

# 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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## PLAINNESS OF SPEECH

*Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech. II Corinthians 3:12*

The things that men are enamored with are generally those things which are contrary to the principles of the Kingdom of GOD. This is made most clearly apparent when the LORD came teaching servitude to our fellow man rather than dominion over him. Revenge is a principle which is so ingrained in the human makeup that it is impossible to completely eradicate it from our initial reactions to being wronged, even though we might learn self-restraint in carrying out our basest desires in pursuing it. The LORD said, "*Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:* (this is that work of the law which is written in hearts of men by nature; see Rom.2:15) *But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.*" (Mat 5:38-42) (This is that law which is written upon the hearts of those who are born again.)

There is not a man alive that does not struggle in his mind and flesh as he considers the ramifications of what the LORD taught. I have heard more explanations of what the LORD did not mean, than I have those which examined exactly what HE did mean. If one would seek to gain an understanding of what CHRIST taught, he must simply look at how CHRIST lived HIS life among men. The LIFE of JESUS CHRIST is a perfect commentary on, and a faultless example of the truth that HE taught here. "*For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.*" (1Pet 2:20-23)

The natural religious man will often seek to make CHRIST's teaching to be about "morality", and will seek to try by his own endeavor to implement these teachings. Yet when he has expended all of his energy in this quest, he will in reality be no closer to the true implementation of such principles in his heart than when he started. (The rich young ruler is a good illustration of this fact, see Mat.19:16-22) Just as surely as someone commits the right kind of affront, he will without thinking, rise in anger and vengeance towards this person, even though it may be but a momentary episode. Sin is bound in the heart and men are bound to sin.

The teachings of CHRIST set forth two basic truths (or principles) which serve to enrage the righteous and to humble sinners. The first of these lessons is that the LORD would have HIS children to be aware of how their innate corruption would destroy them, were it not to be restrained by HIS mercy. The second is that HE would have them to know the perfections that dwell in HIM as HE demonstrates a perfect righteousness before men and GOD which cannot be copied or exceeded. HE "*was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*" (Heb 4:15)

In like fashion, as CHRIST taught these principles when HE walked among the men of this world, so too, does HE send forth men into the world to declare the exact same things. On more than one occasion Paul speaks of the simplicity of speech which he used in the declaration of the gospel among those to whom he was sent. When he does so, HE is not describing the gospel as a message which is so simple that men can grasp the true understanding of it in their flesh. Rather, he is declaring that the gospel cannot be enhanced or aided in any way by the sophistry or eloquence of men in order for it to be successful in the calling of the sheep of HIS pasture. The gospel message itself, when indicted by the SPIRIT of GOD, (see Rom.1:16) cannot be overturned or rejected by those whose hearts the LORD has opened, as seen in the cases of the Ethiopian Eunuch, the Samaritan woman, or Lydia. The clearest example of this truth is seen in Acts 13:48, *“And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.”*

It is quite unfortunate, that many religious (and I think in many cases, well meaning) men think that certain elements of the gospel message should be hidden or at least “judiciously” spoken of, rather than simply declared as plainly as the scriptures speak of them. Some of those are:

1. The absoluteness of GOD and HIS decrees. HE said, *“I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.”* (Isa 45:5-7) What can possibly be added to this statement by the potsherd of the earth? Or why would men spend hours seeking to “explain” it in such a fashion as to soften it up or make it more palatable to the natural man? Do not the sons of GOD rejoice in HIS majesty and tremble before HIM who does according to HIS will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the Earth? Can HIS hand be stayed? Can HIS will be thwarted? Plainness of speech requires an answer that does not equivocate.

2. The unconditional election and predestination of HIS children unto eternal life, and HIS determination to destroy the reprobate who HE has ordained unto destruction and created for this purpose. *“Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory.”* (Rom 9:20-23)

3. The definite and particular atonement for sin which CHRIST has performed in order to redeem those whom HE has loved with an everlasting love. *“Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.”* (Heb 9:12) Is it possible that one for whom HE has “obtained eternal redemption” should ever perish? To teach such is a most egregious error and the very antithesis of the gospel.

4. The effectual calling of the elect unto CHRIST and the application of the gift of faith to those whom HE calls. *“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) *“All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.”* (John 6:37) Can any man enter the kingdom of GOD without FAITH or a knowledge of CHRIST?

5. The complete and total salvation of those whom CHRIST has redeemed. *“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”* (Rom 8:1-4) *“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?”* (Rom 6:1-2)