

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

THE FAMILY NAME

Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named. Ephesians 3:15

In 1883, Daniel Whittle penned these words of, what is now, a well known hymn:
"I know not why God's wondrous grace To me He hath made known,
Nor why, unworthy, Christ in love Redeemed me for His own.
I know not how this saving faith To me He did impart,
Nor how believing in His Word Wrought peace within my heart.
I know not how the Spirit moves, Convincing men of sin,
Revealing Jesus through the Word, Creating faith in Him."

It is quite true that the SPIRIT does create faith in HIM (i.e.; CHRIST) but we must never lose sight of the fact that HE creates faith "in them" (which wording I would prefer). CHRIST is the OBJECT of all true FAITH, and in order for a man to possess true FAITH, that FAITH must be not only in HIM, but that HE is their FAITH. The SPIRIT of GOD calls the sons of GOD out of darkness and into the LIGHT; which LIGHT HE is pleased to manifest in the preaching of the Gospel. The work of the SPIRIT is directly applied to the awakened sons of GOD and HE does create true FAITH in each one of those whom HE is pleased to give the LIGHT of knowledge of the glory of GOD in the face of JESUS CHRIST. Thus, when they hear; that faith, which HE has created in them, does rejoice in that FAITH which they hear in the gospel, ("which brings LIFE and immortality to light") so that "*faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the WORD of GOD.*" "*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.*" (John 10:27)

The sons of GOD believe the gospel because HE gives them ears to hear it, otherwise it would be an "uncertain sound" when HE is pleased to send men to declare it. LIFE must precede hearing. In many cases this may seem to be a simultaneous occurrence, but it is certain that a man must be "born from above" before he can believe that which is revealed in the gospel. "*Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*" (John 3:3) "*Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.*" (John 18:37) Many "heard" what Peter said on the day of Pentecost with their natural ears, but only those whose hearts the LORD had opened received it. The same thing occurred when Paul and Barnabas were sent to Antioch to declare the unsearchable riches of CHRIST. "*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.*" (Acts 13:48) Also with Lydia, "*And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.*" (Acts 16:14).

The point of bringing up this truth which seems abundantly clear to me as I study the scriptures and observe the LORD's working in HIS children, is because there are some who seem to take issue with this, while clinging to the notion that men must be exposed to the preaching of the gospel (according to their definition of what the gospel is) in order to be "born again". One of the outgrowths of this notion is to exalt those with "preaching gifts" above the rank and file, as if they possess some certain power of their own. Those who are privileged to declare the gospel are mere servants who must perform the task to which they are sent and can take no glory therein.

In all ages there are those descendants of Diotrephes who love to have the preeminence, sit in the chief seats, and take unto themselves various titles. The only "title" to which the sons of GOD should aspire to, is be as those believers at Antioch. *"And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."* (Acts 11:26) It is not clear if this was a pejorative term applied to them by outsiders, a term of respect by the same, or that by which they themselves desired to be known by.

The term "Christian", literally means a "follower" or "imitator" of CHRIST. Being a "Christian" is not simply belonging to a religion which adopts the doctrine of CHRIST. It is not to be defined by some moral persuasion, political affiliation, or family ties. Rather to be a Christian is to renounce all reliance, effort, or ground of hope which is not found in JESUS CHRIST and HIM crucified. We often hear this term applied to our nation by some well meaning but deluded folks. No nation upon this earth is a "christian" nation. A nation could have been founded by men who themselves were "Christians", but that term cannot be applied to the resulting governed body, any more than a man can be born again by the power and will of the flesh. *"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."* (John 3:8) *"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."* (John 1:12-13)

So who or what is this of whom we read that *"the whole family in heaven and earth is named"*. The verse before this one says *"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."* (Eph 3:14) Some would try to make a grand distinction between the FATHER and the LORD JESUS, as if you could have ONE without the other. Herein lies the greatest mystery which can never be resolved by human understanding, regardless of educational pedigree or astuteness of learning.

The NAME by which the sons of GOD are named, is the LORD JESUS CHRIST who is the fulness of the GODHEAD bodily. HE has that NAME which is above all names. HE is the ALPHA and the OMEGA, the BEGINNING and THE END. We marvel at the revelation of HIMSELF to Philip when HE said, *"Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?"* (John 14:9) Yet this was no new revelation since Isaiah had prophesied the same thing, *"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."* (Isa 9:6) Thus John speaks of HIS coming, *"No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."* (John 1:18)

CHRIST came into the world to do the will of HIS FATHER in redeeming that people which were given to HIM in an eternal covenant. HE has been set upon the holy hill of the LORD as KING and ruler of a Kingdom whose government and peace shall be without end. Yes, beloved HE is that ONE of whom the whole family of GOD in heaven and earth is named. *"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."* (Acts 4:12)

Isaiah writes of a "day" which appeared to him a great ways off, but now we see has come to pass. *"And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach."* (Isa 4:1) Is this not the desire of every one of those quickened sons of GOD, as they are given ears to hear the glorious good news of CHRIST? They want to be married to no other, even if it means being a doorkeeper in the house of GOD or eating crumbs which fall from HIS table.

"In that day shall the branch of the LORD be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel. And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem." (Isa 4:2-3) Oh! HE has taken away our reproach and there remains no condemnation for those who are called by HIS NAME. *"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."* (Rev 2:17) No man can know that NAME except HE be given a mind to receive it. JESUS CHRIST the RIGHTEOUS. mam