

GRACE GAZETTE

Volume V

Issue 28

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

THE WORK OF GOD

Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.
John 6:28-29

It seems that everywhere you turn nowadays that you can hear men speaking about doing the "Lord's work". They are either engaged in trying to persuade men to perform it or to get them to send them some money so they can do it bigger and better than it has ever been done before. In listening to these "work mongers" one would come to the conclusion that the LORD is either impotent to perform HIS own work or naturally dependent on men to carry it out in some fashion or other. There are multitudes who are convinced that they are doing the "Lord's work" and who become quite angry with those (such as myself) who deny that such is possible.

The man who has never been convinced of his own sinful nature and its resulting impotence, often entertains the notion that he can through some sort of effort of his own perform some "work" which would be pleasing in the LORD's sight. In fact most men think that they can keep the law (proving that they have never been slain by it, see Rom. 7:7-14) and by so doing perform the "Lord's work". These men who asked the LORD this question, "*What shall we do that we might work the works of GOD,*" were of these opinions. They assumed that it was possible for men to "work the works of GOD." They unblushingly asked the LORD what deeds they could perform in order to curry favor with GOD. They, no doubt, expected to be instructed to adopt some regimen of religious activity or to offer some sacrifice which would be pleasing in HIS sight.

In this they were not much different than the average "religious" person today who is convinced that by some faithful activity they can win the blessings of GOD or gain favor in HIS sight. Modern "churches" (so called) primarily operate on this principle. All sorts of programs and activities are promoted for the purpose of occupying their members with busy work so that they can consider themselves faithful. There are classes to teach, youth programs to run, and of course the ever present offering plate and tithe envelope which is purported to be a better investment than the stock market. They promise men that they will receive blessings from GOD for such activity and even greater rewards in heaven to come. They are encouraged to "win souls" and "bring in the lost" to expand the ever increasing membership in their religious clubs (sometimes called churches) to assure that they will always be able to have an ample budget with which to do the "Lord's work". And on and on it goes and where it stops nobody knows. There seems to be a never ending supply of men who can dream up more and more of the "Lord's work" which is to be done by men.

The GOD of the Bible nowhere indicates that HE has any of HIS "work" that men can perform or that HE intends that they should perform it. HE asked Job, "*Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding.*" (Job 38:4) Then through the Psalmist HE said, "*If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fullness thereof.*" (Psa 50:12) GOD is quite capable of performing HIS own work

without the aid of man as Nebuchadnezzar discovered when he said, *"I blessed the most High, and I praised and honored him that liveth forever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?"* (Dan 4:34-35)

GOD is still performing HIS own work as HE has done in every age and shall continue to do so when the mountains have crumbled and the seas have become dry land. Some of that work which HE performs is:

HE humbles the pride of men, most especially HIS elect. Again even as Nebuchadnezzar confessed, *"Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase."* (Dan 4:37) One word from HIS lips can bring down the mightiest of men.

HE awakens HIS own from the deadness of their sin in HIS own time. As Paul told the Ephesians, *"Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, by (grace ye are saved;)"* (Eph 2:5) GOD does not use any means but HIS own SPIRIT's power to raise up dead sinners to life even in the same fashion as HE raised up JESUS CHRIST from the dead on the third day. No man can in any way participate in this work which is wholly and completely accomplished by HIM alone. Nor is it possible for men to pinpoint the moment when it occurs.

HE sends HIS messengers with the gospel. Nothing can overturn either the mission or the message of anyone whom HE has sent. *"So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."* (Isa 55:11) Sometimes HE may send a man with a message to harden men's hearts (see Acts 28:24-27) or that they might hear and believe. (see Rom.10:14-15) In either case it is the work of the LORD accomplished by HIS hand and according to HIS purpose which cannot in any wise be thwarted.

HE gives, some, faith to believe the gospel. As Paul testified, *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."* (Eph 2:8-9) The gift of faith is the manifestation of GOD's work in HIS elect and is an evidence that they are the sons of GOD. *"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)

HE indwells HIS people through HIS HOLY SPIRIT and performs in them by that same power. Paul said, *"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."* (Gal 2:20) He went on to further expand this truth when he said *"For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."* (Phil. 2:13) Even the willingness of GOD's people to walk with HIM and follow HIS precepts is the product of HIS workmanship. (see Eph.2:10; Ps.110:3)

HE shall keep HIS elect from falling and preserve them faultless to the end. *"And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."* (2 Tim 4:18) HE said, *"And I give unto them (my sheep) eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."* (John 10:28)

HE has redeemed HIS elect with HIS own blood which HE shed for the remission of their sins. This is the crowning work which HE has performed for them and is the basis upon which all of HIS subsequent work in their behalf rests. All of the benefits which accrue to the sons of GOD have arisen out of that redemptive work, without which they would have no salvation. *"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."* (1Pe 1:18-19)