

GRACE GAZETTE

Volume V

Issue 30

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

A SAVOR UNTO GOD

Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savor of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savor of death unto death; and to the other the savor of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?

II Corinthians 2:14-16)

Some would have us believe that GOD sends HIS preachers into the earth in the hope that they will accomplish something and perhaps win many souls for HIS kingdom. They picture HIM as trying to save as many as HE can, if only men will listen to HIM before it is too late. They view HIM as being quite pleased with those who expend such effort and scurry around from place to place "spreading the gospel" (as they call it) as if the more mud they sling on the wall the more likelihood there is that some will stick. It is quite common to hear men "preach the gospel" (as they call it) and then tell men that GOD has done all HE can do and the rest is up to them. They believe that the purpose of preaching the gospel is to save souls by persuading men to believe it. Great salesmanship is a prerequisite in their attempts to get a decision out of those they preach to. Those who can do this with great aplomb and flair are much in demand in the religious world.

I do not for one moment question the sincerity and fervor of those who go about the earth with this mindset. The problem is that fervently and methodically proclaiming things that are not true is of no value to the hearers, promotes confusion, and ultimately becomes a great stumbling block to many. If there has ever been a time when there has been a proliferation of religion in the earth, it is in our day. The airwaves are full and the printing presses run day and night blanketing the earth with it. Yet in the midst of it all it is very difficult to find the clear and unadulterated proclamation of the glory of the true and living GOD in the earth. HE has become in the minds of most a pathetic figure with HIS hands tied unless men allow HIM to do something (which he desperately wants to do, according to them). It becomes very clear what the LORD meant when HE said, "*Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?*" (Luke 18:8)

Paul was never one to mince words and sets forth in no uncertain terms that the LORD JESUS CHRIST is the SAVIOR of sinners. He never indicates that the LORD is trying to save anybody, hoping someone will be saved, or waiting on anyone to let HIM into their heart. HE is that ONE who has purchased eternal redemption for HIS elect (see Heb.9:12), saved HIS own to the uttermost (see Heb.7:25), washed them in HIS own blood (see Rev.1:5); justified them by HIS grace (see Rom.3:24), sanctified them by the offering of HIMSELF (see Heb.10:10); imputed HIS righteousness to them and their sin to HIMSELF (see Rom.5:17-19), holds them in the palm of HIS mighty hand that they shall never perish (see II Tim.4:18), ever lives to make intercession for them (see Heb.9:24), upholds all things by the working of HIS mighty power (see Heb.1:3) and will receive HIS elect unto HIMSELF to inhabit that place which HE has prepared for them without the aid of man in any fashion (see Rev.22:3-5)

The message of the true gospel is not a plan or a formula which if men will cooperate with then they will receive blessings in this life or that to come. Rather the true gospel is a magnification of the glory of the blessed GOD. It is a plain message which informs those whom GOD is pleased to enable to hear, that JESUS CHRIST is the SAVIOR of sinners. It is not a message about what HE is trying to do or hopes to do but is a declaration of what HE has already accomplished in the behalf of those who are powerless to save themselves. The true gospel is a proclamation that JESUS CHRIST has completely satisfied the demands of the law which rightly condemns those who have broken its precepts. It is a plain decree, (designed for those who have been awakened by HIS SPIRIT to flee from the wrath to come,) that HE has removed all grounds of condemnation for HIS people and has imputed HIS righteousness to their account. It is an exhortation impelling those who have been given faith to believe its precepts and cast themselves at HIS feet for mercy. It is a sweet balm to them which heals their diseases and calms their troubled conscience.

Those who think the gospel is a formula or plan say that they preach in order to get men saved. Paul never taught such because he was ever aware that the purpose of preaching the gospel was primarily to magnify the glory of GOD in redemption. About his own ministry he said, *"According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust."* (1Ti 1:11) The privilege of preaching the gospel is not given except to those whom HE has sent (see Rom.10:15). This is a solemn calling and one which must never be entered upon without a due consideration of the glory which belongs to HIM who is worthy of all praise.

The GOD who dwells in the light to which no man can approach is a jealous GOD who will share HIS glory with none. HE intends to manifest the glory of HIS grace in the earth and the ages to come by the unfolding of HIS purpose in redeeming an elect people which HE has loved with an everlasting love. (see Eph.2:6-8) The proclamation of the gospel is a sweet fragrance to HIM according to Paul. *"For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ."* HE takes delight in the exaltation of HIS SON who HE has lifted up and given a name which is above every name and is pleased to send forth men into the earth to declare HIS glory.

While there are some who are given ears to hear that gospel and take delight in it, (a savor of life unto life) there are others who will not hear it and even despise it (a savor of death unto death) considering it either foolish or unnecessary. Yet the LORD our GOD takes delight in the proclamation of CHRIST's glory in redemption both in the fact that some are saved and some perish according to HIS eternal counsel and purpose. Who is sufficient for these things? Who can fathom the way and purpose of GOD? Our mouths must be shut and we become silent before HIM as we ponder the awesome glory that belongs to HIM who is the GOD of the dead and the living. All boasting by the creature must come to an end and we find ourselves prostrate and trembling in the dust before HIM who will show mercy to whom HE will show mercy and whom HE will HE will harden. O where shall you appear O sinner, and how shall you know the way of life eternal except that HE in sovereign mercy should be pleased to grant you that life? Where shall be your pride O religious man in the day when HE shall come to judge the quick and the dead? What shall your plea be before HIS awful throne? *"And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?"* (1Peter 4:18)

Blest are the souls that hear and know The gospel's joyful sound;
Peace shall attend the path they go ,And light their steps surround.
Their joy shall bear their spirits up, Through their Redeemer's name;
His righteousness exalts their hope, Nor Satan dares condemn.
The Lord, our glory and defence, Strength and salvation gives;
Israel, thy King for ever reigns, Thy God for ever lives.

Gadsby's Hymns #58
by Isaac Watts (1674-1748)