

THE BIBLE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION

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INTRODUCTION PART 1

I have been richly blessed by the writings of Dr. C. D. Cole. He was a great doctrinal preacher, with the gift of putting his words into writings. Brother Cole has departed this life and is with the Lord now. He lived to see his Second Volume published on Sin, Salvation, Service. In fact he died reading the book.

The Bryan Station Baptist Church is printing his writings. His son has given us permission to print them and this is the next in a series of what we hope to print. Part I has been in print before and we are just reprinting it as it was. Part II of this booklet will be dealt with later on in this booklet in an introduction to the same.

May the Lord bless His word as it is read by those that search these pages.

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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" (II 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 saintship by the effectual call, (the quickening work of the Holy Spirit) through which they become believers in the Gospel. See: I Cor. 1:29; II Thess 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 (Rom. 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". 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). 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; Eph 2:1-10; II Tim. 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. The Bible says we are kept by the power of God through Faith. (I Peter 1:15; Ps. 37:28; John 10:27-29; Phil. 1:6; Heb. 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 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. (Mt 20:28; Rev. 5:9) God's sovereignty involves His pleasure (John 5:21; Matt. 11:25-27) His power (Job 23:13 Jer 32:17 Matt. 19:26) and His mercy. (Rom. 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. (I Thess. 1:3-10; II Peter 1:5-10; Phil. 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 (Rom. 8:28-29) 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 Tim 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 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". This view thought the popular one with the majority of Baptists today, is open to many objections.

3a) 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; 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. "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 5:31 "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 acknowledgement of the truth" (II Tim. 2:25. See also: Eph 2:8-10; 1 Cor. 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 Scriptural words. Titus 1:1

3b) 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; Rom. 9:21) Men are made to differ in the new birth. John 3:6

3c) 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 I Peter 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.

3d) 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 II Cor, 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. Compare with: (Isa 55:11; I Cor. 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. Matt. 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; II Thess. 2:13; Eph 1:4)

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 John 17:24, where it speaks of the Father's eternal love for the Son, and in 1 Peter 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; II Thess. 2:13; II Tim. 1:9)

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 (II 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 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" (Peter 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 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

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" (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. I Cor. 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 3:3-3:5

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 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

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 (a) Confessions of faith; (b) Statements of representative preachers and writers.

4a) 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 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."

4b) 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 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 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 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

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: (Ps. 65:4; Acts 13:48; John 6:37,44,45; 17:1,2; Matt. 11:25,26; I Cor. 12:3; II Cor. 10:4)

INTRODUCTION PART II

Part two of this booklet on the Bible doctrine of Election consists of a correspondence between Mrs. Marjorie Bond (widow-now Mrs. Milton Moorhouse), and Dr. Cole. The letters are self-explanatory. I have written to Mrs. Moorhouse and she has graciously given me permission to use the letters to be put into this booklet. Since the thoughts of Mrs. Moorhouse run in the same channels as the rest of the people that question the doctrine of election I have decided to leave it as near as it was written in their correspondence. I have taken some of the remarks out that do not pertain to this doctrine and have tried to leave it so that it would be instructive and interesting.

Dr. Cole is now with the Lord. Before he departed this life he sent me this material to see if it could be printed. I believe that this booklet will be a great help to those that are honestly desiring to know the true teaching on this doctrine. God richly blessed Bro. Cole in that he was able to put his thoughts into easy to be understood language. It is our privilege to be able to print Dr. C.D. Cole's writings.

To the persons that read this booklet, our prayer is that you might see the greatness of our Lord, and that you might see as James declared in Acts 15:18 "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world". Also as Paul says in Eph. 1:11 "Who worketh all things after the council of His own

will." Our heart is made glad and to rejoice in the fact that God chose me to salvation. If it were not for the doctrine of election, Baptists would have used worldly means to bring men to Christ. But Baptists, down through the ages, have been mission-minded, knowing all the while that all are responsible to come to Jesus when the gospel is preached and yet knowing that no one would be saved but God's elect(John 6:37). Jesus said in John 10:27, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them and they follow me". The doctrine of election will make us mission-minded because we know that our preaching is not in vain in the Lord but will prosper wherein it was sent. Paul said, "I endure all things for the elects sake" (I Tim. 2:10).

May the Lord bless this booklet and cause many that heretofore have not understood this glorious doctrine to see that our salvation from beginning to the end is of the Lord, and that all that know Him would praise Him for His abundant mercy shown toward His people.

Alfred M. Gormley
Pastor: Bryan Station Baptist Church
Lexington, Kentucky
June 26, 1968

LETTER ONE BY MRS. MARJORIE BOND

1505 Scotland Street
Calgary, Alberta
October 5, 1959
Dr. C.D. Cole
746 W. Noel
Rt. 2
Madisonville, Kentucky
My Dear Dr. Cole:

Although I am a total stranger to you, my parents have known Dr. Shields over the years and take "The Witness" regularly. As a result of an article of yours which I read therein several years ago, I feel that I must write you to seek further light on this matter of Election.

Your article opened up a completely new line of thought for me; like most people, I did not subscribe to it at all (at first) but was challenged by it, even though much disturbed. Since then, I have reverted to it time and again and finally this autumn got down to studying it in dead earnest! I read what I could of Spurgeon on the subject, Dr. Shields, and also borrowed a copy of Strong's Theology which I found rather heavy going! All in all, I have become so obsessed with this doctrine that I can scarcely think of anything else. And yet there is so much that I do not understand. I know that the "heart is deceitful above all things" and perhaps mine is deceiving me when I say that I really think the questions that arise in my mind do not stem so much from a reluctance to

admit total depravity as they do from my inability to reconcile the doctrine with other passages of Scripture.

I had always thought that election and predestination was something that the Presbyterians were a little "off" on (excuse the bad grammar!). It never occurred to me that there was so much Scriptural evidence for it, or that Baptists believe it! However, I did feel that if this doctrine was taught in the Scripture, as it seemed to be, than I should know more about it and should believe it, whether I liked it or not and whether I fully understood it or not.

My mind goes round and round like a squirrel in a cage, until I am really exhausted. About the time I think I understand it and accept it, Satan seems to raise fresh doubts to plague me. It leaves one almost breathless. As after a close brush with death, to think that one might not have been elected! Truly, as never before, I can see that our salvation is all of grace. I always thought, when we spoke of salvation as being wholly of God's grace, that it meant that His plan or idea to save us was unmerited favour, since nothing in us merited His ever desiring to save us; and also, that it was a gift for which we could never possibly work or acquire sufficient righteousness to merit. But obviously grace embodies more even than this. When you realize that a person wouldn't even want salvation unless he were elected, then you realize how tremendously indebted we are to grace—for it is grace through and through.

I have wondered sometimes if the objections which we feel towards Election are directed more towards the idea of God's complete sovereignty than towards total depravity. It seems to go against human nature to think that God can do what He likes with us and we are powerless to do anything about it.

I almost hesitate to put into words some of the objections which have come to my mind lest I should be guilty of blasphemy or sacrilege; for I have always been taught that it

is a very serious thing to criticize God. And yet, in the interests of clarifying my thinking, I feel that I must confess to you some of the points about election that are troubling me and which seem to contradict other Scriptures and other doctrines.

Also, I teach a Young Women's Bible Class and we have been studying this subject (the blind leading the blind, I am afraid). We are to have an evening discussion of it on November 5th so I should like to clear up some points in my own mind before that time.

Perhaps the easiest way for you to answer would be for me to put my questions in point form:

1. Most people feel right away that Election is unjust. I realize, from your pamphlet, as well as from Scripture, that God doesn't owe it to us to save anyone and further, that He has a right to bestow the gift of salvation on whom He will. But somehow the feeling persists that if a person doesn't even get a chance to accept or reject salvation, he "goes to bat with two strikes against him" so to speak.

Before studying Election, I always thought that if anyone were even remotely interested in being saved, then, in response to prayer by interested relatives or friends, the Holy Spirit would operate on that person's heart and bring him under conviction to the place where he would decide for or against Christ.

But, if the only people who are going to accept Christ are those who have been "ear-marked" for salvation ahead of time, then, one feels that the rest of the race haven't had a chance, even of refusing. To what extent are they responsible for being lost?

One woman in my class, from the southern states as a matter of fact, said to me afterwards, "If this teaching is right, it makes everything seem so hopeless. I thought anyone could

be saved; that the decision was theirs. But if God has decided ahead of time, they haven't a chance, no matter how much we pray for them".

I tried to point out that the whole race was lost anyway, regardless of Election. That Election of some did not mean that the others were any worse off than they would have been without Election. And yet—with a part of me—I know how she feels, because periodically, in spite of all my praying for light, I have the same feeling...that if you are not elected, you just don't stand a chance. You feel as if the whole matter has been taken out of your hands and you aren't given an equal chance with others.

I understand all the argument about the governor of a prison, too, and agree with it with my head! But my heart keeps saying that while it is true a man is not in prison because the governor hasn't pardoned him, but rather because of his own wrongdoing, nevertheless, the lack of a pardon keeps him there!

Is there Scripture to support the interpretation that if we were not elected, we would never have the faintest interest in salvation? I know from Rom. 8:7,8 as well as other passages, that in our natural state we are at enmity with God. But I always thought that if the Holy Spirit operated on a human heart, say of someone who was showing interest in becoming a Christian, that that person then had a chance to decide whether or not to be saved. But evidently, the Holy Spirit doesn't even work on the heart of anyone who has not been elected ahead of time. Is there Scripture for that?

2. If God chooses only certain people for salvation, or enables only certain people to avail themselves of salvation, then what do you do with verses like John 3:16? I thought Christ died "for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:2) not just for the elect. Spurgeon seem to think that He died only for the elect.

And what about such verses as "He is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" and again "but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent". If man is powerless to repent unless he is elected, and God does not elect him, how is man responsible for not obeying God's command to repent; and, furthermore, how can it be said that God is not willing for any to perish if He doesn't enable all to be saved?

3. How do you explain the fact that sometimes a person is under great conviction but decides against salvation? Were they or were they not elected? My father, who passed away in July, was a great Christian layman and doctor and led many souls to Christ in his offices and through lay preaching. He told me a story which he either read or witnessed himself—I have forgotten which. But a young woman attended some revival meetings night after night and appeared to be deeply moved. In fact, it was apparent to the preacher that she was under deep conviction. The last night, when the call was given, she slipped from her place and left the building. A worker followed her and heard her say, looking up to the stars, "I do not want to be a Christian. Why can't You leave me alone? I am enjoying life and my good times and I am not prepared to change my way of living. Holy Spirit, please leave me alone and don't bother me again". And, with a chilling laugh, she walked off into the night. She was killed in an accident a few hours later, if I remember rightly.

Now, what I want to know is this: was she elected, and if she were not, how did she get under conviction in the first place? Would the Holy Spirit waste time, so to speak, convicting someone of sin whom God had not even elected? If she were elected, why didn't she come? I thought election meant that you had to come whether you realized it or not. Is it possible for certain people to be chosen for salvation but for them, in the exercise of their free wills, to reject it?

4. Also, please explain the verse "many are called, but few are chosen". If that verse said "many are called but few accept" I could understand it. But I do not distinguish between "calling" and "choosing". I would have thought they were the same.

5. Finally, in spite of all the arguments to the contrary, I find myself caught up in a sort of fatalistic attitude—that what is to be will be. Perhaps this stems more from my reading on the sovereignty of God than from Election.

But I find myself arguing thus, "If God has a plan for every individual and every nation, if He ordains the powers that be, and sets up kings and disposes of them, etc., if He is completely sovereign, then He is going to work out His will regardless of Satan's efforts to thwart Him or man's failure to his part".

You say that because Election is a secret matter, we must witness anyway and leave the results to God. True. But on the other hand, I can't see that it matters whether we know or whether we don't since God knows who is elected and will save a person whether we do our bit or not. Just because I fail to witness, God is not going to be thwarted in His design to save certain people. The very fact that God has chosen them is sufficient to ensure that they will be saved whether we witness or not, for the simple reason that God is sovereign and has already elected them for salvation. I agree that I don't know who is elected and who is not. But I don't have to. They are going to be saved anyway if God wills it.

I read in Strong's Theology that our prayers never change God's mind, the idea being that as we grow in our Christian experience and live closer to God, we shall learn to pray for those things that are according to God's purpose for us; therefore He can answer our prayer.

But again—if He has plans for individuals or nations, they will be brought to fruition without our prayers. If this is so, then, what we think have been answers to prayers are only the fulfilment of a divine plan that would have been accomplished quite as well without our prayer. But, because we cannot see the future, we think we have prevailed with God and so we say He has answered our prayer. But, since He planned a certain course for us, it would have come about that way in any event. Do you see what I am trying to say?

I always thought that, to a certain extent, we did prevail with God providing we were not asking for something outside of His will— by that I mean His pleasure or permissive will rather than a fixed, premeditated plan. I guess I thought, for instance, that if a loved one were sick and the Lord didn't have any actual decision made that that was the time they were to die, He would spare their life in answer to prayer. But according to sovereignty, the reason He spared it was simply because He wasn't ready for them to die yet, therefore my prayer had nothing to do with it. They would have recovered in any event. If that were His foreordained plan, or died if that were His plan.

If prayer doesn't change God's mind, then what use was there in Abraham interceding for Sodom and Gomorrah? God would have saved 50 or 40 or 10 in any event if they had been found. Or Moses interceding for Israel. God had a plan for Israel that He would carry out regardless of Moses' prayer so that Moses and the rest of us just pray for something that is bound to happen whether or not we pray! To me that defeats the whole purpose of prayer. It almost makes one feel that we are deluded into thinking we are accomplishing something by prayer, whereas in reality it has all been decided upon ahead of time.

Now, for instance, in the case of Mueller's Orphanage. God had a plan for that work which would be carried to fruition since He is sovereign. If prayer doesn't carry any weight with God, so to speak insofar as influencing Him, then would that milk truck have broken down in front of the Orphanage (thereby supplying milk for all those children) whether Mueller had spent the night on his knees or not? According to theologians, it was not Mueller's prayers that resulted in the seemingly miraculous supply of milk for the orphanage, but just part of a plan that would have come to pass anyway. Mueller might just as well have spent the night in bed as on his knees. I don't understand it. To me, such reasoning contradicts James 5:16 and others which teach importunate prayer. I wonder sometimes if the trouble is not with men's interpretations of Scripture rather than with Scripture itself.

This is a terribly long letter and I do apologize for being so wordy. But this subject is too vast, I guess, to be covered by correspondence. How I wish I could sit down and talk with you.

I am keeping a copy of this letter so that I can refer to it when your answer comes. I do hope you will not think I am imposing on you; but your pamphlet has really stirred me up. I can see where election is indeed a wonderful doctrine if only it didn't seem to contradict other Scriptures.

I hope and pray that you can give me more light and that you won't be offended with such a long letter from a stranger.

With heartfelt thanks in anticipation of your reply, I am

Yours sincerely,
Signed: Marjorie Bond
(Mrs. Marjorie Bond)
REPLY BY DR. C.D. COLE

746 West Noel
Madisonville, Kentucky
October 20, 1959
Mrs. Marjorie Bond
1505 Scotland Street
Calgary, Alberta
Canada
My Dear Mrs. Bond:

Greetings in the Name of His whose Name is above every name!

Your good letter under date of the 5th, was duly received. And it could not have reached me at a busier time, which accounts for my delay in making reply. I am a clerk of Little Bethel Association, and your letter came the first day of our annual meeting. There was a lot of work in preparing for the meeting, and much more work in getting the material in the hands of the printer. At first, I thought I would write briefly, stating my situation, and promising to get to it as soon as possible. And then it occurred to me that I might save this time in the hope of getting to the matter before the time you mentioned ran out. I trust you will not take my delay as evidence of indifference on my part. Moreover, due to infirmities of age, I do not have the capacity for work I once enjoyed.

First of all, let me commend you for your honest attitude towards the doctrine of ELECTION and related subjects; and may I also congratulate you on your grasp of these doctrines. I rarely receive such a well-written letter on any subject. You put your problems in a clear perspective, which makes it easier to deal with them. And I can answer sympathetically because your problems are also my own problems. Much as I would like to solve them for you, I fear my efforts will be disappointing.

I believe you are unduly disturbed over your inability to harmonize all that is in the Bible. This Book is the revelation of the Infinite and the finite mind cannot understand to perfection all that God has revealed. To be able to do so would be an argument against the Bible as God-breathed, and reduce it to a mere human production. Moreover, the determination to harmonize apparent contradictions is sure to result in one of three things, found in actual life. One will either ignore Sovereignty on the one hand, or human responsibility on the other hand, or else be plagued with a disturbed mind as you confess to having. On the one side are the so-called Primitive Baptist (Hardshells), who cannot reconcile human inability with responsibility in the matter of repentance and faith. And so they emphasize the doctrines of sovereignty, the Divine decrees, and human inability, and ignore the Scriptures which command sinners to repent and believe the gospel, hence they have no gospel for the lost. On the other hand there are those who preach the doctrines of human responsibility and the command to repent and believe, and have nothing to say about human inability, the Divine decrees, and sovereignty. Here in my own church and association, as well as throughout the South generally, there is little heard of Election, Depravity, and Sovereignty in salvation. It is because the brethren feel they cannot preach both; that the two are beyond reconciliation—the one being true, the other must be false. Now, in your case there is both the determination to accept all Scripture and to harmonize them, resulting in a confused and disturbed mind. Let us, at the risk of being called inconsistent, take all the Scriptures whether we can harmonize them or not. Dr. J.B. Moody (one of my fathers in the faith) used to say, that if one waited to accept the doctrines until he could harmonize them, he would never accept them; the way to harmonize them is to receive them without question, and they will harmonize on the inside of the soul. This may not be exactly true, but it will be of help. I am not saying that we should make no effort to harmonize seeming contradictory doctrines, but I

do warn against a persistent determination to do so. With this introduction, I will now take up your questions in their order.

1. It is true that most (I would say all) people feel that election is unjust. This is not strange since the carnal mind is enmity against God. People may love a god of their own invention, but only born-again believers can love a Sovereign God who does what He will with His own (1Jo 4:7). God's rights with the sinful human race are the rights of a potter over the clay. We can readily see that the criminal has no claims upon the human court, and it is just as true that the sinner has no claims upon an offended God. Moreover, to say that election is unjust is to put salvation on the basis of justice, thus robbing every sinner of any hope.

When we find people who seem to be interested in salvation, we are encouraged to think they are of the elect, for the elect are not saved without becoming interested in salvation. When we pray for their salvation, we are not asking the Holy Spirit to put them on the fence where they may fall off on either side. They are already on the wrong side—the attitude of ignorant rejection of Christ—and we pray that He may translate them from the Kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of His dear Son (Col. 1:13). We pray for their conversion to faith in Christ, that they may not be left to the choice of a depraved nature. Why He does not convict and convert everybody we preach to and pray for is due to His sovereignty and not to His weakness. We do not pray to a weak God. However, we must distinguish between the desire to be saved from sin and the desire to be saved from Hell. Nobody wants to burn, but the desire to be saved from sin is a holy desire created by the Holy Spirit. When He creates such a desire His further work of conversion will follow, but we cannot assuredly determine the motive of the desire.

You ask to what extent are they (the non-elect) responsible for being lost? They are responsible for all the sins they commit and for their sinful nature also. What one does is a revelation of what he is. This is not apparent to our sense of justice. I cannot see how God can justly hold me responsible for the exercise of a sinful nature inherited—for a nature I had nothing to do with acquiring—for a nature I was born with. If I were to sit in judgment on God (perish the thought) I would say that it is not right to punish me for an inherited sinful nature. I accept my responsibility for sin even though I cannot understand the justice of it. Those who have not been "ear-marked" for salvation fall into two groups—those who have the gospel preached to them, and those who never hear of Christ as Saviour. Those who have the gospel preached to them are responsible for all their sins, including the sin of rejecting Christ, while those who never hear of Him are free from the sin of rejecting Him, although they are guilty of other sins for which they are held responsible. The heathen who have never heard the gospel will not have to answer for the sin of unbelief. Whether we can understand it or not, the sinner in all his depravity and helplessness is accountable to God.

The woman in your class who remarked that the doctrine of election makes everything so hopeless, adding that she thought anyone could be saved; that the decision was "theirs", might be answered this way. Anyone can be saved who is willing to be saved God's way through faith in Christ, but nobody, left to himself, wants to be saved this way. God's way is foolishness to him (I Cor. 2:14; II Cor. 4:3-6 Rom. 10:1-3

The decision is "theirs" but the decision to trust Christ is the result of a renewed mind--the result of grace in the soul. Paul speaks of the time when he thought he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth (Acts 26:9). In the telling of his conversion he ascribes it to the grace of God (I Cor. 15:10; Gal. 1:14-16) There is no self-salvation,

either in providing it or applying it. The work of the Spirit in us is as essential as the work of Christ for us. Paul says that the Jews were asking for a sign (they wanted him to perform a miracle) and that the Greeks were clamouring for wisdom (they wanted him to philosophize), but without catering to the wishes of either, he preached Christ crucified. Salvation through faith in a crucified Christ was to the natural Jew a scandal, and to the Greek it was foolishness. Those effectually called by the Holy Spirit were able to see the power and wisdom of God in such a plan of salvation I Cor. 1:22-31 Why God does not effectually call more than He does is not due to inability but to sovereignty. As I say in my article on election, we must either limit God's power or His mercy, or go over boots and baggage to universalism. If God is trying to save everybody and does not succeed, He is not almighty; if He is not trying to save everybody His mercy is not universal. Rom. 9:18 makes it clear that His mercy is limited and is sovereignly bestowed. Deserving mercy is a contradiction of terms. The flesh in us—remnants of depravity—rebels at this aspect of Divine sovereignty. The writer is aware of this, just as you seem to be.

2. There are passages like John 3:16; I John 2:2 which seem to teach that Christ died for every individual. However, the word "world" rarely ever means every individual of the human race. The word "world" is sometimes used to distinguish between the saved and the lost (I John 5:19); between the Jew and the Gentile (Rom. 11:11-15) and between the few and the many (John 12:19). I believe John 3:16; I John 2:2 teach that Christ died for Gentiles as well as Jews. He died for men as sinners and not as any class or kind of sinners. The Jews thought their Messiah, when He came, would deliver them and destroy the Gentiles. John says that He is the propitiation or Mercy-seat for all believers regardless of class or colour. In other words, Christ is no tribal Saviour. If we think of Christ's death as substitutionary, then I agree with

Spurgeon, that He died for the elect only. If he died as the substitute for every individual, then every individual would be saved, else His death was in vain. Now I believe there is a sense in which Christ's death affects every person. By His death He bought the human race, not to save every individual, but in order to dispose of every individual. The right to judge this world is Christ's reward for His suffering. All judgment has been committed unto the Son (John 5:22). In the parable of the hid treasure, Christ is the man who bought the field (world) for the sake of the treasure (the elect) for the sake of those given Him by the Father (Matt. 13:44). See also John 17:6-11; II Peter 2:1. Incidentally, the word for Lord in II Pe 2:1 is Despot (Gk. despotes), and indicates more authority than Kurios (Lord).

In II Peter 3:9, the apostle is explaining why the Lord has not returned to this earth, the reason being, that He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. This refers to His will of purpose. It is God's purpose that all should come to repentance and be saved. In longsuffering He waits until all the "us-ward" have been brought to repentance. The "us-ward" are described as those who had obtained the like precious faith (II Peter 1:2); who had been given all things that pertain to life and godliness (II Peter 1:3); and who had escaped the corruption that is in the world (II Peter 1:4). In II Peter 3:15, the apostle tells the same "us-ward", that they are to account the longsuffering of the Lord as salvation. Christ's longsuffering towards the elect keeps Him on His mediatorial throne until all have been saved. Had He come sooner than planned, many of the elect would not have been saved. I have been a Christian for 51 years, and if He had come before my conversion, I would have perished in my sins. It is not His will of purpose that any of those given to Him by the Father shall perish. The words "all" and "every" are hardly ever used in the absolute sense (Matt. 3:5-7; I Cor. 4:5) The "all" of II Peter 3:9 are all of the "us-ward" who shall be brought to repentance.

This is not good grammar, but it is good theology and necessary to plainness. Christ will not come in judgment until all those given Him by the Father have come to repentance. When He comes He will usher in the new era of the "New heavens and a new earth", wherein dwelleth righteousness.

3. The story told you by your dear father has been duplicated in many cases of people who seem to be under deep conviction, and yet oppose those who try to lead them to Christ. Such conviction is not of the Holy Spirit, who convicts of the sin of unbelief and leads to faith in Christ. Such cases do reveal the fact of the enmity of the carnal mind towards God, and not a mind wrought upon by the Holy Spirit. A case in point is that of Felix who trembled at the preaching of Paul and then dismissed him until a more convenient season (Actd 24:25).

There is a natural conviction of sin which may be felt by everybody when confronted by his sin (John 8:9), and there is evangelical conviction by the Holy Spirit, and leading to repentance and faith. God never abandons the good work He begins in the soul (Phil. 1:6). The Holy Spirit, in my judgment, never tries to regenerate one of the non-elect. There is much Scripture for this. The New Testament speaks often of those given to the Son by the Father and their salvation is assured. These are called "sheep" and "elect" before they come to Christ. (John 6:37-44; 10:14-16,25-28; II Tim. 2:10) You ask whether or not the woman referred to was an "elect"? I do not know. I can only say that at the time she gave no evidence of being an elect. However, later she may have been convicted by the Holy Spirit of the sin of unbelief and brought to repentance. We can only judge whether a person is an elect or not by his attitude toward the gospel of Christ. If she were a sheep of Christ, she did come to His at some later date, for Christ says, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me".

4. "Many are called, but few are chosen" (Matt. 20:16; 22:14). Calling in the New Testament usually means the effectual call to salvation—saints are made by a Divine call, but it cannot mean that many hear the invitation to accept Christ who have not been chosen by God to salvation (II Thess. 1:4-7; II Thess. 2:13). Calling and choosing are not the same. The choosing or electing took place in eternity past; calling takes place in time and brings about conversion to faith in Christ. There is a general call given to every sinner in gospel preaching, and there is the special call of the Holy Spirit, inducing acceptance of the general call. The general call in gospel preaching is to men as sinners; the special call by the Holy Spirit is to the elect and results in salvation. Romans 8:28 refers to this effectual call. (I Cor. 1:26; Gal. 1:15,16)

5. You complain of being "caught up in a sort of fatalistic attitude—that what is to be will be". There is a vast difference between cold, impersonal something called "fate", and the providential workings of a great and wise God. Things do not come to pass by cold fate, but by God, "Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will" (Eph. 1:11). Dr. Charles Hodge was once asked if he believed what is to be will be. He replies, "Why yes I do; would you have me believe that what is to be won't be?" Prophecy is the Divine prediction of many things which are to be, and these predictions have been or will yet come to pass.

The second paragraph of your letter on this subject expresses a glorious truth. God is ruling this world, making even the wrath of man to praise Him; the remainder of wrath men might do, He restrains. (Ps. 76:10; Prov. 21:1)

Referring to the 1st paragraph of your letter on page 27 it is true that the elect will be saved, and that my failure to witness will not thwart God's purpose to save them. God uses me, but He is not dependent upon me. I dare not think that God is

helpless without me; if I fail He can use someone else. I am not to witness because of any assured results, but in obedience to His will of command. I cannot know His will of purpose concerning those to whom I bear testimony, We are to witness to people as sinners and not as elect sinners. Election has nothing to do with our obligation to witness. Isaiah preached when he was told there would be no good results in the way of response from the people. Isa. 6:8-13

Your letter closes with questions concerning prayer. I have no hope of giving much help here, but will make some observations. Prayer is one of the means by which God brings to pass what He has decreed. Answered prayer is indited by the Holy Spirit. He knows the mind and will (purpose of God) and makes intercession for us according to the will of God (Rom. 8:26,27). How one may know that his prayer is indited by the Holy Spirit, I cannot tell. But the Holy Spirit leads us to pray for that which is within the circle of the Divine will, and if we ask anything according to His will He heareth us (I John 5:14). We are taught to pray for His will to be done. This shows we are not to try to change His will by our praying. This would take control out of His hands and put us in charge.

Whether we can harmonize our praying with His decrees or not; It is our duty to pray because He commands it (Luke 18:1). Prayer implies two things: our inability and His ability. Prayer is an act of dependence upon God who is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" Eph. 3:20.

I do not presume to be able to reconcile the doctrine of Divine decrees with such passages as James 4:2,3 5:16. But I can see how prayer can prevail without changing God, when I think of it as one of the means by which His will of purpose is effected. In Mueller's case, I can think that he was led by the Holy Spirit to spend the night on his knees as the means of

getting milk for the children. We have the same difficulty in the case of Paul's ship-wreck as recorded in Acts 27. When all hope of being saved was gone (Acts 27:20), the angel of God told Paul there would be no loss of life. He then comforts the despairing sailors, soldiers, and prisoners, saying, Be of good cheer; for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me (Acts 27:25). Then later when the sailors were about to abandon the ship, Paul said to the centurion and soldiers "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved" (Acts 27:31). God had declared there would be no loss of life, and Paul believed Him, and yet he believed their safety depended upon the sailors staying with the ship. We might charge Paul with inconsistency but there it is.

As to praying for the sick, we must always pray without knowing what the Divine will is in every particular case. It is appointed unto men once to die, and when the appointed time comes our praying will not cancel the Divine will. David recognized this in praying for his sick child. He fasted and prayed while the child was alive, but when the child died, he bowed to the manifest will of God and said, "While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me that the child may live?" II Sam. 12:22. Paul's prayer for the thorn to be removed is another case of asking for something outside the circle of God's will of purpose. Paul prayed without knowing the will of God, and when it was made known to him, that sustaining grace would be given rather than the removal of the thorn, he bowed in sweet submission and said, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (II Cor. 12:9).

My mind often reverts to the terrible war between our North and our South—the so-called "Civil War". There were men of God on both sides—men of piety and prayer—who pleaded with God for victory. I believe it is conceded that the most

outstanding men of God belonged to the Southern Army—such men as Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson, and Robert E. Johnston. And now all of us rejoice that it was God's will for the Union to be saved.

It is becoming in all of us to seek our Father's face and pray for His blessings, and then bow in reconciliation to His mysterious providence in our lives.

"God holds the key of all unknown,
and I am Glad;
If other hands should hold the key,
Or if He trusted it to me, I might be sad
"What if tomorrow's cares were here
Without its rest!
I'd rather He unlocked the day;
And as the hours swing open, say,
'My will is best.'
"The very dimness of my sight
Makes me secure;
For groping in my misty way,
I feel His hand; I hear Him say
'My help is sure.'
I cannot read his future plans;
But this I know;
I have the smiling of His face,
And all the refuge of His grace,
While here below.
"Enough! this covers all my wants,
And so I rest!
For where I cannot He can see,
And in His care I safe shall be,
Forever blest."

We are all poor sinners in the need of an adequate Saviour. This Saviour is the Lord Jesus Christ Who says, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out". If Christ is the Saviour

of sinners, this poor sinner can qualify for salvation. I praise Him for dying for me, and I praise the Holy Spirit for making me to realize my helplessness and for taking the things of Christ and showing them to me (John 16:14,15).

May the Lord bless you in the coming discussion on Nov. 5th, and make you a blessing to others! I wish I might have been of more help in this reply to your questions. Let me exhort you not to worry over failure to be able to reconcile doctrines which seem to our finite minds to be contradictory.

With heartfelt thanks for this opportunity to discuss with you some of the deep things of God, I am

Yours in gospel bonds,

C.D. Cole

LETTER TWO BY MRS. MARJORIE BOND

1505 Scotland Street
Calgary, Alberta
November 6, 1959

Dear Dr. Cole:

Do you think you can stand another letter from me? I shall try not to be so verbose this time!

Your wonderful and most helpful letter came two weeks ago tomorrow, so you can see it was in plenty of time for our meeting last night. I was going to acknowledge it immediately; then it occurred to me that if I waited till after the meeting, I could "kill two birds with one stone", so to speak—thank you for the letter and report on the meeting as well.

I cannot begin to tell you how much I appreciate the time and trouble you have taken to help a complete stranger—and yet, perhaps, we are not such strangers after all, as we are related through the bonds of the gospel. But you went to a great deal of work, I am afraid, to answer my letter at such length and in such detail and I appreciate it more than I can say. But above all, I feel I owe you a debt of boundless gratitude for your article on Election which sparked off my interest in it and subsequent study of it. I feel as if a completely new world has opened up to me; I get almost excited over it all, Dr. Cole. I do hope it is not wrong to attach so much importance to it, but somehow, I feel as if it is the most significant and personal doctrine in the whole Bible. Nothing should eclipse the

Atonement I know; but I feel that even my conversion, somehow, never made the impression on me that Election has. When you have been brought up in a Christian family, heard the Scriptures from childhood and been active in the Church, there isn't the marked cleavage, somehow, when one becomes a Christian that there is if you have been turned from a life of vice. Is it because we don't feel, in the innermost recesses of our being, that we need Christ as badly as the other type does?

I don't know; but I have often felt that I didn't have the joy in my Christian life that I should. It seemed stale and flat, so often; one did things for the Lord from a sense of duty. Sometimes I have even wondered if I were saved at all. Now all that is changed. The very fact that my salvation is all of grace—in the application of it as well as the provision of it—has transformed everything for me. And I have you to thank for it. Oh, how wonderful it must be to a minister to be so used of God.

When I first read your pamphlet, in addition to all my other objections to Election, I didn't like the idea that (in a sense) I had nothing to do with becoming a Christian. I had always supposed that, with the Spirit's help, I had had sense enough and intelligence enough to recognize something worthwhile and take it! It didn't appeal to me at all to think that if I had been elected, I really had nothing to do with my salvation at all—even in the accepting of it. But now that is almost the best part of it! It is humbling and breath-taking and frightening and thrilling all at once. I just can't get over it, Dr. Cole. To think that all these years (I am 41), I have missed this tremendous teaching and the thrill and joy of it.

It has made my salvation and conversion much more real and personal. I have always envied people who spoke with such joy of their conversion and felt that something had happened,

I never could. I couldn't remember a time when I didn't believe, if you know what I mean. And it has worried me; I've had a sneaking fear that maybe all I had was a head or credal belief because I was brought up in a Christian home and accepted that as I did other patterns of behaviour and thought. I have prayed off and on for months that if I were saved the Lord would make me realize it beyond all shadow of doubt and give me "the joy of His salvation". Not just a barren orthodoxy.

Never did I dream of getting the "witness of the spirit" through the doctrine of Election. I wouldn't want the Lord to think I'm not grateful for salvation. I am; but right now, I feel as if I'm more grateful for Election. Is that wrong?

Over and over I keep saying to myself, like someone rescued from a sinking vessel, when others are lost, "Why me? Why me?". When I wake up in the morning, I used to feel tired and exhausted and wish I didn't have to go to work (I am a war widow); now, almost as soon as I am conscious, I have the feeling that something new and exciting has happened—and then it flashes across my mind in a wave of remembrance—"you are elected" and I get so excited I am wide awake instantly and ready to be up and doing.

I cannot explain it—but somehow as long as you feel that you had the least little bit to do with your own conversion, it takes away some of the thrill and bloom of it. But when the full impact of the thought and realization hits you—that not only the provision of salvation is due to God's grace but also His choice of you as recipient, one can only stand back and marvel—lost in wonder, love and praise.

Now, I must tell you about last night. There were nearly 30 women out. Nothing that we have studied in the 7 or 8 years that I have taught that class has so stirred them as this

Doctrine! They came with Bibles and pens...and objections! I went all over it again very carefully, reminding them first that:

1. The depravity of man required it (election) elaborating on your point that we are just deceiving ourselves if we think any of us would ever want or seek God in our unregenerate state apart from the Holy Spirit and election. (Gen. 6:5; Ps. 14:3; Isa. 64:3; Rom. 3:10; Eph 2:1 –I had them look up and read aloud these references).
2. The sovereignty of God justifies it—He has the same rights over us as the potter with the clay, etc., emphasising such qualities of God as His absolute Righteousness, Holiness, Omniscience, Self-Existence, etc. which entitles Him to act in a sovereign way.
3. The righteousness and Holiness of God safe-guards it; it cannot be unjust for it is absolutely impossible for God to do anything wrong, be unfair, unjust, Unfaithful..."he cannot deny Himself". Regardless of how it may appear to us we have this knowledge and comfort that the Judge of all the earth will do righteously.

Well, after I had made my points, the members asked questions. I felt really sorry for one woman in my class. She has come to our church from the United Church. I think she is saved—but periodically one detects in her thinking and from her remarks, a throwback to the United Church doctrine of salvation through works! Evidently she has been really wrought up over this subject—which I consider a good sign. I told her she couldn't have been any more disturbed than I was at first. She cannot see that it is not unjust of God. I thought your illustration of being on the fence and God pushing them to one side or the other excellent, so I elaborated on that. I think, with most of them, they finally began to see a glimmer of light that if God hadn't elected some, none would be saved.

We all seem to have the same reaction—that if the decision had been left to us, we had a better chance of getting saved than by having God settle it all in Eternity; because we don't or won't accept that teaching that of ourselves we are incapable of reaching out for God. I told them that in our natural state, we are dead in trespasses and sins and a corpse just cannot flicker even an eyelash! So they were just deceiving themselves if they thought for one minute that they would ever accept Christ, apart from God taking certain measures to make them.

Well, our discussion went on for about 1 1/2 hours! This woman also thought as did others that Scriptures elsewhere we contradicted by Election—such as John 3:16; I John 2:2. I was glad to have your explanation of "all" and "world" rarely being used in the absolute sense.

Also, John 6:37..."him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out"...I told them to look up the first part of that verse and they would get a shock! I had! "All that the Father hath given unto me shall come unto me...etc." Of course Christ wouldn't cast out any who came because any who came would be those whom the Father had given! They were simply stunned! But seemed to react more as if it made sense and were opening up new worlds of thought.

Afterwards, while we were waiting for tea, this one particular woman came to me. I did feel so sorry for her; she was flushed and almost tearful and I said, "Edythe, is it any clearer?" She hesitated and said, "Yes, in some respects. But there are other things that I just feel I can't reconcile with my ideas of God and the Bible". I said, "Don't try, Edythe, Dr. Cole told me not to attempt to reconcile all points of this teaching with other passages of Scripture because I would only confuse myself, and I believe he is right". By the way, that was a wonderful help to me, personally, what you told me about

just getting a confused mind. I just let go all the arguments, after reading your letter, and told the Lord that I guessed I had struggled long enough trying to crowd the ocean of His theology into the teacup of my mind and I wasn't going to fuss anymore about the points I didn't understand. He understood them and that was good enough for me. And it is since then that I have had such peace.

I tried to tell something of this to Edythe; she said, "Marjorie, I have nearly gone out of my mind this week". And her voice broke. She said, "I can't think of anything else and I go over and over it until I am nearly crazy". I just ached with pity for her because I had been through the same thing until I got your letter back.

It flashed across my mind that perhaps your letter would help her too. So I asked her if she would like a copy of my questions to you and your reply. She was terribly grateful. I had them with me so was able to let her have them right away. Would you pray with me that she will get peace and learn, by the help of the Holy Spirit to love this doctrine as we do?

One other member, a new-comer to my class although she has been in our church several years, said to me with the sweetest smile afterwards, "I am like you; I know now I have been elected and it is simply thrilling. I wish you could have seen my husband, though. He wanted to come so badly tonight—he asked me if I thought you would mind if he slipped into a back seat"! It seems her husband took her pamphlet and read it; was so thrilled and worked up over it, he read it again and said that never in all his life had he heard anything like it—why don't we hear about it? And do you know, Dr. Cole, person after person has said that to me; "Why don't our ministers preach it??"

One girl, also from the southern states (Texas—but not the one I mentioned in my first letter; she wasn't out last night) has been very keen on this, but admitted to me on different occasions that it simply upset a lot of her ideas and understandings! However, last night, as I closed she said, in front of all the others, almost with a blissful sigh, "Well, it certainly takes the fear out of dying, doesn't it"? And you know, that is what I have felt so strongly. I just stared at her for a minute when she said it—it was the echo of my own heart. Sometimes I feel I can't wait to get to heaven and learn more about Election and all the rest of the Bible.

A third woman, mother of a 6 year old boy, said to me, "Marjorie, I don't know. It is wonderful. I feel that since this study and the thought I have given to Election that everything has cleared up in my mind. And so many passages of Scripture fit in and make sense now when they didn't before".

Yet another girl has talked to me different times and said that at first she felt (when I taught my first lesson in Sept.) that she was opposed to it. But the more she read your pamphlet and thought about it, the more she thought the doctrine really was taught in the Bible and therefore she should be willing to believe it and leave the parts she didn't understand until she got to heaven! Last night, after we were finished, she whispered to me across the table, "Well, I'm happy too, tonight Marjorie. But I'm afraid some aren't. But it's more a case of won't with them.

However, I am praying that the Holy Spirit will do His work in the hearts of those that are confused or resisting. I feel their very interest is encouraging and, as you so truly put it, none of us likes this doctrine; it takes the Holy Spirit to teach a person to love it.

Now, I promised you I wouldn't write such a long letter and I have. I do hope you aren't bored. But I am so full of it all and

so indebted to you that I felt I had to overflow to you. Have you, by any chance, had any of your other teachings put up in pamphlet form? I was looking over some old Witnesses the other day and saw several of yours in serial form, on Sin, Salvation, etc. I should love to have them complete. I sent away for 40 copies of your ELECTION pamphlet and distributed them to my class in Sept., so they have had them to study and mull over ever since! I can never thank you enough for your article. Certainly God must have led you to have it printed.

It would be so wonderful to sit under that kind of preaching today. Why don't ministers preach doctrinal sermons anymore—instead of this milky, predigested, topical preaching that so many give? No wonder Christians today aren't strong and virile and know what they stand for—they have never got off the milk of the Word onto the strong meat. I heard one Baptist minister say that we are "snackbar" Christians today when we should be dining-room Christians. And I think he had something.

Now, I must go. Again, my heartfelt thanks for all you have done for me. I pray God's richest blessings upon you and yours and your ministry for Him which will be fruitful, I am sure, beyond your deepest imaginings and hopes.

Yours in Him,

(Mrs.) Marjorie Bond

LETTER THREE BY MRS. MARJORIE BOND

1505 Scotland Street
Calgary, Alberta

December 7, 1959

Dear Dr. Cole:

Since writing my Christmas card to you, I have received your books, "The Heavenly Hope" and "Divine Doctrines". Thank you very much indeed. I am thoroughly enjoying the magnificent study on the doctrine of God. How it magnifies and exalts Him and restores Him to His rightful position of King of kings and Lord of lords. I have felt for a long time that the Christian church needs a fresh vision of the holiness and majesty of God, and to realize that He is "the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity". There is entirely too much spirit of camaraderie in our attitude toward God today.

I wish more of our present-day ministers preached doctrine. It seems to me that church members would be more firmly rooted and grounded in their faith if we had more doctrinal teaching and less "snackbar" preaching!

Apropos of our study on Election, I am still getting repercussions from it from some of my class members. Nothing that I have ever taught has stirred up such interest. I also gave a copy of your pamphlet to our minister; am awaiting his reaction!

We were visiting with some friends from another Baptist church a few weeks ago and something came up about my Bible Class and this teaching on election. Would you believe it– not one person in that room, apart from the members of my own immediate family who were present, had even heard about Election, let alone understood it? And yet they are all good Christian people—not just nominal church members.

We only got into a preliminary discussion of it when we were interrupted. But I could see that it was not at all favourably received! (As you say, we are all Arminians by nature!) One woman and her aged father who had moved away to Arizona about two years ago, are back in Calgary and were present that night. About a week ago, I ran into this woman at the post office in one of our local department stores. She is working there temporarily and as there were people waiting to be served she didn't have too much time to talk to me. But as I was leaving the wicket, she said, "Oh, Marjorie; I want to have a talk with you some time on that matter that we were discussing at Thelma's the other night." For a minute or two, my mind was a complete blank—I couldn't remember what she was referring to. She smiled and said, "You know, we started a discussion about it". Suddenly light dawned and I said, eagerly, (this is my favourite subject now) "Oh yes, of course. I'll be glad to any time you are free." She nodded and said, "Well, it has set me thinking. I don't understand it and don't say that I agree but I want to learn more about it". So there is another ripple from the stone you cast into the pool!

Dr. Cole, when you are so busy, I do hate to bother you with my questions but I feel that you are so learned in this subject that you are in a better position to help me than anyone else. May I trouble you with one or two further questions:

1. What is meant by making "your calling and election sure"? At first when I was reading II Peter 1:5-10, in the light of my

new knowledge on Election, it seemed to me that Peter spoke as if it were possible to lose one's salvation. And yet, because I believe in the eternal security of the believer (even more so since I understood Election) I didn't see how this could be. As I prayed about it, it seemed to me that perhaps what is meant is rather that a person who does what Peter admonishes is less likely to backslide rather than be lost? Do you think that is the meaning of it?

2. Is the "all" of Rom. 11:32 another example of "all" not being used in the absolute? I mean the part where it says "that He might have mercy upon all". Some people argue that verse as being opposed to Election, saying that if God wanted to have mercy on all, He would not pick and choose people for salvation as the doctrine of election teaches.

3. Also, while we are still in Romans, is it true that even Christians will be judged for everything they have done since they were saved? Not in the sense of punishment for their sins, because Judgment on sin was passed at Calvary. But when the Bible says, "So then we must every one give an account of ourselves to God; " and again, Rom. 2:6..."who will render to every man according to his deeds"; and I Cor. 4:5.

I don't know why it is, but the thought of having all my sins exposed to view, even though I am not going to be punished for them, robs heaven of considerable joy. I backslid very badly some years ago and although the Lord is dearer to me now than He ever was before, I sometimes feel that nothing can undo the sins of those years. God knows all about them and has forgiven me; why must they be published for all the world to see when I get to heaven?

I thought the passages in Psalms that "as far as the east is from the west so far have I removed thy transgression from thee", meant that once we were saved God really blotted out our sins and we never had to hear about them again. But

there seems to be several passages in the epistles which would lead one to think that, although we will not be punished for our sins in the sense of going to hell, we shall certainly have to account for them. If this is so, it seems to me that no Christian could die really at peace, knowing you had that ahead of you. (Why are we more afraid of man's opinion than God's?)

4. My last question has to do with pages 7-9 of your pamphlet "The Heavenly Hope". I had always understood (prior to my study of Election), both from Scripture and various hymns and sermons that I had heard, that there is danger in delaying salvation; that a person could be cut off from this life before they had accepted Christ and be hurled into a Christless eternity.

But according to the doctrine of Election, no one who is elected for salvation can possibly die without being saved? Isn't that true? ("All that the Father hath given to me, will come unto me...") Therefore, anyone whom God has intended to save will be saved and cannot possibly be lost so there is no danger in delaying for them; and the non-elect will not be saved anyway. Isn't that so?

It seems to me I just get things sorted out in my mind to where I understand them, when I read something that puts me off again!

As I say, I used to believe too that there was danger in delay. All the hymn-writers speak of it etc. But since studying Election, I concluded that I must have been wrong. There is no real urgency, in the sense of it being a life and death matter, because no one can die before he is saved, if God intends him to be saved. Therefore, why do ministers (even those like yourself who believe in Election) urge people to make haste and accept Christ before it is too late? It can

never be too late for an elected person, can it? I should appreciate being straightened out on this point.

You will get so you dread to see a letter from me if I always write at such length. But there is so much I need to ask you about and modern ministers, like doctors, are so busy they haven't time for people any more.

Thank you again for all your help and may God richly bless you in the year ahead.

Sincerely,

Marjorie Bond

REPLY BY DR. C.D. COLE

746 West Noel
Madisonville, Kentucky

December 17th, 1959

My Dear Marjorie:

Greetings and best wishes for a happy holiday season! When I mailed you the books, I intended to follow at once with a letter explaining that you would be under no obligation to pay for them, since you had not ordered them. But other things took precedence, and I was still planning to write when your letter arrived with enclosure. Perhaps I should return part of the money as it was more than enough to pay for what I sent. The supply of books and tracts I have written is almost exhausted, and this is one reason why I sent you what I did. The series of SIN and SALVATION have not been put in book form. I have two or three large scrap books containing articles

published in various magazines. At my age (now in my 75th year), I do not expect to publish any more books. However, I have many dear friends among young ministers and some of them may want to publish some of my writings after I am gone.

With this brief introduction, I will now attend to your questions in the hope I may be of some help.

1. Peter's exhortation to "make your calling and election sure", is a warning against presumption. One must not take his salvation for granted without proper evidence of it. Of course he means to make it sure to ourselves, for we can make nothing sure to God. His words have to do with assurance and not to the fact of salvation. He starts with the grace of faith as God's gift, and urges us to build upon that faith so that our lives may not be barren and unfruitful. No unfruitful believer can have assurance of salvation as a subjective experience. Apropos of your own experience while a backslider.

2. I believe "all" in Rom. 11:32 is used only in a relative and not absolute sense, else we have universal salvation. Moreover, Rom. 9:18 teaches that God is sovereign in bestowal of mercy. This does not mean that He refuses mercy to any who trust Christ for it, but that He does not cause all to look to Him for mercy—some are left to their own carnal will.

3. The Christian will be judged for his works and not for his sins. His sins have been judged in Christ and will not appear against him in the day of Judgment. Salvation is of grace; reward is for work. There will be degrees both in heaven and in hell, for both the saved and lost will be judged for their deeds—the lost will receive the degree of punishment commensurated with their evil deeds, and the saved will receive glory according to their works. I do not expect the reward of Paul, for my works have not equalled his.

Romans 2 is dealing with principles of judgment under law:

3a. It is to be according to truth (Rom. 2:2), that is according to facts;

3b. It is to be according to deeds (Rom. 2:6);

3c. It is to be without respect of persons (Rom. 2:11,12). The chapter is not showing how to be saved, but what one may expect from the law, whether he be Jew or Gentile.

Romans 14 warns believers against judging one another for various scruples in regard to eating and observing days on the ground that we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ (Rom. 14:10). We shall give account of ourselves to God and not to one another.

I Corinthians 4 deals with the judgment of the Christian as a steward of God. We cannot judge or appraise the works of one another here and now, for there is much we cannot know, such as motives and hidden things, but when Christ comes He will know everything about us, and "then shall every man have praise of God" (I Cor. 4:5). We are not qualified to judge so as to determine the place one shall have in glory—God will look after that.

4. We are to address the lost as sinners, and not as elect sinners. We do not know who the elect are until they manifest it in faith and good works. And we are to address them as in need of salvation, and urge them to trust the one and only Saviour—and to trust Him now. Shall we tell them to trust Him at once or wait until some other time?

It is true that "no one who is elected for salvation can possibly die without being saved". But this does not mean that they will be saved apart from faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And the means of salvation are as truly elected as are the persons. II

Thess. 2:13,14 Paul knew more about the doctrine of election than any other man, and yet he persuaded people concerning Jesus (Acts 28:23). He knew the elect would be saved, and yet he prayed and worked for the salvation of Israel. (Rom. 9:1-3; 10:1-4; 11:14; I Cor. 9:19-22)

We must not allow the doctrine of election to rob us of compassion for the lost, nor close our eyes to the urgency of salvation. (Heb. 2:3; II Cor. 6:2)

There will be things we cannot understand and doctrines we shall not be able to harmonize, but it is plainly His commanding will for us to witness to all people concerning Christ Jesus. Secret things belong to God, but the revealed things fix our duty Deut. 29:29

With Christian love,

C.D. Cole