，决无理由怀疑他们的蒙选与得救。

1. While Christians are called to bear fruits of their election, children do not and cannot. What if they die infancy? (At the time of the writing of the Canons there was a very high infant mortality rate, so this was a relevant issue.) Can you argue that since infants and children have not produced fruits of election that they are therefore condemned? **Christians do not have to worry about the salvation of their children who die in infancy.**

2. On what basis can I say that? You can claim the covenant promises of God that he would save you and your household. Your children are not saved because they are pure, as Arminians (阿民念主义者) argue, for they inherit Adam's sin. And very early on in their lives children add to their inherited sins. Children of believers who die in infancy are saved because God counts their sins upon Jesus Christ on account of their parents' faith. What amazing comfort that is to God's people, especially to those who have lost children in infancy or in the womb. (Were not children condemned on account of their parents' sin not they own? Why couldn't God save them through their parents' faith?) God's promise is not for your children only after they become 18...but even when they are infants.

Acts 2:39 "For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

God views your children differently from the way he viewed the children of non-believers. Yours are clean!

1Corinthians 7:14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, **but now they are holy.**

(因为不信的丈夫，就因着妻子成了圣洁；并且不信的妻子，就因着丈夫成了圣洁；不然，你们的儿女就不洁净，但如今他们是圣洁的了。)

God then brings Jews and Gentiles in the same way.

Ephesians 2:11 Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—12 that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

3. The Arminian has multiple protests:

- a. Some Arminians – true Baptists (浸信会信徒) - say that God made man with a free will and man, of his own, has to choose. And since a baby cannot choose, he cannot be saved. They treat their children as pagans (外邦人) .
- b. Other Arminians argue that the baby doesn't have to choose but would be accepted into heaven by virtue of him not having sinned.
But the Bible says that all have sinned, that there is none righteous, and Jesus is the only way to make peace with God.

Romans 3:10 As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one; 11 There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God.

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

If no one is righteous, and since men can only be saved through Jesus Christ, then graciously God counts the child's sin upon Christ through the faith of the parents. This is why he gave us this promise.

Conclusion:

God passed over some (reprobated them) and reserved them for the justice they deserved because of their inherited and actual sins.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: Reprobation is not a doctrine to fear. If you are a believer, but have doubt about whether you are elected or not, make use of the Bible and depend upon God's Holy Spirit. In doing this, the assurance of your election will be stronger. And when you think of reprobation and realize that God could have justly passed over you, but he didn't, let God's praises flow from your lips.

Finally: If you are seeking God, maybe you are beginning to realize that you are a sinner and need a Savior, don't worry about whether you are elect or not. Do what God expects his children to do. Attend worship. Read his Word. Ask questions. Pray for help. In due time the Lord will work and you will know that you believe.