

Election (God's Prejudice!) ***"But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."*** (2 Thess. 2:13, 14.) If there were no other text in the sacred word except this one, I think we should all be bound to receive and acknowledge the truthfulness of the great and glorious doctrine of God's ancient choice of His family. But 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 almost universally and most frequently disregarded and discarded.

In most pulpits it would be considered a high crime and treason to preach a sermon upon Election, because they could not make it what they call a "practical" discourse. I believe they have erred from the truth therein. Whatever God has revealed, He has revealed for a purpose. There is nothing in Scripture which may not, under the influence of God's Spirit, be turned into a practical discourse; for, ***"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."*** (2 Tim. 3:16.) So all Scripture has some spiritual usefulness, and when turned into a free-grace discourse; and free-grace practice, that is the best discourse and practice, especially when the true doctrines of God's immutable love are brought to bear upon the hearts of saints and sinners.

Now, I trust that some of you who hear these words, and who are startled at the very sound of these words, will say; "I will give it a fair hearing, I will lay aside my prejudices; (not very likely any of you will actually say that, but...) I will just hear what the man has to say." Do not shut your ears and say: "It is too high, this doctrine." Even as they said of our Lord's words, and would not continue following our Lord Jesus Christ. ***"Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. (The overwhelming majority turned back and walked no more with him, and so it is today!) Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, (for them all!) Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. (It is the voice of discouragement and despair coming out of Peter's mouth, and only supernatural faith made the difference, or they would all have got out of there like a shot!) And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the Living God. Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve."*** (John 6:60-71.)

Who has asked you to call this doctrine too high or hard? Why should you oppose yourself to God's doctrine? Remember what became of the children who found fault with God's prophet and exclaimed, ***"Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head."*** Say nothing against God's doctrine, lest haply some evil beast should come out of the forest and devour you also. There are other woes besides the open judgment of Heaven – take heed that these fall not on your head. Lay aside your prejudices; listen calmly, listen dispassionately; hear what the Scripture

says; and when you receive the truth, if God should be pleased to reveal and manifest it to your souls, do not be ashamed to confess it. To confess you were wrong yesterday, is only to acknowledge that you are a little wiser and a little less wrong today; and instead of being a reflection of yourself, it is an honor to your judgment, and shows that you are improving in the knowledge of the truth. Do not be ashamed to learn, and to cast aside your old doctrines and views and works.

From time to time we bring these plain words of this doctrine back to our minds in this good way: Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) He hath continually 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 honor. 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.

That God saves from corruption and damnation those whom He has chosen from the foundations of the world, not for any disposition, faith or holiness that He foresaw in them, but of 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! It is no novelty that we preach, no new doctrine. I love to proclaim these strong old doctrines, what are called by the nickname of "Calvinism" but which are indeed and in fact most certainly revealed truth of God as it is in Christ Jesus, to wit:

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

**(Eph. 2:1-10)**

Article 3 of the Westminster Confession well says: "By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestinated, 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. These angels and men thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number so certain and definite, that it can not be either increased or diminished. Those of mankind that are predestinated to 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 other thing in the creature as a condition or cause moving Him thereunto." I love you. Amen.

Comprehending this glorious and eternal work of God, in choosing those who are to be His children among the human creation, is a blessed part of that *“path of the just [which] is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”* (Prov. 4:18). As surely as this doctrine of Election is curiously threaded through the blessed canon, so also are the displays of glorious gifts bestowed upon that favored garden of our God (Ezekiel 28:13).

***“Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.”*** (Eph. 4:8)

While we in this banqueting house sit, with our Father's felicitous banner spread over us, it is my sincerest hope to open for you, who *“as the hart panteth after the water brooks”* pant after our God, the gift that is defined in scripture as *“an excellent spirit,”* to wit:

***“He that hath knowledge spareth his words: and a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit”*** (Prov. 17:27)

Dr. Gill, in this place, provides some elements of this gift: *“the ‘Keri,’ or marginal reading, is ,קרי ‘of an excellent’ or ‘precious spirit’ {f}; and such an one is a right spirit; a spirit of faith and love, and of a sound mind; and of such a spirit is a man of understanding in things divine and spiritual; to have a spirit of prayer, and to be tenderhearted, and of a sympathizing and forgiving spirit, is to be of an excellent spirit. The Targum is, ‘humble in spirit’; and a meek and quiet spirit is in the sight of God of great price; the Lord has a great regard to such who are of an humble and contrite spirit: with these he dwells, to these he gives more grace; these are like to Christ, and have the fruits of his Spirit, and are very useful and ornamental.”*

This spirit is said to be *“excellent.”* The Hebrew word “yaqar” provides a glimpse of how treasured those are to whom this spirit is gifted. This word is used to declare the *rarity* of the Word of the LORD in the days of Eli for *“in those days; there was no open vision.”* (1 Samuel 3:1). The stones prepared for Solomon's temple are described with this word, to wit:

***“And the king commanded, and they brought great stones, costly stones, and hewed stones, to lay the foundation of the house.”*** (1 Kings 5:17)

It describes those who would stand with the bride at the great wedding supper, to wit: *“Kings' daughters were among thy honourable women.”* (Psalm 45:9). This spirit is *precious*, as is the death of His saints in the sight of the LORD (Psalm 116:15); as wisdom is more precious than rubies (Proverbs 3:15); and defines that life for which the adulteress continually hunts (Proverbs 6:26). It is that word that denotes the *brightness* and *clarity* of the light of truth (Job 31:26; Zechariah 14:6), as the Bride of Christ is manifest, to wit:

***“Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?”*** (Song 6:10)

This excellent spirit is a most energetic part of *“all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:”* (2 Peter 1:3), or by the putting forth of a glorious virtue. The effects of this excellent spirit are seen in God's chosen family, as they make their way through this waste, howling wilderness among whom they *“shine as lights in the world.”* (Philippians 2:15).

There is no guile in their spirit (**Psalms 32:2**), for the light of the LORD searches all their inward parts (**Proverbs 20:27**). This excellent spirit infuses these souls with full power to preach, to wit:

***“And I said, Hear, I pray you, O heads of Jacob, and ye princes of the house of Israel; Is it not for you to know judgment? Who hate the good, and love the evil; who pluck off their skin from off them, and their flesh from off their bones; Who also eat the flesh of my people, and flay their skin from off them; and they break their bones, and chop them in pieces, as for the pot, and as flesh within the caldron. Then shall they cry unto the LORD, but he will not hear them: he will even hide his face from them at that time, as they have behaved themselves ill in their doings. Thus saith the LORD concerning the prophets that make my people err, that bite with their teeth, and cry, Peace; and he that putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war against him. Therefore night shall be unto you, that ye shall not have a vision; and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine; and the sun shall go down over the prophets, and the day shall be dark over them. Then shall the seers be ashamed, and the diviners confounded: yea, they shall all cover their lips; for there is no answer of God. But truly I am full of power by the spirit of the LORD, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin.”*** (Micah 3:1-8)

This spirit of “power, and of love, and of a sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:7) makes God's elect children “Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;” (Romans 12:11). This spirit, particularly when all of our earthly possessions and even our very life hangs precariously in the balance, enables us, as our beloved co-elect friend Stephen, to SPEAK !

***“And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.”***  
(Acts 6:10)

Oh what a wonderful gift is this, that when a testimony for the true and living God is necessary in the earth, there are those granted so great a gift of the spirit, to wit:

***“And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?”***  
(Revelation 6:9-10)

This excellent spirit was in all those heroes of the faith enshrined in **Hebrews chapter 11**, it was indeed in our friend and prophet **Daniel** (v. 5:12 & 6:3), and by the covenanted mercies and gifts of our Father, who chose us to be in His family. It is in every member of the Westboro Baptist Church. Those who have seen this excellent spirit in this blessed place, and have done despite unto that spirit (**Hebrews 10:29**) will shortly now echo that horrible truth:

***“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”*** (Hebrews 10:31)

We, the meanwhile, who are “joined unto the Lord [are] one spirit” (1 Corinthians 6:17), and having received the “spirit of adoption” in our hearts (**Romans 8:15**) cry to our father for the deliverance to come when our Saviour returns in power and glory. Even so come, Lord Jesus.

I love you. Amen.