

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

THEIR HELP AND THEIR SHEILD

O Israel, trust thou in the LORD: he is their help and their shield. O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD: he is their help and their shield. Ye that fear the LORD, trust in the LORD: he is their help and their shield.

Psalm 115:9-11

As I was growing up, it was quite customary to begin each school day with reading a verse or two from the Bible, reciting the "LORD's prayer", and then saying the "pledge of allegiance" to the flag. No thought was given to the possibility (at least in my childlike mind) that such things would become antiquated and neglected in time to come. Yet our society has grown so enlightened and self-sufficient, that such practices are now deemed a threat to the tender minds of youth rather than building blocks to undergird the very foundations of our society.

I am not a proponent or encourager of the rote learning of "religion" or the practice of blind "patriotism", yet it occurs to me that it is obvious that those particular practices were somewhat useful in the institution of certain values which are sadly lacking in the present day. Having said that, I would necessarily point out that the recitation of the "pledge of allegiance", to the flag does not ensure that one actually adheres to the "pledge", which is made. Neither can the reading of the scriptures instill a love of the TRUTH contained therein. Nor, does true prayer consist of mouthing the words which the LORD taught HIS disciples as an example of what real prayer contains.

Actually, it should be pointed out that this passage of scripture which is referred to as "the LORD's prayer", is technically, not aptly named. A more accurate name would be "the LORD's example of prayer given to HIS disciples." The "LORD's prayer" is recorded for us on several occasions, such as "*I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight.*" (Mat 11:25-26) Another is at the tomb of Lazarus, "*And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.*" (John 11:41-42)

We see another clear example of HIS prayer which carried with it an answer from HIS FATHER, "*Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.*" (John 12:27-28) Of course, much of what HE said while hanging on the cross is but HIS prayer unto the FATHER whom HE loved more than life itself, culminating in HIS final prayer "*And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.*" (Luke 23:46)

Yet the most glorious of all of HIS prayers which are recorded for us in Holy Writ, is found in John chapter 17, which begins with: "*Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.*" (John 17:1-4) Here in the Garden of Gethsemane, as HE prayed, HE poured out HIS soul unto death and sweat as it were great drops of blood in the behalf of HIS people. In the treading of that winepress HE committed HIMSELF once again to HIS FATHER, "*Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt.*" (Mar 14:36) "*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)

Though HE was poured out like wax, HE thought upon those in whose behalf HE gladly suffered, praying, *“Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.” (John 17:24-26)*

In this Psalm before us we read of those whose trust was in the LORD and the fact that HE is their HELP and their SHIELD. Nowhere in the annals of history has this absolute trust been more perfectly illustrated than in that commitment of the LORD JESUS unto HIM who was all HIS TRUST. Nor has it been shown any more clearly that HE is the SHIELD of HIM whose trust is stayed upon the FATHER than when HE poured out HIS life’s blood in the behalf of sinners and yet arose triumphant over sin and death for those HE came to save. *“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. 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. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.” (2Pet 1:16-18)*

“O Israel, trust thou in the LORD.” In order to demonstrate HIS love for a particular people the LORD raised up the house of Israel as a type and foreshadowing of that entire, elect nation which HE loved from the beginning. That mystery which was hid from the foundation of the world is now revealed as the LORD has declared HIS purpose to call out HIS sheep from every kindred, tribe, and tongue upon the Earth. *“Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” (Col 1:26-27)*

That true Israel of GOD is now revealed as those whom the LORD has called and caused to trust in HIM. (see Acts 2:39) These are those for whom HE has ever stood as their SHIELD and BUCKLER. *“For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.” (Rom 2:28-29)*

“O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD.” Aaron and his descendants were appointed by the LORD to be the priests for the natural nation of Israel. They were set apart unto this office with much pomp. Yet that ONE who has come as the GREAT HIGH PRIEST over the house of GOD did not come after this order. These earthly priests could not continue their priesthood by reason of death, but CHRIST is come with an endless LIFE and stands at the RIGHT HAND of the throne of the majesty on HIGH, ever living to make intercession for those that come unto GOD by HIM. The priesthood of Aaron was imperfect and only served for a season, itself, standing in need of that TRUE OFFERING which was made once in the end of the age.

“Ye that fear the LORD, trust in the LORD: he is their help and their shield.” Well has the Psalmist said, *“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever.” (Psa 111:10)* This is the work of the SPIRIT of GOD in the sons of men, to cause them to tremble before HIM. Many are those who are beset with a fear of death and its consequences, yet relatively few, comparatively, actually stand in awe before the presence of HIM with a desire to magnify HIS awful NAME even if HE should see fit to destroy them. Job made this confession, *“Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him.” (Job 13:15)* The trust of the people of GOD, in HIM, does not rest on a natural desire to be preserved. Rather, the fact that HE is their SHIELD causes them to fall at HIS feet in worship, powerless to do anything else. HE is worthy to be praised. *“Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the LORD, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places.” (Deut 33:29)* Is HE your SHIELD? mam

