

ELECTION

PRESENTED BY

JESS HALL, JR.

GREEN LAWN CHURCH OF CHRIST

FEBRUARY 2, 1969

WE COME TONIGHT IN OUR STUDY OF BASIC BIBLE DOCTRINES TO A STUDY OF THAT DOCTRINE KNOWN AS THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION. INCLUDED IN THE DISCUSSION OF THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION MUST NECESSARILY BE SOME REFERENCE TO THE DOCTRINE OF PREDESTINATION, THE DOCTRINE OF REPROBATION, AND SOME OTHER THINGS BECAUSE ALL OF THESE ARE INTERTWINED AND FORM BUT DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF THE SAME SUBJECT. I WISH IT WERE POSSIBLE TO TAKE ENOUGH TIME TO DEVOTE PERHAPS A MONTH TO A DISCUSSION OF THIS SUBJECT, AND EVEN THEN IT MIGHT BE IMPOSSIBLE TO DO IT JUSTICE. SUCH CANNOT BE DONE, BUT I WOULD EMPHASIZE AGAIN THAT WE ARE SEEKING MAINLY TO PUT BEFORE YOU SOME BASIC PRINCIPLES OF SCRIPTURE, TO ACQUAINT YOU WITH SOME BASIC CONCEPTS IN THESE AREAS OF PARTICULAR DOCTRINES IN ORDER THAT YOU, TAKING THESE, MIGHT IN YOUR CONTINUING STUDY OF SCRIPTURE USE THESE TO MORE PERFECTLY UNDERSTAND THINGS UPON WHICH WE HAVE NOT TOUCHED. TO THAT END, WE ARE REPRODUCING THESE SERMONS AND THIS ONE AS WITH THE OTHERS WILL, IN THE COURSE OF TIME, BE PRINTED AND READY FOR DISTRIBUTION.

QUITE OFTEN WHEN WE BEGIN TO SPEAK OF THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION, THERE ARE SOME OF MY BRETHREN WHO SAY THAT THERE IS NO SUCH DOCTRINE IN THE WORD OF GOD. BUT THIS IS NOT SO. THERE IS A DOCTRINE OF PREDESTINATION. THERE IS A DOCTRINE OF ELECTION IN SCRIPTURE, AND I HOPE IN THE COURSE OF THIS LESSON TONIGHT TO BE ABLE TO SET BEFORE YOU, FIRST OF ALL, THE CALVINISTIC DOCTRINE OF ELECTION, ITS WEAKNESSES AND THE AREAS IN WHICH IT CONFLICTS WITH THE WORD OF GOD, AND THEN, HAVING DONE THAT, I WANT TO GO BEYOND JUST STATING WHAT THE BIBLICAL DOCTRINE IS NOT AND SET BEFORE YOU SOME PRINCIPLES WHICH I THINK WILL BE HELPFUL IN UNDERSTANDING WHAT THE SCRIPTURAL DOCTRINE OF ELECTION ACTUALLY IS. MANY TIMES WHEN WE BEGIN A DISCUSSION OF SOMEONE ELSE'S TEACHING, WE ARE ACCUSED OF PUTTING THEIR TEACHING IN OUR OWN LANGUAGE AND OF PUTTING IT IN OUR OWN LANGUAGE IN ORDER THAT WE MIGHT THEN HAVE AN EASY JOB OF SHOWING ITS WEAKNESSES. THEREFORE, TONIGHT I DO NOT WANT TO MAKE THAT MISTAKE; AND SO WHAT I HAVE TO SAY ABOUT THE CALVINISTIC DOCTRINE OF PREDESTINATION AND ELECTION WILL BE TAKEN FROM CALVINISTIC WRITERS. PERHAPS WITH BUT ONE EXCEPTION, THE STATEMENTS WILL BE TAKEN FROM A WRITING BY THE LATE LOUIS BERKHOF WHO WAS PROFESSOR OF SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY AT CALVIN SEMINARY. I THINK THAT A PROFESSOR OF SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY AT CALVIN SEMINARY MIGHT BE REGARDED AS AN EXPERT AS TO JUST EXACTLY WHAT THE DOCTRINE OF CALVINISM TEACHES. FIRST OF ALL I WANT TO READ TO YOU MR. BERKHOF DEFINITION OF THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION AS IT IS TAUGHT BY CALVINISM. HE STATES THAT ELECTION MAY BE DEFINED AS "THAT ETERNAL ACT OF GOD WHEREBY HE IN HIS SOVEREIGN GOOD PLEASURE AND ON ACCOUNT OF NO FORESEEN MERIT IN THEM CHOOSES A CERTAIN NUMBER OF MEN TO BE THE RECIPIENTS OF SPECIAL GRACE AND OF ETERNAL SALVATION." NOW, IF I MAY SIMPLY RESTATE THAT. MR. BERKHOF STATES THAT THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION AS TAUGHT BY CALVIN IS THAT GOD BY AN ARBITRARY ACT HAS PREDESTINED CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS TO SALVATION, AND THAT THEY WILL BE SAVED BY THE GRACE OF GOD. NOW, ACCORDING TO CALVINISM THIS IS REALLY JUST ONE-HALF THE DOCTRINE AND YOU CANNOT UNDERSTAND THE CALVINISTIC DOCTRINE OF ELECTION UNLESS YOU PLACE BY ITS SIDE THE OTHER HALF OF THE COIN. THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN IS THE CALVINISTIC DOCTRINE OF REPROBATION. THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION, ACCORDING TO THE CALVINIST, SAYS THAT GOD HAS PREDETERMINED THAT A CERTAIN NUMBER OF MEN WILL BE SAVED. THE DOCTRINE OF REPROBATION IS, AS DEFINED BY THEM, "THAT ETERNAL DECREE OF GOD WHEREBY HE HAS DETERMINED TO PASS SOME MEN BY WITH THE OPERATIONS OF HIS SPECIAL GRACE AND TO PUNISH THEM FOR THEIR SINS TO THE MANIFESTATION OF HIS JUSTICE." NOW LET ME PARAPHRASE THAT. MR. BERKHOF DEFINES THE DOCTRINE OF REPROBATION AS BEING THE ETERNAL DECREE OF GOD (THAT IS TO SAY THAT THIS IS A DECREE WHICH WAS MADE FROM OR BEFORE THE VERY BEGINNING—GOD MADE IT EVEN IN ETERNITY)

WHEREIN GOD DETERMINED TO PASS CERTAIN MEN BY AND TO PUNISH THEM FOR THEIR SINS IN ORDER THAT THE JUSTICE OF GOD MIGHT BE MADE MANIFEST. IN OTHER WORDS, THERE IS NOT ANYTHING IN THE WORLD THAT THESE MEN COULD DO IN ORDER TO AVOID BEING PUNISHED FOR THEIR SINS BECAUSE GOD HAS FROM ETERNITY PREDESTINED THEM TO ETERNAL DAMNATION.

NOW, HOW DOES THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION WORK? DOES MAN HAVE ANY CHOICE IN THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION TO GRACE OR REPROBATION TO ETERNAL DAMNATION. MR. BERKHOF SAYS CONCERNING THE OPERATION OF ELECTION, "IT IS IRRESISTABLE. THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT MAN CANNOT OPPOSE ITS EXECUTION TO A CERTAIN DEGREE, BUT IT DOES MEAN THAT HIS OPPOSITION WILL NOT PREVAIL. NEITHER DOES IT MEAN THAT GOD IN THE EXECUTION OF HIS DECREE OVERPOWERS THE HUMAN WILL IN A MANNER WHICH IS INCONSISTENT WITH MAN'S FREE AGENCY. IT DOES MEAN HOWEVER, THAT GOD CAN AND DOES EXERT SUCH AN INFLUENCE ON THE HUMAN SPIRIT AS TO MAKE IT WILLING." NOW WHAT MR. BERKHOF IS LOOKING AT HERE IS THE AGE-OLD DELIMMA WHICH CONFRONTS ALL CALVINISTS WHICH STATES THAT IF THIS OPERATION OF GRACE IS IRRESISTIBLE, THEN IT OF NECESSITY OVERRIDES THE MORAL AGENCY OF MAN. IF IT IS IRRESISTABLE, MAN DOESN'T HAVE ANY CHOICE. IF IT IS IRRESISTABLE, MAN IS MADE TO BE SAVED. MR. BERKHOF REALIZES THAT THIS IS INCONSISTENT WITH WHAT SCRIPTURE REVEALS CONCERNING THE NATURE OF MAN AND HIS FREE MORAL AGENCY. HE SEEKS TO AVOID THE DELIMMA BY SAYING THAT MAN CAN OPPOSE IT, BUT HE CAN OPPOSE IT ONLY TO A CERTAIN DEGREE AND HIS OPPOSITION CANNOT PREVAIL. HE SAYS MAN IS NOT MADE TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN IN A WAY THAT OVERRIDES HIS FREE WILL, BUT GOD WORKS ON HIS SPIRIT IN ORDER TO MAKE HIS SPIRIT WILLING. NOW IT APPEARS TO ME THAT MR. BERKHOF STILL HAS NOT AVOIDED THE DELIMMA. IF GOD OPERATES ON THE HUMAN SPIRIT IN ORDER TO MAKE IT WILLING, THEN IT APPEARS TO ME THAT WHETHER A MAN IS WILLING OR NOT IS STILL DETERMINED BY AN ACT OF GOD WHICH MAKES IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR HIM TO RESIST BEING WILLING. AND SO THE DOCTRINE OF CALVINISM SIMPLY STATED IS THAT GOD HAS PREDETERMINED THAT CERTAIN MEN WILL BE SAVED AND CERTAIN MEN WILL BE REPROBATE ETERNALLY FROM THE PRESENCE OF GOD AND THAT MAN DOES NOT HAVE ANY CHOICE IN THE MATTER.

NOW WHAT IS WRONG WITH THIS DOCTRINE? 1. IT MAKES GOD PARTIAL. IT MAKES GOD CHOSE THIS MAN OVER THAT MAN AND THIS IS INCONSISTENT WITH WHAT GOD HAS REVEALED CONCERNING HIMSELF. THE APOSTLE PETER IN ACTS 10:34 SAID, "OF A TRUTH I PERCEIVE THAT GOD IS NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS; BUT IN EVERY NATION HE THAT FEARETH HIM, AND WORKETH RIGHTEOUSNESS, IS ACCEPTED WITH HIM." SURELY WHEN SCRIPTURE SAYS THROUGH THE INSPIRED PETER (II PETER 3:9) THAT IT IS THE WILL OF GOD THAT ALL MEN SHOULD COME TO REPENTANCE, IT ILL BEHOVES ANY MAN TO SAY THAT THIS IS NOT THE WILL OF GOD AND THAT GOD DOES NOT WILL THAT ALL MEN SHOULD BE SAVED, BUT THAT GOD WILLS SOME MEN SHOULD BE ETERNALLY REPROBATE FROM HIS PRESENCE.

2. THIS DOCTRINE OF ELECTION MAKES GOD ARBITRARY FOR IT REVEALS A GOD WHO IS WIELDING UNLIMITED POWER IN A TYRANICAL AND DESPOTICAL WAY. IT REVEALS A GOD WHO WITHOUT ANY REASON AT ALL LOOKS DOWN AND MAKES SOME ARBITRARY CHOICES AND PLACES CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS ON ONE SIDE AND CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS ON ANOTHER. AGAIN, THIS IS CONTRARY TO EVERYTHING THAT GOD HAS REVEALED CONCERNING HIS NATURE.

3. THIS DOCTRINE OF ELECTION IS UNJUST TO THE UNSAVED FOR THE UNSAVED, ACCORDING TO THE DOCTRINE OF REPROBATION, DO NOT HAVE ANY CHANCE AT ALL. IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE HOW THEY LIVE, IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE HOW THEY CRY. IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE HOW THEY PLEAD WITH GOD, HOW THEY PRAY TO GOD. IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE THAT THEY MAY, ACCORDING TO THE TEACHING OF SOME OF THESE INDIVIDUALS, COME TO THE MOURNERS BENCH AND SEEK FOR WEEKS AND FOR MONTHS TO PRAY THROUGH. IF GOD HAS PREDETERMINED THEM TO ETERNAL DAMNATION, THEY DO NOT HAVE A CHANCE TO BE SAVED. NOW, CERTAINLY GOD IS TO BE PRAISED FOR SAVING THE ELECT. WE'LL TALK ABOUT THE ELECT AND HOW THEY BECOME THE ELECT WHEN WE TALK ABOUT BIBLICAL DOCTRINE, BUT GOD IS NOT TO BE CHARGED WITH THE CONDEMNATION OF THE LOST FOR GOD DESIRES THE SALVATION OF ALL PEOPLE. "FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD (THAT MEANS HUMANITY), THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON THAT WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE." LOOK AT ROMANS 8:32, "HE THAT SPARED NOT HIS OWN SON, BUT DELIVERED HIM UP FOR US ALL, HOW SHALL HE NOT WITH ^{him} ALSO FREELY GIVE US ALL THINGS?" LOOK AT II PETER 3:9. "THE LORD IS NOT SLACK CONCERNING HIS PROMISE, AS SOME MEN

COUNT SLACKNESS; BUT IS LONGSUFFERING TO US-WARD. NOT WILLING THAT ANY SHOULD PERISH, BUT THAT ALL SHOULD COME TO REPENTANCE." GOD OFFERS PARDON, GOD OFFERS SPIRITUAL PEACE TO EVERY INDIVIDUAL. HE OFFERS IT UPON THE BASIS OF THE ATONING WORK OF HIS SON AND NOTHING IN ALL OF THIS WORLD PREVENTS A MAN FROM RECEIVING THE BENEFITS OF THAT ATONING WORK EXCEPT HIS UNWILLINGNESS TO RECEIVE THAT WHICH GOD HAS OFFERED UNTO HIM.

4. THIS DOCTRINE DESTROYS HUMAN FREEDOM. SURELY THROUGH THE MEANS OF THE GOSPEL, THE AGENCY OF GOD'S PEOPLE, GOD LEADS, GOD PERSUADES, GOD ENTREATS, AND GOD EXHORTS, BUT NEVER ANYWHERE IN THE BIBLE DO WE HAVE AN INTIMATION OF A HINT THAT GOD EITHER SAVES THEM WHEN THEY ARE UNWILLING TO BE SAVED OR MAKES THEM WILLING TO BE SAVED IN SPITE OF THEIR SINS.

5. THIS DOCTRINE DISCOURAGES SAVING THE LOST. WHY SHOULD I BE CONCERNED ABOUT GOING INTO ALL OF THE WORLD AND PREACHING THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST WHEN GOD HAS ALREADY FIXED FOR ETERNITY THE DESTINATION OF EVERY INDIVIDUAL WHO SHALL HAVE EVER LIVED ON THE FACE OF THE EARTH. GOD HAS ALREADY TAKEN THIS INDIVIDUAL AND PREDESTINED HIM TO ETERNAL LIFE AND GOD HAS TAKEN ANOTHER INDIVIDUAL AND PREDESTINED HIM TO ETERNAL DAMNATION AND THERE IS NOT ANYTHING IN THIS WORLD THAT CAN CHANGE THOSE DECREES. WHY THEN SHOULD I BE WORRIED ABOUT PREACHING THE GOSPEL? IF GOD HAS PREDESTINED A MAN TO BE SAVED, THAT MAN CAN AND THAT MAN WILL BE SAVED IN SPITE OF MY EFFORTS OR IN SPITE OF THE LACK OF MY EFFORTS TO CARRY HIM THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST.

6. THE DOCTRINE TENDS TOWARD IMMORALITY. WHEN A MAN HAS BEEN PREDESTINED TO ETERNAL LIFE AND WHEN, HAVING BEEN PREDESTINED TO ETERNAL LIFE, THERE IS NOT ANYTHING HE CAN DO, THERE IS NOT ANYTHING THAT THE DEVIL CAN DO, THERE IS NOT ANY WAY IN THIS WORLD THAT HE CAN MISS GETTING THERE--WHY SHOULD HE BE CONCERNED ABOUT LIVING ACCORDING TO THE INSTRUCTIONS OF THE N.T. IF HE HAS BEEN PREDESTINED TO ETERNAL LIFE THEN ALL OF THE SINS THAT HE MIGHT COMMIT IN SPITE OF A LACK OF REPENTANCE, WOULD NOT KEEP HIM OUT OF HEAVEN.

7. THIS DOCTRINE TENDS TOWARD PRIDE, FOR I, YOU SEE, HAVE BECOME ONE OF THE ELECT. I AM ONE OF THE PREDESTINED, AND ALL OF THESE UNSAVED OUT HERE--GOD DIDN'T PREFER THEM, GOD DIDN'T ELECT THEM. THEREFORE, I HAVE PRIDE BECAUSE GOD HAS CHOSEN ME ABOVE ALL OTHERS.

ALL OF THESE THINGS ARE WRONG, UNSCRIPTURAL, ABOUT THE CALVINISTIC DOCTRINE OF ELECTION. BUT NOW, HAVING MADE THESE COMMENTS ABOUT WHAT THE BIBLICAL DOCTRINE OF ELECTION IS NOT, WE HAVE YET THE MOST IMPORTANT HALF OF THE LESSON AND THAT HALF DEALS WITH THE QUESTION, "WHAT IS THE BIBLICAL DOCTRINE OF ELECTION?" FIRST, LET ME SET FORTH SOME PRELIMINARY THOUGHTS. LET ME LAY SOME FOUNDATION UPON WHICH WE LATER WANT TO BUILD. LET ME SUGGEST IN THE FIRST PLACE THAT GOD TAKES THE INITIATIVE IN SALVATION. ONE MAN HAS SAID THAT THE DOCTRINE TERMED ELECTION, IS NONE OTHER THAN GOD'S INITIATIVE IN SALVATION OR GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY IN RELATION TO MAN'S REDEMPTION, AND I BELIEVE THAT'S TRUE. WE OPEN UP OUR BIBLES TO GENESIS 1:1 AND THERE WE READ IN RELATION TO THE CREATION, "IN THE BEGINNING GOD." I BELIEVE THAT THAT STATEMENT, "IN THE BEGINNING GOD," APPLIES NOT ONLY TO THE BEGINNING OF GOD'S PHYSICAL CREATION, BUT I BELIEVE IT APPLIES ALSO TO THE BEGINNING OF THE WORK OF REDEEMING MAN. THE INITIATIVE HAD TO BE IN GOD. MAN DOES NOT REVEAL HIMSELF TO GOD. GOD REVEALS HIMSELF TO MAN. AS WE LOOK AT THE SCRIPTURES, AS WE LOOK AT THE REVELATIONS THAT GOD HAS MADE OF HIMSELF UNTO US, THE TENOR OF THE ENTIRE LENGTH AND BREADTH OF BIBLICAL TRUTH IS THAT GOD INITIATES SALVATION. THE ZENITH OF ALL OF GOD'S WORK IS SALVATION. HE SENT CHRIST IN ORDER TO MAKE SALVATION OR REDEMPTION POSSIBLE. LUKE 19:10 JESUS SAID, "I AM COME TO SEEK AND TO SAVE THAT WHICH WAS LOST." HE WAS SAYING THAT HERE IS THE EXERCISING OF THE INITIATIVE ON GOD'S PART TO PROVIDE A MEANS, TO PROVIDE A WAY, WHEREBY THE GULF THAT HAD BEEN CREATED BETWEEN GOD AND MAN THROUGH MAN'S SINS MIGHT BE BRIDGED, NOT BY AN ACT OF MAN BUT BY AN ACT OF GOD. SO THIS IS THE FIRST THING, AND A VERY IMPORTANT MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION, THAT GOD INITIATES SALVATION.

2. WE NEED TO REMEMBER THAT GOD ACTS WITH A PURPOSE IN ELECTION. GOD ACTS WITH A PURPOSE THAT IS ETERNAL. GOD'S SCHEME OF REDEMPTION DID NOT COME INTO HIS MIND ON THE DAY OF THE CRUCIFIXION. THE DAY OF THE CRUCIFIXION WAS THE CULMINATION OF THE SCHEME OF REDEMPTION

THAT HAD BEEN IN THE MIND OF GOD FROM ETERNITY. EVERYTHING THAT GOD DID FROM THE FALL OF MAN TO THE COMING OF JESUS CHRIST INTO THE WORLD WAS DONE WITH A SPECIFIC PURPOSE IN MIND, AND THAT PURPOSE WAS THE REDEMPTION OF MAN IN CONFORMITY WITH GOD'S ETERNAL PLAN. LISTEN TO II TIMOTHY 1:9-10. "WHO HATH SAVED US, AND CALLED US WITH AN HOLY CALLING, NOT ACCORDING TO OUR WORKS, BUT ACCORDING TO HIS OWN PURPOSE AND GRACE, WHICH WAS GIVEN US IN CHRIST JESUS BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN; BUT IS NOW MADE MANIFEST BY THE APPEARING OF OUR SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, WHO HATH ABOLISHED DEATH, AND HATH BROUGHT LIFE AND IMMORTALITY TO LIGHT THROUGH THE GOSPEL." THERE IS NOTHING ARBITRARY, THERE IS NOTHING UNGRACIOUS, THERE IS NOTHING UNLOVING IN GOD'S DEALINGS WITH MAN, FOR SUCH WOULD CONTROVERT HIS RIGHTEOUS NATURE. SUCH WOULD SAY THAT EVERYTHING THAT GOD HAS SAID CONCERNING HIMSELF IS NOT TRUE. ALL OF THE GOOD THAT COMES INTO THE LIVES OF MEN, THE GREATEST OF WHICH IS MAN'S ETERNAL REDEMPTION, COMES AS A RESULT OF THE GRACIOUS PURPOSE OF GOD THROUGH THE AGES.

3. WE NEED TO BE AWARE OF THE DANGER OF A ONE-SIDED VIEW OF GOD. WHEN WE LOOK AT GOD AND EMPHASIZE HIS WILL, HIS INFINITE POWER, HIS OMNISCIENCE, AND THINK NOTHING OF HIS LOVE, HIS MERCY, HIS GRACE, AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS, THERE IS A DANGER OF DERIVING A CONCEPT OF GOD AS BEING A GOD THAT IS AN ARBITRARY DESPOT RATHER THAN A FORGIVING FATHER WHO DESIRES THE BEST FOR HIS CREATURES. IN OTHER WORDS, IT IS THE ERROR OF CONCEIVING OF THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD AS A FUNCTION OF HIS GOOD PLEASURE RATHER THAN IN TERMS OF AN ETERNAL PURPOSE DESIRING THE GOOD OF ALL. AND HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU HEARD THAT? HOW MANY TIMES HAVE WE LOOKED INTO SCRIPTURE AND WE HAVE SEEN AN ACT OF GOD, AND THE ONLY THING WE SAID ABOUT IT, THE ONLY THING WE FELT WE COULD SAY ABOUT IT, WAS THAT IT WAS JUST AN ARBITRARY ACT OF THE GOOD PLEASURE OF GOD, WHEN SUCH WAS NOT THE CASE AT ALL. I AM NOT SAYING THAT GOD DOES NOT HAVE THE RIGHT TO EXERCISE HIS GOOD PLEASURE. BUT WHAT I AM SAYING IS THAT GOD'S GOOD PLEASURE IS NOT EXERCISED ARBITRARILY. EVERY DEED THAT GOD HAS DONE IT HAS BEEN HIS GOOD PLEASURE TO WORK FOR THE ETERNAL PURPOSE THAT HE WAS WORKING FOR MAN IN JESUS CHRIST.

4. WE NEED TO BE AWARE OF THE FACT THAT THE ATONEMENT IS NOT LIMITED, BUT GENERAL. WHEN IT IS HELD THAT GOD FOREORDAINED SOME MEN TO ETERNAL DAMNATION WHILE HE FOREORDAINED OTHER MEN TO ETERNAL LIFE IT IS A NECESSARY CONCLUSION THAT JESUS CHRIST CAME TO DIE FOR SOME MEN, BUT HE DID NOT COME TO DIE FOR OTHERS. THIS IS NOT AN OVERSTATEMENT OF THE DOCTRINE. LISTEN AGAIN TO MR. BERKHOF. "CHRIST DIED FOR THE PURPOSE OF ACTUALLY AND CERTAINLY SAVING THE ELECT AND THE ELECT ONLY. THIS IS EQUIVALENT TO SAYING THAT HE DIED FOR THE PURPOSE OF SAVING ONLY THOSE TO WHOM HE ACTUALLY APPLIES THE BENEFITS OF HIS REDEMPTIVE WORK." MR. BERKHOF SAYS THAT JESUS DIDN'T DIE FOR ALL MEN. HE ONLY DIED FOR THE ELECT. NOW SOME HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO ACCEPT THIS KIND OF STRAIGHT-FROM-THE-BOTTLE CALVINISTIC DOCTRINE AND THEY HAVE SOUGHT TO MODIFY THE DOCTRINE, AS DID A. H. STRONG IN HIS WORK ON SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY. HE MAKES IT COME OUT THIS WAY. "THE SCRIPTURES REPRESENT THE ATONEMENT AS HAVING BEEN MADE FOR ALL MEN AND AS SUFFICIENT FOR THE SALVATION OF ALL. NOT THE ATONEMENT THEREFORE IS LIMITED, BUT THE APPLICATION OF THE ATONEMENT THROUGH THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT." IN OTHER WORDS, HE IS SAYING JESUS DIED FOR ALL MEN, BUT THE PROBLEM, MR. STRONG SAYS, IS THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT MUST NOT HAVE KNOWN THAT, BECAUSE HE JUST GOES TO WORK ON A FEW MEN. THEY ARE THE ELECT AND THE REST OF THEM ARE LEFT OUT. NOW OF THESE TWO POSITIONS, I BELIEVE THE LATTER, THE MODIFICATION, IS THE WORST DOCTRINE. ACCORDING TO THE FIRST, HERE'S A MAN WHO IS LOST AND YOU CAN GO TO HIM AND SAY, "I'M SORRY THERE IS NOTHING FOR YOU." BUT ACCORDING TO THE SECOND MAN YOU GO TO HIM AND SAY, "THERE IS SOMETHING FOR YOU BUT YOU CAN'T HAVE IT." IT IS LIKE GOING TO A STARVING MAN WHO CRAWLS IN OFF THE DESERT, HUNGRY AND THIRSTY AND DYING, AND A MAN GOES AND SAYS, "THERE IS A BIG BANQUET INSIDE, BUT THERE IS NOTHING FOR YOU. I'M SORRY." BUT THE SECOND POSITION GOES TO THIS HUNGRY, THIRSTY, DYING MAN AND SAYS, "THERE IS A GREAT BIG FEAST IN HERE AND IT IS FOR YOU." YOU GET HIS HOPES ALL BUILT UP AND THEN SAY, "BUT YOU CAN'T HAVE IT." SO THE MODIFICATION IS REALLY WORSE THAN THE DOCTRINE WHICH IT ATTEMPTS TO MODIFY. BOTH OF THEM ARE WRONG BECAUSE THE ATONEMENT IS NOT LIMITED. NEITHER IS THE APPLICATION OF THE ATONEMENT LIMITED SO THAT SOME CANNOT HAVE IT APPLIED TO THEM. LISTEN TO II PETER 2:1.

(THESE ARE PASSAGES WHICH SHOW THAT THE DEATH OF CHRIST IS FOR ALL, EVEN THOSE WHO ARE CONSIDERED AS LOST.) "BUT THERE WERE FALSE PROPHETS ALSO AMONG THE PEOPLE, EVEN AS THERE SHALL BE FALSE TEACHERS AMONG YOU, WHO PRIVILY SHALL DENY THE LORD THAT BOUGHT THEM, AND BRING UPON THEMSELVES SWIFT DESTRUCTION." HERE ARE INDIVIDUALS WHO DENY THE MASTER, BUT PETER SAID THEY DENY THE MASTER THAT BOUGHT THEM. HE DIED FOR THEM. THE ATONEMENT WAS NOT LIMITED. 1 JOHN 2:2, "AND HE IS THE PROPITIATION FOR OUR SINS; AND NOT FOR OURS ONLY, BUT ALSO FOR THE SINS OF THE WHOLE WORLD." 1 TIMOTHY 2:6, "WHO GAVE HIMSELF A RANSOM FOR ALL." TITUS 2:11, "FOR THE GRACE OF GOD THAT BRINGETH SALVATION HATH APPEARED TO ALL MEN." THE ATONEMENT IS GENERAL, IT IS NOT LIMITED.

NOW WE HAVE SAID THAT EVERY ACT THAT GOD HAS DONE HAS BEEN DONE IN RELATIONSHIP TO HIS PURPOSE FOR MANKIND. NOW WHAT IS GOD'S PURPOSE FOR MANKIND? GOD'S PURPOSE FOR MANKIND IS DISCERNED IN BOTH THE O.T. AND N.T. FROM THE BEGINNING OF TIME IT STRIKES US THAT THE PURPOSE OF GOD IS NOT LIMITED, BUT WORLDWIDE IN ITS SCOPE. CERTAINLY THIS IS TRUE AS WE READ SCRIPTURE THAT THE CHOICE OF GOD SOMETIMES NARROWS ITSELF DOWN THROUGH MAN. WE MUST ALWAYS LOOK AT THESE CHOICES NOT AS ENDS IN THEMSELVES, BUT AS MEANS TO THE LARGER END OF ACCOMPLISHING GOD'S ETERNAL PURPOSE. LET'S LOOK AT SOME OF THEM IN THE O.T. AS SOON AS MAN IS CAST OUT OF THE GARDEN, GOD GIVES HIM HOPE IN GENESIS 3:15. THEN THERE IS A CHOSING OF SETH OVER AGAINST THE LINE OF CAIN FOR IT IS SAID, "THEN BEGAN MEN TO CALL ON THE NAME OF JEHOVAH." GENESIS 4:26. THE NEXT ELECTION IS THAT OF NOAH AND HIS FAMILY AS THE CHANNEL THROUGH WHICH GOD'S BLESSINGS ARE GOING TO COME TO THE WORLD, GENESIS 6:8. FROM NOAH'S FAMILY ONE IS CHOSEN, SHEM. AND FROM THE SHEMITES ONE IS CHOSEN. ABRAHAM IS SELECTED AND GOD'S REMARK TO ABRAHAM DISCLOSES HIS PROPOSED WILL TOWARD MANKIND. LISTEN TO IT FROM GENESIS 12:3. "AND I WILL MAKE OF THEE A GREAT NATION, AND I WILL BLESS THEE, AND MAKE THY NAME GREAT; AND THOU SHALT BE A BLESSING; AND I WILL BLESS THEM THAT BLESS THEE, AND CURSE HIM THAT CURSETH THEE; AND IN THEE SHALL ALL FAMILIES OF THE EARTH BE BLESSED." YOU SEE GOD'S PURPOSE IN CHOSING SETH AND IN CHOSING NOAH AND IN CHOSING SHEM AND IN CHOSING ABRAHAM WAS NOT ONE THAT WAS LIMITED IN SCOPE BUT WAS FOR THE EXPRESS PURPOSE OF BRINGING A BLESSING TO ALL MANKIND. FROM ABRAHAM'S SONS ISAAC WAS CHOSEN AND FROM ISAAC'S SONS, JACOB WAS CHOSEN AND JACOB BECAME ISRAEL, AND NATIONAL ISRAEL BECAME GOD'S ELECT, THE ONES THROUGH WHOM HE WAS TO BESTOW HIS FAVOR UPON THE WORLD IN THE COMING OF JESUS CHRIST. LISTEN TO THESE O.T. PASSAGES, EZEKIEL 20:5. "THUS SAITH THE LORD GOD, IN THE DAY WHEN I CHOSE ISRAEL, AND LIFTED UP MINE HAND UNTO THE SEED OF THE HOUSE OF JACOB." PSALM 105:6, "O YE SEED OF ABRAHAM HIS SERVANT, YE CHILDREN OF JACOB. HIS CHOSEN." GOD CHOSE ISRAEL, YET THE UNIVERSAL SWEEP OF ISRAEL'S CALL CANNOT BE OVERLOOKED, FOR IF WE OVERLOOK THE UNIVERSAL SWEEP OF ISRAEL'S CALL, WE MISS THE VERY PURPOSE FOR WHICH GOD CALLED THEM. IN ISAIAH 49:6 ISAIAH SAID, "I WILL ALSO GIVE THEE FOR A LIGHT TO THE GENTILES, THAT THOU MAYEST BE MY SALVATION UNTO THE END OF THE EARTH." GOD, WHY DID YOU CHOSE ISRAEL? WHY DID YOU WANT THEM TO BE EXCLUSIVE? GOD CHOSE ISRAEL TO BE EXCLUSIVE IN ORDER THAT THEY MIGHT ACCOMPLISH GOD'S ALL INCLUSIVE PURPOSE OF SENDING REDEMPTION AND SALVATION TO THE ENTIRE WORLD.

BUT NOT ONLY IS GOD'S PURPOSE FOR MANKIND DISCERNED IN THE O.T., GOD'S PURPOSE FOR MANKIND IS DISCERNED IN THE N.T. IT IS DISCERNED IN THE INCARNATION AND IN THE ATONEMENT OF JESUS CHRIST. IN LUKE 2:29-32 SIMEON IS SPEAKING. HE SAID, "LORD, NOW LETTEST THOU THY SERVANT DEPART IN PEACE, ACCORDING TO THY WORD; FOR MINE EYES HAVE SEEN THY SALVATION, WHICH THOU HAST PREPARED BEFORE THE FACE OF ALL PEOPLE: A LIGHT TO LIGHTEN THE GENTILES, AND THE GLORY OF THY PEOPLE ISRAEL." SIMEON HAD BEEN LOOKING FOR THE COMING OF MESSIAH AND HE WAS NOT TO DIE UNTIL MESSIAH CAME, AND HE SAID HERE, "I HAVE SEEN MESSIAH INCARNATE. I HAVE SEEN HIM WHO WAS COME TO BE A LIGHT TO THE GENTILES." WE HAVE ALREADY SEEN THAT EVERY STATEMENT RELATIVE TO THE PURPOSE OF THE ATONEMENT AS IT RELATES TO MANKIND SHOWS THAT THE ATONEMENT IS UNIVERSAL AND NOT LIMITED. WE FIND ALSO THAT IN THE N.T. GOD'S PURPOSE FOR MANKIND IS SEEN IN THE HISTORY AND THE TEACHING OF THE EARLY CHURCH. INDEED THIS IS ONE OF THE GREAT STRUGGLES THAT WE SEE BEING CARRIED ON IN THE EARLY CHURCH IN THE BOOK OF ACTS. ON THE ONE HAND THERE WERE THOSE WHO SAID THE GOSPEL WAS FOR THE JEWS AND WAS TO BE LIMITED TO THE JEWS. ON THE OTHER HAND THERE WERE THOSE

WHO SAID THAT THERE WAS NO LIMITATION TO THE GOSPEL AND THE GOSPEL WAS TO GO TO EVERY MAN. THIS STRUGGLE WAS NOT REALLY SOLVED UNTIL A MIRACLE CAME TO PETER IN THE TENTH CHAPTER OF ACTS AND UNTIL THEY HAD AN INSPIRED MESSAGE IN THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER WHICH SAID, "LET THE GENTILE BRETHREN INTO THE CHURCH OF GOD." IN FACT, WHEN WE TURN TO THE EPHESIAN LETTER WE FIND THAT THE MYSTERY WHICH HAD UNTIL THE TIME OF THE GOSPEL DISPENSATION BEEN HIDDEN, WHICH HAD BEEN HIDDEN PAUL SAID THROUGH ALL OF THE AGES AND WAS NOW MADE KNOWN, WAS THE FACT THAT THE GOSPEL WAS FOR THE GENTILE AS WELL AS FOR THE JEW. THE GENTILE, ACCORDING TO PAUL IN EPHESIANS 3, IS FELLOW HEIR, IS A FELLOW MEMBER OF THE BODY AND IS FELLOW PARTAKER OF THE PROMISE IN CHRIST JESUS THROUGH THE GOSPEL. EPHESIANS 3:4-13.

BUT NOW WHILE THIS IS GOD'S PURPOSE FOR MANKIND, WHAT IS GOD'S PURPOSE FOR THE INDIVIDUAL? IT CAN READILY BE SEEN, I BELIEVE, THAT GOD'S DEALING WITH THE INDIVIDUAL CAN BEST BE UNDERSTOOD, AND IT CAN ONLY BE UNDERSTOOD, IN CONTEXT WITH GOD'S LARGER PLAN FOR THE WHOLE WORLD. WHEN WE BEGIN TO SEE GOD'S PURPOSE FOR THE WHOLE WORLD IN JESUS CHRIST, THEN, AS WE LOOK BACK ON THE ACTS THAT GOD TOOK IN ORDER TO BRING TO FRUITION HIS REDEMPTIVE SCHEME IN JESUS CHRIST, MANY OF THE CHOICES WHICH SEEMED AT THE TIME TO BE ARBITRARY, PROVE TO BE MOST GRACIOUS ACTS RELATED TO HIS RIGHTEOUS PURPOSE FOR ALL MANKIND. GOD FORESEES, AS FAR AS THE INDIVIDUAL IS CONCERNED, THE FAITH OF THE BELIEVER. WHEN DOES GOD SEE IT? WHEN DOES GOD CHOOSE? WHEN DOES GOD ELECT? I DON'T BELIEVE THAT GOD CAN CHOOSE AFTER MAN, FOR IF GOD CHOOSES AFTER MAN THAT WOULD MAKE MAN SUPERIOR TO GOD. I DON'T BELIEVE THAT GOD CAN CHOOSE ALONG WITH MAN, FOR IF GOD CHOOSES ALONG WITH MAN, THAT WOULD MAKE GOD DEPENDANT UPON MAN. GOD MUST CHOOSE MAN BEFORE MAN CHOOSES GOD. FOR IT IS ONLY WHEN GOD CHOOSES MAN BEFORE MAN CHOOSES GOD THAT THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD CAN BE MAINTAINED.

THIS IS THE CLEAR TEACHING OF SCRIPTURE, EPHESIANS 1:4 "ACCORDING AS HE HATH CHOSEN US IN HIM BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD," II TIMOTHY 1:9, "WHO HATH SAVED US, AND CALLED US WITH AN HOLY CALLING, NOT ACCORDING TO OUR WORKS, BUT ACCORDING TO HIS OWN PURPOSE AND GRACE WHICH WAS GIVEN US IN CHRIST JESUS BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN." NOW IF THOSE PASSAGES SAY ANYTHING, THEY SAY THAT WE HAVE BEEN CHOSEN IN GOD BEFORE WE HAVE CHOSEN GOD. BUT NOW DOES THIS MEAN THAT, THOUGH MAN IS CHOSEN OF GOD BEFORE MAN CHOOSES GOD, THAT THIS CHOICE IS ARBITRARY, THAT THIS CHOICE IS OF SUCH A NATURE AND EXERCISED IN SUCH A MANNER THAT MAN CANNOT RESIST IT? I BELIEVE NOT. I BELIEVE THE TEACHING OF SCRIPTURE TO BE LIKEWISE CLEAR UPON THIS EVERY INDICATION OF SCRIPTURE IS THAT EACH PERSON ENTERS INTO LIFE, OR, CONTRARIWISE, EACH PERSON ENTERS INTO CONDEMNATION ACCORDING TO THE RESPONSE THAT HE MAKES TO THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST. THE RESPONSE THAT HE MAKES TO THE GOSPEL IS STILL DEPENDENT UPON GOD, BECAUSE, AS WE HAVE SEEN, GOD HAD TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE IN PROVIDING A WAY WHEREBY MAN COULD BE SAVED. WHAT WE ARE SAYING IS THAT GOD ELECTS, BUT THAT IN GOD'S ELECTION, HE DOES ABROGATE, HE DOES NOT OVERRULE, HE DOES NOT NEGATE THE FREEDOM OF MAN, MAN'S RIGHT OF CHOICE WAS BESTOWED UPON HIM AT CREATION, NOT AT THE FALL. HE HAD THE RIGHT AT CREATION AND NOT EVEN THE FALL HAS TAKEN AWAY FROM MAN THE RIGHT TO EXERCISE THE FREE MORAL AGENCY THAT GOD GAVE TO HIM. GOD WILL NOT, GOD DOES NOT, EXERCISE HIMSELF IN SUCH WAYS AS TO ANNUL THE FREE MORAL AGENCY OF MAN.

ALL THE WRITERS OF THE N.T. CONSISTENTLY ASSUME FREEDOM ON THE PART OF MAN AND MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY TO THE INVITATION OF THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST. INDEED THE PRIMARY AND CONTINUING APPEAL TO REPENTANCE AND FAITH IN THE WORD OF GOD PRESUPPOSES FREEDOM OF CHOICE AND OF CONDUCT ON THE PART OF MAN. EVERY APPEAL THAT THE SCRIPTURE MAKES TO MAN, APPEALS TO MAN AS A MORAL, AS A SPIRITUAL, AND AS A PERSONAL BEING. EVERY APPEAL THAT THE SCRIPTURE MAKES TO MAN IS ONE THAT SEEKS TO PERSUADE MAN AND NOT TO COERCE HIM. GOD SEEKS TO PERSUADE MAN NOT THROUGH THE IRRESISTIBLE EXERCISE OF HIS ETERNAL SPIRIT, BUT HE SEEKS TO PERSUADE MAN THROUGH THE DULY APPOINTED MEANS--THROUGH THE DEATH OF JESUS, THROUGH THE REVELATION OF THAT DEATH AND ITS BENEFITS THAT WE HAVE IN HIS ETERNAL WORD, THROUGH CHRISTIANS AS JESUS LIVES IN THEM AND AS THEY LIVE IN HIM AND AS INDIVIDUALS LOOKING AT CHRISTIANS SEE THEM AS A LIGHT IN A DARK WORLD. ALL OF THESE ARE MEANS BY WHICH GOD SEEKS TO PERSUADE MEN TO BECOME, BY THEM

FREE CHOICE, CHRISTIANS. IN JOHN 16:8-11 WE FIND THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT CAME CONVICT OF SIN, AND OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND OF JUDGMENT. THIS IS SIMPLY SAYING THAT GOD WHEN HE COMES THROUGH THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT, AS HE EXERCISES HIS APPEAL THROUGH THE WORD, SEEKS TO APPEAL TO THE WHOLE OF MAN--TO HIS EMOTIONS, TO HIS INTELLECT, AND TO HIS WILL.

ALSO, LET US NOT FORGET THAT GOD, IN HIS ELECTION, ELECTS ONLY TO SALVATION. GOD DOES NOT ELECT TO DAMNATION. GOD DOES NOT ELECT ANY MAN TO BE ETERNALLY LOST. GOD'S WILL--WE'VE READ IT SEVERAL TIMES, (II PETER 3:9)--IS "THAT ALL MEN SHOULD COME TO REPENTANCE." MEN MAY PERISH, BUT THEY WILL NOT PERISH BECAUSE GOD DESIRES IT OR HAS PREDETERMINED IT. IN ROMANS 10:1 PAUL PRAYED THAT HIS FELLOW ISRAELITES MIGHT BE SAVED. HE SAID, "BRETHREN, MY HEART'S DESIRE AND PRAYER TO GOD FOR ISRAEL IS, THAT THEY MIGHT BE SAVED." WHY, PAUL? IF GOD HAS ALREADY PREDESTINED SOME OF THEM TO ETERNAL DAMNATION, SHOULD YOU BE CONCERNED? THE APOSTLE PETER IN II PETER 1:10 WROTE TO CHRISTIANS AND SAID, "MAKE YOUR CALLING AND ELECTION SURE." WHY BE WORRIED ABOUT IT IF IT IS ALREADY PREDETERMINED AND CERTAIN BY THE ETERNAL DECREE OF GOD?

GOD ELECTS MEN TO SALVATION NOT TO DAMNATION AND TONIGHT IF YOU ARE LOST, IT IS NOT BECAUSE GOD WILLS IT. AND IF TONIGHT YOU ARE LOST, IT IS NOT BECAUSE GOD HAS ORDAINED THAT NOTHING WILL BE ABLE TO BE DONE FOR YOU. IF YOU ARE LOST TONIGHT, IT IS BECAUSE YOU HAVE UNTIL THIS MOMENT OF TIME BY YOUR OWN CHOICE TURNED YOUR BACK UPON JESUS AND HIS WORK UPON THE CROSS. IT IS BECAUSE EVERY APPEAL THAT GOD HAS MADE TO YOU THROUGH THE MANIFESTATION OF HIS LOVE SEEN AT ITS ZENITH IN JESUS CHRIST, THROUGH THE ATONING BENEFITS OF THE BLOOD OF JESUS, THROUGH EVERY APPEAL THAT CAN BE MADE THROUGH HIS WORD TO YOUR SPIRIT, YOUR SOUL, YOUR EMOTIONS AND YOUR WILL, YOU HAVE CHOSEN TO REJECT. THEY HAVE GONE FOR NAUGHT. TONIGHT, THAT CAN ALL BE CHANGED. IT CAN CHANGE BY AN ACT OF PURE WILL, BY YOUR SAYING, "NO LONGER AM I GOING TO REFUSE, NO LONGER AM I GOING TO REJECT. NO LONGER AM I GOING TO SAY NO TO GOD. I AM GOING TO SAY, 'YES, GOD.'" I AM GOING TO SAY, "YES, I KNOW YOU LOVE ME." I AM GOING TO SAY, "YES, I KNOW JESUS DIED FOR ME. I AM GOING TO SAY, 'YES, BECAUSE I KNOW THAT THE INVITATION OF JESUS IS NOT LIMITED BUT IS TO 'WHOSOEVER WILL LET HIM COME,' AND I WILL, I'M COMING!'" WOULD YOU, WHILE WE STAND AND WHEN WE SING?