

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

MUTUAL FAITH

That I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me. Romans 1:12

One does not have to listen to very much "preaching" in the present day before he will likely hear the phrase, "your personal savior", mentioned. Usually this comes forth as men would impress upon others their need to exercise faith in obtaining their own salvation. It is interesting that this particular "phrase" is never mentioned even one time in the scriptures and I do not believe it can be discovered in any "Christian" literature before the twentieth century.

Yet I would dare say that few who profess to be the followers of CHRIST have not heard it time and again and a decided minority among them would not in some measure approve of it. The rise to prominence of the "easy believeism" or "decisionism" of the present day could likely not exist without such "phrasology". When men reduce the "gospel" (so called) of salvation to a formula which can only be ultimately fulfilled by the "free will" of men, then they have to differentiate between those who have "permitted" the LORD to save them and those who have not. So a convenient phrase was coined to describe a mans possession of his own "savior" in much the same fashion as if a man purchased his own puppy from the pet store. The difference being that a man gains possession of the puppy by paying a sum of money whereas a man gets his own savior by deciding to let him come into his heart.

Both can only come to pass by an action of the man's free will. The notion that CHRIST JESUS has shed HIS precious blood in a futile attempt to save all men gives rise to the concept that salvation must be made complete by the decision of a man to be saved. Therefore in making the decision to be saved, he enables CHRIST to be his SAVIOR.

This is actually a very blasphemous notion and flies in the face of the scriptures which declare HIM to be the SAVIOR of sinners and not the "offerer" of salvation. "*And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.*" (Mat 1:21) "*Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.*" (Titus 3:5) "*Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.*" (Heb 9:12)

HE has never attempted to save anyone. HE has however accomplished completely the salvation of everyone for which HE poured out HIS precious blood as a sin offering. If the blood of CHRIST is accepted in heaven as a perfect payment for sin, then that sin is of necessity forever canceled and forgotten. "*Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.*" (Rom 8:33-34)

If thou hast my discharge procured, And freely in my room endured

The whole of wrath divine, Payment God cannot twice demand,

First at my bleeding Surety's hand, And then again at mine. (A. Toplady ; #227 Gadsby's)

Paul speaks here in Romans of the "mutual faith" of the children of GOD. He never mentions a "personal faith" and most assuredly not a "personal savior". The English word "mutual" only

appears in the KJV one time. Yet the Greek word which is here translated "mutual" appears at least one hundred times in the NT. It is most often translated as "one to another", and it clearly means a particular faith that is shared by all who are said to possess it.

It is "*mutual faith*" because it has the exact same origin. Paul in writing to the Ephesians, says, "*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.*" (Eph 2:8-9) True faith has but one source, it is not the product of man's will nor does it spring from his ability or reason. Rather it is clearly a gift which is bestowed upon the objects of GOD's mercy and, being a gift, affords them no grounds upon which to boast; either of possessing it or having receiving it. Apart from this gift of faith, a man will remain in the darkness of unbelief. When given this gift he cannot do anything else but believe. This is exactly that which was expressed by Simon Peter, when he said, "*Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.*" (John 6:68)

It is "*mutual faith*" because it has one OBJECT. Most of the "faith" one hears about today is a mere subjective sort of faith. That FAITH which saves the children of GOD is not concerned with degrees, levels, or kind, but rests solely on its OBJECT which is CHRIST JESUS the LORD and HIM crucified, risen, and ascended into the heavens where HE ever lives to make intercession for those who come unto GOD by HIM.

Paul declared this sort of FAITH when he said, "*For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.*" (2Tim 1:12) Faith will not save men, but seeing CHRIST as the OBJECT of faith is the evidence of the gift of FAITH. This is that which Paul described when he said, "*One Lord, one faith, one baptism.*" (Eph 4:5) and then further clarified it saying, "*Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.*" (Col 3:11)

It is "*mutual faith*" because it causes rejoicing in all of those who have fled to CHRIST for refuge and forms the very basis of true Christian fellowship. Religious men may fellowship with one another around many different doctrines, practices, and customs; finding complete satisfaction in the uniformity of their denominations and particular orders. Some glory in their ancient heritage, others in their miraculous signs, wonders, and prophecies; some in their baptisms and ordinations, or their adherence to holy days, law keeping, and Sabbaths, yet the true sons of GOD can only find a complete satisfaction in the clear declaration of CHRIST alone as the SUM and substance of their salvation, transcending all religious shibboleths and Nehushtans.

They identify with Paul who said, "*But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.*" (Gal 6:14) The basis of their "fellowship" is the "gospel of the glory of the blessed GOD" (see I Tim 1:11) They cannot rise up to battle nor express their joy when the trumpet sounds an uncertain sound. There are a multitude of "gospels" which are proclaimed far and wide in the present day. The proliferation of them is staggering. It is no wonder that the LORD said, "*when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?*" (Luke 18:8) (see Gal. 1:6-9)

While there are "gospels" abounding, yet there is only one which is true. There is ONE CHRIST and ONE SALVATION which is found in HIM. That's where the sons of GOD desire to be found and it is here alone that they can rejoice together and edify one another by "*mutual faith.*"

"*The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*" (Eph 1:18-23)

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