

GRACE GAZETTE

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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 INGREDIENTS OF TRUE REPENTANCE

I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. *Luke 13:3*

The LORD JESUS told HIS disciples that HE was going away from them for a season but would send to them a COMFORTER. HE then described to them the function of this COMFORTER. *"If I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. (John 16:7-8)* The manner in which HE said that this comfort would come is quite odd to fleshly reason.

HE said this COMFORTER would reprove the world of sin, *"because they believe not on me"*. This is indeed the greatest sin imaginable. Nor can any ever be "forgiven" for it. This is the sin against the HOLY GHOST. The SPIRIT of GOD testifies to the world that JESUS CHRIST is the SAVIOR of sinners and yet men turn a deaf ear to that witness because they are dead in trespasses and sin and receive not a love of the truth that they might be saved. They can blame no one but themselves. *"For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD: They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices."* (Prov 1:29-31)

A man in the flesh cannot comprehend how a reproof for sin could ever be a comfort, yet every man who has been born again and given a SPIRIT of repentance cannot but welcome this reproof and fall upon his face confessing his sin, though his heart breaks within him, and the fear of the ALMIGHTY overwhelms him. *"The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise. He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding."* (Prov 15:31-32) *"Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head: for yet my prayer also shall be in their calamities."* (Psa 141:5) *"Open rebuke is better than secret love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend."* (Prov 27:5-6)

So the work of the SPIRIT to "reprove" men of sin is a welcome relief to the sons of GOD and it is in this manner that the LORD is pleased to minister comfort to them as they are made to hate the garment spotted by the flesh as they cry out with the Apostle Paul. *"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."* (Rom 7:24-25)

HE also said that this COMFORTER would reprove the world, *"Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more."* (John 16:10) The earthly ministry of the LORD JESUS CHRIST was hidden from none, HE went about daily doing good unto men. The SPIRIT reproves the world in testifying of HIS righteousness each time the gospel is preached. Yet the very fact that HE rose from the dead and ascended to the right hand of the FATHER where HE ever lives to make intercession for those who come unto GOD by HIM, is a reproof unto all who doubt it.

This same "reproof" which condemns the scoffers, is the basis of the blessed hope to those who are given *"like precious faith"* testifying that it is *"Not by works of righteousness which we*

have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.” (Titus 3:5) What a comfort it is to those who tremble before HIM, that HE is their GREAT HIGH PRIEST who has obtained eternal redemption for them.

Then HE said that the COMFORTER would reprove the world *“Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.”* (John 16:11) When the LORD JESUS went to Calvary’s cross, HE destroyed the power of darkness and made manifest HIS light to HIS elect who sat in that darkness. *“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”* (Heb 2:14-15) Those who worship and serve the creature are rebuked by HIS work as HE demonstrated HIS dominion over this world and its god, *“And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.”* (Col 2:15)

While this rebuke is startling and final to those who are mere creatures of the flesh, this is a most comforting ministry of hope to those who confess that they are strangers and sojourners in this world and plainly confess that they seek a city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is GOD. Who can condemn them? Not the world, the flesh, or the Devil.

Primarily the work of the SPIRIT in the sons of GOD is to grant them repentance. Most people think that repentance is synonymous with “remorse” or “sorrow” over acts of sin. These attitudes are most definitely always associated with true repentance; yet true repentance is much more than a simple expression of regret. In the three fold work of the SPIRIT that we have been discussing is seen the three chief ingredients of true repentance which is performed in the sons of GOD by this same SPIRIT of the LIVING CHRIST.

Repentance is a recognition of what sin is. Sin is surely in men, but those who have been given eyes to see, recognize that they themselves are sin. David confessed it in his prayer of repentance saying, *“Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.”* (Psa 51:5) Our problem is not just that we have sinned but that we are sinners without one iota of righteousness. This is illustrated in Job’s prayer before the LORD when he said, *“Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.”* (Job 42:6)

The work of the SPIRIT in HIS people will produce not only a remorse for the acts of sin which they have committed; but also a detestation of the very principle of sin which they freely confess controls their flesh and would destroy them apart from the mercy of GOD. The Pharisee did not have it, but the Publican who would not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven, and smote upon his breast, saying, *“GOD be merciful to me a sinner”,* did, and went away “justified” because he was given eyes to see his spiritual poverty.

Repentance is a recognition of the ONE true source of righteousness, which is JESUS CHRIST the RIGHTEOUS. RIGHTEOUSNESS is acceptance with GOD, even as the FATHER testified; *“This is my beloved SON, in whom I am well pleased.”* (Mat.3:17) *“And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.”* (Col 1:18-20) There can be no repentance, except a man acknowledge this truth.

Repentance is a recognition of both the right and glory of HIM who is the JUDGE of heaven and earth, to judge all things according to the STANDARD which HE has established. *“To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”* (Rom 3:26) *“Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?”* (Gen 18:25) The man who has never feared the RIGHTEOUS JUDGE has never been brought to see HIM who *“will by no means clear the guilty.”* (Exo 34:7) and who *“will not at all acquit the wicked.”* (Nah 1:3) True repentance declares the justification of GOD in condemning them as Job says, *“Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.”* (Job 13:15) yet causes one to cast himself upon the mercy of HIM who is the RIGHTEOUS JUDGE believing in the sufficiency of the blood of CHRIST. mam