

# 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*

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## TURN US, O LORD

*Turn us again, O LORD God of hosts, cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved. Psalm 80:19*

The LORD's disciples mistakenly held to the notion that HE came into the world to establish an earthly Kingdom in Israel, right up until the eve of HIS ascension back to the FATHER as they inquired of HIM: *"When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6)* They had little understanding of the nature of HIS Kingdom nor how HE would manifest it in the Earth. HE told them that *"times and seasons"* were in HIS hands and the knowledge of such could only be bestowed according to the good pleasure of HIS will. HE did give unto them specific instructions as to where they were to be (Jerusalem) and how they were to proceed (wait), before giving them the promise which would usher in the manifestation that HIS Kingdom was not of flesh and blood and was intended solely for the benefit of HIS children. *"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."* (Acts 1:8)

The LORD laid the axe to the root of Nicodemus' notion that he might learn from CHRIST in his natural understanding when HE told him, *"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."* (John 3:3) In like fashion HE clearly apprised HIS disciples that the power of HIS kingdom is sovereignly dispensed according to HIS own pleasure and could not be enjoyed or entered into apart from HIS visitation of HIS power upon them. Thus, according to HIS predestined purpose, they tarried in Jerusalem and at the appointed hour, HE visited them in a demonstration of power which they had not, heretofore, seen. Nor has HE seen fit to duplicate this exact scenario again. The reality of this occurrence is demonstrated as HE caused a multitude to hear the message which was preached and to believe it.

Charles G. Finney, (who is widely considered as the Father of Modern Revivalism) began preaching around 1825 in upstate New York. He instituted many of the practices (such as what many today describe as the "altar call") of "modern evangelism". (see Mat.23:15) He was of the opinion that men had a completely free will and could influence GOD to pour out HIS blessings upon them by an adoption of morality and a devoted life of prayer, most especially if carried out in concert with others of the same mindset. He believed that men were the cause of their own salvation and brought their own faith to GOD rather than receiving "faith" from the hand of GOD.

Needless to say, his message was widely and happily received and for a season appeared to usher in a new era of spiritual prosperity. Yet, as in all endeavors of the flesh, the glory of GOD took second place to the glory of men and their accomplishments and the lasting effects of his errors remain with us today in the rank and file of so called Christendom. One of his more egregious errors which persists in the minds of many today, is that men can by their own efforts, prayers, and devotion, cause GOD to pour out HIS blessings and send "revival".

We certainly believe in the constant need of GOD's people for "revival", and hope to join with Habakkuk in imploring the LORD for such. *"O LORD, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid: O*

*LORD, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy.” (Hab 3:2) We often find ourselves in a cold and indifferent frame of mind due to the weakness and wickedness of our own flesh, and only because HE works in us both to will and to do of HIS good pleasure, do we desire with David, “to see THEE as we have seen THEE in the sanctuary.” We delight in the words of the Psalmist who sought the LORD saying, “Turn us again, O LORD God of hosts, cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.”*

Quite in contrast to Finney’s appeals to the natural man to “cause” GOD to hear him through “*much praying*”; the Psalmist makes all of his appeal to the LORD, recognizing that unless the LORD is pleased to “*turn us again*” we cannot even desire HIS presence, much less call upon HIS NAME in such a fashion as to compel HIM to hear us. The man who does not recognize that all of his blessings, faith, obedience, and true prayers are the gift of GOD which are bestowed according to HIS sovereign pleasure, is a man who is not acquainted with the GOD of the Bible. For a man to desire to be “turned” from his natural sinful way, he must be visited by the LORD. “O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.” (Jer 10:23) Left to himself every man will be consumed by his own corruption. “The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the LORD.” (Pro 16:1) We do not point this out to discourage men from praying, but rather that they might recognize HIM from whom all blessings flow. “For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?” (1Cor 4:7)

The Psalmist’s appeal is not to an imaginary deity who makes his blessing a possibility whose fulfillment depends upon man’s effort and endeavor. Rather his appeal is to the “LORD GOD of hosts.” This literally means HE who has all power and is the COMMANDER of the armies (hosts) of the heavens as well as those of the Earth. As Nebuchadnezzar learned, “And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?” (Dan 4:34-35) HE is not a GOD who waits upon the activity of man’s “free will”, but rather is the ONE who causes HIS people to be willing in the day of HIS power.

The Psalmist desires the presence of the LORD HIMSELF, and not simply some benefit which can be derived from religious activity. “Cause THY FACE to shine”. This is exactly what Paul describes to the Corinthians when he said, “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” (2Cor 4:6) There is no other avenue of blessing to the sons of men than that which arises in and through a knowledge of JESUS CHRIST as the SAVIOR of sinners and the LORD GOD of Heaven and Earth. Paul willingly cast off all of his religious and cultural traditions for the excellency of the knowledge of CHRIST. “Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection. (Php 3:8-10) Then the Psalmist brings forth the conclusion of that work which he desired for the LORD to carry out in HIS own power and bring to fruition. “We shall be saved.” He understood that what the LORD undertakes to perform will be done and the gates of hell cannot prevail against it. One of Finney’s errors was to define salvation as something which men participate in. Yet the Psalmist clearly states, “But the salvation of the righteous is of the LORD: he is their strength in the time of trouble.” (Psa 37:39) “Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it, except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. (Psa 127:1) “The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” (1John 1:7) mam