

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

FLATTERING LIPS

They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak. The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things.

Psalms 12:2-3

The Jews were convinced that the truth of GOD could be taught to men a little at a time and could therein be applied to them over the course of many succeeding generations and that their descendants could embrace it, by an adherence to the letter of it. We read a description of this notion in the prophecy which the LORD gave to Isaiah: "*But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.*" (Isa 28:13)

This is still a common notion, not simply to the Jews, but to the multitude of Gentiles which call themselves the followers of CHRIST. The results are the same in the present day with those who would identify themselves as "Christians", and go about with the idea that they can make and teach disciples of the LORD through their study, efforts and application, of practices and doctrines which are looked upon as duties and decisions of the supposed "free will" of men.

In this quest they have established denominations, sects, and parties to build their "brand" and promote their "organizations" which in turn propagate the earth with followers of their various factions, each one vying for "converts" in a sort of "contest" with others. All the while they count their devotees and take great pride in their swelling numbers. If these "numbers" should lag behind their projections and desires they brainstorm to come up with new methods designed to better appeal to the masses which they are trying to reach.

As I survey this scene I am reminded of that which the LORD told the Pharisees, "*Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.*" (Mat 23:15) They view the making of these "proselytes" as a badge of honor, with little regard to the necessity of the SPIRIT's work in bringing about a "new birth" and drawing men unto HIMSELF in repentance. One can hardly go anywhere in the earth which is not infected with just about every aberration and disregard of the truth of GOD, which is set forth by these varied "brands". One is made to wonder what Paul meant when he said, "*There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*" (Eph 4:4-6) Can this be found?

Behind all of this foolishness are varying degrees of "will worship", sign seeking, and those who are, "*Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.*" (1Tim 1:7) and demonstrating a total disregard of the simplicity of the gospel which Paul was solely committed to preach. "*For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.*" (1Cor 2:2) "*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)

The corrupt nature of men causes them to corrupt the things of GOD and to diverge from HIS way without any provocation, so we are not surprised at any of this. Paul warned the Ephesian elders that such events would occur. "*For I know this, 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.*" (Acts 20:29-30) He told Timothy,

“For the time will come (i.e. in Timothy’s lifetime) when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.” (2Tim 4:3-4)

The common denominator in these departures from that which Paul, night and day, labored among the brethren, to declare, is the notion that men can better perform the work of the SPIRIT than HE can since the common belief which is rampant across “nominal Christendom” is that men have a free will which must be appealed to and therefore the idea is prevalent that the Kingdom of GOD is like a business which if tended to “properly” will prosper in the hands of those who seek to perpetuate it, little by little, year after year.

Paul reiterated the words of Isaiah to the Romans, *“Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved: For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short (i.e.; concise or speedy) work will the Lord make upon the earth.” (Rom 9:27-28)* He was speaking to them of the fact that the LORD has a people scattered throughout the earth that HE will call in HIS own time. This is exactly what Peter declared on the Day of Pentecost *“For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” (Acts 2:39)*

When the LORD calls a man from darkness to light, HE does it speedily and without warning and does not rely upon the work of men. Paul had no idea that he was squarely in the sights of the LORD’s determined purpose, when he was a young man, or when he sat at the feet of Gamaliel, or especially when he was breathing out threatenings against the people of GOD. He relates his experience to the Galatians, *“But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me.” (Gal 1:15-16)* Though the whole life of the Apostle was indeed a preparation for that which the LORD called him to, yet the work which the LORD did could not be predicted, hindered, or aided by men, including Paul himself. The same is true for the thief on the cross, the woman at the well, or blind Bartimaeus who sat by the wayside begging. The LORD may plow a field for some time yet the increase which HE brings from that seed which HE plants is immediate and bears fruit in the season which HE alone ordains.

This short and speedy work is also a sure work. *“The LORD knoweth them that are HIS.”* HE said that HE would call HIS sheep by name and they would hear HIS voice. HE will save HIS people from their sins. This is not just a reference to HIS redemptive work at Calvary but also speaks of the certainty that HE shall lose none which are given to HIM, for indeed the gates of Hell cannot prevail against the establishment of HIS Kingdom in the earth.

This work is a lasting work which shall never end. *“For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.” (Rom 11:29)* *“Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” (Php 1:6)*

Thus the sons of GOD are continually warned and instructed of those who would go about with flattering lips to turn them aside from the ONE thing which is NEEDFUL. The LORD shall indeed deliver those that are HIS from their deceptions (see) so HE does place watchmen upon HIS walls to cry out when danger lurks. Much of Paul’s ministry was of such a nature.

The word “flattering” literally means “smooth” or a “slippery place”, the Hebrew word is sometimes translated as “field” or “parcel of land”. Both Judas and Baalam were sent to their “place” or “field”, and both were flatterers of the highest degree. *“Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.” (2Cor 11:14-15)*

Thus there are a multitude of silver-tongued orators who deepen their proselyte’s deception by their perversions of the truth. They appear to the flesh to be “givers of light” but all the while they speak lies by preaching a message which is not rooted in the simplicity of CHRIST and HIM crucified. They would not neglect to mention HIS crucifixion but they paint it with such a broad brush as to make it ineffectual, and leave its efficacy in the hands of men.

That man who has not only heard the TRUTH, but heard HIS word IN TRUTH cannot abide the empty and flattering words of those who would add something to it. Do not preach to me about prophecy, tell me about the PROPHET. Do not teach me about the law and my duty to it, but tell me about the LAWGIVER and HE who has fulfilled the law in its jot and tittle. O preach to me of HIM who is my PERFORMER, HE who is the SAVIOR of sinners and the KING of glory, ONE who has triumphed over HIS enemies and obtained eternal redemption for HIS people. mam