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## *THE BIBLE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION*

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**ELECTION!** - what a hated word! What a despised doctrine! What a neglected truth even by many who profess to believe it. There are many who experience a feeling of repulsion at the very mention of this Bible-revealed, God-honoring, 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 doctrine 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 doctrine of grace has 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.

**Election took place in  
eternity;  
salvation takes place when  
the sinner believes.**

### **Some 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 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”* (Romans 11:7). *“...God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation...”* (II Thessalonians 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 saintship by the effectual call, (the quickening work of the Holy Spirit) through which they become believers in the Gospel. See I Corinthians 1:29; II Thessalonians 2:13, 14.

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, (Romans 11:5). 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,”* Luke 14:18. 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. See Luke 14:23. 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 re-generated 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,”* I Corinthians 15:10. Read John 1:13, Ephesians 2:1-10; II Timothy 1:9; James 1:18.

Is my destiny in my own hands now? Then I will either keep myself saved or I will lose my salvation. But the Bible says *“Who are kept by the power of God through faith,”* I Peter 1:5. Read also I Peter 1:15; Psalm 37:28; John 10:27-29; Philippians 1:6; Hebrews 13:5. 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 bootstraps; that the Ethiopian can change his color, 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, or 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. See Matthew 20:28; Revelation 5:9. God’s

sovereignty involves His pleasure (John 5:21; Matthew 11:25-27); His power (Job 23:13; Jeremiah 32:17; Matthew 19:26); and His mercy (Romans 9:18).

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. See I Thessalonians 1:3-10; II Peter 1:5-10; Philippians 2:12-13; Luke 18:7. 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. 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 Romans 8:28-39. 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 (II Timothy 2:10).

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 salva-

tion. 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 Ephesians 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.*" This view, though the popular one with the majority of Baptists today, is open to many objections.

(1) It denies what the Bible says about man's condition by nature. The Bible does not describe the natural man as having faith (I Corinthians 2:14; John 3:3). 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. "*He 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 5:31). "*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 acknowledging of the truth,*" (II Timothy 2:25). Read also Ephesians 2:8-10; I Corinthians 3:5. Election was not because of foreseen faith, but because of foreseen unbelief. It is not the election of God's faithful ones, but the faith of God's elect, if we are to keep to Scriptural words (Titus 1:1).

(2) 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. Ephesians 2:3; Romans 9:21. Men are made to differ in the new birth. John 3:6.

(3) 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 Romans 8:29-30 the foreknown are predestinated to the image of Christ, and are called, justified, and

glorified. In I Peter 1:2 the word for "foreknowledge" is the same as "foreordain" in the 20<sup>th</sup> 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.

(4) 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 endeavor 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 when there are no results. Ponder II Corinthians 2:15-16. 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. Cf. Isaiah 55:11; I Corinthians 3:5-6; John 6:37-45. 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 other 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. Read John 15:16; II Thessalonians 2:13; Ephesians 1:4.

2. **When was the electing done?** For an answer we are shut up to the Scriptures. But the **Bible** answers with sunlight clearness. Ephesians 1:4 "...he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world..." The expression, "before the foundation of the world" is found in John 17:24, where it speaks of the Father's eternal love for the Son, and in I Peter 1:20, where it refers to the eternal determination of the Divine mind concerning the death of Christ. There are many similar expressions. See Revelation 13:8; II Thessalonians 2:13; II Timothy 1:9. **Election is eternal!**

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. Chosen that we should be holy not because we were holy. Ephesians 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.

#### **Some 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 (II Timothy 1:7) and make him willing in the day of His power. 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 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," (Romans 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 if He will. "*The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will,*" (Proverbs 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," (Matthew 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 honor and another to dishonor. By the same par-

ity 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 who go to hell will have nobody to blame but themselves, while those who go to heaven will have nobody to praise but God. Read Romans 9:22-23.

### 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 "*And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life,*" (John

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. See I Corinthians 1:23-24.

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 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).

It is painful to some of us to see our brethren forsake the faith of our Baptist forebearers 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 objective 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 1:15-16 "*...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 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. See John 6:37.

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! ! !**

**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: (1) Confessions of faith; (2) Statements of representative preachers and writers.

**(1) Confessions of Faith:**

The Paterines, according to W. A. Jarrell, appealed to the text in the 9<sup>th</sup> of Romans, in proof of the doctrines of **unconditional election**. See Jarrell's history, page 139. The Paterines were ancient progenitors of the Baptists.

The Waldenses, through whom Baptist church succession must be traced, declared 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 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 accord-

ing 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 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 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 theol-

ogy, 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, Mississippi: "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 honored 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 an 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 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 heretics 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.

Election is the very foundation of hope in missionary endeavor. 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 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. Romans 1:16.

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 message needs further Scriptural support, the following Scriptures will give it: Acts 13:48; John 6:37; 6:44-45; John 17:1-2; Matthew 11:25-26; II Corinthians 10:4.

*Our church prints this message in a pocket-sized booklet and in study book form. Please see back page for ordering information.*