

The
Bible Doctrine
Of
Election
C.D. Cole

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INTRODUCTION TO ELECTION

Election! -- What a blessed word! What a glorious doctrine! Who does not rejoice to know that he has been chosen to some great blessing? Election is unto salvation -- the greatest of all blessings. And strange to say, this is a neglected truth even by many who profess to believe it, and others have a feeling of repulsion at the very mention of this Bible-revealed, God-honouring, and man humbling truth. Spurgeon said, "There seems to be an inveterate prejudice in the human mind against this doctrine, and although most other doctrines will be received by professing Christians, some with caution, others with pleasure, yet this one seems to be most frequently disregarded and discarded." If such were true in Spurgeon's day, how much more so in this our day. Concerning this doctrine there is an alarming departure from the faith of our Baptist fathers. Touching this article of our faith Baptists have come to a day when they have a Calvinistic creed and an Arminian clergy.

But there are some who love the doctrine of Election. To them election is the foundation dug deep for the other doctrines of human redemption to rest upon. They love it enough to preach it in the face of criticism and persecution. They will surrender their pulpits rather than be silenced on this precious tenet of the once delivered faith. But all who love the doctrine were once haters of it, therefore, they have nothing in which to take pride. Every man by nature is an Arminian. It takes the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God, taught by the Holy Spirit, to cause a man to love the doctrine of election. How deeply important that believers should be learners. To do this we must acknowledge the superior wisdom of God whose thoughts are not as our thoughts. The Bible was given to correct our thinking. Repentance is a change of mind resulting in a change of thinking. We are not to come to the Bible as critics; the Bible is to criticize us. We cannot come to the Bible infallibly, but by grace we can come humbly. May grace be given to every writer and reader that we may have the right attitude of heart before God. The surest evidence of a saved state is to have the right attitude towards the Word of God. Dear reader, let the writer warn you against "poking fun" at any doctrine of the Bible.

The doctrines of grace have found expression in two systems of theology commonly known as Calvinism and Arminianism. These two systems were not named for their founders, but for the men who popularized them. The system of truth known as Calvinism was preached by Augustine at an earlier date, and before Augustine by Christ and the Apostles, being especially emphasized by the Apostle Paul. The system of error known as Arminianism was proclaimed by Pelagius in the fifth century. Between these two there is no middle position; every man is either one or the other in his religious thinking. Some try to mix the two but this is not straight thinking. To say that we are neither Calvinistic nor Arminian is to evade the issue. Paulinism is represented by either Calvinism or Arminianism. The true system is based upon the truth of man's inherent and total depravity; the false system is based upon the Romish dogma of free-will.

GENERAL REMARKS TO DISARM PREJUDICE

There is no doctrine so grossly misrepresented. Brother A.S. Pettie's complaint against The enemies of total depravity is equally applicable here, when he says, "From hostile lips a fair and correct statement of the doctrine is never heard". The treatment that the doctrine of election receives from the hands of its enemies is very much like that received by the primitive Christians from pagan Roman Emperors. The ancient Christians were often clothed in the skins of slain animals and then subjected to attack by ferocious wild beasts. So the doctrine of election is clothed in an ugly garb and held up to ridicule and sport. We will now try to strip this glorious truth of its false and vicious garment with which enemy hands have robed it, and put upon it the garments of holiness and wisdom.

1. Election is not salvation but is unto salvation.
"What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election (elect) hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded" (Rom. 11:7). "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation" (2 Thess. 2:13). Now then, if the elect obtain salvation, and if election is to salvation, election must precede salvation. Men are saved when they believe on Christ not when they are elected. Roosevelt was not president when he was elected, but when he was inaugurated. There was not only an election to, but an induction into the office. God's elect are inducted into the position of sainthood by

John 17:1-2 *These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: 2 As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.*

Mat 11:25-26 *At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. 26 Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight.*

1 Cor 12:3 *Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.*

2 Cor 10:4 *(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds:)*

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the effectual call, (the quickening work of the Holy Spirit) through which they become believers in the Gospel. See:

1 Cor 1:29 *That no flesh should glory in his presence.*

2 Thess 2:13-14 *But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: 14 Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

2. Election is not the cause of anybody going to hell, for election is unto salvation.

Neither is non-election responsible for the damnation of sinners. SIN is the thing that sends men to hell, and all men are sinners by nature and practice -- sinners altogether apart from election and non-election. It does not follow that because election is unto salvation that non-election is unto damnation. SIN is the damning element in human life. **ELECTION HARMS NOBODY.**

3. Election belongs to the system of grace.

In Paul's day there was a remnant among the Jews who were saved according to the election of grace (Rom 11:5 *Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace*). The attitude of men towards election is the acid test of their belief in grace. Those who oppose election cannot consistently claim to believe in salvation by grace. This is seen in the creeds of Christendom. Those denominations that believe in salvation by works have no place for the doctrine of election in their confessions of faith; those that believe in salvation by grace, apart from human merit, have not failed to include election in their written creed. One group is headed by the Roman Catholics, the other group is headed by the Baptists.

4. Election does not prevent the salvation of anybody who wants to be saved.

But the distinction needs to be made between a mere desire to escape hell and the desire to be saved from sin. The desire to be saved from hell is a natural desire -- nobody wants to burn. The desire to be saved from sin is a spiritual desire resulting from the convicting work of the Holy Spirit, and God's electing grace is the very mother of this desire. To represent election by saying that God has spread the Gospel feast, and a man comes to the table hungering for the bread of life; but God says "No, this is not for you, you are

not one of my elect", is to misrepresent the Holy Doctrine. Here is the truth -- God has spread the feast but the fact is nobody wants to come to the table. *"They all with one consent began to make excuse"*. God knew just how fallen nature would act, and He took no chance on His table being filled, so, He tells His servant to go out and compel them to come (Luke 14:23 *And the lord said unto the servant. Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.*). Were it not for the redemptive work of Christ there would be no Gospel feast; were it not for the compelling work of the Holy Spirit there would be no guests at the table. A mere invitation brings nobody to the table.

5. Election means that the destiny of men is in the hands of God. Many of us have regarded as an axiom the statement that every man's destiny is in his own hands. But this is to deny the whole tenor of Scripture. At no time is the destiny of the saint in his own hands, either before or after he is saved. Was my destiny in my own hands before I was saved? If so, I regenerated myself; I resurrected, by my own power, myself out of a state of sin and death; I am my own benefactor and have nobody to thank but myself for being alive and saved. Perish such a thought! By the grace of God I am what I am.

John 1:13 *Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

Eph 2:1-10 *And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins: 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ. (by grace ye are saved.) 6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: 7 That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

Election is the very foundation of hope in missionary endeavour. If we had to depend upon the natural disposition or will of a dead sinner, who hates God, to respond to our gospel, we might well despair. But when we realize that it is the Spirit that quickeneth, we can go forth with the gospel of the grace of God in the hope that God will cause some, by nature turned away, to be turned unto Him and to believe to the saving of the soul. Election does not determine the extent of missions but the results of it. We are to preach to every creature because God has commanded, and because it pleases Him to save sinners by the foolishness of preaching. We believe more in election than the Anti-mission Baptists. We believe that God elected means of salvation as well as persons to salvation. He did not choose to save sinners apart from the gospel ministry.

Rom 1:16 *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*

Election gives a saneness to evangelism that is greatly needed today. It recognizes that sinners *"believe through grace"* (Acts 18:27) and that while Paul may plant and Apollos may water, God gives the increase. Arminianism has had its day among Baptists and what has it done? It has given us man-power, but robbed us of God's power. It has increased machinery but has decreased spirituality. It has filled our churches with Ishmaels instead of Isaacs by its ministry of "sob stuff" and with the methods of the "counting house".

If this little tract need further Scriptural support, the following Scriptures will give it:

Psa 65:4 *Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causeth to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple.*

Acts 13:48 *And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.*

John 6:37 *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.*

John 6:44-45 *No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. 45 It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.*

be consistent, they will have to surrender the doctrine of preservation on the same ground. Election does not mean that the elect will be saved whether they believe or not, nor does it mean that the non-elect will be damned regardless of how much they may repent and believe. The elect will be saved through repentance and faith, and both are gifts from God as already shown; the non-elect do not repent and believe.

The objection we are now considering is simply not true to fact. Believers in election have been and still are among the most godly. Augustus Toplady challenged the world to produce a martyr from among the deniers of election. The Puritans, who were so named because of the great purity of their lives, with few exceptions (if any), were believers in personal, eternal, unconditional election, and of course, in the security of the believer.

Modernism, that spawn of the pit, is rapidly adding to the number of its adherents, but they are coming from the ranks of Arminianism. Others have challenged the world to find a single Higher Critic, or a single Spiritualist, or a single Russellite, or a single Christian Scientist, who believes in the absolute sovereignty of God and the doctrine of election. Without an exception these awful heresies are Arminians to a man. This is a significant fact that is not to be winked at.

6. OBJECTORS CLAIM THAT OUR VIEW OF ELECTION DESTROYS THE SPIRIT OF MISSIONS.

They boldly assert that if unconditional election should find universal acceptance among us that we would cease to be a missionary people. There is an abundance of historical evidence with which to refute this claim. Under God, the father of modern missions was William Carey, a staunch Calvinist.

Andrew Fuller, first secretary of the society that sent Carey to India, held tenaciously to our view of election. It did not destroy the missionary spirit of these men. "The proof of the pudding is in the eating." Belief in election did not destroy the missionary spirit in Judson, Spurgeon, Boyce, Eaton, Graves, Carroll and a host of other Baptist leaders. The Murray church, which Dr. J.F. Love called the greatest missionary church on earth, heard election preached by Boyce Taylor for nearly forty years. The greatest missionary churches among us today are those that have been purged from the heresies of James Arminius.

2 Tim 1:9 *Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,*
James 1:18 *Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.*

Is my destiny in my own hands now? Then I will either keep myself saved or I will lose my salvation. The Bible says we are kept by the power of God through Faith.

1 Pet 1:15 *But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;*

Psa 37:28 *For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.*

John 10:27-29 *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: 28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. 29 My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.*

Phil 1:6 *Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:*

Heb 13:5 *Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*

If my destiny is not safe in my own hands after I am saved then how could it be thought to be safe in my own hands before my conversion?

The saint dies, his body is consigned to the grave and becomes a dust-heap. Is his destiny in his own hands then? If so, what hope has he of ever coming out of the grave with an immortal and incorruptible body? None at all if his destiny is in his own hands. Such a theory, that the destiny of the saint is or ever has been in his own hands, reverses the very laws of nature and implies that water can rise above the level of its source; that man can lift himself into the attic by his boot-straps; that the Ethiopian can change his colour, and the leopard can remove his spots; that death can beget life; that evolution is true and God is a liar. The theory that one's destiny is in his own hands begets self-confidence and self-righteousness; the belief that destiny is in the hands of God begets SELF-ABNEGATION AND FAITH IN GOD.

6. Election stands or falls with the doctrine of God's sovereignty and man's depravity.

If God is sovereign and man is depraved, then it follows as a natural consequence that some will be saved, none will be saved or, all will be saved. The practical results of election are that some, yea many, will be saved. Election is not a plan to save a mere handful of folk. Christ gave Himself a ransom for many.

Mat 20:28 *Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.*

Rev 5:9 *And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;*

God's sovereignty involves His pleasure

John 5:21 *For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.*

Mat 11:25-27 *At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. 26 Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight. 27 All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father: neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.*

His power

Job 23:13 *But he is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth.*

Jer 32:17 *Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee:*

Mat 19:26 *But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible. And His mercy.*

Rom 9:18 *Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.*

7. The elect are manifested in repentance and faith and good works. These graces, being God-wrought in man, are not the cause but the evidences of election.

1 Thess 1:3-10 *Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in*

because of any merit or works of theirs, nor of any value of them to Him; but of His own good pleasure."

W.T. Conner, professor of theology, Southwestern Baptist Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas: "The doctrine of election means that God saves in pursuance of an eternal purpose. This includes all the gospel influences, work of the Spirit and so on, that leads a man to repent of his sins and accept Christ. So far as man's freedom is concerned, the doctrine of election does not mean that God decrees to save a man irrespective of his will. It rather means that God purposes to lead a man in such a way that he will freely accept the gospel and be saved."

Pastor J.W. Lee, of Batesville, Miss.: "I believe that God has foreordained before the foundation of the world that He would save certain individuals and that He ordained all the means to bring about their salvation on His terms. Men and women are not elected because they repent and believe, but they repent and believe because they are elected."

To the above list of well known and honoured Baptists we could add quotations from Gill, Fuller, Spurgeon, Bunyan, Pendleton, Mullins, Dargan, Jeter, Eaton, Graves, and others too numerous to mention. It is sadly true that many of our pastors hold election as a private opinion and never preach it. We personally know a number of brethren who say that election is clearly taught in the Bible, but that we cannot afford to preach it, because it will cause trouble in churches. This is worse than compromise: it is surrender of the truth. It is a spirit that leads preachers to displease God in order to please men. The writer believes that silence upon this subject has wrought more harm than open opposition to it. Those who openly oppose election will, sooner or later, make themselves ridiculous in the eyes of all Bible loving Baptists.

5. IT IS FURTHER OBJECTED THAT OUR VIEW OF ELECTION MAKES MEN CARELESS IN THEIR LIVING.

It is said that belief in the doctrine leads men to say, "If I am elect, I will be saved; if I am a non-elect I will be lost, therefore, it matters not what I believe or do." The same objection has been persistently made against the doctrine of the preservation of the saints. This is bald rationalism. It is the setting of human reason against divine revelation. It takes no account of the operation of the grace of God in the human heart. If Baptists surrender election on such a ground, to

own free-will and justice." THE DATE OF THIS CONFESSION WAS 1120!!!

The London Confession (1689) and the Philadelphia Confession (1742) read as follows: "By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestined or foreordained to ETERNAL LIFE through Jesus Christ, to the praise of His glorious grace; others being left to act in their sins to their just condemnation, to the praise of His glorious justice."

The New Hampshire Confession (Article 9): "We believe that election is the eternal purpose of God according to which He graciously regenerates, sanctifies and saves sinners; that being perfectly consistent with the free-agency of man, it comprehends all the means in connection with the end; that it is a most glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, being infinitely free, wise holy and unchangeable; that it utterly excludes boasting and promotes humility, love, prayer, praise, trust in God, and active imitation of His free mercy; that it encourages the use of means in the highest degree; that it may be ascertained by its effects in all who truly believe the Gospel; that it is the foundation of Christian assurance; and that to ascertain it with regard to ourselves demands and deserves the utmost diligence."

(b) REPRESENTATIVE PREACHERS AND WRITERS!

John A. Broadus, former president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary: "From the divine side, we see that the Scriptures teach an eternal election of men to eternal life simply out of God's good pleasure."

A.H. Strong, former president of Rochester Theological Seminary: "Election is the eternal act of God, by which in His sovereign pleasure, and on account of no foreseen merit in them, He chooses certain of the number of sinful men to be recipients of the special grace of His Spirit and so to be made voluntary partakers of Christ's salvation."

B.H. Carroll, founder and first president of the Southwestern Baptist Seminary: "Every one that God chose in Christ is drawn by the Spirit to Christ. Every one predestined is called by the Spirit in time and justified in time, and will be glorified when the Lord comes." Commentary on Romans, page 192.

J.P. Boyce, founder and first president of Southern Baptist Seminary: "God, of His own purpose, has from eternity determined to save a definite number of mankind as individuals, not for or

the sight of God and our Father: 4 Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. 5 For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. 6 And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost: 7 So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. 8 For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing. 9 For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; 10 And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

2 Pet 1:5-10 And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; 6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; 7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. 8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. 10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:

Phil 2:12-13 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. 13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Luke 18:7 And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?

The man who doesn't pray, who has not repented of his sins and trusted Christ, and who does not engage in good works has no right to claim that he is one of God's elect.

SOME FALSE VIEWS EXAMINED AND REFUTED

Many professing Christians really have no view of election. They have not given it enough thought and study to even have any opinion about it. Many have erroneous views. We shall notice some of them.

1. The view that men are elected when they believe.

fanned into a flame but that believers are born again of incorruptible seed which the Lord places; acknowledge that if anyone is in Christ that there is a new creation, for we are His workmanship, having been created in Christ Jesus; - and election must be at once recognized."

Every real believer on his knees subscribes to our view of election. You cannot pray ascribing some credit to self. Sovereign grace will come out in prayer though it may be left off the platform. No saved man will get down on his knees before God and claim that he made himself to differ from others who are not saved, but with Paul he says, *"By the grace of God I am what I am."* And in praying for the lost we supplicate God to convict and convert them. We do not depend upon the freedom of their wills but beg God to make them willing to come to Christ, knowing that when they come to Christ He will not cast them out.

John 6:37 *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.*

A Methodist minister once went to hear a Presbyterian minister preach. After the sermon, the Methodist said to the Presbyterian, "That was a pretty good *Arminian sermon you preached today." "Yes," replied the Presbyterian, "We Presbyterians are pretty good Arminians when we preach and you Methodists are pretty good Calvinists when you pray." MORE TRUTH THAN POETRY HERE!! *(Those that oppose Divine Election mistake human responsibility for "free-will". No doubt this Methodist minister was making reference to the Presbyterian preacher's encouragement to his listeners to believe the gospel. It is doubtful that the preacher was stating to his listeners that man has a "free-will." Ye Editor).

4. IT IS ALSO OBJECTED THAT OUR VIEW OF ELECTION IS A NEW DOCTRINE AMONG MISSIONARY BAPTISTS.

The fact is that it is so old-fashioned that it has about gone out of fashion. The ignorance betrayed in such a claim is indeed pitiable. In refutation we resort to two sources of information (a) Confessions of faith; (b) Statements of representative preachers and writers.

(a) CONFESSIONS OF FAITH

The Waldenses declare themselves as follows: "God saves from corruption and damnation those whom He has chosen from the foundation of the world, not from any disposition, faith or holiness that He foresaw in them, but His mere mercy in Christ Jesus His Son, passing by all the rest according to the irreprehensible reason of His

This view is easily refuted for it is contrary to both common sense and Scripture. Election is to salvation, and therefore, must precede salvation. It is nonsense to talk about electing a man to something he already has. The man has salvation when he believes and hence election at that point would not be necessary. ELECTION TOOK PLACE IN ETERNITY; SALVATION TAKES PLACE WHEN THE SINNER BELIEVES.

2. The view that election pertains only to the Jews.

This view robs Gentiles of the comfort of Rom 8:28-39. Rom 8:28-29 *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. 29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

Moreover, Paul, who was an apostle to the Gentiles, says that he endured all things for the elect's sakes that they might obtain salvation.

2 Tim 2:10 *Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.*

3. The view that election took place in eternity, but that it was in view of foreseen repentance and faith.

According to this view, God, in eternity, looked down through the ages and saw who would repent and believe and those who He foresaw would repent and believe were elected to salvation. This view is correct in only one point, namely, that election took place in eternity. It is wrong in that it makes the ground of election to be something in the sinner rather than something in God. Read Eph 1:4-6 where election and predestination are said to be *"According to the good pleasure of His will" and "To the praise of the glory of His grace"*.

Eph 1:4-6 *According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: 5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.*

This view thought the popular one with the majority of Baptists today, is open to many objections.

nature. There must be the miracle of the new birth, for except a man be born from above he cannot see or enter into the Kingdom of God. John 3:3-5 *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. 4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*

It is painful to some of us to see our brethren forsake the faith of our Baptist forbears at this point and join the ranks of the Roman Catholics and other Arminians. If anyone doubts this charge let him read the article of faith adopted by the Catholics at the council of Trent (1563). I quote their statement on the freedom of the human will -- "If anyone shall affirm that since the fall of Adam man's free-will is lost, let him be accursed." But alas, in this day, such a spirit is not confined to the Roman Catholics. Horatius Bonar makes the following quotation from John Calvin: "The Papist theologians have a distinction current among themselves that God does not elect men according to their works which are in them but that He chooses them that He foresees will be believers."

Ah, the real trouble with the objector is not election; it is something else. His real objection is to total depravity or human inability to do good. I can do no better here than to quote from Percy W. Heward of London, England. He says, "It seems to me that the majority of objections to God's sovereign grace, to God's electing love, are actually objections to something else, namely objections to the fact that man is ruined. If you probe beneath the surface you will find that very few object to election. Why should they? Election harms no one. How can the picking of a man out of doom harm anyone else? The real objection at the present day is not to election, though that word is made the catchword of sad controversy -- the real objection is to that fact which is revealed in Psalm 51, that we are shapen in iniquity, that we are born sinners by nature, dead in sins, until, as we read concerning Paul in Galatians 1, 'It pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me by His grace to reveal His Son in me...' Ah, beloved friends, we deserve nothing but doom. Acknowledge this and election is the only hope. Acknowledge that we are poor lost sinners, dead in trespasses and sins, only evil continually; acknowledge that there is in man no natural spark to be

(i) It denies what the Bible says about man's condition by nature. The Bible does not describe the natural man as having faith.

1 Cor 2:14 *But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

John 3:3 *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

Both repentance and faith are gifts of God, and God did not see these graces in any sinner apart from His purpose to give them. "Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins", Acts 5:13 "When they heard these things they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life", Acts 11:18. "In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledgement of the truth" 2Ti 2:25. See also:

Eph 2:8-10 *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

1 Cor 3:5 *Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?*

Election was not because of forced faith, but because of forced unbelief. It is not the election of God's faithful ones, but the faith of God's elect, if we are to keep Scriptural words

Titus 1:1 *Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness:*

(ii) It makes the human race differ by nature, whereas, the Bible says, we are all by nature the children of wrath and all clay of the same lump.

Eph 2:3 *Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.*

Rom 9:21 *Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? Men are made to differ in the new birth.*

John 3:6 *That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*

(iii) It perverts the Scriptural meaning of the word "foreknowledge".

The word as used in the Bible means more than foreknowledge about persons, it is the foreknowledge of persons. In Rom 8:29,30, the foreknown are predestined to the image of Christ, and are called, justified and glorified. In 1Pe 1:2, the word for "foreknowledge" is the same as "foreordain" in the twentieth verse of the same chapter, where the meaning cannot be "foreknowledge" about Christ. God's foreknowledge about persons is without limitations; whereas, His foreknowledge of persons is limited to those who are actually saved and glorified.

(iv) It is open to the strongest objection that can be made against the Bible view.

It is often asked, "If certain men are elected and saved, then what is the use to preach to those who are not elected?" With equal propriety we might ask, "If God knows who is going to repent and believe, then why preach to those who according to His foreknowledge, will not repent and believe?" Will some repent and believe whom He foreknew would not repent and believe? If so, He foreknew a lie.

Right here is the weakness of much of modern missions. It is based upon sympathy for the lost rather than obedience to God's command. The inspiration of missions is made to rest upon the practical results of missionary endeavour rather than upon the delight of doing God's will. It is the principle of doing a thing because the results are satisfactory to us.

If we are faithful, God is as pleased with our efforts as when there are no results. Ponder

2 Cor 2:15-16 *For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: 16 To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?*

The elect prior to their conversion are known only to God. We are to preach the gospel to every creature because He has commanded it. He will take care of the results. Compare with:

Isa 55:11 *So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.*

who go to hell will have nobody to blame but themselves, while those who go to heaven will have nobody to praise but God.

Rom 9:22-23 *What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: 23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory.*

3. IT IS AGAIN OBJECTED THAT OUR VIEW OF ELECTION IS AGAINST THE DOCTRINE OF WHOSOEVER WILL.

But the objector is wrong again. Our view explains and supports the doctrine of "*WHOSOEVER WILL*". Without election the invitation to "*WHOSOEVER WILL*" would go unheeded. The Bible doctrine of "*WHOSOEVER WILL*" does not imply the freedom or ability of the human will to do good. The human will is free, but its freedom is within the limits of fallen human nature. It is free like water; water is free to run down hill. It is free like the vulture: the vulture is free to eat carrion, for that is its nature, but it would starve to death in a wheat field. It is not the buzzard's nature to eat clean food; it feeds upon the carcasses of the dead. So sinners starve to death in the presence of the bread of life. Our Lord said to some sinners, who were in His very presence "*Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life*" (Joh 5:40). It is not natural for a sinner to trust in Christ. Salvation through trust in a crucified Christ is a stumbling block to the Jew and foolishness to the Greek; it is only the called, both Jews and Greeks, who trust it as the wisdom and power of God.

1 Cor 1:23-24 *But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; 24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.*

Here is a physical corpse. Is it free to get up and walk around? In one sense, yes. It is not bound by fetters. There is no external restraint. But, in another sense, that corpse is not free. It is hindered by its natural condition. It is its nature to decompose and go back to dust. It is not the nature of death to stir about. Here is a spiritual corpse -- a man dead in trespasses and sins. Is the man free to repent and believe and do good works? Yes, in one sense. There are no external restraints. God does not prevent but offers inducements through His Holy Word. But the corpse is hindered by its own

on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion...Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy and whom He will He hardeneth" (Rom 9:15-18). It needs to be said for the comfort and hope of great sinners, that God's mercy is not limited by the natural condition of the sinner. All sinners are dead until God makes them alive. He is able to take away the heart of stone. No man is too great a sinner to be saved. We can pray for the salvation of the chief of sinners with the assurance that God can save them if He will. "The King's heart is in the hands of the Lord as the river of water; He turneth it whithersoever He will" (Pr 21:1). We rejoice to say with Jeremiah that there is nothing too hard for God. We can pray for the salvation of our loved ones with the feeling of the leper, when he said, "Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean"(Matt 8:2). When Robert Morrison was about to go to China, he was asked by an incredulous American if he thought he could make any impression on those Chinese. His curt reply was, "No, but I think God can." This should ever be our confidence and hope when we stand before sinners and preach to them "CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED".

2. ANOTHER OBJECTION TO ELECTION IS THAT IT MAKES GOD UNJUST.

This objection betrays a bad heart. It would obligate the CREATOR to the CREATURE. It makes salvation a divine obligation. It denies the right of the potter over the clay of the same lump to make one vessel to honour and another to dishonour. By the same parity of reasoning it makes the governor of a sovereign state unjust when he pardons one or more men, unless he empties the prison and turns all the prisoners loose. Our view of election is in harmony with what even the Arminians allow to be proper and just for a human governor. All can see that a governor, by pardoning some men, does not harm others, who are not pardoned. Those who are not pardoned are not in prison because the governor refused them a pardon but because they were guilty of a crime against the state. Isn't God to be allowed as much sovereignty as the governor of a state? Salvation, like a pardon, is something that is not deserved. If it were deserved, then God would be unjust if He did not bestow it upon all men.

Salvation is not a matter of justice but of mercy. It wasn't the attribute of justice that led God to provide salvation but the attribute of mercy. Justice is simply each man getting what he deserves. Those

1 Cor 3:5-6 *Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? 6 I have planted, Apollos watered: but God gave the increase.*

John 6:37-45 *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. 38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. 39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. 40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. 41 The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. 42 And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven? 43 Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. 44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. 45 It is written in the prophets.*

And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. It is ours to witness: it is His to make our witnessing effective.

THE DOCTRINE DEFINED, EXPLAINED AND PROVED

What is election as the term is used in the Bible? Election means a choice -- to select from among - to single out - to take one and leave another. If there are a dozen apples in a basket and I take all of them there has been no choice; but if I take seven and leave five there has been a choice. Election, as taught in the Bible, means that God has made a choice from among the children of men. In the beginning God set His choice upon certain individuals, whom He gave to His Son, and for whom Christ died as their substitute, who in time hear the Gospel and believe in Christ to life everlasting. Let us amplify by raising three very pertinent questions.

1. WHO DOES THE ELECTING?

Who chooses the persons to be saved? If men are chosen to salvation, as the Scriptures affirm, who does the choosing? There must be a selection or universalism. The language of Scripture seems peculiarly definite in reply to this question. Mark 13:20 speaks of the ELECT, whom He ELECTED, rendered in our version, "The elect's sake whom He hath chosen". The word election is associated with

God not with man. God is the CHOOSER, His people are the CHOSEN, and grace is the source. The theology, that God votes for us, the Devil votes against us, and that we cast the deciding ballot is entirely outside the pale of Scripture teaching, and is almost too ridiculous to notice.

John 15:16 *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*

2 Thess 2:13 *But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:*

Eph 1:4 *According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:*

2. WHEN WAS THE ELECTING DONE?

For the answer we are shut up to the Scriptures. But the *BIBLE* answers with sunlight clearness. In Eph 1:4 we read that "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world". The expression, "before the foundation of the world" is found in Joh 17:24, where it speaks of the Father's eternal love for the Son, and in 1Pe 1:20, where it refers to the eternal determination of the Divine mind concerning the death of Christ. There are many similar expressions. ELECTION IS ETERNAL!

Rev 13:8 *And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*

2 Thess 2:13 *But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:*

2 Tim 1:9 *Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.*

3. WHY WAS THE ELECTING DONE?

Was it on the ground of something good in the sinner? Then nobody would have been elected for there is none good. Holiness is not the cause but the effect of election. We are chosen that we should

be holy not because we are holy (Eph 1:4). Nor, as we have already seen, is election in view of foreseen repentance and faith. Election is the cause of repentance and faith and not the effect of these graces. To say that God chose men to salvation because He foresaw that they would repent and believe and be saved is to attribute foolishness to the infinitely wise God. It is as if the president should issue a decree that the sun must rise tomorrow because he foresees that it will rise; or as if a sculptor should choose a certain piece of marble because he foresaw that it would make itself into the image he wanted. We challenge any Arminian to raise these questions and get his answers from the Scriptures.

OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED AND ANSWERED

Many are the objections brought against this doctrine. Sometimes the objectors are loud and furious. Alas! that so many of these objectors are in Baptist ranks. To preach this old-fashioned doctrine of our faith as did Bunyan, Fuller, Gill, Spurgeon, Boyce, Broadus, Pendleton, Graves, Jarrell, Carroll, Jeter, Boyce Taylor and a host of other representative men of our denomination is to court the bitterest kind of opposition. John Wesley himself never said harsher words against this blessed tenet of our faith than do some so-called Baptists of today. Arminianism that offspring of popery, has had an abnormal growth in the last decade or two as the adopted child of a large group of Baptists.

1. IT IS OBJECTED THAT OUR VIEW OF ELECTION LIMITS GOD'S MERCY.

Right here we criticize the critic, for he who makes this objection limits both God's mercy and power. He admits that God's mercy is limited to the believer, and to this we agree; but he denies that God can cause a man to believe without doing violence to the man's will, and thus he limits God's power. We believe that God is able to give a man a sound mind (2 Tim 1:7) and make him willing in the day of His power. (Ps. 110:2) At this point we must face two self-evident propositions. First, if God is trying to save every member of Adam's fallen race, and does not succeed, then His power is limited and He is not the Lord God Almighty. Second, if He is not trying to save every member of the fallen race, then His mercy is limited. We must of necessity limit His mercy or His power, or go over boots and baggage to the Universalist's position. But before we do that, let us go "to the law and to the testimony", which says, "I will have mercy