

ELECTION and REPROBATION.

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Do you believe in election and reprobation? To prevent the necessity of repeating a thousand times what may be said at once, we purpose to answer this oft-asked question in writing, so that the Saints may learn doctrine, and all who will may understand that such election and reprobation as is taught in the Old and New Testaments, and other revelations from God, we fully believe, in connexion with every other principle of righteousness; and we ask this favor of all into whose hands our answer may come, that they will not condemn until they have read it through, in the spirit of meekness and prayer.

The Lord (Jehovah) hath spoken through Isaiah (xlii, 1) saying, "Behold my servant whom I uphold—mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth;" evidently referring to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, chosen, or elected by the Father. (1 Peter i, 20) "Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by him do believe in God, to serve him in the redemption of the world, to be a covenant of the people (Isaiah xlii, 6), for a light of the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel, having ordained him to be the judge of the quick and dead (Acts x, 42) that through him forgiveness of sins might be preached (Acts xiii, 38) unto all who would be obedient unto his gospel." (Mark xvi, 16, 17.)

Every High Priest must be ordained (Heb. v, 1), and if Christ had not received ordination, he would not have had power to ordain others, as he did when he ordained the Twelve (Mark iii, 14) to take a part in the ministry which he had received of his Father; also, (John xv, 16) "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, (Heb. v, 4) for no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God as was Aaron (v, 5). So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest, but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." No being can give that which he does not possess; consequently no man can confer the Priesthood on another, if he has not himself first received it; and the Priesthood is of such a nature that it is impossible to investigate the principles of election, reprobation, etc., without touching upon the Priesthood also; and although some may say that Christ as God, needed no ordination, having possessed it eternally; yet Christ says, (Matt. xxviii, 18) "All power is given to me in heaven and on earth;" which could not have been if he was in eternal possession; and in the previously quoted verse we discover that he that said unto him (i. e. his Father) glorified him to be made an High Priest, or ordained him to the work of creating the world and all things upon it, (Col. i, 16) "For by him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in the earth," etc., and of redeeming the same from the fall, and to the judging of the quick and dead, for the right of judging rests in the Priesthood, and it is through this medium that the Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son (John v, 22), referring to his administration on earth. It was necessary that Christ should receive the Priesthood to qualify him to minister before his Father, unto the children of men, so as to redeem and save them. Does it seem reasonable that any man should take it upon him to do a part of the same work, or to assist in the same Priesthood, who has not been called by the spirit of prophecy or revelation as was Aaron, and ordained accordingly? And can it be expected that a man will be called by revelation who does not believe in revelation? Or will any man submit to ordination for the fulfillment of a revelation or call, in which he hath no faith? We think not.

That we may learn still further that God calls or elects particular men to perform particular works, or on whom to confer special blessings, we read, (Isaiah xiv, 4) "For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have called thee (Cyrus) by thy name, to be a deliverer to my people Israel, and to help to plant them on my holy

mountain, (Isaiah lxxv, 9, see connexion) for mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there," even on the mountains of Palestine, the land of Canaan which God had before promised to Abraham and his seed; (Gen. xvii, 8) and the particular reason why Abraham was chosen or elected to be the father of this blessed nation, is clearly told by the Lord, (Gen. xviii, 19) "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him;" and this includes the general principle of election, i. e., that God chose, elected, or ordained Jesus Christ, his Son, to be the creator, governor, saviour, and judge of the world; and Abraham to be the father of the faithful, on account of His foreknowledge of their obedience to His will and commandments, which agrees with the saying in the 2 Tim. ii, 21, "If a man purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work."

Thus it appears that God has chosen or elected certain individuals to certain blessings, or to the performance of certain works; and that we may more fully understand the movements of the Supreme Governor of the universe, in the order of election, we proceed to quote the sacred writers, (Rom. viii, 29, 30) "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren; moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called, and whom he called, them he also justified, and whom he justified, them he also glorified." And whom did he foreknow? Those that loved him, as we find in the 28th verse of the same chapter, "For we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." And "who are the called according to his purpose?" Those whom he foreknew, for he foreknew that those who loved him would do his will and work righteousness; and it is vain for men to say they love God, if they do not keep his commandments. Cain found it so when he presented an unrighteous offering, for God said unto him, (Gen. iv, 7) "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?" And yet he was not accepted. "But whose keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected; and hereby know we that we are in him" (1 John ii, 5), or, that we "are the called according to his purpose."

But did not God foreknow all things and all men? Surely; "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world" (Acts xv, 18). But does that prove that all men would love him and keep his commandments, so that he would predestinate them unto eternal life? Certainly not, for that would make God to foreknow things which were not to be, and to predestinate men to that unto which they could never attain. (Matt. vii, 13) "For wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat."

The principles of God's kingdom are perfect and harmonious, and the Scriptures of truth must also agree in all their parts, so that one sentiment thereof shall not destroy another, and when we read that "whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate;" and that "known unto God are all his works;" so that it might appear, from an abstract view thereof, that God foreknew all, and consequently predestinated all "to be conformed to the image of his Son;" we ought also to read, (Mark xvi, 16) "He that believeth not shall be damned;" and (John viii, 24) "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins;" also (Matt. xxv, 41) "Depart from me, ye cursed, for I was an hungred and ye gave me no meat," etc.

Paul, referring to the Saints (Rom. i, 7), calls them beloved of God, called to be Saints; and says (Rom. viii, 1) "There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit;" and goes on to show, in his epistle to the Romans, that the law [the law of carnal commandments given to the children of Israel, the covenant people] could not make the comethereunto perfect (see also Heb. x, 1), but was given for a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ (Gal. iii, 24); so that when he had come and of-

fered himself without spot unto God (Heb. ix, 14), the sacrifice of the law should be done away in him, that the honest in heart all might come unto the perfect law of liberty (James i, 25); or the Gospel of Christ, walking no longer after the flesh but after the spirit, and be of that number who love God and keep his commandments, that they might be called according to His purpose (Rom. viii, 28); and these were the individuals referred to, whom God foreknew; such as Abel, Seth, Enoch, Noah, Melchizedek, Abraham, Lot, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Caleb, Joshua, the harlot Rahab, (who wrought righteousness by hiding the servants of God, when their lives were sought by their enemies,) Gideon, Barak, Sampson, Jephtha, David, Samuel, and the Prophets; (Heb. xi, 4-34) "Who, through faith, subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens." These all died in faith, having kept the commandments of the Most High, having obtained the promise of a glorious inheritance, and are waiting the fulfillment of the promise which they obtained; (Heb. xi, 40) "God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."

The Prophet Alma bears a similar testimony to the other Prophets concerning election, in his 9th chapter (Book of Mormon), saying, "This is the manner after which they were ordained; being called and prepared from the foundation of the world, according to the foreknowledge of God, on account of their exceeding faith and good works; in the first place being left to choose good or evil; therefore they, having chosen good, and exercising exceeding great faith, are called with a holy calling; yea, with that holy calling, which was prepared with, and according to, a preparatory redemption for such; and thus they have been called to this holy calling on account of their faith, while others would reject the Spirit of God on account of the hardness of their hearts and blindness of their minds, while, if it had not been for this, they might have had as great privilege as their brethren; or, in fine, in the first place, they were on the same standing with their brethren. Thus, this holy calling being prepared from the foundation of the world for such as would not harden their hearts, being in and through the atonement of the only-begotten Son, who was prepared; and thus being called by this holy calling, and ordained unto the high priesthood of the holy order of God, to each his commandments unto the children of men, that they also might enter into his rest, this high priesthood being after the order of his Son, which order was from the foundation of the world, or, in other words, being without beginning of days or end of years, being prepared from eternity to all eternity, according to his foreknowledge of all things." (Rom. ix, 11, 12) "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand not of works, but of him that calleth; it was said unto her, the elder shall serve the younger." As we have before shown why God chose Abraham to be the father of the faithful, viz., because He knew he would command his children and his household after him; so now we see, by this, why the purposes of God, according to election, should stand, and that for his oath's sake. (Gen. xxii, 16, 17, 18) "By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice." Here the Lord Jesus, coming through the seed of Abraham, is again referred to, through whose sufferings and death, or in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed, or made alive, as they had died in Adam, (1 Cor. xv, 22). In this, election is made manifest, for God elected or chose the children of Israel to be His peculiar people, and to them belong the covenants and promises, and

the blessings received by the Gentiles come through the covenants to Abraham and his seed; for through the unbelief of the Jews (Rom. xi, 17) they were broken off, and the Gentiles were grafted in; but they stand by faith (Rom. xi, 20), and not by the oath of election; therefore it becometh them to fear lest they cease quickly to bear fruit and be broken off (verse 21), that the Jews may be grafted in again; for they shall be grafted in again (verse 23), if they abide not in unbelief.

The Gentiles became partakers of the blessings of election and promises, through faith and obedience, as Peter says, writing to the strangers scattered abroad (1 Pet. i, 1st chap.), who were the Gentiles, the "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the spirit unto obedience;" (1 Peter, ii, 9) for ye are a chosen generation, a royal Priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light, (verse 10) which in times past were not a people, but now are the people of God, which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy."

Why were they a peculiar people? Because God had chosen that generation of Gentiles, and conferred on them the blessings which descended through the Priesthood, and the covenants unto the house of Israel, or grafted them into the good olive tree (Rom. xi, 17); and thus the house of Israel became the ministers of salvation to the Gentiles; and this is what the house of Israel was elected unto, not only their own salvation, but through them salvation unto all others (John iv, 22), "For salvation is of the Jews," (Rom. xi, 11,) and "through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles."

Among the promised seed we find Jesus Christ neither last nor least, but the great High Priest and head of all, who was chosen to lay down his life for the redemption of the world, for without the shedding of blood there could be no remission of sins (Heb. ix, 22). (Deut. vii, 6, 7, 8, 9) Moses bears a similar testimony with Peter and Paul to the principles of Election—"For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God; the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people, for ye were the fewest of all people; but because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. Know therefore, that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations;" which proves the long continuance of the blessings of this highly favored people.

And the Lord said unto her, (Rebecca, Gen. xxv, 23) "The elder shall serve the younger." And why? Because that Isaac, the father of Esau and Jacob, the husband of Rebecca, and the son of promise to Abraham, was the heir; and as Esau was the elder son of his father Isaac, he had a legal claim to the heirship; but through unbelief, hardness of heart, and hunger, he sold his birthright to his younger brother Jacob (Gen. xxv, 33); and God knowing beforehand that he would do this of his own free will and choice, or acting upon that agency which God has delegated to all men, said to his mother, "The elder shall serve the younger;" for as the elder son, Esau, has sold his birthright, and by that means lost all claim to the blessings promised to Abraham; those blessings and promises must have failed, if they had not descended with the purchased birthright unto the younger son, Jacob, for there was no other heir in Isaac's family; and if those blessings had failed, the purposes of God according to election must have failed in relation to the posterity of Israel, and the oath of Jehovah would have been broken, which could not be though heaven and earth were to pass away. (Rom. ix, 13) "As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." Where is it written? (Mal. i, 1, 2). When was it written? About 397 years before Christ, and Esau and Jacob were born about

1773 years before Christ, (according to the computation of time in Scripture margin), so Esau and Jacob lived about 1376 years before the Lord spoke by Malachi, saying, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated," as quoted by Paul. This text is often brought forward to prove that God loved Jacob and hated Esau before they were born, or before they had done good or evil; but if God did love one and hate the other before they had done good or evil, He has not seen fit to tell us of it, neither in the Old nor New Testament, nor any other revelation; but this only we learn that 1376 years after Esau and Jacob were born, God said by Malachi—"Jacob have I loved and Esau have I hated;" and surely that was time sufficient to prove their works, and ascertain whether they were worthy to be loved or hated.

And why did he love the one and hate the other? For the same reason that he accepted the offering of Abel and rejected Cain's offering. Because Jacob's works had been righteous, and Esau's wicked, and where is there a righteous father who would not do the same thing? Who would not love an affectionate and obedient son more than one who was disobedient, and sought to injure him and overthrow the order of his house? (Objection). But God seeth not as man seeth, and He is no respecter of persons. (Acts x, 34). True, but whatsaith the next verse, "He that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of him;" but it does not say that he that worketh wickedness is accepted, and this is a proof that God has respect to the actions of persons; and if He did not, why should he command obedience to His law? For if he had no respect to the actions of men, He would be just as well pleased with a wicked man for breaking His law as a righteous man for keeping it; and if Cain had done well, he would have been accepted as well as Abel (Gen. iv, 7), and Esau as well as Jacob, which proves that God does not respect persons, only in relation to their acts. (See Matt. xxv, 34 to the end) "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was an hungred and ye gave me meat," etc.; and because that God blessed Abel and Jacob, this would not have hindered His blessing Cain and Esau, if their works had been righteous like unto their brethren; so God's choosing one nation to blessing does not doom another to cursing, or make them reprobate, according to the reprobation of God, as some suppose; "But by resisting the truth they become reprobate concerning the faith" (2 Tim. iii, 8); and are "abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate" (Titus i, 16); consequently, are not fit subjects for the blessings of election.

Rom. ix, 15, "For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." (See Exod. xxxiii, 14 to the 19) "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest, for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name, and I will make all my goodness to pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy." (Rom. ix, 16) "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy;" having His eye at the same time directed towards His covenant people in Egyptian bondage. For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh (Exod. ix, 16, 17), "And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power, and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth. As yet exaltest thou thyself against my people, that thou wilt not let them go?"

God had promised to bring the house of Israel up out of the land of Egypt at His own appointed time; and with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and great terriblest (Deut. xxvi, 8). He chose to do this thing that His power might be known, and His name declared throughout all the earth, so that all nations might have the God of heaven in remembrance, and reverence His holy name, and to accomplish this it was needful that he should meet with opposition to give him an opportunity to manifest His power; therefore He raised up a man, even Pharaoh, who, He foreknew, would harden his heart against God of his