

GRACE GAZETTE

Volume VII

Issue 32

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

GOD'S TAPESTRY

That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ.

(Col 2:2)

It is obvious from history and the scriptures that all churches have a finite life span. Yet men have devised the concept of "organizations" in order to perpetuate the existence of those institutions which they have established. The LORD admonished the church at Sardis, "*I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.*" (Rev 3:1) Many such institutions continue to function and call themselves churches long after Ichabod (see I Sam. 4:21-22) is written over their doors. They are content to point out the glories of their illustrious past and to promote the husk without the kernel. They mistake the brilliance of their confessions of faith and their long history of existence with that of the presence of the LORD in their midst.

The scripture does not present the church as an organization or an institution as is commonly considered by the religious multitudes. Rather, the church is a living organism which receives its life from one SOURCE. No group of people can come together and become a church by organizing and designating themselves a church, regardless of the "credentials" of some who would think to "authorize it" or what larger body might confer upon it an air of legitimacy by gathering it under its wing.

Neither can any such group of people whom the LORD has established as a church, continue as such except that the LORD of hosts should continue to walk in their midst. "*Except the LORD build the house, they labor in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.*" (Ps 127:1) No church can hold onto what the LORD has done with them in times past but must of necessity lean upon HIM who is their LIFE and hope that HE is pleased to continue to walk among them and sustain them from day to day. We would do well to pay heed to what HE told the Laodiceans, "*Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.*" (Rev 3:17)

That church which is strong is that one which knows itself to be extremely needy, yea even perishing and dying except that the LORD should visit it with the early and latter rain of HIS blessings. Its power does not consist in the strength of the orations of its preachers or the strictness of its order and close adherence to its time honored traditions. The true people of GOD are not known because of their faithfulness, their zeal, or even their doctrine, but the LORD said "*By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*" (John 13:35) There is not a thing in the world for a man to glory in, in such a declaration. True love for the brethren is something that can only be produced by the work of the HOLY GHOST in the people of GOD and is spoken of as the evidence that they are indeed the true sons of GOD as John said, "*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)

In Paul’s letter to the Colossians he writes of the church being “knit together”. He uses the phrase in the text we have cited at the beginning and then later in the same chapter when he says, “*the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.*” (Col 2:19) He uses the same phrase in his letter to the Ephesians where it has been translated “compacted”. “*From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.*” (Eph 4:16)

The Greek word used in all of these instances literally means, “to cause to coalesce, to join together, put together” (Strong’s) It carries with it the notion that this is brought to pass by a power outside of that which is coalesced or put together. We know very plainly that this POWER is the power of GOD which alone can enable brethren to be woven together into a tapestry which is both beautiful and strong.

This is a tapestry which is woven of many different threads. “*For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us.” (Rom 12:4-6) “And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.” (1Cor 12:6-7)*

Yet this tapestry is the work of ONE. “*Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.” (1Cor 12:4-5) “God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honor to that part which lacked.” (1Co 12:24)* There is no gift of which any man may glory but each is to rejoice that every gift is given for the profit of the whole body by HIM who doeth all things well. HE is the WISE MASTERBUILDER.

One NEEDLE is used in the knitting of this tapestry. “*But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.” (1Cor 12:11-13)* The children of GOD are knit together in local assemblies because they are all born of the same SPIRIT and are partakers together of the same LIFE thus having been given the gift of discerning the body of CHRIST they cannot help but to love one another.

This tapestry is spread abroad by its MAKER and with it HE is well pleased with its beauty which is the result of HIS work. This is the direct answer of HIS prayer “*For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.” (John 17:8-11)*

The MAKER of this tapestry will declare its fitness in the final day and will manifest that its beauty is that which is wholly supplied by HIM. “*Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.” (Jude 1:24-25) “Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.” (Eph 5:25-27)*