

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 PERFECTER

The LORD will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O LORD, endureth forever: forsake not the works of thine own hands.

Psalms 138:8

The Apostle Paul exhorted the children of GOD to “walk circumspectly”, (see Eph. 5:15) which literally means to keep one's eyes open and look around at what is going on. The followers of CHRIST are not to hide their heads in the sand, but rather to be observant, both as to the events that transpire around them and especially to take heed unto their own selves and to those things which are at the very basis of the faith which they profess. “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 Cor 13:5) The Bereans are a good example, “These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” (Acts 17:11)

The followers of CHRIST are to beware of those who speak false words which turn men from their steadfastness. “Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.” (Eph 5:6) “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.” (Eph 5:11) Peter even reiterated the teachings of Paul when he wrote, “As also in all his (i.e.; Paul) epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction. Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.” (II Pet 3:16-17)

The errors of which he speaks are not always easily recognized because the deadliest of errors are set forth, not by those who have a complete disregard of the Bible, but by those who “wrest” or twist the scriptures. “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.” (II Peter 2:1-2)

This is why the LORD has given gifts to HIS church, “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: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.” (Eph 4:13-15)

The “winds” of false doctrine have blown quite steadily and strongly since the establishment of the first gospel churches after Pentecost. They have often blown with such ferocity that from time to time it seems that the truth will be swallowed up by them. Paul even warned the Ephesian elders that “after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.” (Act 20:29-31)

The age in which we presently live is one in which the “truth is evil spoken of” and there are many who “call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!” (Isa 5:20-21)

The prevailing “winds” of our age sets forth the sanctification of the saints as being a cooperative effort with both man and GOD taking a part. We have often heard men say such things as “the life you have is the gift of GOD to you, but what you make of it is your gift to HIM”, and “GOD helps those that help themselves”. It is quite common for men who profess faith in CHRIST to speak about improving themselves through their own effort and dedication or to consider that while the blood of CHRIST is sufficient for their past sins it is now up to them to deal with those in the present. This doctrine is like a “Siren song” which lulls many into relapsing to their natural understanding (see I Cor. 2:11-16) that they become pleasing in the LORD’s sight by their acts of obedience and thereby merit HIS favor and blessings by the same.

Paul dealt with this very issue in his letter to the Galatians. “Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?” (Gal 3:3) “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” (Gal 3:28-29) All of the blessings of GOD in redemption, justification, and sanctification are bestowed upon the true sons of GOD by and according to HIS promise and not by any adherence to a code.

This is the gospel of free and sovereign grace and cannot be compromised in any whit lest we be found to be those who “lie in wait to deceive”. “He lieth in wait secretly as a lion in his den: he lieth in wait to catch the poor: he doth catch the poor, when he draweth him into his net.” (Psa. 10:9) By nature men have the “law” principle written on their hearts. (see Rom. 2:14-15) Men by nature believe that they can earn favor with GOD by their actions or forfeit it by the same. By nature men believe they can go to heaven by “being good” and/or enjoy a measure of prosperity by their own action. This “prosperity” is defined by each one differently but it is, in general, an abundance of whatever they value the most.

It is only when they are taught the true nature of the “*law of the SPIRIT of life in CHRIST JESUS*” that they are set free from the “*law of sin and death.*” (see Rom.8: 1-17) One of the first lessons which this “law” (i.e.; the principle of the SPIRIT of life in CHRIST) sets forth is a clear knowledge that “*in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.*” (Rom 7:18) The first work of the SPIRIT of GOD in the sons of GOD is to convince them of their own sin and utter barrenness to perform any activity which could either deliver them from destruction or cause them to gain the favor of GOD.

Yet some who profess to be the followers of CHRIST have either forgotten this “principle” or either never knew it. They go about to load the LORD’s people with many “laws”, “duties”, and “requirements” which they must fulfill. They have perhaps “forgotten” that the “promises” of GOD are “*yea and amen*”, and can in no wise be overturned nor the recipients thereof fail to enjoy them on the basis of that promise alone. “*O foolish Galatians*”.

The sum total of all of the righteousness of the sons of GOD is the righteousness of CHRIST JESUS the LORD. HE has made HIS people “*every whit whole*” (see John 7:23) and shall present them before HIS FATHER in that very state. HE is our PERFORMER and PERFECTER. Nor will HE forsake those who are HIS. “*Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; And ye are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s.*” (1Cor 3:21-23) “*That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.*” (1Cor 1:29-31)

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