

GRACE GAZETTE

Volume XXII

Issue 5

Published occasionally for mourners in Zion

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

OUR GUIDE

And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. *Isaiah 58:11*

Sometimes the children of GOD become quite satisfied with what they know, thinking that learning and proclaiming the way of the LORD is the same as being obedient to HIS direction. Often, they substitute a reliance on what they would call “sound doctrine” and religious observances, with the carrying out of the LORD’s command of loving their brethren and seeking to bear their burdens. We sometimes hear some of them quite boldly and loudly proclaiming their “liberty” in CHRIST, while disregarding the primary purpose of that wondrous “liberty”. *“For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” (Gal 5:13-14)*

The LORD, speaking through Isaiah admonished the children of Israel about these very notions. *“Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high. Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD? Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?” (Isa 58:4-7)*

HE who describes this hypocrisy, is also the only ONE who can and does lead HIS people out of it, by first bringing this to their attention and then causing them to desire HIS way and not their own. Thus, HE brings them to repentance as they view HIS perfections and guidance, contrasted with their own fruitless endeavors. *“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.” (1Cor 10:13)*

A man who is a useful “guide” is one who knows the way that he is going and is able to lead those who are ignorant of the best way and even some who are wrongly convinced that they already know the best way. A man may think himself to be an excellent fisherman who knows all of the “hot spots” to catch fish, only to discover that the man who is a skilled “fishing guide” can lead him to spots he was not aware of and teach him things that he did not know.

JESUS CHRIST is skilled in the art of “catching fish”. HE sent HIS disciples into the world, telling them that they would be “fishers of men”. HE never taught them tactics which appeal to the flesh, but rather, taught them the WORD of GOD, the FOUNDATION of HIS Kingdom, and the glory of HIS PERSON. Thus, HE was their GUIDE in this endeavor. HE never taught them to plead with men or use clever tactics to persuade them. Rather, HE spoke plainly as HE sent them to gather the Sheep of HIS pasture. HE specifically told them not to cast pearls before swine. Many so called “preachers” today have no use for the wisdom of this GUIDE but think they have a better way of appealing to men and spend their time coming up with formulas and catchphrases while cajoling their “free will”, rather than declaring the TRUTH set forth by this GUIDE. *“All that the Father giveth me shall come to*

me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” (Joh 6:37) “But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (2Thess 2:13-14)

The LORD JESUS CHRIST is a GUIDE who knows the WAY. “Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” (John 14:5-6) This is the same WAY of which Isaiah wrote, “And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.” (Isa 35:8) Are we not thus encouraged? “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.” (Heb 10:19-22)

The LORD JESUS CHRIST is a GUIDE who has walked the very path that HE sends HIS children upon. HE has never sent any into HIS field but that HE has already trod that very ground, met those same difficulties, and tasted the same grief and anguish associated with it. “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” (Heb 4:15) “Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.” (Heb 5:2)

The LORD JESUS CHRIST is a GUIDE who is skillful in HIS craft. “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) As GOD HE knew all things and needed nothing, yet condescending to men of low estate and taking upon HIMSELF the likeness of sinful flesh, HE subjected HIMSELF as a MAN to all that men must gain. As our SUBSTITUTE, HE gained all of that for us, that we might lack nothing. HE is thus able to guide HIS sheep to green pastures.

The LORD JESUS CHRIST is a GUIDE who has triumphed over the greatest enemies of those people who HE would lead from darkness unto light. Sin is the greatest stumbling block that has beset the children of GOD. “For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.” (Eccl 7:20) Yet our GUIDE has cleared our path by HIMSELF. “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.” (Rom 5:8-9) HE is a GUIDE who needs no one to add anything to that which HE has accomplished. “Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.” (Heb 9:12)

Just as sin is a great stumbling block, which HE has completely removed; (“Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Rom 6:11)) HE has also cancelled the penalty associated with it. “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Rom 6:23) Therefore we can say with Solomon; “For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death.” (Psa 48:14) HE has “tasted death” for us and has taken it by the throat and left it with no power to either condemn the sons of GOD nor to bring them into fear at its prospect. Its lifeless form and the grave will be cast into the lake of fire at the final day. “And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.” (Rev 20:14) “For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.” (1Cor 15:25-26)

The LORD JESUS CHRIST is a GUIDE who leads HIS people out and in. A good guide brings those who use his services back to the place from whence they departed. HE knew HIS people from the beginning. HE subjected them to vanity according to HIS good pleasure, and HE has now brought them to a place of blessing which HE has prepared for them. “For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried. Thou broughtest us into the net; thou laidst affliction upon our loins. Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.” (Psa 66:10-12)