

# GRACE GAZETTE

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*Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.* *Hebrews 12:12-13*

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## GOING ON TO PERFECTION

*Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God.* *Hebrews 6:1*

There are certain words which appear in the Bible which cause consternation in the minds of some. One could almost come to the conclusion that some folks wish these words were not used in the scripture. Some of them are very "inconvenient". Predestinate, for example is one of those words. The definition of the word as well as its use in the scripture is fairly straightforward, (meaning to mark the destination or outcome beforehand). However much has been written and preached over the years (by some who just cannot quite grasp the plain truth of it) trying to explain it away and relegate it to a meaningless term.

It seems that those who cavil the hardest against the predestination of all things by a Just, Holy, and Sovereign GOD have no problem, at all, believing that it is man's freewill that determines the outcome of things. Foreordination or predestination is the sole prerogative of GOD. If you don't think so just ask Nebuchadnezzar who had an up close and personal acquaintance with this GOD and reported *"And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honored him that liveth forever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and 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 4:34-35) David contrasted his GOD with the limited gods of the heathen by saying, *"But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased."* (Psalm 115:3)

We need not fear to use any word or teach any doctrine which is taught in the Word of GOD, whether we like it or not. Election is another one of those words which some wish was just removed from the scripture, since its inclusion is another "inconvenient" truth. In fact it appears that some of the newer (so called) translations of the scripture, just leave it out or reduce it to an afterthought. Yet the truth of GOD shall stand the test of time and the twisting of its written form by men. Truth will always exalt JESUS CHRIST above all persons and things and leave man no place to glory before HIM except in the work which HE has done.

Perfection is another word which causes gasps from some who would rather keep it hidden rather than examine what the scripture means when it uses the term. Many recoil at the use of the word perfection since they think that it implies "sinlessness" or "sinless perfection". There are others who have gone shipwreck thinking that it is possible for them to attain such a sinless state. The words "perfect" and "perfection" are used quite a few times in the scripture but never to indicate a state of sinlessness. Those who think it possible for them to

cease from sinning in this life are, either, unacquainted with what sin is or their own corrupt nature. There are several Greek words which are translated as perfect but every one of them conveys the meaning of “completeness”, “fullness” or “maturity”. The word which is translated “perfection” in our text literally means “full age, mental or moral completeness, maturity”.

So we are instructed to “leave” the doctrines of CHRIST. Some have assumed this to mean that doctrine is therefore unimportant. This is not at all the thought conveyed here, rather the opposite is true. The foundation of sound doctrine is the only basis from which one can go on to the “perfection” mentioned here. Paul said, that one of the marks of maturity was not being able to be *“tossed about with every wind of doctrine”*. (see Eph.4:12-15) which is a desired place for the sons of GOD to be. If a man does not have a firm grasp of what the gospel is, then it is not likely that he will be able to make much headway into “perfection”. The weak and beggarly state of the “visible church” (humanly speaking) is primarily due to the dearth of sound teaching in its midst. (see Amos 8:11; Luke 18:8) The average (so called) Christian has little concept of what the true gospel is. Most are so steeped in the teaching of the sovereignty of free will that they actually think the true gospel to be false when they hear it. How could those who are ignorant of basic truth be expected to walk in a mature way?

This passage of scripture is a strong counsel unto those who have not only been instructed in the true doctrine of the scripture but who have their senses exercised to discern good and evil. (see Heb.5:13,14) What we are instructed to do is not to abandon sound doctrine but rather to avoid hashing over doctrines without any desire to see them applied to us in our everyday lives in a practical way. *“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.” (James 1:22)*

We never grow tired of hearing the gospel preached. It is that which fills our heart with gladness and causes us to rejoice and praise the GOD who designed and accomplished our redemption according to HIS own purpose and not ours. However, we should rejoice in the hearing of these things not just to hear them but that in hearing them we might be stirred by them and found to be walking in obedience to HIS precepts and not just endlessly parroting doctrines we have already learned. Some seem to think that what they know is more important than what they do, but did not the LORD say, *“my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it.” (Luke 8:21)* and did HE not say, *“If ye love me, keep my commandments”?* (John 14:15) Doctrine that does not melt the heart of the saints of GOD and stir them up to love and good works is probably but an empty shell. (see Heb.10:22-25) Paul said that that word which he preached was *“not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.” (1Cor 2:4-5)*

Now lest we should be mistaken into thinking that by such exhortations we are prompting the children of GOD to mere morality let us remember that many of these Hebrews to which Paul was writing were abandoning their reliance on the finished work of CHRIST to return to a form of Judaism in which their flesh took comfort. The *“love and good works” which we are admonished to pursue will always have as its basis and firm foundation the knowledge that it is “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Titus 3:5)* Our pursuit of obedience to HIM is born out of a desire to be *“found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.----. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded:” (Phi 3:9-15)*