

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

THE KISSES OF HIS MOUTH

*Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love is better than wine.
Song of Solomon 1:2*

Man in his natural religious state is desirous of fulfilling duties and meeting whatever requirements that his religious tradition deems appropriate. This natural dedication can be so strong that a man is even willing to lay down his life to uphold his chosen belief and fulfill his desire to be faithful to it. Sincerity (to one degree or another) is a trait which is found among just about all types of religious adherents. Dedication to a particular cause can be discovered wherever men gather to express the tenets of this creed or that.

Counterfeit money which is easily detected would be useless. In the same fashion, counterfeit religions would not be so effective in keeping men in darkness if they were obviously false. Most religions in the earth are very effective in promoting morality and general order. In fact most religions are roundly approved by the rank and file of the earth as being beneficial for society in general. Even the government approves of the promotion of religion as long as equal opportunity is given to all, and one religion is not sanctioned above another, which is as it should be.

Multitudes in this country pay homage to what is called the "christian" religion, which as society defines it, has a multitude of facets and many different flavors. In fact many are fond of saying that the good old United States is a "christian" nation founded on "christian" principles. Some have even taken great umbrage at the possibility that one of the candidates for president may not in fact be a "christian" and that it's possible that he won't use the Bible to be sworn in if he is elected. I suppose we may find out the answers to those "mysteries" soon enough, but the truth is that all religion which is chosen and ordered by men is all of equal value and bears the same marks regardless of what it is called.

While nations may be composed of a populace which is in its convictions disposed to the tenets of the christian faith, there is no such thing as a "christian" nation except that one which is described by Peter, "*But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*" (1Pet 2:9) The citizens of this nation did not become so by natural birth nor human choice as John says; "*Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*" (John 1:13)

The inhabitants of this kingdom are not mere natural men at all, but they have been born again from above by the HOLY GHOST sent down from heaven. "*Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*" (John 3:5-8)

This is the solution to the problem set forth by the apostle Paul, *"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption."* (1Cor 15:50) A radical transformation must take place in order for a man who is born of a woman to become a subject of the kingdom of GOD. This is not a function of religion nor is it brought about by sincere devotion to so called "christian" principles. Men may adopt the outward forms of "christianity" just like they can choose any other religion on the face of the earth, but such is as ultimately worthless as counterfeit money when it is examined in the proper light.

Those who are by grace made the possessors of this spiritual birth have not added one iota to their standing by their own power. All that they have and are is the result of the outpouring of HIS mercy and the gift of HIS grace. *"For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual."* (1Cor 2:11-13)

It most certainly follows then that those who are born of this SPIRIT and taught and indwelt by the same should possess different desires and longings than those who have not been so taught and led. *"But we have the mind of Christ."* (1Cor 2:16) *"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."* (Col 3:1-3) Some have taught that because of this then the sons of GOD can and should attain perfection in this life.

Those who maintain such an idea are ignorant of the fact that we are yet left here in this earth in the same corruptible body of flesh and blood which has always been with us and shall remain so until the day of the resurrection when this mortal shall put on immortality and death is swallowed up in victory. However we are not left without hope and it is in this hope that we *"press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."* (Phi 3:14) It is in the midst of this very conflict which we find ourselves in as the *"flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh"* (Gal 5:17) that we are made to long for those refreshing times sent from the presence of the LORD. (see Acts 3:19) And it is only by HIS SPIRIT that we are enabled to desire HIS fellowship and long for HIS appearing.

It is in such a state that we see the "church" (the bride) longing for the kisses of her HUSBAND.

It is obvious that she has tasted of those kisses or else how could she know that which she desires. *"The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee."* (Jer 31:3)

It is apparent that HE has gone away for a season though she is not without hope that HE shall return. *"In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer."* (Isa 54:8)

She desires HIS presence more than any other. *"For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness."* (Psa 84:10)

As a chaste bride, she longs for HIS kiss alone. *"If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."* (John 15:19) *"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."* (1Jo 2:15)

She loves her HUSBAND because HE first loved her and has clearly demonstrated that love by giving HIMSELF for her. *"In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."* (1John 4:9-10)