

EXCERPTS FROM

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THE LINK

North Road Chapel (Evangelical)

BIDEFORD

Internet Edition

EFFECTUAL CALLING

(Part 1)

The Last four editions of THE LINK have carried articles on 'HUMAN DEPRAVITY', 'ELECTION' and 'THE EXTENT OF THE ATONEMENT' in which it has been shown from the Scriptures that the work of God in salvation is PREDETERMINED, as are all His ways? "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world" (Acts 15:18). In nothing is the God of heaven HAPHAZARD. He, "worketh all things after the counsel of His own will" (Eph. 1:11). He is sovereign, and all things move to their appointed goal. "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: ... I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it" (Isaiah 46:10-11).

In the execution of His eternal counsel, no power on earth or in hell can thwart, hinder, or deter. "He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, what doest thou?" (Dan.4:35). The EVERLASTING COVENANT is ordered in ALL things and SURE (Cf. 2 Sam.23:5 - Isaiah 55:3 - Jer.32:40 - Ps. 89:34-35).

In view of the fact that the Church was "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father" (1 Peter 1:2), and chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world (Cf. Eph.1:4), and that Christ the Mediator and Head of all that number, acting as surety for them, fulfilling all righteousness, and bearing the curse and judgment to the full, which ransom price a thrice Holy God accepted at the bar of Divine justice, it must logically follow that all the benefits of the Father's election, and the fruits of the Son's atonement, be made real and actual to all for whom it was designed. However, whilst this assumption is logical, it also must be proved to be Biblical, as was the case with the doctrine of Human Depravity, Election, and the Extent of Atonement.

Popular Arminian gospel preaching declares that God has done His part in providing a remedy for sin, now it is up to the sinner to decide whether or not he will avail himself of it. Such preaching is a negation of 'TOTAL DEPRAVITY': it completely eliminates 'ELECTION': it makes an absolute nonsense of 'ATONEMENT' - that glorious

FINISHED work of the Redeemer which is not only efficacious, but it is emancipating. It has effected a full SATISFACTION to God and it LIBERATES the captive from the bondage of Satan. "By the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water" (Zech.9:11).

How then is one to preach? This is the question asked by many. Others foolishly say: "What is the point of preaching at all, for if this Covenant of Grace is so watertight, then all the elect will be saved in any case". Such reasoning shows a pathetic ignorance of the Holy Scriptures. God who has designed the end of the sinner's salvation has also designed the means for its accomplishment.

Having considered previously, the election of the Father, and the redemption of the Son, we now look at the work of the Holy Spirit; for in the economy of Redemption all three Persons of the Godhead are active, and all work in absolute harmony. Elect of God the Father, sprinkled by the blood of Jesus Christ, sanctified by the Holy Spirit (Cf. 1 Peter 1:2).

As the work of Christ in atonement was within the orbit of the Father's sovereign election, so the work of the Holy Spirit in effectual calling is within the orbit of the Son's work of atonement. (This is not to say that the Holy Spirit of God is not engaged in any other work; for He is). But in the matter of EFFECTUAL CALLING - that is, making good to sinners all the benefits of the Covenant of Grace - it is within the confines of ELECTION and ATONEMENT.

To hold the view that the Holy Spirit is doing His best in trying to influence and persuade men to trust in Christ, is not only a foolish notion but is a concept of the Third Person of the Trinity which is so dishonouring as to be well-nigh blasphemous. Is not the Holy Spirit God himself? Is He in any way inferior to either Father or Son? Is not the Holy Spirit all POWERFUL and INVINCIBLE? Are we to understand that He is oftentimes thwarted in His purpose or defeated in His objective? NEVER! let it be categorically stated that when the Holy Spirit of God works upon the heart of an ELECT soul, His power will be IRRESISTIBLE. It may not be immediate or instantaneous, but such will be

regenerated and ultimately brought to repentance and faith: "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil.1:6).

However far a sinner may have gone into the 'far country' - for remember, even elect souls are: "by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (Eph.2:3) - yet, when the rod of God's strength is put forth out of Zion ... men are made willing in the day of His power (Cf. Psalm 110:2-3), and God is found of them that sought Him not (Cf. Isaiah 65:1).

In the INITIAL working of the Holy Spirit in regeneration there is NO CO-OPERATION of the sinner whatsoever. The Third Person of the Trinity works directly upon the heart of a man and changes it's spiritual condition: "I will put a new spirit within you and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh" (Ezek.11:19) - "It is not of him that willeth...but of God that showeth mercy" (Rom.9:16) - "For it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of HIS GOOD PLEASURE" (Phil.2:13).

This, of course, does not mean to say that man does not co-operate in later stages, for it is quite evident from the Scriptures that he does; but in the initial stages of regeneration and new birth, as in the natural, so in the spiritual, the person born is passive. "Salvation is of the Lord" (Jonah 2:9).

Seeing then that this is an operation of Divine power, is it an act which will automatically come upon all God's elect? If it is not, what means has the Almighty devised to bring it about? This is to be the subject of the following section.

(Part 2)

The God of heaven has ordained that His truth be declared throughout all nations: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15).

It is undeniably taught in the Word of God that there is a call in the gospel which is NOT EFFICACIOUS. This is sometimes called an "external call" or "the general call". The Lord himself set this out very clearly: for example,

the parable of the great supper (Luke 14:16-24) - the parable of the marriage feast (Matt.22:1-24) which concludes: "MANY are CALLED, but FEW are CHOSEN".

In obedience to the great commission given to the Church by the Head himself, His servants are to preach ALL TRUTH among ALL NATIONS (Cf. Matt.28:19-20). Part of this truth is 'REDEMPTION'. This is to be set forth clearly in ALL its aspects - God's eternal plan; the finished work of Christ; and the transforming operation of the Holy Spirit. However, the mere presentation of the doctrine of redemption does not constitute all the gospel, for in it there is also A CALL. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money: come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price" (Isaiah 55:1) - "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth" (Isaiah 45:22) - "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt.11:28). The Hyper-Calvinist will say that such invitations as this can only be issued to 'CONCERNED' sinners - those who they would say show signs of election. The parables of the marriage feast (Matt.22:2-8) and the great supper (Luke 14:6-24) completely destroy such a theory, as do also, such Scriptures as Proverbs 1:24-26, where it is clearly stated that the Lord called sinners who had no regard or concern whatsoever.

Hyper-Calvinists who oppose the invitation and general call of the gospel are as much in error as the Arminian with his universal atonement and human decisionism.

It is the Church's mandate to preach the gospel and to CALL sinners to repentance and faith. The pros and cons of election are not to enter into our thinking or to deter us in any way in this; for no man knoweth who the elect are, only the Lord knoweth His sheep (Cf. John 10:14-15). Even so, He himself, though omniscient, and knowing ALL things, issued the GENERAL CALL: "Repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:15). Again, the Hyper-Calvinist will retort by saying, "because of TOTAL DEPRAVITY man is unable to repent. This may be so, but it is no more unreasonable for God to require repentance than it is for Him to demand obedience to His holy law. The fact that man has become totally depraved by virtue of the fall of his

federal head, Adam, in no way releases him from his responsibility to God and to His law.

Should any be asking the question: "why does God require the gospel to be preached indiscriminately with a general call to all?" the answer is twofold,

1. In this way God maintains His claim on the sinner. It is the absolute right of the Creator so to do. The fact that man is now incapable of rendering complete obedience to his rightful sovereign in no way abrogates the Creator's claim on the creature, or releases the creature from his responsibility to the Creator. The RIGHT of God to demand absolute obedience REMAINS, and He asserts that right in both the law and the gospel. Therefore, the sinner who does not heed the call to repentance but disregards and slights still further the just claims of God in such a call, so increases his guilt and becomes more hardened. In this the preacher becomes a saviour of death unto death (2 Cor.2:16).

2. By the universal proclamation of the gospel and the general call, the Holy Spirit gathers out from the nations of the earth, the elect. This is the Divinely appointed means to accomplish the decreed end. The preacher must of necessity be general in his preaching, for he cannot identify the elect in their unregenerate state. These are the secret things which belong unto Jehovah. This does not mean, however, that he is to convey to his hearers the thought that Christ died for EACH ONE, neither is he to give any kind of assurance that God intends to save ALL men. Therefore, his message is addressed in general terms: he does not say, "Christ died for YOU"; rather does he say: "Christ died for SINNERS"; calling men to repentance and to believe the gospel, fully assuring them that: "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:21).

The Arminian type of preacher can be heard to say: "I could not preach like that: if I had to watch so closely my phraseology I should have no liberty." One quite understands this, for, where there is little concept of doctrine, thinking is shallow, and phraseology becomes loose; and although it may not be Intentional there is a careless use of language which can not only be misleading, but completely erroneous. The person concerned may in

himself feel absolute freedom in his preaching, but this is NOT the liberty of the Holy Spirit of God.

A preacher must first concern himself with DOCTRINE, for primarily he is the declarer of GOD'S TRUTH: then, he must choose out 'acceptable words' and so coin his phraseology to the end THAT TRUTH BE CONVEYED to the hearers, and in no way DISTORTED. He is not to put Christ up on 'OFFER' to all men; rather is he to PRESENT Christ in all the wonder of His person, and the perfection of His work for sinners, and then CALL upon them to REPENT and BELIEVE.

As has already been stated ALL TRUTH must be preached. Again, many will say that these subjects, such as election, predestination, effectual calling, etc. are only for believers and should never be mentioned to the unsaved, for they would confuse and mislead. Such are in direct conflict with the Lord himself; for in one of His great discourses to a very mixed audience, He said: "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" - "No man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father" (John 6:37 & 65). What is this if it be not ELECTION and EFFECTUAL CALLING? No preacher is to pigeon-hole TRUTH.

Others argue that in the light of HUMAN DEPRAVITY and man's TOTAL inability to repent, believe, and turn to Christ for he is DEAD in trespasses and in sins, is it not a nonsense, or even a mockery to call them to REPENTANCE and FAITH? The answer is a firm NO for we are never to assume that a person is reprobate or non-elect; and whilst all ARE DEAD, yet, in the issuing of the GENERAL CALL, if elect souls are there and the time of EFFECTUAL CALLING has come, then the Holy Spirit will be so present as was the Lord at the grave of Lazarus. It was impossible for Lazarus in his condition to hear, let alone obey the command given, for he was dead, yea, even corrupt. Yet, the one who was behind the call to 'come forth', immediately gave the LIFE and the ABILITY so to do. No preacher must withhold any aspect of TRUTH or fail in his responsibility to apply the message to his hearers, and CALL sinners to repentance.

Through this divinely ordained medium of preaching, it pleases God to save them that believe (Cf. 1 Cor.1:21). It is conceded that on occasions men are truly converted

apart from preaching. In this God is Sovereign and He can and will bring ALL His elect to salvation, and apart from rare exceptions it is 'through the foolishness of preaching'. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God' (Rom.10:17).

It is when the Word of God is preached and that Word applied by the mighty power of the Holy Spirit that men are saved and delivered from sin and bondage. This is EFFECTUAL CALLING, it is the INVINCIBLE work of the Third Person of the Godhead, it is not a decision of the will of man, for it is an IRRESISTIBLE CALL, it is a calling "ACCORDING TO GOD'S PURPOSE" (Rom.8:28). In His eternal counsel, God has elected and chosen certain persons whom He will call; He has fixed the time when He will call them, and the place from which He will call them, as at Corinth, Ephesus, etc. He has appointed the means of their calling, and will providentially order the circumstances that it shall be infallibly accomplished. Why was Paul bidden to remain at Corinth? "For I have much people in this city" (Acts 18:10) not yet EFFECTUALLY CALLED; nevertheless, God says, "they are His", His by virtue of ELECTION.

This aspect is further wonderfully illustrated in the account of the Ethiopian eunuch, in Acts Chapter 8. Philip was so controlled, and his movements ordered, that he was on the spot in the desert at precisely the right time to explain the truth of the gospel, for the time of EFFECTUAL CALLING had arrived for another elect soul, and the Ethiopian was, brought from darkness into light, and from the power of Satan unto God (Gf. Acts 26,18).

The truth is further exemplified in Acts Chapter 16. Paul plans to go into Asia and Bithynia but the Spirit suffered him not. The providential hand of God directed him to Philippi and upon arrival at that city, by the river side, there was a certain woman named Lydia who heard the words of Paul and Silas - THE GENERAL CALL - whose heart the Lord opened - THE INVINCIBLE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT - and she attended unto the things that were spoken of Paul - EFFECTUAL CALLING.

Yet another in that city was to be CALLED ACCORDING TO GOD'S PURPOSE. In the providence of the Almighty God this was to take His two servants into prison, for at midnight

the hour of effectual calling would strike for the jailor at Philippi, and God wanted His servants there to make known His Truth. So, two preachers are shackled in a human prison in order that a prison governor be released from the chains and bondage of the spiritual dungeon of Satan: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out" (Rom.11:33).

It makes no difference who or where God's chosen ones are: at the appointed time the Lord will make bare His holy arm and men shall see His salvation, even to the ends of the earth (Cf. Isaiah 52:10). So it is, that at the last, there shall be a great multitude which no man can number out of all nations and kindreds, and people, and tongues, who will stand before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands. These will cry with a loud voice, saying, SALVATION TO OUR GOD which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb (Cf. Rev.7:9-1).

No soul in heaven ever talks of having decided for Christ; all use the language of Holy Scripture: "SALVATION IS OF THE LORD" (Jonah 2:9). "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that NOT OF YOURSELVES: it is THE GIFT OF GOD" (Eph.2:8).

Every man and woman who through grace is brought into the family of God is BORN AGAIN: but it is NOT of the WILL of the flesh, NOR of the WILL OF MAN but OF GOD. It is ALL according to the sovereign purpose of election, through the merits of the efficacious work of Christ's atonement, and made actual and vital to us by the invincible power of the Holy Ghost.

Election, Atonement, and Effectual Calling are of equal extent, and each has reference to the same people; the objects are the same, neither more nor less. They that were chosen in eternity and redeemed by Christ at Calvary are all called in time, and every one called in time was specifically atoned for at Calvary because elected in eternity. "WHOM HE DID PREDESTINATE THEM HE ALSO CALLED" (Rom.8:30). "The vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory, even us, whom He hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles" (Rom.9:23-24).

The elect are called "according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (2 Tim.1:9).

Because of God's eternal purpose and grace given to the elect in Christ before the world began, there is a sense in which they are preserved, NOT SAVED, for as are all Adam's posterity, the elect are born in sin and under the sentence of death - CONDEMNED ALREADY - until regeneration takes place. Nevertheless, in the providence of God such are preserved: "Them that are sanctified by God the Father, and PRESERVED in Jesus Christ, and called" (Jude v.1).

Those set apart (sanctified) by the Father are seen to be in Christ and will be preserved unto the day of EFFECTUAL CALLING. This is not only logical - it is utterly Biblical; for how could it be conceived that an Almighty, Invincible, Immutable God should so choose unto Himself a company of sinful people whom the Son should become surety for, and positively atone, yet, somehow those same people should die in their sins before the Holy Spirit could get to them. Is not the thought preposterous? Indeed, it is well-nigh blasphemous, For what would have become of such attributes as Power, Immutability, Rectitude, and so on?

The elect are ALL redeemed by Christ, and EFFECTUAL CALLING is the CERTAIN consequence of it: "I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; THOU ART MINE" (Isaiah 43:1). "This is the FATHER'S WILL ... that of ALL which He hath given me I should lose NOTHING, but should raise it up again at the last day" (John 6,39).

ELECTION, PARTICULAR REDEMPTION, and EFFECTUAL CALLING - THE PLAIN TEACHING OF HOLY SCRIPTURE - STAND OR FALL TOGETHER.

W. H. Molland.

HISTORIC ARTICLES OF RELIGION

These Articles serve to show the agreement which existed between Protestant churches in past centuries, Lutheran Reformed, and Non-conformist on the subject of Free-will and Effectual Calling.

Westminster Confession of Faith 1647

"Those of mankind that are predestined unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to His eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of His will, hath chosen in Christ, unto everlasting glory, out of His mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith and good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature as conditions, or causes moving Him thereunto: and all to the praise of His glorious grace.

As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath He, by the eternal and most free purpose of His will, foreordained all the means thereto. Wherefore, they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, and redeemed in Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ by His Spirit working in due season, are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by His power, through faith, unto salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only."

The Baptist Confession of Faith 1689

OF FREE-WILL. "Man by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability or will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so, as a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able by his own strength to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto."

OF EFFECTUAL CALLING. "Those whom God hath predestined unto life, He is pleased in His appointed and accepted time, effectually to call by His Word and Spirit out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly, to understand the things of God. Taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them a heart of flesh. Renewing their wills, and by His

almighty power determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by His grace.

This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from anything at all foreseen in man nor from any power or agency in the creature; being wholly passive therein, being dead in sins and trespasses, until being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it, and that by no less power than that which raised up Christ from the dead."

The Book of Common Prayer - Articles of Religion 1562

"Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) He hath constantly decreed by His counsel secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom He hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour. Wherefore they which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God be called according to God's purpose by His Spirit working in due season; they through grace obey the calling; they be justified freely; they be made sons of God by adoption; they be made like the image of His only begotten Son Jesus Christ; they walk religiously in good works, and at length, by God's mercy they attain to everlasting felicity."

A Declaration of the Faith and Practice of The Church of Christ at Horsley Down, under the Pastoral Care of John Gill. Early 1700's.

iii. We believe that, before the world began, God did elect a certain number of men unto everlasting salvation, whom He did predestinate to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, of His own free grace, and according to the good pleasure of His will, and that in pursuance of this gracious design, He did contrive and make a covenant of grace and peace with His Son Jesus Christ on behalf of those persons, wherein a Saviour was appointed, and all spiritual blessings provided for them; and also that their persons, with all their grace and glory, were put into the hands of Christ and made His charge and care.

vi. We believe that, that eternal redemption which Christ has obtained by the shedding of His blood is special and particular, that is to say, that it was only intentionally designed for the elect of God, and the sheep of Christ, who only share the special and peculiar blessings of it.

vii. We believe that the justification of God's elect is only by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, without the consideration of any works of righteousness done by them; and that the full and free pardoning of all their sins and transgressions, past, present, and to come, is only through the blood of Christ according to the riches of His grace.

viii. We believe that the work of regeneration, conversion, sanctification, and faith, is not an act of man's free-will and power, but of the mighty, efficacious, and irresistible grace of God.

The Augsburg Confession - Article 18. 1530

"Concerning free-will it is taught that to some extent man has freedom of will to lead a just and honourable life, to choose between things which reason comprehends; but without grace, assistance, and the operation of the Holy Spirit, he is unable to become pleasing to God, or to fear God in heart, or to believe in Him or to cast out of his heart the innate evil propensity; but these things are effected through the Holy Spirit alone."

The Concordlae Formulae 1577

"It is rightly said that in conversion, God through the drawing of the Holy Spirit, makes willing men out of the obstinate and unwilling; and that after such conversion the regenerated will of man does not remain inactive in the daily exercise of repentance, but co-operates in all the works of the Holy Spirit which He performs through us."

The Helvetic Confession 1566

Making it clear that the natural man has no free-will to choose spiritual good, the article adds: "In regeneration the understanding is enlightened by the Holy Spirit to understand both the mysteries and the will of God; and, the will itself is not only changed by the Spirit, but

also furnished with powers both to will and to do good spontaneously."

The Scottish Confession - Article 12.

"We are so dead, so blind, so perverse, that neither can we feel when we are pricked, see light when it shines, nor assent to the will of God when it is revealed, except the Spirit of the Lord Jesus quicken that which is dead, remove the darkness from our minds, and bow our stubborn wills to the obedience of the blessed gospel."

The French Confession. 1559

"We believe that by the secret grace of the Holy Spirit we are made partakers of the light of faith, which is a gracious gift of God, and peculiar to those alone to whom God sees meet to impart it."

The Confession of Basil. 1534

"Our nature is so vitiated, and has such a propensity to sin that unless it is renewed by the Holy Spirit no man can do, or will, what is good of himself."

The Synod of Dort 1618

xi. "When God accomplishes His good pleasure, or works in them true conversion, He not only causes the gospel to be externally preached to them and powerfully illuminates their minds by His Holy Spirit that they may rightly understand and discern the things of the Spirit of God; but by the efficacy of the same regenerating Spirit He pervades the inmost recesses of the man; He opens the closed and softens the hardened heart, and circumcises that which was uncircumcised; infuses new qualities into the will which though heretofore dead, He quickens; from being evil, disobedient, refractory, He renders it good, obedient and pliable, actuates and strengthens it, that like a good tree, it may bring forth the fruits of good actions."

xii. "This is the regeneration so highly celebrated in Scripture and denominated a new creation, a resurrection from the dead, a making alive, which God works in us without our aid. But this is nowise effected merely by the external preaching of the gospel, by moral suasion or such mode of operation that after God has performed His part,

it still remains in the power of man to be regenerated or not; to be converted or to continue unconverted; but it is evidently A SUPERNATURAL WORK, most powerful and at the same time most delightful, astonishing, mysterious and ineffable; not inferior in efficacy to creation or the resurrection from the dead, as the Scripture declares. So that all in whose hearts God works in this marvellous manner are certainly, infallibly, and effectually regenerated and do believe. Whereupon the will thus renewed is not only actuated and influenced by God, but in consequence of this influence becomes itself active. Wherefore, also, man is himself rightly said to believe and repent by virtue of the grace received."

xiv. "Faith is therefore to be considered as the gift of God, not on account of it's being offered by God to man to be accepted or rejected at his pleasure, but because it is in reality conferred, breathed, and infused into him; not even because God bestows the power or ability to believe and then expects that man should by the exercise of his own free-will consent to the terms of salvation, and actually believe in Christ; but because He who works in man both to will and to do, and indeed all things in all PRODUCES BOTH THE WILL TO BELIEVE AND THE ACT OF BELIEVING also."

THE WRITINGS OF GREAT THEOLOGIANS

Martin Luther 1483-1546

"Before the conversion of a man there are two efficient causes found, namely, THE HOLY SPIRIT, and THE WORD OF GOD as the instrument of the Holy Spirit through which He effects conversion and which man is to hear; he cannot however give credence to it and accept it through his own powers, but EXCLUSIVELY through the grace and operation of God the Holy Spirit."

"In divine and spiritual things we have no free-will, but only in name."

"'Free-will' is a mere empty term in that every thing which we do is done from necessity under the bondage of Sin ... 'Free-will' having once lost its liberty is compulsively bound to the service of sin, and cannot do anything good. I from these words, can understand nothing else than that 'Free-will' is a mere empty term, whose reality is lost; and a lost liberty, according to my grammar is no liberty at all. To give the name liberty to that which has no liberty is to give it an empty term ... 'Free-will', without the grace of God is absolutely not free, but, immutably the servant and bond-slave of evil."

"The Spirit of God through the Word effects new birth; when the Holy Spirit has effected and accomplished this, and through His divine power and operation alone has changed and renewed the will of man, then the new will of man is an instrument and organ of God the Holy Spirit, so that it not only accepts the grace but also co-operates in subsequent works of the Holy Spirit."

"FAITH IN THE HEART PROCEEDS ONLY FROM GOD'S SPIRIT."

Francis Turretin born 1623 (Geneva).

The following is recorded of him. "As a public teacher he was faithful and undaunted, daily inflicting severe blows upon Popery, Socinianism, and Arminianism. From the pulpit he thundered against prevailing immoralities, while with many tears, he besought sinners to be reconciled to Christ."

In his work on 'THE ATONEMENT', translated from the Latin, Turretin states: "The inseparable connection between the gift of Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit bears testimony most conclusive to definite atonement. As these two gifts, the most excellent which God has bestowed on us are always in Scripture joined together as cause and effect, they must be of equal extent and go together; so that the Son is not given to acquire salvation for any others than those to whom the Spirit was given to apply the salvation procured. No reason can be assigned why the gift of the Son should be more extensive than the gift of the Holy Spirit. It is plain that the Holy Spirit is given to none but the elect. Hence, if there be any harmony between the work of the Son and that of the Holy Spirit in the economy of salvation, Christ was given to die for the

elect and for them only. 'He shall save His people from their sins' (Matt.1:21). The very expression SAVE denotes the actual communication of salvation. Christ is Jesus not only because He is willing and able to save, and because He removes all obstacles out of the way of salvation, but because He does in reality save His people, both by meritoriously acquiring salvation for them and effectually applying it to them. Such was the intention of God in sending Christ."

George Smeaton, Early 1800's

"The fact of man's inability, which Scripture everywhere asserts or implies, is to be explained by the withdrawal of the Spirit, which left him in SPIRITUAL- DEATH. Scripture therefore, in terms the most expressive, denies to man the power or ability to think a good thought (2 Cor.5:5) or to receive the things of the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 2:14) and declares that human nature is wholly turned away from God, and at enmity against Him (Rom.8:7) and this state of heart has the determining influence on the will in all religious and spiritual judgment."

Octavius Winslow. 1800's

"So far from co-operating with the Spirit in the new creation, the natural man presents every resistance and opposition to it. There is not only a passive aversion but an active resistance to the work."

A. A. Hodge. 1860

"The internal call is an exercise of Divine power upon the soul, immediate, spiritual, and supernatural, communicating a new spiritual life and thus making a new mode of spiritual activity possible. That repentance, faith, trust, hope, love, etc. are purely and simply the sinner's own acts; but as such are possible to him only in virtue of the change wrought in the moral condition of his faculties by the recreative power of God ... The act of grace which regenerates, operating within the spontaneous energies of the soul and changing their character, can neither be co-operated with nor resisted; but the instant the soul is regenerated it begins to co-operate."

"It is a part of the ministry of the Word to lay before men their fallen, miserable, lost and undone estate by nature; to open to them the nature of sin, it's pollution and guilt, and the sad consequences of it; to inform them of their incapacity to make atonement for it; and of their impotency and inability to do what is spiritually good; and of their own righteousness to justify them in the sight of God.

They are to be made acquainted that salvation is alone by Christ and not otherways. The fulness, freeness and suitableness of this salvation is to be preached to them; and the whole to be left to the Spirit of God to make application of it as He shall think fit ... When the gospel dispensation took place the Apostles of Christ were forbidden by their first commission to go to the Gentiles or to any of the cities of the Samaritans; and though upon Christ's resurrection from the dead their commission was enlarged and they were sent to preach to all nations of the world; yet before they could reach to the extent of their commission, multitudes must be dead, to whom the gospel call or the sound of it was never heard. In succeeding ages, many parts of the world have been without the preaching of the Word, and are at this day, indeed it is confined to a very small part of it. Where it is preached though many be externally called by it, yet few are chosen and internally called by the Spirit and grace of God; and as this call is of many who are not chosen, of many who are not sanctified, or that are not called with a holy calling; and so many are not saved, for it is to them the savour of death unto death.

The external call is frequently rejected, and for the most part and by the greater numbers of those that hear it ... Many that hear have an aversion to what they hear; the gospel is a hard saying to them; foolishness to some, and a stumbling block to others. Some mock and scoff at it as did the Athenians, others as the Jews contradict and blaspheme it, putting it away from them, judging themselves unworthy of eternal life; therefore it is no wonder that it becomes of no saving effect to either of these sort of persons. Indeed it is always insufficient and ineffectual of itself unto real conversion without the all-powerful and efficacious grace of God; it is when His power attends the

ministry that many believe but unless His arm is revealed, the report of the gospel will not be believed nor the call attended to.

The external ministry of the Word or the outward call is not in vain, it has its purpose. All things are for the elect's sake and particularly is this so in the ministrat-ion of the gospel which to them is the savour of life unto life. As it is the will of God that His chosen people and others should promiscuously dwell together, so He sends His gospel to them in general, and by it takes out a people for His name, calls them by His grace EFFECTUALLY, out of the world and separates them from the men of it, to be a peculiar people to Himself."

William Cunningham 1805-1861.

"Man himself is dead in sins and trespasses - utterly destitute, until his will has been renewed, of any ability to will what is good; and therefore the power which is sufficient or adequate to renew his will, must be such as certainly to overcome all obstacles, and infallibly produce the necessary change. Nothing is more common than to hear men admit the necessity of Divine grace in the work of regeneration yet who make it manifest that they attach no definite practical idea to the admission; and the cause is to be found not so much in this, that they do not in some sense believe what they admit, but that they also hold some defective and erroneous views upon the subject - some error mingled with the truth regarding it - which introduces indefiniteness and confusion into all their impressions concerning it.

Thus it is that the admission by Papists of the necessity of Divine grace in the work of regeneration, so long as they also hold that man has some natural power or freedom to will what is spiritually good, and that, in the exercise of the natural power of free-will, he actively co-operates with God in the production of the whole process, tends only to produce confusion of view, and indefiniteness of impression, in regard to the whole matter.

The doctrine of Scripture on the contrary, is fitted to produce distinct and definite impressions upon this subject, by denying to man any natural ability to will anything spiritually good, and by asserting the necessity of the renovation of the will by the sole operation of God's gracious power before any spiritual activity can be manifested - before any good volitions can be produced. Here is a clear and definite barrier interposed to men's natural tendency to magnify their own natural powers.

If men admit this, their impressions of their own utter helplessness and entire dependence upon Divine grace must be much more precise and definite than they can be upon any other thing; while the tendency of the church of Rome or of any similar doctrine, which leaves no one part of the process of regeneration to Divine grace alone, but represents man as co-operating more or less in the exercise of his natural power of free-will in the whole of the process, is to lead men to rely upon themselves, and to claim to themselves some share in everything that contributes to promote their own happiness and welfare."

Louis Berkhof 1874-1959

"Without regenerating grace no one can turn to God, and none can accept the offer of salvation apart from an efficient act of God founded on election. Yet salvation is offered in all seriousness to all who hear the gospel on condition of faith and repentance. They who are lost will have only themselves to blame."

"It is the same Word, that is heard in the external call, and that is made effective in the heart in the internal calling. Through the powerful application of the Holy Spirit the external call passes right into the internal. But while this calling is closely connected with the external call and forms a unit with it, there are certain points of differences (a) It is a calling by the Word, savingly applied by the operation of the Holy Spirit, 1 Cor 1:23-24; 1 Pet.2:9; (b) it is a powerful calling, that is, a calling that is effectual unto salvation, Acts 13:48; 1 Cor.23-24; and (c) it is without repentance, that is, it is a call that is not subject to change and that is never withdrawn, Rom.11:29."

EVANGELISM REQUIRED BY ELECTION

Occasionally it is suggested that election makes evangelism superfluous. The question is asked: 'If the decree of election is unchangeable and therefore renders the salvation of the elect completely certain, what need have they of the gospel? Will not the elect be saved whether or not they hear the evangel?'

The premise of that argumentation is altogether true. Divine election makes the salvation of the elect unalterably certain. But the conclusion drawn from that premise reveals a serious misunderstanding of the divine sovereignty as expressed in the decree of election.

While election is from everlasting, the truth may not be lost out of sight that its realization is a process in time. In that process numerous factors play a part. One of those factors is the evangel. And it is a most significant factor.

The sovereignty of God is not to be equated with His almighty power. God is indeed almighty. Significantly, the brief Apostles Creed ascribes that attribute to Him, not once, but twice. If He wished, God might by sheer force lift up His elect to heaven and likewise by sheer force thrust the non-elect down to hell. But He does nothing of the kind. Foreordination is not compulsion, nor does certainty preclude freedom. No one was ever converted to Christianity by force. Every true convert turns willingly, his willingness, to be sure, being a gift of God, bestowed in the new birth. God deals with men as rational and moral creatures, as free agents. Therefore He reasons and pleads with the unsaved through the gospel. He would 'persuade' men (2 Cor.5:H). And in the case of the elect He applies the gospel to their hearts in a saving way through the Holy Spirit.

Let no one suppose that God's sovereign decree concerns only ends, to the exclusion of means. It cannot be said too emphatically that God has foreordained all that comes to pass. 'All' embraces means as well as ends. God did not merely decree that a certain sinner would inherit eternal life, but He decreed that that sinner would receive eternal life through faith in Christ and that he would obtain faith in Christ through the gospel.

The sovereignty of God may not be construed so as to rule out the responsibility of man. Because the ablest and most learned theologians and philosophers have proved unable to reconcile divine sovereignty and human responsibility with each other before the bar of human reason, the danger is ever imminent that one of these will be stressed at the expense, even to the exclusion, of the other. But the Bible teaches both with great emphasis, and he who in humble faith accepts the Bible as the infallible Word of God, will stress mightily one as well as the other. Therefore, the preacher of the gospel must tell the sinner, not merely that salvation is by sovereign grace alone, but also that, in order to be saved, he must believe in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. On the one hand, he must proclaim that God's elect are sure to be saved; on the other hand, he must issue the warning that he who does not believe the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God will abide on him (John 3:36). Even the elect need that admonition, for it is part and parcel of God's way of bringing them to salvation.

A most significant conclusion is now warranted. Instead of rendering evangelism superfluous, election demands evangelism. All of God's elect must be saved. Not one of them may perish. And the gospel is the means by which God bestows saving faith upon them. In fact, it is the only means which God employs to that end. 'Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God' (Rom.10:17).

Here let it be observed that paradoxical though it may seem, election is universal. To be sure, election is the choice of certain persons out of a larger number to everlasting life. Thus election spells particularism. Yet, in a real sense election is universal. God has His elect in every nation and also in every age. The church consists of 'elect from every nation', and in no period of history have God's elect perished from the earth, nor will that occur in the future. God wants the evangel proclaimed throughout the world and throughout time in order that the sum total of His elect may be gathered. Again let it be said, election demands evangelism.

The same truth may be viewed from still another angle. Scripture teaches that election was unto good works, said Paul: 'For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we

should walk in them'. And Scripture teaches specifically that election was unto witnessing. Said Peter: "Ye are a chosen generation...that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light" (1 Peter 2:9). God chose certain persons, not only that they might go to heaven when they die, but also that they might be His witnesses while here on earth. Once more let it be said, election demands evangelism.

An equally significant conclusion is that election guarantees that evangelism will result in genuine conversion. The preacher of the gospel has no way of telling who in his audience belongs to the elect and who does not. But God knows. And God is sure to bless His Word to the hearts of His elect unto salvation. Just when it will please God to do that in the case of an elect individual, we do not know, but He most certainly will do it before that person's death. So certain as it is that all God's elect will be saved, precisely so certain is it that the word of the gospel will not return to God void (Cf. Isa.55sLL).

The above was written by Dr.R.B.Kuiper, Professor of Practical Theology at Westminster Theological Seminary (1933-52).

EDITORIAL

Man's total depravity and complete inability to turn to God of himself is utterly Biblical, as also is the doctrine of the invincible work of the Holy Spirit in calling all the elect. Further to this, these are the historic beliefs of the Church. Abundant proof of this fact is given in the foregoing pages of this issue of The Link.

The question arises, HOW and WHEN did the Church become deceived and abandon such fundamental articles of the Faith, and WHO was responsible for propagating such error? In answering such questions in these pages, one can only speak generally, giving but an incomplete picture.

Pelagius must first be mentioned - a British monk of the early 5th century A.D. He propounded amongst many other things, the theory that man of his own free-will could embrace and believe the gospel. (For fuller details of PELAGIANISM etc. see THE LINK April/June 1985 page 13).

This early heresy was stoutly resisted by Augustin of Hippo. However, it reoccurred in a modified form through a man named John Cassian, an Abbot of a Marseilles Monastery. He asserted that God wished all men to be saved, that there was grace for all, and although man was a fallen creature, yet, he was not dead in that he had no power for good} he, therefore, according to his own will, obeyed or rejected the call of the gospel.

With the advent of the Protestant Reformation, these beliefs (which in each case emanated from Romanism) were shattered by the mighty power of the Holy Spirit and there was a return to the basic elements of the Faith. The doctrine of sovereign electing saving grace shone forth in all its wondrous brilliance again.

The Reformers preached total depravity, and salvation by grace alone, according to God's sovereign election, through the merits of an efficacious atonement, and made actual to each one by the effectual calling of the Holy Spirit. The historic Confessions quoted give the evidence to this, as men of God set out the vital tenets of the Faith for the help and direction of future generations, lest they become ensnared in ancient heresies.

However, as always, Satan made his counter attack, and through Arminius, in the early 17th century, he revived the old Semi-Pelagian error. Arminius contended that man is not so depraved as to be unable to turn to God. He maintained that the Holy Spirit's operation is in every case resistible, and that there is no invincible efficacy put forth on any to whom the Gospel is preached. It is always the assent of man's will which determines the matter.

Arminius denied that the Holy Spirit conferred the gift of faith: that the Spirit of God imparts the renewing of the will, thus rendering it certain that faith will ensue. He insisted that the Holy Spirit never operates on the will

of man in any other way than can be resisted. He openly denied that faith was a gift of God wrought by the Spirit. Other vital doctrine was assailed by this man, such as that which has been dealt with in this magazine over the past twelve months. Arminius was eroding the glorious truths brought to light by the Spirit of God in the great Protestant Reformation. Indeed, Arminius was propagating ANOTHER GOSPEL.

This briefly answers the questions as to WHEN these sad departures took place and WHO was responsible for their instigation.

As to HOW they became so widespread, it can only be said that it was due to a great slide from the Biblical position, as men lent an ear to a perverted gospel and distortion of truth, plus a wilful despising and turning away from the faith of their fathers, as so meticulously set out by them in their Confessions.

So great was the concern of the faithful in the days of Arminius, and so burdened were they at the prevailing heresy, that at length a Synod was summoned in the Netherlands - THE SYNOD OF DORT - in the year 1618. Some eighty to ninety delegates were present from many countries including Britain. They assembled on the 13th November 1618 and did not disband until 9th May 1619. It was described as an august assembly - the most representative body that had ever met. One hundred and fifty four sessions were held, as well as a large number of conferences. All the topics were discussed with fairness yet with a zeal for truth. The doctrine of the grace of God was thoroughly examined from the Holy Scriptures, and nobly was the work discharged. George Smeaton states: "It may be questioned whether anything more valuable as an ecclesiastical testimony for the doctrine of sovereign efficacious grace was ever prepared on this important theme since the days of the Apostles." Yet, the tragedy has been that the works and findings of these great men of God have been despised and thrown out over the generations, and replaced by shallow, tawdry, deficient evangelism.

One further question might be asked: WHY do large sections of evangelicalism today still, not only hold to the Arminian position, but actively defend it: aggressively denouncing the true? One is completely baffled by this.

ANNOUNCEMENTS and INFORMATION

THURSDAY 2nd January 1986

A Prayer Meeting will be held in the main Chapel at 6.30 pm. in accordance with our usual practice at the commencement of a New Year.

The circulation of THE LINK continues to widen, and 500 copies are now printed each quarter.

The tape ministry also extends to many parts of the British Isles. 1500 sermons have gone out from North Road Chapel during the past twelve months.