

GRACE GAZETTE

Volume XIX

Issue 25

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

THE WORD OF TRUTH

Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. James 1:18

We live in an area of the country which is often called the "Bible Belt". The reason for this is the assumption by many that the Bible is more revered and even believed in this region more so than in other areas of the nation. Many presume that this standing is of great advantage and that those who are considered to be "Bible believers" (whether in whole or in part) are more likely to be given an entrance into the Kingdom of GOD. We wish that all men were indeed "Bible believers" and would even be willing to aid others to become such if it were possible to do so.

The truth is that a "nominal" belief that the Bible is the Word of GOD, without a wholesale submission to its precepts and a complete surrender to HIM who is the SUBJECT and OBJECT of it, will be but a source of condemnation in the day of Judgement. *"And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46)*

The Pharisee's were great students of the scriptures. Many of them carried about portions of the scriptures upon their bodies wherever they went. They were "Bible believers" no doubt, even exceeding the devotion of many around about them. Yet the LORD said they were farther from the Kingdom of GOD than the wicked and immoral "publicans and harlots".

Many politicians regale us with their "faith" and belief in the "Bible". Some even opine that we need to get back to the principles which are taught in its pages. Yet in reality most of this is mere "fodder", since I have never heard even one of them seeking to exalt the glory of CHRIST as the ONE WAY of SALVATION. What is the benefit of "believing the Bible" without an acknowledgement of HIM who is the WORD of GOD who dwelt among us and poured out HIS life's blood to purchase the eternal salvation of that elect bride which HE came to redeem?

Some quote Paul's exhortation to Timothy, *"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."* (2Tim 2:15), in an attempt to encourage men to read it and peruse its pages diligently. They will often tell us that the LORD is impressed when men apply themselves to such "study" and by doing so they can rejoice in the knowledge that they obtain thereby, even gaining "discernment" by the process.

We would certainly never discourage men from reading and "studying" the scriptures, but this particular verse is not about that sort of "study". Rather the "study" (i.e.; be earnest or diligent; the same exact (Greek) word is used in II Pet. 1:10, as "give diligence") is in the working out of that salvation which the LORD has worked in. A man cannot become "approved" by the operation of his flesh in any endeavor. Rather those that are "approved unto GOD" demonstrate that fact as they are given an understanding of the TRUTH which is found in the word of GOD. This is a fulfillment of that which the LORD promised when HE said, *"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you."* (John 16:13-15)

The phrase “*word of truth*” is found four times in the New Testament. It is always translated from the same two Greek words: Word, meaning a DIVINE expression or statement. We see this set forth in John 1:1. “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*” (John 1:1) Truth, meaning verity, or that which is absolute. We see this set forth when CHRIST identified HIMSELF. “*Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*” (John 14:6) Thus, we can have no doubt that when the scriptures use this phrase, it is always pointing to CHRIST. No expression of absolute truth can be had which does speak of JESUS CHRIST.

We are certain that the Bible is absolutely true, however, it is not in itself, as a book with words upon its pages, “the word of truth.” Neither is that which is spoken by preachers and teachers, however accurately set forth, “the word of truth.” There is a necessary ingredient (which cannot be supplied by men) which makes the “spoken word” or “written word” the “word of truth.” This “ingredient” is the operation of the SPIRIT of GOD to apply that and cause men to “hear” it.

We see this illustrated on the day of Pentecost as the LORD miraculously caused men to “hear” the word of GOD. “*Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.*” (Acts 2:6) Then the results of this “hearing” were manifested as the LORD sent Peter to declare the gospel in no uncertain terms. “*Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?*” (Acts 2:37)

Some quote the passage of scripture which says, “*So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*” (Rom 10:17) to purport that men can only “hear” as a result of a gospel preacher mouthing the words which are taught in the scriptures. Yet that is to get the cart ahead of the horse, for it is impossible that a man can “hear” the gospel, without the operation of the “word of truth” upon his mind preceding such “preaching”. We do not wish to minimize the glorious blessing that is brought to the sons of men through the “preaching” or declaration of the gospel of the glory of the blessed GOD. Yet we would want to put that “preaching” in its proper context as that which is sent by the LORD to those who have already been enabled to “hear”.

Saul of Tarsus, “heard” the “WORD of TRUTH” on the road to Damascus yet no mere mortal preached to him. “*And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?*” (Acts 9:4) We don’t suppose that every individual who was under the sound of Peter’s voice had the SPIRIT to fall upon them, “*While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.*” (Acts 10:44) Rather those who “heard” the “WORD of TRUTH” are meant. Faith is applied through “hearing” rather than preaching.

The “WORD of TRUTH” must be “rightly divided” (i.e.; literally “make a straight cut”, or get to the root of the matter, dissect accurately). CHRIST must be seen, that is the WORD of TRUTH is to be dwelt upon. Regardless of how much of the scriptures a man might know and/or teach, if CHRIST JESUS and HIM crucified is not discovered and proclaimed, then the WORD of TRUTH is not “rightly divided.” The Pharisees devotedly studied the Bible, but they could not see CHRIST therein, thus were bereft of the WORD of TRUTH. “*I know that ye are Abraham’s seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.*” (John 8:37)

The “WORD of TRUTH” along with the POWER of GOD and HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS are inseparably linked. “*By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left.*” (2Cor 6:7) Wherever you find the WORD of TRUTH, you will see a demonstration of the power of GOD unto SALVATION. HE is the SWORD and SHIELD of HIS people as HE brings them from darkness unto LIGHT. Where you find the WORD of TRUTH you will also discover a people who claim no RIGHTEOUSNESS but HIS. “*But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.*” (1Cor 1:30)

The sons of GOD are born again by the WORD of TRUTH. As James says, “*by HIS own will begat HE us.*” John says the same thing, “*Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*” (John 1:13) Truly this is that WIND which blows where it determines, causing men to hear the glorious good news which brings LIFE and IMMORTALITY to light. How else could those dead in trespasses and sins ever embrace this WORD of TRUTH. Do you love the WORD of TRUTH?