

GRACE GAZETTE

Volume IV

Issue 45

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

WHERE'S THE BEEF?

Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

II Corinthians 13:5

Several years ago one of the nation's large hamburger chains (Wendy's) ran a series of humorous commercials on TV. A little old lady became quite famous for her unforgettable line in these ads, "Where's the beef?" She uttered this question as she looked inside one of the competitor's hamburger buns and was incredulous that they would call the postage stamp sized piece of meat inside it, a hamburger. The unspoken but plain meaning of her question was that it was a great error to call something a hamburger which was not worthy of such a name when compared to the robust burgers offered by Wendy's. Now I am not much of a fan of any fast food burgers but we are confronted with a similar issue when we are called upon to look at the evidence (or lack thereof) of the SPIRIT's work in us who express a hope in calling ourselves the sons of GOD.

The scripture is full of references to the necessity of examination, judgement, and proving of one's profession of faith in CHRIST. (see Gal.6:4; Heb.4:1;12:15, II Pet.1:10) It is one thing to be a "professor" of faith and quite another to be a "possessor" of faith. The world is full of those who "profess" to have faith in CHRIST, and there are many preachers who equate those who "profess" faith with those who are indeed, true believers. The last one hundred years has seen the concept of "decisional" Christianity become almost universally accepted among those who claim to be "Christians". This idea is set forth with such terms as "accepting CHRIST" or "letting the LORD into your heart". Quite a few are convinced that it is in the power of men to "allow" the LORD to save them or to prevent HIM from doing so strictly according to their choice. This is such a perversion of truth that it is impossible to fully expose it and set the record straight in the limited space of such an article as this. The fact is however that truth loves scrutiny and that which is real can and should be subjected to a thorough examination. The heart cry of any true believer must always be that of David who said, "*Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*" (Ps.139:23-24) The scripture seems to indicate that there will be many who are convinced that they are true believers who shall sadly find that they are mistaken. (see Mat.7:13-14,21-23; Rom.9:27)

There are three different Greek words used in this passage which are all closely related, and yet different enough that we should look at them to get a sense of what Paul is saying here. The first word which is translated: examine is "peirazo" which literally means to tempt or try. The second word which is translated: prove is "dokimazo" which literally means to document or

determine by evidence. This is the same word which is translated "examine" in *I Cor. 11:28*; *"But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup."* The third word which is translated: reprobates is "adokimos" which literally means; unapproved, fails the test, or is undocumented. Paul uses this same word in *I Cor. 9:27* where it is translated; "castaway".

So we could paraphrase what Paul says here in *II Cor. 13:5* thusly; Test and try your own faith to see that it is the faith of CHRIST; look for documentation and proof that your faith is real. Don't you understand that if you are indeed the sons of GOD, that the SPIRIT of CHRIST is in you, you have been made new creatures unless you are deceived and in reality nothing more than those who are standing in error, being unapproved.

When prospectors for gold found what they thought was real gold they could never be certain until it was taken to the assayers office who "tried" or "tested" it with chemicals that proved its purity. If it was but "fools gold" (iron pyrite) then this "test" would show it to be so. This is what Paul means here when he says "examine yourselves". We must constantly scrutinize what we believe by the word of GOD. To be relying in anything other than CHRIST alone will ultimately destroy the "faith" which we profess. That man whose confidence is in his "decision" or his ability to "believe" will be found to possess nothing more than husks and chaff which the wind drives away. The true believer can find hope in nothing else but the living CHRIST. He can find no help or comfort in his ability to hold onto CHRIST but must confess his need of constant mercy and the strong arm of ONE to keep him from falling and preserve him until the end.

One does not become a child of GOD by being obedient but genuine obedience to the LORD is an evidence that a man is a child of GOD. The LORD said *"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me."* (*John 10:27*) *"Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."* (*II Tim 2:19*) While we yet live in this world we are never completely free from the "flesh" which would constantly war against that *"mind of CHRIST"* which we have been given, but we are no longer under its total dominion. We are dead to sin, therefore how can we delight to walk in it and be content to have it for our master. (see *Rom. 6:1-18*; *I John 3:9*)

Only those who have been indwelt by the SPIRIT of GOD and given a lively hope in CHRIST will be genuinely concerned with this matter of personal examination. The dead religionist is quite content with his Creeds and Catechisms and is encouraged by those of like mind to trust in those things which he feels is within his ability to agree to and walk in, in an outward profession of "faith", perhaps delighting in his "decision for CHRIST", morality, or law keeping. He finds this "examination" to be the stuff of fools and extremists and is quite uncomfortable with such personal scrutiny. The Judaizers are bent on demanding obedience to a certain standard and are quite intent on devising and maintaining some form of continual sacrifice. They are never satisfied unless there is some uniformity of action among their followers whether it be of dress, conduct, or some form of law-keeping. The liberty of the sons of GOD is considered by them something to be fought rather than embraced.

The LORD JESUS said; *"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."* (*John 16:7-8*) HE has turned the searchlight of HIS truth on and pierces the very souls of HIS elect causing them to continually cry out: *"Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart."* (*Psalms 26:2*)