

GRACE GAZETTE

Volume XVIII

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 FITLY FRAMED BUILDING

Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

Ephesians 2:19-22

The LORD JESUS spoke this parable, "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it." (Mat 7:24-27) Clearly, HE, summed up the necessity of having a proper foundation upon which to build a house that would be able to stand.

HE spoke of a STONE (i.e.; a ROCK) in HIS conversation with the Pharisees . "Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The **stone** which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this **stone** shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder." (Mat 21:42-44) They clearly understood that HE was speaking of HIMSELF as that "STONE" and themselves as those ground "to powder" and they grew angry and would have killed HIM, but the ordained time for that, was not yet come.

It is very apparent throughout the scriptures that CHRIST alone is the FOUNDATION of the FAITH once delivered to the saints. Paul testified of this when he said, "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." (1Cor 3:11) Peter gave testimony of the same when the lame man was healed at the temple gate, "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:11-12) Nonetheless there are many who believe and teach that the apostles and prophets are an integral part of this "foundation".

They often point to the LORD's calling Simon; Peter (i.e.; Petra) as a stone, to say that Peter was the one upon whom HE would build HIS church. Yet the church is not built upon Peter (even though his name meant a stone) but rather upon "this ROCK" (in contrast to Peter as a stone), which is CHRIST. (see I Cor 10:4) And while the apostles and prophets both were used mightily by the LORD in the establishment of HIS Kingdom in the earth; they were as much resting upon this FOUNDATION as any other inhabitant of Zion. This is why Paul says, that the household of faith is built upon the "FOUNDATION of the apostles and prophets." That is to say the same FOUNDATION which the apostles and prophets rest upon is that ONE to whom they point as the "CHIEF CORNERSTONE."

Behold the sure foundation stone which God in Zion lays,
To build our heavenly hopes upon, And his eternal praise.
Chosen of God, to sinners dear, And saints adore the name;

They trust their whole salvation here, Nor shall they suffer shame.
The foolish builders, scribe and priest, Reject it with disdain;
Yet on this rock the church shall rest, And envy rage in vain.
What though the gates of hell withstood? Yet must this building rise;
'Tis thy own work almighty God, And wondrous in our eyes.

The Kingdom of GOD, manifested in HIS church, in the present day, does not simply consist of a FOUNDATION but rather is a building which is constructed by HIM who is the WISE MASTER-BUILDER. This building rests squarely upon its FOUNDATION and is tied to it with cords of love which cannot be broken. Paul says it is a building which is "*fitly framed together*". HE has designed each part of this building and HE has used no unnecessary parts in its construction. "*But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal (i.e.; the whole).*" (1Cor 12:7) "*But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.*" (Eph 4:7-8)

This "*fitly framed*" building is strengthened by that which every joint supplieth and no one member is more important than any other. This is a galling prospect to the sons of Diotrephes. Each part of the building is designed to be dependent upon one another, as each part rests in the LORD, and the whole edifice "*groweth into a holy temple in the LORD.*" "*For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body.*" (1Cor 12:14-20)

This "*fitly framed*" building is "*built together for a habitation of GOD through the SPIRIT.*" Peter describes the church of the LORD when he says; "*Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.*" (1Pet 2:5) The only acceptable spiritual sacrifices that can be offered up unto GOD are those which are in and of CHRIST. "*By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.*" (Heb 13:15-16) The benefit that each of the "parts" of the body bestows or receives from or to the other "parts" is in the ministry of one to another, through the exaltation of CHRIST.

For each "part" of the body is a "*living (i.e.; lively) stone*", made alive by CHRIST. "*And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.*" (1John 5:11-12) This is the basis of all of the benefits of the brethren one to another. The fellowship of the LORD's people is not in their shared interests in the things of this world. Rather their ministry one to another is in their testimony of the LIFE which is in CHRIST. In this they strengthen one another. In this they bear one another's burdens. In this they esteem one another better than themselves. On a practical note I believe that the singing of praise in psalms and hymns unto the LORD in the gathering of the saints is a blessed practice which encourages each one even as praying together causes them to bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of CHRIST.

How sweet, how heavenly is the sight, When those that love the Lord,
In one another's peace delight, And so fulfil his word!
When each can feel his brother's sigh, And with him bear a part;
When sorrow flows from eye to eye, And joy from heart to heart.
When free from envy, scorn, and pride, Our wishes all above,
Each can his brother's failings hide, And show a brother's love.
When love in one delightful stream Through every bosom flows;
When union sweet and dear esteem, In every action glows!
Love is the golden chain that binds The happy souls above;
And he's an heir of heaven that finds His bosom glow with love.

Do you delight in the assembly of the saints which is the habitation of GOD?

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