

# 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*

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## THE WINE OF ASTONISHMENT

*Thou hast shewed thy people hard things: thou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment.*

*Psalm 60:3*

Regardless of the amount of knowledge a man may receive from a study of the scriptures, his understanding is incomplete if he fails to see the glory of CHRIST upon every page. To read the Bible as a collection of stories, and not see CHRIST as the subject of each one is to miss the purpose of those accounts. To preach from the scriptures as a source of sound doctrine and not see CHRIST revealed in that doctrine is to declare a message which is as dead and dry as the skeletons in the valley of dry bones and as useless to the awakened sons of Adam, as that which the “*physicians of no value*” brought to Job.

CHRIST is the GIVER of all sound doctrine as well as the ONE to whom all true doctrine points. HIS doctrine is not, primarily, concerned with lessons of morality, but, rather, to testify of the gospel of the glory of the blessed GOD. To declare HIS truth is to exalt the finished work of the REDEEMER and the establishment of HIS Kingdom in the earth. This Kingdom is not one which is entered into or comprehended by flesh and blood. It is not concerned with geography or specific tribes and nationalities. The weapons of those who are called to wage its war, are not made of metal, glass, or wood, but are nonetheless mighty even to the casting down of imaginations and every high thing which would exalt itself against HIM.

To read of the trials and sorrows of GOD's people upon the pages of the sacred scriptures and not consider that such are but an illustration of that MAN of SORROWS who was tempted (i.e.; tried) in all points like as we are, is to focus upon the wrong person. This world is truly a lowland of sorrow and temptation (i.e.; trial) for all of its inhabitants, but is most especially a grievous dwelling place for the sons of GOD who are awakened to behold the corruption that is in them by nature and choice.

To spend our days in lamentation and commiseration about these trials, in our conversations to one another, is to turn our eyes away from the only SOURCE of comfort in the midst of such troubles. “*There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.*” (1Cor 10:13) We would never wish to make light of the physical suffering of anyone but at the same time we would wish to remind those who have fled to CHRIST for refuge that HE is a MAN of SORROWS and acquainted with our grief. HE is the WAY that we might escape all trials. May our focus be ever upon HIM.

Though the physical pain of scourging and crucifixion, that our LORD underwent, was of an extreme nature, yet the agony which was brought upon HIM as HE became sin for us was a much greater burden for HIM to bear. This is pointed out here by the Psalmist as he makes reference to the troubles of those who feel the judgment of a broken law, by saying they are made to drink the “*wine of astonishment.*” While this may aptly describe their reaction, it has a more pointed

and greater application to that which CHRIST underwent as HE bore the curse of the law which was due to those for whom HE made HIS soul an offering for sin. HE was “astonished” for them.

The English word “astonishment” appears 21 times in the scriptures. The Hebrew word that is translated as “astonishment” in Psalm 60:3, appears only three times in the Old Testament. The two other times that it is found it is translated as “trembling”. *“Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the LORD the cup of his fury; thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling, and wrung them out.” (Isaiah 51:17) “Therefore hear now this, thou afflicted, and drunken, but not with wine: Thus saith thy Lord the LORD, and thy God that pleadeth the cause of his people, Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of my fury; thou shalt no more drink it again.” (Isaiah 51:21-22)*

It is interesting that in all three cases there is a reference to the drinking of this cup and/or wine. It is remarkable that it is this “cup” (I believe synonymous with wine) that we are given as believers to drink in remembrance of HIM and the fact that HE poured out HIS blood as an atonement for our sin. What HE did was not merely a blood-letting or a sacrifice which had its import in the red and white corpuscles of HIS human blood, but rather that HE expended HIS life for us. The life is in the blood, and the import of HIS blood sacrifice was that HE died a visible and real death. For the LORD said, *“when I see the blood, I will pass over you.”*

Thus while the LORD points out the judgment which is due to all who have transgressed HIS law and disregarded HIS sovereign right to rule in glorious dominion, yet HE has not appointed all of the inhabitants of the earth to actually drink this cup of “astonishment, trembling, and fear”. For HE has a people which HE hid in CHRIST from before the foundation of the world and HE has gladly come into this world in order to take that cup from them and drink every last dreg for them.

HE does plead *“the cause of HIS people”* (see Isa. 51:21). HE is an ADVOCATE, MEDIATOR, and INTERCESSOR for those whom HE has loved with an everlasting love. There has never been a time in the history of creation when HE has not stood in this office in the behalf of HIS people, which are precious in HIS sight. There has never been a time in the history of this world or the ages to come, when HIS people have stood outside of that COVERING, being hid in a “clift of the ROCK” as HIS glory passes by.

HE has taken this *“cup of trembling”* out of their hand. (see Isa.51:22) Though HE has ever stood as their MEDIATOR, yet it pleased HIM according to HIS purpose to magnify the glory of HIS grace in coming into this world and making HIS redemptive work known. HE took upon HIMSELF the form of a SERVANT that HE might demonstrate the purpose of GOD to be both just and the JUSTIFIER of HIS elect bride. As a LAMB slain HE has made a proper and acceptable “SACRIFICE”, causing her to be adjudicated “just and holy” and “without spot or blemish.”

There is no doubt that she, just like all of mankind, stood guilty of breaking the Holy Law of GOD. As a lawbreaker she was worthy of death and destruction. Yet due to the depths of HIS love and the wideness of HIS mercy, HE came into the world to pay the debt that she owed. HE paid it all, in full, treading the winepress of GOD’s wrath alone to accomplish it. She cannot pay that debt which is cancelled nor can any accusation ever be brought against her.

She cannot *“drink it again.”* (see Isa.51:22) Well did Toplady write these blessed words.

If thou hast my discharge procured, And freely in my room endured  
The whole of wrath divine, Payment God cannot twice demand,  
First at my bleeding Surety’s hand, And then again at mine.  
Turn, then, my soul, unto thy rest; The merits of thy great High Priest  
Speak peace and liberty; Trust in his efficacious blood,  
Nor fear thy banishment from God, Since Jesus died for thee. #227 Gadsby’s Hymns

HE is “astonished” in our behalf. *“Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.” (Heb 5:7-9)*

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