

GRACE GAZETTE

Volume IX

Issue 5

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

SCATTERED BONES

Our bones are scattered at the grave's mouth, as when one cutteth and cleaveth wood upon the earth.

Psalm 141:7

The fact that the LORD taught the Jews to have respect unto the physical body even in death is manifested in their custom of the burial of the bodies of their dead. The heathen have from ancient times burned their dead or let animals eat them as a means of disposing of them or either gone to great lengths (as the Egyptians) to preserve the bodies of the dead. The custom of burning bodies arose among those who did not believe in a bodily resurrection of the dead and the practice of elaborate embalming (as practiced by the Egyptians) arose among some because they believed in a "carnal" afterlife wherein they would have need of their same body and all of its carnal sustenance. Thus they buried them with various foods and trinkets which they felt would be useful to them in the expected afterworld.

Paul says that there is coming a day when the bodies of the saints shall come forth from the graves and that these transformed bodies would be immortal and incorruptible in the same likeness as the body of the LORD JESUS CHRIST who is the FIRSTBORN from the dead. (see I Cor. 15: 3-58) Paul testified that he believed in the resurrection of the dead even while he was yet a Pharisee. (see Acts 23:6-8)

It is very clear from the scriptures that the LORD JESUS arose from the tomb in the same body in which HE was put in it since the disciples found the sepulcher, (where he was laid,) empty. In like fashion does the scripture speak of the resurrection as graves being opened and the sea giving up her dead. At the same time in which we recognize the significance and necessity of a bodily resurrection we also recognize that the bodies in which the saints of GOD are clothed in that glorious day are spoken of as "spiritual bodies" which are not "terrestrial" (of the earth, even as man was formed from its dust) but rather "celestial" (heavenly).

These bodies in which we presently dwell and have recognition among our peers, are susceptible to decay and corruption (i.e., mortal) whereas those bodies in which we (who have been given a hope in CHRIST) presently dwell, shall be changed in a moment or the twinkling of an eye into immortal bodies which cannot either decay or perish but yet in which we can be recognized. Even as the disciples (above five hundred) saw the LORD JESUS CHRIST after HIS own resurrection and knew HIM. Such is the expectation of the sons of GOD which according to Paul is the basis of our hope in CHRIST. *"But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not*

raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.” (1Cor 15:13-20)

And so against this backdrop of a sweet hope in the resurrection of the body and the resultant consideration of a tomb which would contain the remains of the believing dead until the day of the resurrection, the Psalmist likens his own condition to one whose bones are scattered at the graves mouth. He laments a completely forlorn and helpless estate from which he finds no ready deliverance in himself, very much like that which is written about in Psalm 22. *“I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me.” (Psa 22:14-17)*

These words prophetically describe the very state into which the LORD JESUS willingly placed HIMSELF that HE might manifest HIMSELF as our SUBSTITUTE, bearing our sin and weakness. *“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.” (2Cor 8:9)* HE would be in all points tempted as we are that HE might be touched with the feelings of our infirmities. *“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)*

Yes indeed dear one, you who find yourself overwhelmed with the sin which doth so easily beset us and feel that there is no hope or help to be found for your condition in your own self. In your deepest despair and darkest hour when you know yourself to be as bones, “scattered at the graves mouth”, remember that CHRIST has carried away the sins and sorrows of all whom the HOLY GHOST is pleased to cause to call upon HIS name. This man CHRIST JESUS is the SAVIOR of sinners.

HE is that ONE who is the deliverer of HIS people and has triumphed over sin and the grave. HE has led captivity captive and has given gifts unto men. Is there any other who can deliver the helpless or rescue those who are destroyed by their own hand, those who have no strength and are overwhelmed with sadness at their most lamentable condition? Did HE not with HIS own lips say, *“All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” (Mat 11:27-30)*

This is the consolation which is spoken to the sons of GOD who are awakened from the dead and made to know their own poverty and weakness. Those that see themselves as so many bones scattered upon the ground, not even resting in a proper burial place but strewn about for all to see the shame and reproach which they feel is heaped upon them. Their skeletons are not even complete but are sawn asunder as if someone had split them with an axe. There is nothing but despair for such little children apart from the sweet comfort of the consoling gospel of the glory of the blessed GOD who took upon HIMSELF their likeness and gave HIMSELF as a ransom for them. May HE ever be praised! Hallelujah! mam