

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

A GRAND MEETING

Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Psalm 85:10

It is commonly accepted among the legions of religious men; that GOD is pleased when men keep HIS law and is angry when they do not. Thus it is equally common to find them promoting morality and the performance of "good deeds" as a means of gaining the favor of GOD, and enhancing their own standing with HIM.

This thought process is that which depends upon the supposed "free will" of men, as the basis and means whereby this obedience and performance takes place. Cain demonstrates this line of thought in the very early days of mankind's existence as he took the fruit of the labor of his own hands and brought it to the LORD as an offering. He was then angry when he (and his offering) was rejected by the LORD, and ultimately (due, I believe, to envy) slew his own brother (Abel), whose person and offering of blood was received by the LORD.

In this action we see pictured the rejection by the natural man of that ONE who alone has a righteousness which is acceptable in Heaven. Abel was received (by the LORD); not because of his actions, but because HE was beloved in CHRIST who is illustrated in both Abel (as a type of CHRIST) and in his OFFERING which is typical of that BLOOD SACRIFICE which the LORD JESUS made as the SUBSTITUTE and MEDIATOR of HIS people; whom HE loved from before the foundation of the world. "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." (Acts 10:34-35)

The very thought that GOD would determine the salvation of HIS people, rather than them determining it is reprehensible to the natural man. He recoils at such a notion and is often ready to destroy those who would proclaim this to be the case. He also strongly opposes the truth which declares that men do not possess the ability to gain the favor of GOD by actions of their own, and that HIS favor is bestowed not on the basis of conditions which they meet, but strictly according to HIS promise which is conferred by grace. For this grace is given to sinners and not to the righteous. "They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." (Mar 2:17)

It is because of a failure to comprehend the dire estate of man as desperately wicked and completely separated from GOD due to that wickedness and willing blindness (see Rom.1:21), that causes men to suppose that they possess power to come into HIS presence with offerings and activities which they presume to be righteous and acceptable in HIS sight. Sadly, many who will profess to being the followers of CHRIST, nonetheless expect that they can influence the blessing of GOD by their actions and expect that they shall be rewarded for adherence to HIS ways by their carnal obedience. "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do." (Luke 17:10)

That man who is convinced of his innate corruption and carnal separation from GOD, confesses that he has not one shred of hope which is not bestowed upon himself by the goodness of GOD which leads him to repentance. He expects nothing in return but desires to be found faithful to HIM who has called him out of darkness and into the light. He is caused to confess with Job, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." (Job 13:15)

When one is enabled to discover the absolute holiness of GOD and the inviolable nature of GOD's holy law (which HE has placed men under), he will ever stand in total amazement at the revelation of GOD's purpose to bring glory to HIS NAME in the display of HIS grace by the redemptive work of CHRIST. The average person looks at the work which CHRIST performed as being simply a remedy for the problem of man's sinful action which the LORD designed in retrospect to his fall into sin.

The true glory of the gospel is beheld, however; as one is enabled to see that the very world itself was designed as a stage upon which GOD would manifest the glory of HIS grace in the deliverance of that people whom HE loved from the beginning.

In order that this grace might be magnified, HE has revealed the absolute nature of that law which HE has placed mankind under. It is a law which has no remedy for those who break its precepts. In this HE would demonstrate the fact that HE will not acquit the wicked nor clear the guilty. That soul which sins shall die. The wages of sin is death, even as it is appointed unto men once to die. This is the dark backdrop upon which the grandest demonstration of mercy could then be displayed, even as diamonds are displayed upon black velvet in the jewelers shop.

Thus when the gospel is displayed, mercy and truth are met together. HIS mercy to fallen sinners is declared and HIS TRUTH is made known to those who have no knowledge. There is absolutely no reason, humanly speaking, that GOD should or would be compelled to show mercy to a people who have despised HIS law, unthankfully consumed the provisions which HE has so kindly provided, and even woefully mistreated those emissaries HE has sent into the world to declare unto them HIS determination to visit the unworthy with overtures of kindness.

Yet this is exactly that truth which the angels declared to those trembling shepherds on that Judean hillside two thousand years ago. *"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."* (Luke 2:13-14) And it is this same message which has been committed into the hands of those whom the LORD is pleased to send into the highways and byways of this benighted world of sorrow. *"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."* (Acts 2:36) Has ever any clearer message of TRUTH been set forth and has ever the MERCY of GOD been more fully displayed than in HIS determination to redeem sinners by the blood of HIS only Begotten SON?

MERCY and TRUTH are indeed met in the declaration of the gospel to ruined sinners, but RIGHTEOUSNESS and PEACE have kissed each other as the very basis of this redemption is set forth. MERCY was not enough to satisfy the claims of justice which the Law of GOD demanded. In HIS sovereign prerogative HE could have simply done away with the Law, but HIS determined purpose was to perform a feat which could not be matched nor challenged. Thus HE fulfilled the Law in its jot and tittle and placed the basis of HIS people's salvation not simply upon mercy but upon justice as well. *"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) *"For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."* (i.e. set apart unto salvation) (Heb 10:14)

Just as a wedding is not complete until the groom and the bride have kissed, so has RIGHTEOUSNESS and PEACE met together in CHRIST and HE has brought a perfect salvation unto those who have been the objects of HIS love from the beginning. HE has not left HIS bride at the altar wondering if HE does indeed love her. No HE has demonstrated HIS everlasting love in laying down HIS life for her, satisfying every jot and tittle of the law for her so that there is no condemnation unto her either in this present world or that which is to come.

Thus HE declared to HIS disciples, *"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."* (John 14:26-27)

The SPIRIT does indeed bear witness (to those that believe) of the complete and finished work of CHRIST in their behalf. This is the grounds of their peace which HE whispers to them as they are enabled to see JESUS CHRIST and HIM crucified. *"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"* (Heb 9:14) *"Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love is better than wine."* (Song 1:2)