

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

MISPLACED CONFIDENCE

And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. 1 John 2:28

Confidence is a wonderful state of mind if the foundation upon which one builds his confidence is sure and steadfast. However, a confidence which is built upon a false foundation will be the source of the greatest sorrow a man can know. The LORD JESUS said, *"And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it."* (Matt 7:26-27) There are many foundations laid today in the religious world but there is only ONE that will endure the test of time. *"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is JESUS CHRIST."* (1 Cor 3:11)

For every truth that is laid down in GOD's word Satan has produced many counterfeits which appear on the surface to be sound but like termite eaten wood these fakes cannot support any weight or endure testing. Woe be to those who sleep on the enchanted ground of false confidence. The sobering thing is that there are many well meaning "teachers" who have gone out into the world spreading false hope by repeating a counterfeit message they have been taught by others who were either deluded themselves or devilish deceivers whose intent is the destruction of men. (see Mat.7:15; Phil.3:2; Col.2:8)

Those who call themselves "Christians" are not immune to these deceptions, yea I tell you they are the very ones for whom these deceptions and false hopes are designed. There are many totally false religions in the world today who outright deny that JESUS CHRIST is the LAMB of GOD which taketh away the sin of the world. They are easy to identify and therefore pose no threat to the would be followers of CHRIST. No it is the more subtle deceptions that bring destruction among many who would identify themselves as "believers". These are the false hopes we wish to identify for the sake of the LORD's people, for it does not matter how right a man is on many subjects nor how confident he may be in what he believes, if the basis upon which he stands is anything other than JESUS CHRIST and HIM crucified then that mans religion is false and his hope is in vain. Some of the grounds for false hope and confidence are:

Sound doctrine.

It is very important that we be instructed by sound teaching that we may have a strong foundation on which to stand. (see Eph.4:11-16; Col.2:4-8) Yet there are many who are confident of their standing in CHRIST because they hold to this doctrine or that. Dogmatic adherence to doctrinal teaching is not an evicence of faith, what ever that doctrine may be. I believe very strongly in a doctrinal position some describe as Calvinism (though I am not very fond of the term nor would I gladly be labeled as such) but a person can be steeped in these doctrinal truths and

yet have no standing in CHRIST. "Some men of wise opinions boast and sleep on doctrines sound, O LORD let not my soul be lost on this enchanted ground".

Profession of faith or decision for CHRIST.

We are admonished in the scriptures to confess CHRIST before men (see Romans 10:9). This concept has been turned into a cottage industry by multitudes of well meaning "soul winners" who are convinced themselves and then go about convincing others that they can be "saved" by repeating a prayer or stating that they believe in CHRIST. Thus unconvicted and non-repentant men are assured that they have a standing in CHRIST simply because they have made a decision to be. The LORD said *"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my FATHER which is in heaven."* (Matt 7:21) Our confidence must be built on CHRIST himself and not on our decision to believe. Only GOD can work such a work.

Faith without works.

Nothing raises the eyebrows of those who believe in salvation by grace alone (which we do) more than when one mentions works. Actually it is redundant to speak of faith and works as though they are separate entities. Good works are simply the result of true faith. *"I will shew thee my faith by my works.-----But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?"* (James 2:18-20) There is no such thing as having faith and manifesting no evidence of it. *"For it is GOD which worketh in you both to will and to do of HIS good pleasure."* (Phil 2:13) Vain is the confidence of that man who believes himself to be standing in CHRIST yet has not love nor obedience to HIS commandments. Baptism or church affiliation. These two subjects are not related except that those who are the sons of GOD by new birth into the Kingdom of GOD are admonished to be baptized (in water) and to be a part of a local church (see Acts 2:41-47; Heb.10:25) Yet many seem to place great confidence in these activities as though they were synonymous with having a standing in CHRIST. One only has to read the obituaries to discover that "church membership" is a prized possession of the dead even if not so when they were alive.

Our confidence must rest in CHRIST and CHRIST alone, not our faith, not our profession, not our doctrine, not our church connection. Flee from those who encourage men to have confidence in anything else. *"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."* (2 Tim 1:12)

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