

# 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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## THOROUGHLY FURNISHED

*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

*2 Timothy 3:16-17*

When I was a kid (some say I still haven't grown up) I can remember receiving a toy on Christmas day that was battery powered. Much to my chagrin I discovered that the batteries were not included with the toy. Of course, it being a holiday, no stores were open and so it was impossible to obtain the needed batteries. The toy was essentially useless because it lacked a very vital component. GOD does not give gifts which are without power. *"For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance."* (Rom 11:29) HE accomplishes exactly what HE intends to do.

HE has *"predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will."* (Eph 1:5) According to that predestinated purpose it has pleased HIM to reveal to us the mystery of HIS will (see Eph.1:9). HE could have revealed that to us in any fashion which pleased HIM. HE could have sent guru's into the earth to live on the side of a mountain which we would have to scale under great duress to discover this "hidden wisdom" (see I Cor.2:7) or HE could have committed it into the hands of an earthly organization of which one would have to be a part in order to receive it. HE could have placed it in the hands of a few "prophets" or a class of elite clergymen who alone could dispense that truth as we sat at their feet and marveled at their wisdom. HE could have given it to smiley faced religious shepherders to dispense with dramatic flair. The truth is that HE has delivered it to us in the pages of the holy scriptures, the Bible.

The Bible contains all of the information that is needed for the children of GOD to grow up into mature believers completely equipped to walk in the good works which *"God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."* (Eph 2:10) The first part of that verse says *"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works"*. So it is obvious that HE has begun a good work in us and HE will perform it until the very end. (see Phil.1:6) GOD is pleased to perform good works in and through HIS elect children as they dwell upon this earth. HE works in us by HIS SPIRIT to give us a ready mind and a willing heart to do HIS will. (see Phil.2:13) And HE is pleased to reveal the truth of HIS word which HE sets forth before us in the pages of Bible.

It is impossible to "prove" to the natural man that the Bible is the word of GOD. Yet at the same time it is impossible to convince the true children of GOD that it is not. The SPIRIT of GOD bears testimony through the written word by HIS power of the eternal truths contained in it. Just as HE convinces men in the matter of creation, *"Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."* (Heb 11:3), so HE convinces HIS sheep of the veracity of HIS word. Religious men debate the reliability and completeness of it but the sons of GOD receive it as the very words of life and depend upon it for instruction and comfort .

Paul said, the scriptures (the Bible) are given to us for the purpose of thoroughly furnishing (i.e.; providing) the children of GOD with all of the information that they need in order that HIS exact purpose be accomplished in them. *"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ:"* (Eph 4:13) HE could have just "matured" (perfected) us immediately totally without any participation by us, but it has pleased HIM to involve us in a process whereby we are exercised in these bodies in which we now live. (see Heb.5:14; 12:11) HE is presently working in HIS sons through the admonitions and exhortations of HIS word that we might be:

**Instructed in sound doctrine.** Sound doctrine does not change with the times nor can it be altered or modified to suit the tastes of natural man. The truth of the gospel will always be a savor of life to some and of death to others. The cross of JESUS CHRIST will always be offensive to religious men because they are determined to find some way to merit GOD's favor. They will always despise the fact that HIS blessing is bestowed according to HIS grace and not according to their worth or choice. A man cannot know what the gospel is, apart from the word of GOD. *"How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? -----So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."* (Rom 10:14,17) The gospel of JESUS CHRIST is only discovered in the scriptures, which contain the record of who HE is, what HE has done, and what HE shall yet do. So if any mans doctrine is true it must line up with exactly what the scripture says concerning CHRIST. Sound doctrine begins and ends with JESUS CHRIST. Who is *"the author and finisher of our faith."* (Heb 12:2)

**Reproved by its power.** The LORD JESUS said that when the HOLY SPIRIT was come, *"He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:"* (John 16:8) HE performs this work in the children of GOD through the scriptures. As they are made aware of the perfections of CHRIST revealed there, HIS people are convicted of their own unholiness and convinced of HIS absolute righteousness. Religious men set about to keep the law evidently unaware of their own depravity. However the commandments which HE has given in HIS word drive HIS sons to their knees in repentance as HIS perfect law reveals to them their sinfulness and innate inability to keep its precepts.

**Corrected by its truth.** The scripture is full of many admonitions and warnings for the sons of GOD. It is by this means as the HOLY GHOST is pleased to apply HIS word to their minds and hearts that they are chastened and corrected. *"Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?"* (Heb 12:9) HE does not leave HIS children to wallow and die in their sin but chastens them. Sometimes HE may use physical suffering in order to get their attention but HE ultimately uses HIS word to yield *"the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."* (Heb 12:11)

**Instructed in practical holiness.** Now we are quite sure that all men shall remain sinners until they die. In this fact it is not possible to detect the children of GOD from the children of the world. (see Eph.2:3) However it is equally clear that the LORD has made some changes in the lives of those HE has visited with the new birth and the baptism of the HOLY GHOST. After listing the description of the men of this world and their characteristics Paul says, *"And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."* (1Cor. 6:11) Those who are manifested as the true children of GOD are singled out from the world as being made *"new creatures"* in contrast to what they once were. As these new creatures they have a desire to be instructed in the lifestyle which the word of GOD describes as good. They are reminded that there are some who *"after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning."* (2 Pet. 2:20)

GOD will apply HIS word to HIS children so that such may never be said of them. Rather HE intends that they should hear these words from the scripture; *"Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."* (Luke 12:32)