

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

WOUNDING IN THE HOUSE OF GOD

Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful. Proverbs 27:6

When I was but a lad, my father often told me that the chastisement which he was preparing to give me was for my own good. I usually doubted his sincerity or at least questioned his definition of good as his belt connected with my backside. As I experienced the pain of my transgression, anger over my punishment often rose against him. But now with the clearer understanding of adulthood I can say that he was right and I thank GOD for his faithfulness in correcting my childish ways. Of course, today, in our "enlightened age", such treatment of children is considered by many in our society as cruel, brutal and quite unnecessary. Yet the formula which the LORD prescribed for the correction of children has never changed. (see Prov.13:24; 22:15; 23:13-14; 29:15). It is amazing that our "enlightened age" has produced more criminals and menaces to society than the ages before Dr. Spock. Respect for authority is almost gone. The antics of overpaid and pampered athletes are indicative of this trend and mirror our society rather than being an aberration of it.

The scripture is quite plain that the LORD is faithful to correct HIS children. *"For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."* (Heb 12:6) *"Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."* (Heb 12:11) Chastening is not a pleasant experience even when it is administered by the hand of a gracious and merciful GOD who only has our best interests at heart. (see Rom. 8:28) But we should be thankful when HE administers it because it is an evidence of our sonship and serves to make us stronger and more faithful in our walk with HIM.

I can't think of a time in my childhood when I got a whipping I did not deserve. There were many more times that I should have gotten worse than I did. When a man has been made acquainted with his own sinfulness by the HOLY SPIRIT, he can hardly be angry when the hand of the LORD is a chastening one, but must marvel at the mercy of GOD who spares him a constant barrage of correction. There are many ways which the LORD has designed to bring correction to HIS own. The most plainly seen is the interaction of GOD's people in the local church, as each part supplies that which is lacking by the whole (see Eph. 4:16). The church is made up of living stones which must, of necessity, chafe upon one another as we all fit together in unity for the glory of CHRIST. (see I Pet.2:5) This chafing requires that we labor (see Eph.4:2, 3) to maintain this unity, because it is not pleasant to the natural man to esteem others better than ourselves and to seek the benefit of our brethren even at our own expense. (see I Cor. 6:7) Some think that they can be strong in the LORD without being a part of a local church but they are mistaken. The saying that "no man is an island" is never illustrated more plainly than here. GOD's people are to be united. It is impossible for a man to learn unity by himself or to discover what it is to hold brethren in a higher esteem than himself when not faced with that day to day necessity. It is vitally necessary for the children of GOD to interact with one another, sometimes even cause pain to one another, in order for them to become what they are intended to be. We learn to love

one another in spite of our differences and offenses because we are placed side by side and are given no other choice but to work it out.

All wounding is done according to the purpose of the LORD. *"See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand." (Deut 32:39)* Nothing ever transpires in this world which is not according to the direct purpose of GOD. The old theologians called this the absolute predestination of all things. This is a doctrine which is roundly rejected in our day by the majority of religionists but is nonetheless true as it always has been.

The LORD JESUS is familiar with being wounded by HIS brethren. *"I was wounded in the house of my friends." (Zech 13:6)* Peter denied that he even knew him. Can you imagine the pain that this caused to our REDEEMER as HE made eye contact with Peter in the judgment hall. If Peter as a mere man wept over this incident, what must HE have felt who was "wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities." (Isa. 53:5). HE was *"in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."* (Heb 4:15) Even when our brethren wound us we must not speak evil of them for our LORD left us this example, *"Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:"* (1 Pet. 2:23)

Woe be to those who bring offense to the sons of GOD. *"It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come! It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones." (Luke 17:1-2)* Judas Iscariot carried out the will of GOD perfectly yet Judas himself was condemned. It is an awful thing for one of GOD's children to knowingly bring offense or speak evil of another of HIS sons. There is no excuse for such behavior. It should be repented of and restitution sought immediately. There can be no peace to those who sow discord among brethren or who wound them without regard. *"But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ."* (1 Cor 8:12)

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