

GRACE GAZETTE

Volume VII

Issue 31

Published occasionally for Zion's mourners

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

AS YE HAVE BEEN TAUGHT

As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

Colossians 2:6-7

The common denominator of all religions which are the work of men's hands and imaginations is that they must be taught to each succeeding generation in order to perpetuate them in the Earth. This is in stark contrast to that which is the true religion which can neither be overturned nor ultimately negated in the Earth by either men or devils.

Men often think it necessary to establish doctrines, creeds, and rules of order by which they would define what is true and believe that the continuity of true faith somehow depends on passing these treasured shibboleths on to their followers in order to preserve that faith. It seems quite clear to us that such is not the case in the transmittal of that faith which is delivered to men by the LORD HIMSELF. *"For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest." (Heb 8:10-11)*

Yet it is quite clear, as well, that this faith is to be earnestly contended for. (see Jude 1:3) It is to be taught (I Tim 4:11) and committed into the hands of faithful men who can teach others. (see II Tim. 2:2). We are to build one another up in the faith and to follow the exhortation of Paul to *"Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus."* (2 Tim 1:13) Then there is the great commission which the LORD gave to his disciples in Matthew's gospel, *"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."* (Mat 28:19-20)

So; is there some conflict in the scriptures? How can both of those notions be true? In order to see the harmony in these concepts one must be able to understand that GOD is not only quite capable of giving men the gift of faith without any sort of intervention on the part of men but that is the only way in which men can become possessors of that true faith which is not mixed with any error.

The Jews were quite content with the "religion" of their fathers which was handed down from one generation to the other. They learned its precepts and were able to perpetuate it for centuries. The Samaritan woman (see John 4) was ready to defend the "religion" she grew up in and to see a marked contrast between it and that which she thought was the "religion" of the LORD JESUS. HE told her quite plainly that neither "religion" was of any real consequence because the only ones who could truly worship the FATHER were those who were given the privilege of worshipping HIM in spirit and truth.

This "true worship" cannot be taught by the lips and actions of men. Nor can it be passed down from one generation to the other nor perpetuated by the establishment of rules of order and instilled by any tradition however replete with memories of past glories and denominational successes. This is exactly what the LORD meant when HE moved John to write, *"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."* (John 1:12-13)

Most all organized "churches" claim to be able to trace their "order", "doctrine", and "practice" back to some sort of connection with the apostles. Some place much more emphasis on themselves as being the "one true church" than others do, but most all of them look upon their "religious heritage" with some sort of a sense of satisfaction and "safety". They set about to perpetuate their "orders" for following generations, secure in the knowledge that as long as their "church" exists, the world will not be without truth.

We are quite certain of the fact that the LORD does not need anyone to help HIM out in order to assure that the church which HE established remains that against which the gates of hell cannot prevail. HE has always been and continues to be the only moving FORCE which preserves and populates that assembly. HE does it quite often in ways which totally baffles those who think it impossible for a man to believe without hearing them preach their particular brand of truth.

There is but one TRUTH whether or not you or I have it. It has pleased GOD to give to those men (upon whom HE has given faith see Rom.12:3) various degrees of enlightenment and understanding of the scope of HIS dealings with men. Some are privileged to see some of the fullness of HIS grand and glorious design and others are only given a glimmer of light which (in the eyes of those who see more fully) seems no light at all. Yet all still only see through a glass darkly and are like those workers in the vineyard who all received the same compensation at the end of the day. Knowing CHRIST is not a function of study nor is it connected with mental capacity; but rather, is the result of the direct operation of the HOLY GHOST upon the hearts of those whom HE is pleased to conform to the image of CHRIST.

So we are sent into the world to proclaim the glorious truth of the gospel with the certain knowledge that HE is quite able and equipped to bestow faith upon whomsoever HE desires. Furthermore we have often seen it demonstrated that HE is pleased to bring HIS children along a pathway that they (or we) knew not. Sometimes we are amazed to discover that HE has taught HIS people truth in the most unlikely of places, so that we might learn neither to glory in that knowledge we have been given nor to be puffed up by the same.

A love of JESUS CHRIST is universal among all of those who have been born of the SPIRIT as is a love of the brethren and a desire to know HIS WORD. The LORD is often pleased to teach HIS children the truth long before they ever hear it articulated by some preacher HE has sent for them to hear. Then the message which HE is pleased to deliver by the hands of the messenger HE has sent, is to them a word of confirmation and a glorious delight that they have "heard" for the first time even though they "knew" it for a while.

How is it that men know that what they are hearing preached is true, unless the SPIRIT bears witness with them that these things are so? Such is the gift of faith which is bestowed by the HOLY GHOST who leads HIS own into all truth. I can still remember when I first came to a "knowledge" of the glorious doctrine of the unconditional election of those whom the LORD loved with an everlasting love. I had never heard such a thing preached in all my life, but when I heard it I knew that it was true. And then to hear that JESUS CHRIST definitely atoned for the sins of HIS elect and purchased their redemption was a further confirmation of that which I knew had to be true. It is still a vivid memory to me the first time that I "heard" preached that GOD was an absolute and holy GOD. I somehow knew it to be true.

"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." (John 6:44-