

*Elect in the Son*, Robert Shank, Springfield, MO: Westcott, 1970, reprinted Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1989, 242 pp.

In this important work on election, Robert Shank argues that election should not be confused with predestination. Election is Christocentric, referring primarily to the Church and only secondarily to individuals. Election of individuals is contingent upon their identification with the

Church. He writes that "election is the act whereby God chooses men for Himself, whereas predestination is His act determining the *destination* of the elect whom He has chosen" (p. 156). The destination of the elect is to be conformed to the image of Christ. He denies the concept of unconditional election: "Election and predestination comprehend all men potentially, no man unconditionally, and the Israel of God efficiently" (p. 157).

Shank maintains that Calvinists have been too literalistic in their treatment of biblical metaphors describing man's depraved condition. He contends that salvation is synergistic; monergism should be rejected. Faith is a condition for salvation, but this does not nullify grace; on the contrary it establishes grace in the believer's life. Shank also rejects the doctrines of limited atonement and irresistible grace, clearly demonstrating how they stand in opposition to biblical teaching.

The difficulty with Calvinism, Shank writes, is its insistence upon monothetism and determinism. This denial of duality in God's will logically leads to the charge that God is the author of sin, and it is precisely at this point that Calvinists contradict themselves. When writing in the context of responsibility for sin, Calvin shuns determinism, asserting that God merely *permits* sin, but contradicts himself by asserting determinism in other contexts. Shank points out that Calvinism offers no satisfactory resolution of this dilemma.

*Elect in the Son* is a remarkably lucid book, based squarely upon the Scriptures. Its message is liberating and a much-needed corrective to the harsh implications of strict Calvinism.

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