

# 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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## STRANGE DOCTRINE

*Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.*

*Hebrews 13:9*

Down through the ages of the world there have been many pestilences, calamities, and famines. Many have perished as a result of these occurrences. Even in this modern era, when mankind is impressed with its own power, knowledge, and science “falsely so called”, men are powerless to prevent or even mitigate such catastrophes. We can see this clearly demonstrated in the recent “Covid” fiasco. Political leaders and “scientists” of every stripe, clamored and rushed to give hope to the masses that they had everything under control. All we had to do was listen to their unparalleled wisdom which was based upon their supposed great expertise, and they would provide solutions to this dilemma. Now it is plain that their theories and solutions were based upon nothing but hubris and not fact. Yet many still persist in following these “solutions”, even though experience has proven the uselessness of the advice given by the “experts”.

Men are born with a nature which is contrary to the order and TRUTH of GOD. Every person born into this world automatically believes that they can control their destiny through the operation of what they would call their “free will”. They naturally believe that what they desire to do is the best path for them to follow. This is proven by the fact that one of the first words that must be taught to children is “no”. Some are more easily convinced of the wisdom of heeding that command than others who need more stern measures to convince them that there are undesired consequences attached to paying no mind to those who would exercise authority over them.

So, it comes as no shock to us that bowing down to an absolutely Sovereign GOD, is not something that comes naturally, but is a TRUTH which must be engraved upon the heart of those to whom the LORD is pleased to show mercy. Men can learn this TRUTH as a rote doctrinal matter. We see this demonstrated by the Pharisees, who claimed to believe in a Sovereign GOD, but yet whose heart was hard against the ONE sent by GOD to teach them HIS TRUTH. “*And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not. Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.*” (John 5:38-40) Only the operation of the SPIRIT of GOD upon the heart of a man can cause him to abandon all hope in a solution to his dilemma which is based upon his own ability to do anything.

Religion is the safe harbor for men who rejoice in the power of their free will and their ability to obey GOD, keep HIS law, and establish doctrines and practices which are acceptable to natural men feeding their desire to worship god at arm’s length. The LORD described this condition, “*Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.*” (Mat 15:7-9)

The state of what is called “modern Christendom” is perfectly described in the LORD’s admonition. There are congregations of folks all over this country and around the world who, while calling themselves Christians, deny the absolute rule of CHRIST over all things. One doctrine is common among them all, which is that: men are the deciding factor in whether or not they will be saved and/or

walk in obedience to the LORD. This notion can be found among all false professors led by physicians of no value and miserable comforters who espouse a mixture of “psychology”, “positive reinforcement” and entertainment oriented “worship”. Faith is touted as an action of men rather than the gift of GOD.

This is a state of affairs that man has no cure for. Only the LORD in Sovereign Mercy, pouring out HIS SPIRIT and leading HIS people out of darkness and into the LIGHT, can remedy this situation. We are reminded of Habakkuk’s heart-rending lament, “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)

In “Pilgrim’s Progress” (by John Bunyan), we read that Christian, took a short cut from the straight and narrow way, and went into “by-path meadow”, which appeared to be a very comforting and inviting route, but which ultimately led to Doubting Castle where he was imprisoned by Giant Despair. He along with his companion, Hopeful, had gotten out of the way that led to the Celestial City even though the path through “by-path meadow” seemed to lead to their destination.

The writer of Hebrews gives an exhortation which is quite appropriate for the sons of GOD who are desirous of arriving at the gates of that CITY as those who have put their hands to the plow and not looked back. His admonition to them is, “*Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines.*” We sometimes hear the “*physicians of no value*”, whose chief occupation is white-washing sepulchers, tell men that “doctrine is not important.” This is a blatant falsehood which was ignored by the early disciples. “*Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.*” (Acts 2:41-42)

Without “doctrine” there is no Gospel. Sound doctrine is the very basis upon which the “FAITH” of GOD’s elect stands. “*Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.*” (2John 1:9) Thus it is no wonder that a warning to avoid “*divers and strange doctrines*” should be pressed upon the sons of GOD. This is especially true in this day in which we live since “*divers*” (i.e.; different and varied) doctrines abound, proliferated by blind guides who are content to abide in “doctrines” which are the product of men who reject the notion of a Sovereign GOD who will show mercy to whom HE will show mercy and who will harden whom HE will as well. (see Romans chapter nine)

Nadab and Abihu offered “*strange fire before the LORD*” (see Num.26:61) and they and their families were destroyed as a result. This “*strange fire*” is analogous to these “*strange doctrines*” which the Hebrews were warned against. This fire was not that which was commanded by GOD to be offered, it was kindled by their own hand. “*Strange doctrine*” is any teaching which does not have JESUS CHRIST and HIM crucified at its center and as its basis. The verse which precedes this admonition is “*Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.*” (Heb 13:8) All other “doctrines” are “*strange*” which do not have their substance and foundation here.

Paul declared that he had no other message. “*For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.*” (1Cor 2:2) In fact he announced a curse upon anyone who came preaching any other message, however eloquent and learned they may be. “*But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.*” (Gal 1:8-9)

GOD’s people are not free to pick and choose what “doctrine” they will accept, but are compelled by the SPIRIT of GOD to desire that CHRIST alone be magnified in all things and at all times. They cannot be satisfied to have HIM pictured as hoping to save some if they will let HIM. CHRIST is the HOPE of HIS people. CHRIST is the SAVIOR of HIS people. CHRIST is the FAITH of HIS people. “*Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.*”(Col 2:8-10) “*Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.*” (1John 4:1) “*But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.*” (2Thess 2:13)