

GRACE GAZETTE

Volume XI

Issue 8

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 MEMORY OF THE JUST

The memory of the just is blessed: but the name of the wicked shall rot.

Proverbs 10:7

The scripture is very clear that all men are alike sinners and every man in and of himself is worthy of destruction. *"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom 3:23) "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." (Rom 3:10-12)*

Yet the scripture is also very clear that the LORD has put a difference between those who are the wicked and those who are the just. The wicked perish in their sins but the just *"shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." (Mat 13:43)* The just are *"blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom {they} shine as lights in the world." (Phil 2:15)* The just shall "prosper" in the blessings of GOD but *"The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away." (Psa 1:4)*

And so it is that the SPIRIT of GOD does perform a work in the sons of GOD which makes them a savor unto HIM as well as to one another. This is the result of that *"common salvation"* (see Jude 1:3) which is produced by HIM who is the AUTHOR and FINISHER of our faith. This is the sanctifying work of CHRIST which is demonstrated by the fulfillment of the exhortations given to them in the scriptures. *"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you," (II Cor 6:17)*

One of the evidences of this sanctification is found in the knitting together of those whom HE is pleased to make one in CHRIST. *"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." (1John 3:14-16)* It is for this which CHRIST prayed, *"That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." (John 17:21)*

There is a natural love (or affection) which is commonly found among the creation which GOD has made. It can be seen among all types of creatures from dogs to humans. A mother loves her child unconditionally. A dog is loyal to his master. This "natural love" also includes the special affection and attraction which is found between men and women. This "love" forms the basis of the ongoing of the species. This "love", like all things natural, can be and is found corrupted as, mothers abandon and even slay their children, dogs bite the hands that feed them, and men burn in lust one to the other working that which is unseemly. (see Rom.1:26-32)

The love of brethren, one to the other, is, on the other hand, an incorruptible love which the world can observe (see John 13:35) but can neither comprehend or enter into. It is the fruit of the SPIRIT which can only grow on those trees which are the planting of the LORD.

It is no unwelcome chore for the sons of GOD to love one another. Peter writes, *"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently."* (1Pet 1:22) True brotherly love is without pretense or reluctance because it stems from the SOURCE of all love. *"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love."* (1John 4:7-8)

A man's natural love is swallowed up by the grave, but that which is produced by the SPIRIT of GOD is made perfect by death. This love, one for the other, is not subject unto death but rather is enhanced by it, as the saints in all ages are bound together by ties which the world knows nothing of. *"For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's."* (Rom 14:8) They share this common bond and rejoice in Paul's testimony, *"According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."* (Phil 1:20-21)

As we contemplate the lives of HIS people which are in our acquaintance we are encouraged and blessed as we remember them with fondness for the work of the grace of GOD in their lives. The Psalmist commented on this when he said, *"Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness: he is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous. A good man sheweth favour, and lendeth: he will guide his affairs with discretion. Surely he shall not be moved for ever: the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance."* (Psa 112:4-6)

GOD demonstrates HIS faithfulness and love for HIS elect people by the work of HIS SPIRIT in them. It is this work which endears the sons of GOD to one another, and I might add often infuriates the men of this world. This is manifest not just with those with whom we have been personally acquainted but in the reports of others who have testified of HIS faithful work in those of their acquaintance. The grace of GOD produces the same fruit in all of those in whom HE is pleased to dwell, though HE causes them to be a diverse lot.

Even as the writer of Hebrews reminds us of the exploits of the saints in times past, and we are encouraged and strengthened as we see the mighty hand of GOD at work in HIS people in all ages. *"These all died in faith."* (Heb 11:13) Time would fail us to recount the mighty deeds which the LORD has been pleased to perform through and in HIS children, leaving us a legacy and fond remembrance so that we might exult with Solomon, *"The memory of the just is blessed."* (Prov 10:7)

As much as we may be encouraged by the works of righteousness which the LORD is pleased to perform in the sons of GOD, yet all of those works fade in comparison with the demonstration of righteousness which the LORD JESUS CHRIST manifested when HE tabernacled among men. The most exemplary of saints is still beset with sin, yet HE is that ONE who was tempted in all points and sinned not at all, *"neither was guile found in his mouth:"* (1Pet 2:22)

We find our greatest blessings and encouragement in remembering, *"How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him."* (Act 10:38) *"Never man spake like this man."* (John 7:46) HE is the very epitome of the JUST since HE is the JUSTIFIER of HIS people.

Stephen's testimony was a word of condemnation to those Jews which believed not. They were incensed as HE declared that JESUS of Nazareth was that JUST ONE. He said they, *"have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers:"* (Act 7:52) They despised the memory of the JUST even as those who believe not do in the present day. The Psalmist said of the wicked, *"God is not in all his thoughts."* (Psa 10:4) Yet in those whom the SPIRIT abides HE is their constant delight. *"Unto you therefore which believe he is precious."* (1Pet 2:7)

mam