

The True Doctrine of Unconditional Election and Foreknowledge Concisely Explained and Expounded

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Elect according to the foreknowledge of God, the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. -- I Peter 1:2.

This inspired language from 1 Peter 1:2 gives the principle we wish to notice in this passage of Holy Writ which is the use of the word "obedience". Let us not overlook the fact that "election" and "foreknowledge" are the divine sources mentioned here, both from whence spring the "obedience" of saints and true believers. If, then, the "election" of the saints by the Father and Son was a prior, divine act which took place before any of the saints were ever in evidence, and, since "foreknowledge" also was before the saints were manifested, then it must surely follow that their "obedience" was divinely prearranged before there were any of them visible, as yet.

Now, if it is granted that the "election" and the "foreknowledge" of God were unconditional upon the act (or acts) of the creature, then it must follow that their "obedience" also is not conditioned upon any act, or acts, of the individual. The Holy Spirit of God is the principle in the children of God which sanctifies them, or sets them apart from the world, the flesh and the devil, unto obedience of Christ, and unto the sprinkling of His precious blood which purges their consciences from dead works to serve the living God. (Hebrews 9:14).

Jesus Christ is head over all things to His Church and people, not a human man. Among these "all things" to His Church and people "is their obedience". The human nature of the saints of God is not obedient to the truth. Neither can it ever be. The natural man knows not the things of God,

and is wholly incapable of ever knowing them. This means to include the human nature of the natural man of the believer. The carnal mind is enmity against God. (Romans 8:7). This also means the carnal mind of the believer. It is not with one's human nature, nor yet is it with one's carnal mind, that the believer assents to the principles of divine truth.

In the work of regeneration, both the natural man and the carnal mind are not born again. They remain, as they were, unchanged. The new or Heavenly birth brings the believer out into the spiritual world and into the manifestation of Heavenly or Spiritual life. This work, having been effected in the believer by the Holy Spirit, he now has the mind of Christ and the nature of Christ in contradistinction to the human nature and to the carnal mind, which he also continues to have, as formerly.

Hence, here within every believer, the spiritual warfare begins, to-wit: the flesh lusting against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh. (For proof read Galatians 5:16.) Now, to keep the believer in this warfare and to preserve in keeping in subjection the human nature and carnal mind, he needs and must have the things which only grace furnishes him for the conflict (or contest). The Apostle Paul was granted, through grace, a sufficiency of strength to enable him to withstand the pricking of that thorn in the flesh (sin), that messenger of Satan, which was sent to buffet him.

The preaching of the Gospel is one of those divinely, ordained things which God has purposed and fixed for the salvation of them that believe. Preaching the Gospel does not save the unbeliever, but under the unction of the Spirit of God, it does establish them that believe in the truth, and does save them from error, delusion and human traditions. But, it must have the unction of the Spirit of God in them who believe.

The mere, mechanical (or formal) act of preaching will accomplish nothing. Likewise, the word preached must be mixed with faith in the soul of the hearer, or else the hearer, or true witness, will not heed. Thus, this salvation of the Lord through preaching is not conditioned on the will of the

creature or on the will of the believer himself, but is conditioned on the presence of the Holy Spirit, both in the one who preaches and also in the one who hears.

If there are any such things as conditions in the covenant of Grace, one thing is for sure: they are not conditioned on the acts of sinners or believers, but every condition is met and fulfilled in the completeness and fullness of Jesus Christ for He alone is the obedience of His people and they are every one complete in Him. The righteousness of God's holy law is fulfilled, not by the believer, but IN the believer, by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in him. This effectual indwelling of the Spirit of Christ in His people constitutes their obedience. Without this effectual indwelling, religion is nothing more than mere form, devotion languishes, and prayer becomes but parrot chatter.

That the blessings enjoyed by believers here in time are contingent upon their obedience cannot be proved by Scripture. All of our blessings are in Christ, and have ever been stored up in Him from before the foundation of the world. We are told that God has blessed His people with ALL (not some) spiritual blessings in Heavenly places in Christ Jesus, according as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world.

Now just how many of these blessing will God's people miss through their failure to be obedient? Will there be any excess blessings left over through their failure to obey? On the other hand, will there be any shortage of blessings not received through their being more obedient, than God expected them to be? If, therefore, the "election" and the "foreknowledge" of God from which "obedience" is derived, are certain, there cannot be anything left uncertain or indefinite about the extent of their "obedience".

God does not bribe His people to be obedient by offering them blessings, as we have seen some parents promise their children money or candy, if they will behave themselves. The mercy of God endures forever

and His people have always been bountifully blessed in all ages, regardless whether they have been obedient or not.

There is not a true believer but what he must say, if he tells the truth, that God has blessed him far above anything he has ever merited. And this is because of what one is made to feel that God already has done for him, because of his unworthiness. The child of God will be made to earnestly pray that he may be enabled, through His grace, to walk acceptably before the Lord, and not at all for blessings he expects to receive in the future for thus having been obedient. Obedience is the effect of Grace, and the fruit of obedience is the outcome of mercy graciously bestowed.