

MAKE SURE OF WINNING IN GOD'S ELECTION.

*"Brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure."
– 2 Pet. 1:10.*

INTEREST in the recent election of a President of the United States has been general throughout the whole world, and especially amongst English-speaking peoples: in fact, the exercise of the franchise by the public, whenever and wherever, is generally a matter of absorbing interest to "the children of this world" – whether the office be a high one, as that of President of the United States, or Member of Congress, or Member of Parliament, or whether it be a lower one, for some petty office of ward magistrate or constable. The candidates for these offices and their friends, in proportion to the dignity of the office, do not hesitate to spend money for printing, brass bands, banners, flags, banquets, traveling speakers, etc. And this is looked upon as thoroughly reasonable, and engaged in by the reputedly more intelligent and sane of all nations. But there is another election in progress – an election of a hundred and forty-four thousand, to a higher position than that of any earthly magistrate or potentate; and for not a few years merely, for the elect are promised this highest of all honors for all eternity.

Does the world know about this election? We answer, No. True, many have heard something about an election – that God is "taking out of the nations a people for his name," a "little flock," who, as joint-heirs with Jesus Christ their Lord, will be given the Kingdom which God hath promised to them that love him, – the Kingdom for which we pray, "Thy Kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." But tho they have heard of this Kingdom and the election now in progress, to make up the foreordained number of its kings and priests they do not really believe it, but regard it as a fantasy, "as a tale that is told," a fairy story which none but the simple-minded and children would take seriously. Ah yes! and so the Redeemer-King

informed us it would be; and so he prayed to the Father, saying, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them unto babes; even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." – Matt. 11:25,26.

If the wise and prudent, the keen and the shrewd, the learned and the great, really comprehended the situation, – if they really believed in this election which is in progress under divine direction, according to the divine Word, what haste there would be amongst them to "make their calling and election sure," as the Apostle exhorts. It is not that people are not appreciative of such honors and dignities of power and influence as this Kingdom offers, that they pass by God's election, and treat it with indifference; for their love of power, their love of influence, their love of position and prestige, is abundantly in evidence in connection, not only with the governments of this world, but also in connection with even the trifling offices in the nominal churches. The spirit of "Which shall be greatest?" has apparently not died out.

But while those who seek for earthly offices of a brief tenure and comparatively small dignity are willing to sacrifice time, energy, money, etc., to attain these petty offices and honors, and while they can arouse enthusiasm amongst their friends and neighbors, leading to expenditures of time, money and energy to an astounding degree, and tho they think it strange that we "run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of us" (1 Pet. 4:4), nevertheless, they affect to think it remarkable that we who are candidates for the superlatively high office for which God has nominated us should spend time, **[R2727 : page 342]** influence and means in making our calling and election sure, and in assisting "brethren" in their election work: they consider our time wasted. Altho they spend millions of dollars in speeches, brass bands, editorials, parades, etc., to determine which of two men should hold the most honorable office of this nation for four years, they consider it remarkably strange that we should spend a fragment of the amount, or make the one-thousandth part of the

commotion to secure for *ourselves* and to all of the "elect" the great "prize of our high calling."

DIFFERENT STANDPOINT – DIFFERENT VIEW.

All this only illustrates the two very different standpoints from which matters may be viewed. From the world's standpoint the Lord's consecrated people who seek to make their calling and election sure to the heavenly Kingdom are counted fools, because to attain that they are willing to sacrifice present temporal interests; and this sentiment of the public is the same today that it was in the Apostle's time, when he wrote, "If any man among you seemeth to be wise, in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise." (1 Cor. 3:18; 4:10.) From our standpoint, seeing the eternal things and the glories attaching to them, we cannot avoid the feeling that it is "the children of this world" who are foolish, in that they expend so much breath and energy upon things which, if attained, last but a short time, and bring with them large measures of perplexity and trouble and criticism of opponents to their election: and sometimes untellable injury to themselves, the ruled.

But why this difference of opinion? Which party is sane, and which is lacking in sanity? We answer, that the difference is that the one class sees what the other class does not see, and that because God has specially revealed it unto the one. As it is written, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man [the natural man, unilluminated by the holy spirit] the things which God hath in reservation for them that love him; but God hath *revealed them unto us* by his spirit,...which searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." – 1 Cor. 2:9,10.

The fact, then, is that the Lord's consecrated people, through faith and by God's holy spirit, have inside information respecting "the things not seen as yet." Hence we see that the two parties – the one seeking earthly honors and advantages, for themselves and each other, the other seeking the heavenly advantages, or election for themselves

and each other – are both laboring for what they see; for what they consider to be the most valuable thing they see and may attain. O how precious, then, is this eye of faith, which the Lord's consecrated people have! No wonder our Lord said to some of his disciples, "Blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear" – other eyes do not see and other ears do not hear these heavenly things. And in that sense of the word comparatively few even in civilized lands have been called or *nominated* of the Lord for his election – comparatively few know anything about it or the terms which must be understood and obeyed in order to make the calling and election sure.

IGNORANCE RESPECTING GOD'S ELECTION.

Even amongst professing Protestant Christians the majority do not know that there is an election. The leading denomination, Methodists, positively deny that there is an election; and even the large denominations which hold that an election is in progress (Presbyterians and Baptists, etc.) have totally false conceptions of its character: they regard God's call or nomination as being the election itself, and hence the words of the Apostle in our text confuse rather than help them. They think of the matter from the standpoint of divine foreknowledge and predestination: they consider the election as something done by the Almighty wholly regardless of the character and works of the elect, saying in their Confessions of Faith, that it takes place without consideration of any worthiness or merit on the part of the elect, but solely of divine grace. They thus make void the Word of God, and the election inducements which it holds out, – confusing their own minds, and in the end traducing the character of the divine ruler and his law.

Would that they could see what is so plainly set forth in the divine Word; *viz.*, (1) that the predestination on God's part was that he would choose a Church, – from amongst those whom his grace would redeem from the curse of death through the precious blood of Christ. (2) That he predestinated that this Church should be of a fixed, positive, limited

number; – we believe literally 144,000 – of whom the nucleus was found in the remnant of Israel which accepted of Christ at and after Pentecost: the number being constantly added to throughout the Gospel age, and to be fully completed with the end of this age. (3) That he predestinated what must be the fixed character of each one whom he would recognize as a member of this elect Church, the body of Christ – as the Apostle says, he "predestinated that we should be conformed to the likeness of his Son." (Rom. 8:29.) Consequently the predestination meant that none could be of the elect Kingdom class (however plainly they heard the call or nomination), unless they made their calling and election sure by cultivating the graces of the spirit and thus coming into heart-likeness of our Lord Jesus Christ – copies of him who set us an example, that we should walk in his steps. – 1 Pet. 2:21. [R2727 : page 343]

Here we have an election which accords with every definition of the Scriptures and all the Scriptural facts relating to the divine plan of the ages. It is this election which we feel justified in securing at any cost, at any self-denial, any self-sacrifice; and these self-denials and self-sacrifices are *works* which must be performed if we would be of the elect; as the Apostle says, we must "*work* out our own salvation with fear and trembling." (Phil. 2:12; Jas. 2:22.) Yet these works are not ours (as men) but as "new creatures," members of the body of Christ. And they are God's works in the sense that they are incited by his Word and Spirit: for "it is God that *worketh* in you to will and to do." – Phil. 2:13; Eph. 3:20.

Let us not be misunderstood, however. Our justification, the *basis* of our call or nomination to this high position in the Kingdom was secured, not by works, but by simple faith without works. We were justified by faith, and had peace with God, before it was possible for us to do any works which would be acceptable in his sight. But when we were accepted in the Beloved, having made full consecration of our mortal bodies, and every interest pertaining thereto, – then the works began, the sacrificing began, the self-denials began, the

overcoming of the world began, the battle with the world, the flesh and the devil began. This battle must be won in our hearts (even tho we will not attain perfection in the flesh) else we will not make our election sure and receive the crown of glory, the symbol of our joint-heirship with him who bought us with his own precious blood.

So then we see (*a*) that only those who have heard something, at least, of the grace of God in Christ have been in the remotest sense in contact with the privileges of this election, – because "faith cometh by hearing." And (*b*) faith the result of hearing, rightly received, brings justification from the sins that are past, and peace with God. And (*c*) only those who are at peace with God (being justified by faith) are called to joint-heirship with Christ in his sacrifice, walking in his footsteps and thus attaining to joint-heirship with him in his Kingdom. And (*d*) only those thus called or nominated by God have the remotest opportunity of becoming the elect. And then mark, (*e*) the Lord's own declaration, "Many are called; few are chosen [elected – from the same Greek word]." – Matt. 22:14.

Let us not only assure ourselves of the fact that there is an elect class being selected during the Gospel age, to a special position of honor and service with the Lord, but let us at the same time note the lessons enjoined upon this class of called or nominated ones – the instructions given them of the Lord whereby they may make their calling and election sure.

OTHER SCRIPTURE REFERENCES TO THE ELECT.

"I endure all things for the *elect's* sake," writes the Apostle Paul. (2 Tim. 2:10.) The Apostle's sufferings whereby, as he said, he sought to "fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ [were] for his body's sake, which is the Church" (Col. 1:24) – not for the world. The reason for this is evident: The Apostle knew the Lord's plan to be to call and to elect during this Gospel age a little flock of overcomers of the world, faithful even unto death, as a Royal Priesthood, to share with the Lord Jesus in the Millennial Kingdom. He knew, therefore,

that labor on behalf of the world before the world's day of trial or judgment would come, would be to a large extent at least love's labor lost; and hence he was not of those who would "beat the air" in the service of the Lord, accomplishing nothing; he would work according to the divine direction and thus be a co-worker together with God, that in due time as a member of the elect company, faithful to the Lord's call, he would be granted a share in the Kingdom, which is to bless all the families of the earth.

"Even so, at this present time there is an *election* according to grace....Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for, but the *election* hath obtained it and the rest were blinded." (Rom. 11:5,7.) Here the Apostle is speaking of this same elect Church, and is referring to the Jewish remnant out of all the tribes with which this elect Church was started, and to which, after Israel's national rejection of the Lord, the special invitation went forth to the Gentiles, to "take out of them a people for his name [to bear the name of Christ]" to complete the predestinated number of the elect 144,000 (twelve thousand *accredited* to each of the twelve tribes of Israel). Thus we who are being called from amongst the Gentiles are invited to fill up the deficiency in the elect number of Israel, and will be, so to speak, divided amongst the twelve tribes, tho according to what rule of distinction the Scriptures do not show.

"Put on, therefore, as God's *elect*, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, long suffering, forbearing one another and forgiving one another." (Col. 3:12,13.) Here we have an intimation of the character-likeness to God's dear Son which the same writer tells us God has predestinated respecting everyone who will make his calling and election sure. (Rom. 8:29.) God has called us with his high calling, and from the time we accept the call and make the requisite full consecration of ourselves to him he gives us the earnest of our inheritance, *viz.*, the spirit of adoption, the spirit of sonship: it remains, however, for us to be tested, – to [R2727 : page 344] prove the depth of our consecration, the sincerity of our professed

love. If we love the Lord with all our hearts we will seek to do those things which are pleasing to him, and these the Apostle is specifying in this Scripture, showing us that God's requirements are all in harmony with his holy spirit of love; that "Love is the fulfilling of the Law," and that we must attain to this condition of perfect love in our hearts if we desire to finish our course with joy, and make our calling and election sure – making sure a share in the inheritance to the spiritual body and the Kingdom glories of which our spirit of begetting is but the earnest or foretaste.

"Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's *elect*." (Titus 1:1.) Here the Apostle not only reiterates that there is an elect class, but he specifically points out that this class has a special faith, a peculiar faith, that is not shared by others, neither can others know it, for "it is spiritually discerned." – 1 Cor. 2:14.

"Shall not God avenge his own *elect*, tho they cry day and night unto him?" (Luke 18:7.) Here our Lord himself testifies respecting this elect class. He gave a parable of an unjust judge, who, tho careless respecting the doing of justice to a poor widow, nevertheless was so careful of his own convenience that he would give her justice, lest by her continual coming she would annoy him. And our Lord's inquiry is, if an unjust judge would thus render justice from a selfish motive, could we expect less from the all-wise, all-loving and all-just Heavenly Father? Verily, God shall avenge the cause of his *elect*, altho he has permitted them to be maligned, slandered, misrepresented, for over eighteen centuries; the time will come when he will give them justice, when he will exalt them; and when those who have wilfully and maliciously injured them shall certainly be punished – in the great time of retribution in which every such evil deed of mankind shall be rendered a recompense, and every good deed receive its reward – in the Millennial day.

"He shall send forth his angels [messengers] and shall gather together his *elect* from the four winds of heaven." (Matt. 24:31.) Here our Lord not only testifies to the fact that there is an elect class, but he assures us that he himself will gather this elect class in due time; in the end of this age when he is ready to establish his Kingdom, in which, as the overcomers, the elect of God, they will be joint heirs and sharers, as in the present life they have been sharers in the sufferings of Christ. – Rom. 8:17; 2 Tim. 2:12; Matt. 13:43.

For the *elect's* sake those days shall be shortened." (Matt. 24:22.) Our Lord here refers to the great time of trouble with which this age shall end, "the day of vengeance," the time of retribution, the day of avenging his elect; and he assures us that the trouble then coming upon the world, and which will largely, we see, be brought about by the world's own course, would, if not interrupted by the Kingdom and its intervention with power from on high, mean the utter obliteration of the race at the hand of its own selfishness. But for the elect's sake those days should be shortened, and the time of trouble will not be permitted to run the length which otherwise it would run. As at first, "He shall speak to them in his wrath and vex them in his sore displeasure," so afterward he shall not permit their utter destruction: his Kingdom will stay the trouble, for "He shall speak peace to the heathen [peoples];" he shall say unto them, "Be still and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted in the earth." – Psa. 46:10.

"Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's *elect*?" (Rom. 8:33.) The Apostle is here pointing out that altho this called class accepted of God to be his elect, and to run with patience the race set before them, and make their calling and election sure, have weaknesses of the flesh, in the overcoming of which they, as new creatures, are not always wholly successful, nevertheless, God looks upon the heart, and their judgment is not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit, the will. Lest such should fear failure after all, he points out that in the great heavenly court there would be none to condemn them; – because God the Judge who once condemned us in

Adam has himself justified us in Christ, – accepting on behalf of the Adamic sin and the resultant weaknesses the sacrifice of Christ. And then he points out that Satan, our Adversary, will have no hearing before the heavenly Court, and that there will be none to appear against us, and that on the contrary our Lord and Master, who redeemed us with his precious blood, will be our Advocate. Who then could lay anything to the charge of God's elect? – those whom God has justified, whom God has called, whom God has accepted, and who, according to the divine arrangement, make their calling and election sure. Who would they be who could find fault with these whom God accepts on his own terms? Surely none! "Yea, we are more than conquerors, through him who loved us and bought us with his own precious blood!"

"Elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father...through sanctification of the spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. 1:2.) The Apostle here marks out the terms of our election; none can remain in this elect company, nor make his calling and election sure, without **[R2727 : page 345]** being under the sprinkling of the blood – justification through faith in the great sacrifice; nor can any attain it without sanctification, a setting apart to God; and such a sanctification as will lead to obedience to God – to the full submission of his will to the will of the Father in heaven. Such must be the character of those who will be of the elect, and this class of which we are seeking to become members was predetermined, foreordained by God; it was not a new thing, but the carrying out of the original divine purpose, in which also our Lord Jesus shared. This the same Apostle shows (1 Pet. 2:4-6), declaring that our Lord Jesus himself was the elect of God, and that we who are now being chosen from amongst men to be "members of the body of Christ," members of the elect class, are chosen in him, chosen as members of his body, and as such must be conformed to the likeness of his character. He says: "To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but *chosen [elect]* of God and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up, a spiritual house, an

holy priesthood, to offer up sacrifices* acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."

*The word "spiritual" is omitted in this verse as spurious, by old MSS. It is the *flesh* that is sacrificed, not the new creature.

"Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture, Behold I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, *elect*, precious, and he that believeth in him shall not be confounded." Thus the whole Church of Christ, the elect little flock, are now being shaped, fitted and prepared for positions in the Temple of God, of which the dear Redeemer himself is the chief cornerstone, the foundation.

"They that are with him are called and *chosen* [*elect* – the same word in the Greek] and faithful." (Rev. 17:14.) Here in symbol our Lord Jesus tells John, and us through him, of the glorious exaltation of the elect in the Kingdom, when they shall be with him and share his glory as the Apostle declares, and with him judge the world; – granting trial, with gracious opportunities to every member of Adam's race to return to full harmony with God through the merit and by the assistance of him who redeemed the race.

"Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine *elect*, in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my spirit upon him. He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles." "I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob and out of Judah, an inheritor of my mountain: and mine *elect* shall inherit it." "They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine *elect* shall make them continue long." – Isa. 42:1; 65:9,22, margin.

Here our Lord Jesus, the Head, and the Church, "members in particular of the body of Christ," are unitedly declared to be God's elect, in whom he is well pleased. The Father was well pleased in the Son, who came not to do his own will but the will of him that sent him, and by his obedience won all the gracious things promised under the

Law Covenant, and redeemed Adam and his race; and the Father is well pleased also in us, whom, tho "we were children of wrath even as others," he has accepted in Christ, justified and sanctified by his Word and spirit, and who, if we abide in Christ, faithful unto death, will be fitted and prepared for his promised Kingdom.

In these statements of the Prophet reference evidently is made to the work of the Lord's anointed (Head and body) in conferring restitution blessings upon the world of mankind during the Millennial age; and this is in full accord with all the New Testament declarations respecting the work of the elect.

"Brethren, give diligence to make your calling and *election* sure." This our text is one of the most forceful of the many references to God's elect, and is particularly clear in marking out the conditions upon which election may be surely attained by each one whom the Lord our God shall *call* or *nominate* to this grand office – the Royal Priesthood. The Apostle has been mentioning the various graces of the Lord's spirit which those who are seeking to be of this royal and priestly class must develop in their characters. He shows us that there is more or less of an addition in the matter: we put on one grace and add to it another, and to that another, and so on; and do this repeatedly in respect to all the graces, which keep growing, developing in us and rounding out and deepening and broadening us as spiritual new creatures. And he shows that those who do not have such experiences of growth in grace and in knowledge are deficient, and cannot hope to make their calling and election sure.

But seeming to understand that some would question the *possibility* of their gaining so great a prize, the holy spirit, through the Apostle, gives to this called and chosen class a word of special encouragement, saying, "For if ye do these things ye shall never fall." There may be more or less stumbling on the part of the elect, not through weakness of the spirit, the heart, the new mind, but "through manifold temptations" of the flesh, the earthen vessel, in which

temporarily resides the new creature, begotten of the spirit, the elect. The Apostle proceeds to give further assurances, saying, "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." The *elect* will not be received of the Lord with chidings and upbraidings for the imperfections of the flesh, which were unwillingly theirs, but on the contrary all the [R2727 : page 346] weaknesses of the flesh will be ignored, and the intents of the heart alone will be judged, and the heart-character formed will alone be tested and approved; and this will determine whether or not we shall stand the Lord's approval and be granted the glorious things which he has promised to them that love him – "glory, honor and immortality" and a share in the Kingdom and its work of blessing.

"He that hath this [election] hope in him purifieth himself even as he [the Lord] is pure." But how is it with those who have not this hope, and who are totally ignorant of this election, – even tho they be Christians, in the sense of believing in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Redeemer? Surely they are at a great disadvantage, lacking as they do the proper conception of the exceeding great and precious promises which are the channel of the power of God working in the elect both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

If we have seen that there is an elect class, it follows that there must be a non-elect class – those who are not making their calling and election sure, and it is proper in this connection that we see something respecting this class, and what provision God has made for them. This phase of the subject we reserve for our next issue.
