

GRACE GAZETTE

Volume XV

Issue 39

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

A VOICE FROM THE EXCELLENT GLORY

For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. II Peter 1:17

Natural religious men are “experts” on the activities, desires, and ways of god. Every major religion has a definition of who god is, how he acts, and what he is going to do. These concepts are not fashioned in the minds of men because of their love of an absolute GOD, but rather help them to place restrictions and parameters around their concept of god, in their own mind, so as not to be overwhelmed. Nothing is more common among the peoples of the earth in general, than an explanation of who god is and what he can and cannot do.

This trait is exhibited most clearly when men try to explain and rationalize the existence of sin and evil in the world and as they seek to reconcile the supposed “free will” of men and the sovereignty of GOD. Paul said of men, “*Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.*” (Rom 1:21-22)

He set forth this observation right after he said, “*For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.*” (Rom 1:20) It is “unnatural” for a man not to believe in an absolute GOD; nature itself testifies of HIM. Yet it is completely natural for him to seek to rob GOD of the glory which is rightfully HIS and to define HIM in such a way that will make HIM more appealing to the corrupt nature of men in their fleshly religions, of whatever stripe.

Job was a man whom the LORD blessed, and chose in CHRIST from before the foundation of the world, yet he had a very clouded view of the glory of GOD, in HIS splendor, until such time as the LORD was pleased to reveal HIMSELF to him. Then he testified that he merely thought he knew who GOD is, having gained most of his knowledge from that which he was taught by men. “*I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear.*” (Job 42:5). He confessed that he had spoken great swelling words when in reality he was ignorant of the SUBJECT. “*Therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.*” (Job 42:3)

Saul of Tarsus, sat at the feet of Gamaliel (a premier teacher of the OT scriptures in his day) and no doubt considered himself an “expert” on the GOD who revealed HIMSELF in those scriptures to the nation of Israel, as he trod the road to Damascus, intent on destroying these upstarts who were speaking in the NAME of JESUS. He despised that NAME and thought that he was doing GOD a service in this endeavor

Yet when the LORD struck him down in that journey, he confessed his ignorance of the very GOD whom HE claimed to serve. “*And he said, Who art thou, Lord?*” (Acts 9:5) How foolish it is for men to consider that they can define HIM who dwells in the LIGHT to which no man can approach, or to seek to place limitations upon HIM who says, “*I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.*” (Isa 45:7) We must simply put our hands upon our mouth, falling at HIS feet, with Nebuchanezzar, saying, “*I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?*” (Dan 4:34-35)

Peter was another man greatly blessed of GOD, a son of favor in the LORD's sight. Yet over and over, Peter demonstrated the weakness of his flesh, as he failed to comprehend the glory of the ONE who taught him during the three years of the LORD's active ministry in the earth. I am not sure of the exact moment when, the LORD was pleased to open his eyes completely (see Luke 22:32) yet it is clear that when he stood before those Jews on the Day of Pentecost, that he was enabled to declare who this MAN JESUS is, with a power which heretofore he had not.

In Peter's second epistle he fondly reflects upon the glorious sight which, he, along with James and John, were given the privilege to witness on the Mount of Transfiguration. At that moment he did not fully comprehend what he was seeing. He even suggested that three places of worship be built upon the site. Yet later, the LORD burned this "lesson" into his mind and heart in order that he might encourage and build up the saints in the faith, as he recounts this "*voice from the excellent glory*" which he and his companions were enabled to hear. This experience was not given to him, for his sake alone, but for all of those who would come after and be strengthened by his recollection of this glorious occurrence.

All of GOD's children are beset by doubts and fears (to some degree) because of the weakness of their flesh. Peter recounts here, not, the testimony of someone who told him about this occurrence, but what he beheld with his own eyes. He said that the gospel which he preached was not based upon some religious myth, but rather those things of which he was an eye witness to. "*For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.*" (2Pet 1:16)

It is a view of this "majesty" which differentiates between that "faith which is learned through the hearing of the ear," and that which is written in the fleshy tables of the heart by the "iron pen" of the LORD. I can see Peter's eyes "light up" when he recounts what he saw and heard, and can sense his eagerness to impart the impact of that experience to those who would read his letter.

The crux of the preaching of the Gospel revolves around the PERSON of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. This "VOICE from the EXCELLENT GLORY" would declare who HE is in no uncertain terms. Though HE appeared on that Mount with Moses (the Law) and Elijah (the Prophets), there could be no mixture of HIM and HIS mission with either one. There was no approval given here of Moses or Elijah, but only the ONE who received the testimony of that HEAVENLY VOICE.

CHRIST has fulfilled the Law so completely, that nothing that is to be done in accordance with it is left undone. "*Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.*" (Mat 5:17) We have no need of any prophet to speak to us of the mysteries of the Kingdom, for CHRIST is our PROPHET, PRIEST and KING. "*God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;*" (Heb 1:1-2)

CHRIST, being the express image of the PERSON of GOD, is "well pleasing" in the sight of GOD. For in no uncertain terms this testimony leaves us with no doubt that HE is ONE with the FATHER even as HE explained quite clearly to Philip, "*Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?"* (John 14:9) It is impossible that a man can be acquainted with GOD and not be acquainted with JESUS CHRIST, who is the fullness of the GODHEAD bodily.

CHRIST is the fulfillment of the purpose of GOD to manifest the glory of HIS grace in the redemption of that people which HE loved and chose in CHRIST from before the foundation of the world. HIS redemptive work is therefore well pleasing in GOD's sight. It is impossible that a man could be acquainted with GOD and reject the completed work of CHRIST in the behalf of HIS elect. How else could a man be justified before GOD? "*Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.*" (Rom 4:25)

CHRIST is the SANCTIFIER of GOD's people. With this GOD is well pleased. How foolish for a man to consider that he could be set apart or made holy in the sight of GOD through any other means. "*But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.*" (1Cor 13:10) "*But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.*" (1Cor 1:30-31)

mam