

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

THAT YOU MAY KNOW

These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. *1 John 5:13*

One of the gravest of errors that has been introduced into the thinking of men, in relation to the gospel, is that a man can be assured of his salvation by remembering a “time” when he first believed. It is quite commonplace to hear men pinpoint a “time” when they were supposedly “saved”. This “time” is recognized as that moment when a man “decided” to be saved. Modern “revivalism” and “neo-evangelicalism” has been and continues to be the “catalyst” for such erroneous thinking.

This scenario is often played out as a skillful orator plies his hearers with moving words, sometimes even an accurate portraying of the work of CHRIST in the behalf of sinners. After a season of “preaching”, then the speaker tells his audience, that they now have the “opportunity” to be “saved”, if they will just come to the front and make a decision to be “saved”. Nothing could be simpler, and many go away quite convinced that they have entered into the Kingdom of GOD because of their decision.

Then later on, because of the cares of this world and other issues, some begin to doubt that they are “saved”. They may seek out counsel on the matter and they are “assured” that by just remembering the “time” when they “gave their heart to the LORD” they can be confident that they are indeed those who “have eternal life”. Thus, we have “churches” full of folks whose “testimony of salvation” consists in recounting the “moment of time” in which they made a decision to be “saved”.

Another error which is not quite as widespread but equally crippling to those who might be seekers after the LORD, is that it is impossible for a man to “know” that he has eternal life. He is told that he must go through his life doubting this matter and merely “hoping” that it is so. In fact some even make it a point of great spirituality to be constantly expressing great doubt that one is a child of GOD.

One thing is certain, and that is, that no man can find a ladder tall enough to reach into the heavens and read his name recorded in the LAMB’s Book of Life. Yet it is equally certain that he cannot find that it is not there either. This is a matter upon which a man cannot speculate nor are we ever to enter into such conjecture. Yet the scriptures give to every one of those who have fled to CHRIST for REFUGE and find themselves continually calling upon HIS NAME, ample reason to rest in HIM.

The English word “know” appears 299 times in the New Testament. The same Greek word which is translated as “know” appears 664 times and is also translated as see, saw, beheld, and looked, etc. So we can conclude that it is a word which is speaking of that which may be observed or seen. John uses the word “know” fifteen times in his first epistle.

The first time that John uses this word in his letter is to present an observable fact to the children of GOD. “*And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.*” (1 John 2:3) Those who are the sons of GOD (i.e.; have eternal life) “keep HIS commandments”. The word “keep” here means to hold dear or count as of great value. The Pharisees thought they were “keepers” of the Law because they took great pains to be exact in their observance of the letter of the Law. Yet they were not in reality “keepers” of the Law because they rejected the LAWGIVER and did not have respect unto the holiness and glory of the Law but rather viewed it as a checklist of things to do or avoid. Those who are the sons of GOD revere HIS Law because it is **HIS** Law, and lament the fact that they do not live up to its lofty standards but find rest in HIM who has perfectly fulfilled it in its jot and tittle. The

TRUTH is not in the man who has no regard to HIS Law. (see I John 2:4) *“But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.”* (1John 2:5)

Then John describes another manner in which the sons of GOD might know their sonship, *“We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.”* (1John 3:14) The greatest delight of those who have passed from death unto life in this present world, is the fellowship of the saints. The sons of GOD are most precious to those of like mind, desiring to worship CHRIST together in SPIRIT and TRUTH. They share this common bond and embrace one another even as CHRIST embraces them. This is that communion which Paul writes about to the Corinthians. *“For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.”* (1Cor 10:17) and also the Romans, *“So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.”* (Rom 12:5)

The sons of GOD are knit together in CHRIST and they delight that it is so. They rejoice in the exhortations to this end. *“Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.”* (Php 2:2-4) *“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.”* (Gal 6:2) Is this not a bit of Heaven on Earth?

This is what Paul describes when he says; *“And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.”* (1Cor 12:26) We are indeed our brother’s keeper and those in whom the SPIRIT of GOD works rejoice in this sweet union of the saints. James gives us a practical application of this unity of SPIRIT when he says: *“If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?”* (Jas 2:15-16) Do we love the brethren and esteem them above ourselves? *“My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.”* (1John 3:18-21)

John says *“And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.”* (1John 3:24) What SPIRIT has HE given to HIS children but HE who leads them into all TRUTH? This is the SPIRIT of a sound mind. *“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”* (2Tim 1:7) A sound mind is one which believes that JESUS CHRIST is the SON of GOD which taketh away the sin of the world according to the gospel of HIS glory. (see 3:23) Can the natural man embrace this TRUTH which he despises by nature? *“Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.”* (Jer 13:23) True faith is the gift of GOD, lest any man should boast. By this SPIRIT’s presence we know HIM. *“Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.”* (1John 4:13-15)

Finally, John sums up how we might know that we have eternal life. *“And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness. And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.”* (1John 5:19-20) Those who have eternal life confess that this world is not their home even as the saints of old who “looked for a city whose BUILDER and MAKER is GOD.” They confess that apart from a man being “in CHRIST” he shall surely perish for the wickedness of this world shall be judged by HIM who comes in flaming fire taking vengeance on all who know HIM not. They confess that CHRIST JESUS the LORD has come into the world as the Only BEGOTTEN SON of GOD, whose blood has been shed for undeserving sinners. Their HOPE is built on nothing less (or more) than JESUS’ blood and righteousness. They confess that apart from HIS grace brought to them through HIS mercy they would have no understanding of these things. Having been given this understanding they rejoice in HIM who is the WAY, the TRUTH, and the LIFE. Thus we know that we have passed from death unto life. mam

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