

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

HIS AND MINE

My beloved is mine, and I am his: he feedeth among the lilies. Song of Solomon 2:16

The Song of Solomon is a graphic and glorious picture of the love which the LORD JESUS has for that people whom HE is pleased to call the “*sheep of HIS pasture.*” This narrative is quite graphic as HE is pleased to depict HIS relationship to HIS people in terms of the romantic and intimate love between a HUSBAND and HIS bride who each find great solace and enjoyment in one another’s company. Many have been caused to blush in reading the details of HIS love so graphically displayed, yet HIS love for her is ever truly expressed here in HIS familiarity with her.

This picture is also quite glorious as we are made to view HIS devotion to her. She is no stranger to HIM, nor has HE had to wait to see who HIS bride might be. Rather HE is well acquainted with her since she was given to HIM before the foundation of the world, and HIS creation of this world is for the purpose of demonstrating that love in the display of HIS redeeming work in her behalf. HE is her SAVIOR and SUSTAINER in this life and that which is to come. “*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand. I and my Father are one.*” (John 10:27-30)

It is impossible to have a right understanding of the LOVE of GOD if one should misunderstand or fail to see the particular nature of HIS love as it is promised, applied, and demonstrated in that work of REDEMPTION, deliverance, and preservation of a people which were chosen in CHRIST from before the foundation of the world. Many have set forth HIS love as being a sort of generic affection for all of mankind. Religious men will grow extremely angry at those who would dare to question their faulty understanding of this intimate and particular relationship which is demonstrated throughout the scriptures and most certainly in this compelling narrative of Solomon’s Song.

Some will protest loudly and roll out John 3:16 (their “big gun”) to “prove” that GOD “loves” every man on the face of the Earth with the exact same degree of affection. Yet even they will have to admit that the enjoyment of HIS love is limited to a certain subset of that population being “whosoever believeth”. It seems quite clear, as we undertake a scriptural study of those whom the LORD “loveth”, that all men without exception could not be meant. The LORD said quite plainly, “*Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.*” (Rom 9:13, see also Mal.1:2,3) The LORD was speaking to Nicodemus in the third chapter of John. Being a leader among the Jews, he would have been of the notion that only the Jews were the objects of the LORD’s love. The LORD shocked him as HE declared that those who were the objects of HIS love are not just Jews but includes men of every tribe and tongue. We see this quite plainly stated in John’s vision and letter, “*for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.*” (Rev 5:9) “*Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*” (1John 4:10)

No one would ever define true, intimate “love” as being open ended and not particularly targeted. If a man says to his wife, “I love you, but then I love every other woman just the same,” he would probably be spending the night in the doghouse. True love carries with it the understanding of particular devotion and commitment. And we see this demonstrated for us in Solomon’s Song and in the expressions of love which the LORD has made to those who are HIS.

In this narrative the Bride makes this statement "I am HIS". Such is the desire and determination of those who have been given FAITH to believe the Gospel, which reveals the REDEEMER of sinners to be the LORD JESUS CHRIST. We see this manifested in a clear understanding that CHRIST is the possessor of HIS bride which were chosen in HIM, and that she takes delight in this special relationship to HIM. This is that relationship which both Peter and Paul wrote of. *"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."* (1Pet 2:9) *"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."* (2Thes 2:13-14) *"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will."* (Eph 1:4-5)

The sons of GOD, as they are quickened by HIS SPIRIT and brought out of darkness and into the LIGHT, desire to be found with HIM and in HIS service, taking delight that they are numbered among the sheep of HIS pasture. They are as that servant which is spoken of by Moses, *"And it shall be, if he say unto thee, I will not go away from thee; because he loveth thee and thine house, because he is well with thee; Then thou shalt take an aul, and thrust it through his ear unto the door, and he shall be thy servant for ever. And also unto thy maidservant thou shalt do likewise."* (Deut 15:16-17) So they are HIS, first by HIS choice and then by their own, as the SPIRIT compels them to love HIM through the gift of FAITH.

Then the Bride confesses that "HE is mine". The weakness of the Bride is often demonstrated as she timidly makes this confession. She can more readily believe that HE is her SALVATION by the operation of HIS SOVEREIGN prerogative and power, than she can boldly confess that she fully embraces HIS promise. We see this demonstrated when the LORD confronted Peter upon the sea shore after his thrice denial of the LORD. The LORD's consideration of Peter was constant, unwavering, and full of tender mercy towards Peter. Yet Peter could hardly bring himself to say without equivocation that he loved the LORD. Peter was pricked in his heart by his failure and felt himself unworthy to make such a confession. Yet the LORD persisted and drew it out of HIM, that he might know that it is HIS great love to HIS children that is the source of their comfort and not their judgement of themselves.

Thus, John writes these words, *"And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God."* (1John 3:19-21) And Paul confirms it in his letter to Timothy, *"If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself."* (2Tim 2:13) We are ever brought back to the wisdom of John who reminds us, *"And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love him, because he first loved us."* (1John 4:16-19)

Poor, weak, and worthless though I am,
I have a rich, almighty Friend;
Jesus, the Saviour, is his name;
He freely loves, and without end.
He ransomed me from hell with blood,
And by his power my foes controlled;
He found me wandering far from God,
And brought me to his chosen fold.
He cheers my heart, my needs supplies,
And says that I shall shortly be
Enthroned with him above the skies;

O what a Friend is Christ to me! (by John Newton, #91 Gadsby's Hymns)

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