

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 TESTIMONY

And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

Revelation 19:10

The unfolding of the gospel is so very precious to the sons of GOD, and its sweetness cannot be likened to anything which has its origins in this world. When its glories are made manifest in the eyes of those who are given ears to hear it, they are sometimes overcome with the joy which is revealed therein. Thus we see John so blessed with what he heard, that he wanted to worship at the feet of the messenger who brought this news to him. The messenger was quick to remind him that there was only ONE who is worthy of such worship.

One ready lesson that we can learn from this incident is that those who are anointed to bring forth the message of the gospel are not sent with a mandate to promote their own name or to provoke men to esteem them in some exalted position. The man who is sent with the everlasting gospel has but one agenda (which is not to gain a following or build a congregation) and that is to see the NAME and HONOR of JESUS CHRIST alone, magnified and exalted. GOD called, and HOLY GHOST indicted preachers are not sent to bring attention to themselves but to the ONE who is the KING and REDEEMER.

Those who are sent with this message have no instruction to take unto themselves any title, to seek any sort of fame, or to enrich themselves from those to whom they are sent. The day and age in which we presently dwell is crawling with a multitude of leaches, freeloaders, and charlatans of every stripe claiming to be the messengers of GOD. They go about strutting and preening while they supposedly exercise their "gifts" in either a theatrical manner or a "learned and studious" one, replete with their diplomas and man bestowed "credentials". The main gift that most of them have is the ability to deceive men and to cause them to remember and honor their own name rather than CHRIST alone. "See thou do it not". Flee from them for they preach "another gospel" which is no gospel at all, but is that upon which many have gone shipwrecked.

In the religious order which I grew up in, it was often a common occurrence to have times set aside for those who were present at the meeting to give their "testimony", if they were of such a mind to do so. I have been in a few meetings since those days when the same practice was encouraged and carried on. Invariably when these "testimonies" (so called) are given they are always about some religious experience which happened to them in times past, most often relating to the time of their conversion, baptism, or joining the church.

There is certainly nothing wrong in recounting the joys which might surround ones memories of those "experiences", for even the Apostle Paul, recounted his own "conversion" experience on more than one occasion. Yet the truth is that while such "experiences" may be held in our fond memories, they are not what the scripture describes as the "testimony of the saints" which is the "testimony of JESUS CHRIST".

"The testimony of JESUS" is a recounting of that which HE has accomplished and is the very basis upon which all of the hopes of GOD's people are built. *"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; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."* (Tit 3:5-7) Not even the grandest "conversion experience" can be a substitute for that very basis of all of our HOPE. Paul did not continually recount what happened on the road to Damascus but rather he said; *"And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."* (1Cor 2:1-2)

"The testimony of JESUS" is a very present hope for the sons of GOD, and is not some distant memory that might fade with time. *"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) *"For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."* (Rom 8:38-39)

"The testimony of JESUS" is manifested in the saints of GOD by that work which HE is pleased to perform in them. *"Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth."* (2Pet 1:12) This verse follows that exhortation which Peter wrote saying, *"And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins."* (2Pet 1:5-9) The work of the SPIRIT in the sons of GOD is the evidence of their sonship.

"The testimony of JESUS" is that which sets the children of GOD apart from those who do not have this "evidence or witness" (i.e.; testimony) *"Them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth."* (2Thes 2:10-13) *And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death."* (Rev 12:11)

The life of the children of GOD in this world is fraught with many dangers, fears, and troubles. It is so by the design of the LORD unto their benefit. They are not born into this world with knowledge of spiritual things, but in HIS own time HE is pleased to call them from darkness to light. The beginning of this "knowledge" is brought to them in the new birth, which is not of this fleshly realm but that which has its origins in the LIFE of CHRIST. Thus they are quickened from the deadness of their "natural state" and granted "LIFE in CHRIST".

While the beginning of their pilgrimage (from darkness to LIGHT) is of great importance, that beginning is only that, for it is the purpose of GOD to bring each one of them into a "wealthy place". This beginning is not always clearly defined and many of GOD's children are troubled by religious impostors who try to demand for them to tell them the day and hour in which they were "saved". The SALVATION of GOD's little children is not an experience which can be recorded on a calendar, rather the SALVATION of the sons of GOD is in the PERSON of the LORD JESUS CHRIST and the subsequent work which HE has performed in their behalf. The weakest of saints who may tremblingly confess that they cannot tell when their journey began, can yet confidently confess that JESUS CHRIST is their ALL in all, that one in whom their soul delights. This is the

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