

GRACE GAZETTE

Volume IV

Issue 13

Published occasionally for Zion's mourners

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

OUR INTERCESSOR

Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Romans 8:34

The ultimate winner of a sporting contest is not always readily apparent at the beginning of the game but it is always clear at the finish. In hearing the predictions leading up to the NCAA men's basketball tournament, very few (if any) of the expert prognosticators even correctly picked which teams would be in the final four let alone who the eventual winner would be. This particular tournament is seldom won by the team which looks on paper to be of championship caliber. But it is always won by the team which performs like a champion when the game is on the line. When the tournament started, the hopes of many teams were built very high based on the fact that they were chosen as the number one seeds in each of the four regions. But the hopes of all of them were shown to be without any basis in fact, because they were each beaten by teams which outperformed them when the contest was held. UCLA was hyped by most of the commentators, I heard, as being practically unbeatable for many reasons not to mention their long standing tradition of success in games of the type to be played. But once the ball was tipped all of the predictions, expectations, and traditions meant nothing because they were soundly outperformed and never posed a serious threat to win. Some say, if the game were played again there might be a different outcome, but I doubt it because the better performers have demonstrated their prowess and besides that the contest is done, it is finished.

Paul sets forth some of the most glorious prose in all of the New Testament here in the eighth chapter of Romans. He begins with *"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus,"* (Rom.8:1) and ends with *"I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."* (Rom.8:38-39) Paul is not here making a prediction about how the contest is going to come out or who he thinks will triumph. No! he is speaking as one who knows that the game is over, and the championship trophy is in hand, and the CHAMPION has procured the victory. It is finished. Three short words uttered by our SAVIOR but the hope and expectation of all of the elect children of GOD forever rests upon HIS pronouncement.

Man's natural religious bent continually causes him to desire to add a little something to this finished work in order that it might be complete. But nothing can be added to something which is finished. One of the most common errors that is received by multitudes of professing believers today is that of paying lip service to believing that CHRIST finished the work HE set out to do, yet believing that the elect are not counted as righteous until they add their faith and in some cases their works of righteousness to the equation causing GOD to apply the forgiveness which was purchased by CHRIST.

The forgiveness of the sins of GOD's elect children was procured and applied at the cross of JESUS CHRIST. (see Eph.1:7; Col.1:14) This is the very basis and object of the faith which is given to each of them at the time selected by GOD the FATHER (see Gal.1:15) Those for whom HE shed HIS precious blood have never been the objects of GOD's wrath nor appointed unto this end. (see I Thes.5:9) It is for this reason that HE came into the world to redeem them in order that HE might be both just and the justifier of HIS own. Where is boasting then? *"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."* (Gal 6:14) Just as the thousands of adoring fans welcomed the national champions back to Gainesville, so do the sons of GOD rejoice in the triumph of their CHAMPION. None of those fans entertains the slightest notion that they contributed to the victory, they just rejoice in what was procured and benefit from the performance which was carried out by another.

The scripture says that CHRIST is presently making intercession for us. Some have assumed that this means HE is actively pleading and praying that GOD would forgive HIS people. This is a false assumption. CHRIST does not intercede for us with words or groans. HE intercedes for us by HIS presence before the FATHER. Charles Wesley (who was a much better theologian in his song writing than he was in his preaching) wrote these words,

"Five bleeding wounds HE bears, received on Calvary.

They pour effectual prayers, They strongly plead for me.

Forgive him, O forgive they cry, nor let that ransomed sinner die."

This intercession of CHRIST insures:

The absolute forgiveness of all of the sins of all of HIS elect sons. "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." (Psalms 103:12) Our forgiveness is in no way dependent on faith but on the Living SAVIOR who is our faith.

The safety and perserverance of HIS people. Nothing can separate us from HIM because HE is alive to keep us from falling. "having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." (John 13:1) "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." (John 10:28)

The resurrection of the bodies of the elect unto immortality. Paul said we had no hope and our message is vain if CHRIST is not risen from the dead but our assurance is "now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept." (1 Cor 15:20) The fact that HE is now alive at the right hand of the FATHER is the proof that HE arose and so shall we.

The eternal bliss of the sons of GOD. We look for a city which hath foundations which HE has prepared. "That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." (Eph 2:7) CHRIST is all!

mam