

GRACE GAZETTE

Volume V

Issue 46

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

THE LANGUISHING OF THE SONS OF GOD

Turn us again, O LORD God of hosts, cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.

Psalms 80:19

The LORD JESUS promised to send HIS SPIRIT into the world for the benefit of HIS disciples. HE said that HE would send HIM as a COMFORTER and a GUIDE. (see John 14:16,17; 16:13). The natural man with his natural religion assumes this to mean that present and continuing bliss is promised to them, usually coupled with some requirement of obedience to insure its enjoyment. The gifts and calling of GOD are without repentance however, and HIS promise of the SPIRIT is not contingent on the relative obedience of HIS children. In fact it is the very gift of HIS SPIRIT that produces obedience in them.

The LORD promised the comfort of the HOLY SPIRIT but HE also explained the order in which the SPIRIT is pleased to work when HE said, "*And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:*" (John 16:8) The work of the SPIRIT in the lives of GOD's people is first a preparatory work which is designed to bring them to a place of complete awareness of their own needs as well as HIS power to provide those needs. (see Acts 2:37) The child of GOD cannot be truly comforted until he is first acquainted with his own inability to gain comfort by his own power. Religion, especially the modern kind, does its best to convince men that the ability to be comforted is at their fingertips and can be appropriated by them whenever they decide to have it. Those who are acquainted with their own depravity and barrenness, however, are quite convinced that this religion can offer them no help at all and find themselves totally helpless apart from the gracious power of GOD being applied to them. It has pleased the LORD from time to time to leave HIS children in this conviction of barrenness and weakness for varying lengths of time in order that they may be convinced that it is HIS power and presence alone which can help them.

Because of the corruption of our flesh which is ever with us we are constantly growing complacent even after experiencing the blessed power of HIS presence. We enjoy HIS comforts and bask in the pleasure of HIS fellowship one moment and then we take it for granted the next playing out in real life the experience which Solomon recorded in his song. "*I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night. I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them? My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him. I rose up to open to my beloved; and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock. I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone: my soul failed when he spoke: I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer.*" (S, of Sol.5:2-6)

In order that HE might teach HIS beloved bride the value of HIS presence, HE is pleased to hide HIMSELF from her from time to time. For it is in those barren times that the hunger for HIS fellowship is developed. It is in this personal acquaintance with their own fickleness and impotence that HE is pleased to give to HIS children the longing for HIS deliverance. The sad rule of the flesh is that we do not value those things which are easily obtained nor do we

hunger and thirst after those things which can be had at a moments notice. So it is in the predestined purpose of GOD to cause HIS people to languish from time to time in great duress and times of leanness in order to bring them to a place of comfort through the working of HIS SPIRIT in them. The happy, happy, ever happy religion of our time knows nothing of this. The average so called "christian" of our day knows nothing of what it is to be pining for HIS presence. They have no idea of what the Psalmist meant when he said. *"O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary. Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee."* (Psa 63:1-3) The man made "christian's" praise of "god" is limited to a consideration of the present blessings he is receiving, he is convinced by his *"miserable comforters"* (see Job 16:2) that he has the power to be blessed whenever he desires to be and can easily be satisfied with loaves, fishes, and crumbs.

In Psalm 88, we read of the author's longings which have him upon the brink of total despair saying, *"For my soul is full of troubles: and my life draweth nigh unto the grave. I am counted with them that go down into the pit: I am as a man that hath no strength: Free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, whom thou rememberest no more: and they are cut off from thy hand. Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps. Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves. Selah. Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me; thou hast made me an abomination unto them: I am shut up, and I cannot come forth. Mine eye mourneth by reason of affliction: LORD, I have called daily upon thee, I have stretched out my hands unto thee."* (Psa 88:3-9) Is this not descriptive of the very soul sufferings of CHRIST as HE bore the awful curse of sin in our behalf? Indeed the LORD would have us to be acquainted with HIS grief in order to remind us that our salvation is not, yea cannot, be of ourselves. CHRIST has trod the winepress of GOD's wrath in our stead so that we might come to the place of rejoicing that the Psalmist records in the very next Psalm saying *"I will sing of the mercies of the LORD forever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations."* (Psa 89:1) HE will not cast us off forever because of that which our blessed LORD has endured for us. By HIS grace HE is faithful to send leanness to our souls in order that we might glory only in HIS deliverance.

The Psalmist was in such a state of languishing as he cried unto the LORD saying, ***"Turn us again;"*** not just once but three times. He knew where they had been, he had been given some taste of the preciousness of the LORD's blessing in such a way that he longed once more for it. He knew that at the present time they had a great lack.

He also knew that the LORD alone could provide what they needed as he cried, ***"O LORD GOD of hosts, cause thy face to shine"***. That man who has tasted of the preciousness of the LORD's presence (revealed by GOD alone) cannot help but to desire to see it over and over. Yesterday's manna will not suffice for today's hunger. Paul said O, *"that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death."* (Phi 3:10) We long to see HIM face to face. *"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."* (2Cor.4:6)

Then he expresses his hope, the very source of HIS comfort, saying ***"and we shall be saved"***. The salvation which our LORD has provided for us was accomplished in eternity, it is manifested in the present time, and we know it shall be completely and perfectly enjoyed by those who are the LORD's own throughout the ages to come. The last enemy which shall be destroyed is death. The sons of GOD languish and long for that moment when this mortal shall put on immortality and this corruptible shall put on incorruption, death shall be swallowed up in victory and we shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever. In the meantime HE has sent us a COMFORTER who shall give us such things as we need and bring us in a way which we knew not but that one which, HE, the MAN of sorrows is fully acquainted with. www.gracechapelobrien.net <http://wayfarerblog.blogspot.com/> mam