

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*

FEW AND FULL

Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. *Job 14:1*

Job was surrounded by “friends”(?) who were full of advice and answers but were quite short on spiritual understanding. In fact Job called them “*miserable comforters*” (Job 16:2) and “*physicians of no value*” (Job 13:4). These “*forgers of lies*” as he called them were no doubt great thinkers and moralistic theologians who were certain that all of Job’s calamities were the result of some hidden sin or human frailty which if he was a mind to he could correct and then present himself to the LORD who would then as a result of his reformation and self remedy, smile upon him with material and spiritual blessings.

We are now living in a “post Christian” era when the foundational fabric of our society is not in any sense built upon a consideration of GOD as an absolute sovereign. We do not entertain the notion that our society (or any other on the face of the earth, for that matter) has ever been built upon a true understanding or spiritual reliance upon GOD; but there has been (in our historical past from our roots in English culture) at least an external recognition of the control of all things by an all powerful and absolute GOD.

There was a time (by the grace of GOD) when voices thundered from the pulpits of the land and served to shape and mold society and its mores to some extent. Today we are living in a time when the message which comes from pulpits (no longer thundered but soothingly spoken) is shaped by the philosophies of “*forgers of lies and physicians of no value.*” The world has more influence in the “churches” (so called) of our day than these “*synagogues of Satan*” (see Rev.2:9) have upon the world. Smiley faced “preachers” and “money hungry” thieves tailor their sermons to draw the biggest crowds and tell their constituents exactly what they want to hear and keep them entertained. (see II Tim.4:3,4)

The “power of positive thinking” is now the basis of “theology” as predominant numbers of “christians” (so called) exhibit more confidence in the arm of the flesh and the abilities of men than they do in the power of an Almighty GOD. The “gospel” has been reduced to a formula whose effectiveness is enhanced by those with great powers of persuasion to cajole and convince men of the ease with which they can avail themselves of a ticket to heaven.

One of the most glorious tributes to the power of JESUS CHRIST and Paul’s complete reliance upon HIM, (“*I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*” (Phi 4:13)) has now been co-opted by these “*miserable comforters*” and made to be a rallying cry for the flesh to perform at its “best” and accomplish great things in all kinds of endeavors from making money and getting out of debt, to winning football games and prize fights. CHRIST has taken “second place” to the “I can do” according to these “*forgers of lies.*”

Job never heard a motivational speaker or attended any self-help seminars but he was given a clear understanding of the state of man, the purpose of GOD, and the absolute bleakness of the prospects of this flesh when he made his declaration “*Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.*” He never read the latest book which told him how to pick himself up by the bootstraps and start making positive confessions and getting his life,

finances, and house in order or how relief was just a decision away. Nor was he able to avail himself of all of the motivational stories or counseling that could assure him that he could overcome his various problems since others had already done it before him.

No! his confession was much simpler and without the least consideration of his own ability when he said, *"Behold, he taketh away, who can hinder him? who will say unto him, What doest thou?" (Job 9:12)* He understood that all things (whether judged good or bad according to men) were given to him in GOD's ordained purpose. *"And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD." (Job 1:21)* He knew that he had nothing wherein to boast and had no other hope or expectation than one given to him by an absolute GOD as he confessed, *"Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." (Job 13:15)*

The "motivators" would accuse Job of being "negative" but the fact is that such an understanding as he had is the pure truth and lays the axe to the root of man's reliance in the flesh. Then there are those who would say Job was just satisfied with mediocrity and was looking for a means to excuse his laziness or was "fatalistic" (whatever that is supposed to mean.) Fatalism is the belief that fate is the dictating force in the world. The scripture teaches that GOD is the dictating force in the world and HIS purpose cannot be altered anymore than the WORD that is gone out of HIS mouth can be changed. (see Isa.46:9-11)

So are we saying that there is no place for exhortation or encouragement to the people of GOD? Of course not; the scripture is full of many exhortations and admonitions but they are given to those who have ears to hear and eyes to see. The purpose of the exhortations and admonitions is to bring the people of GOD low before HIS footstool to cry out for mercy as they recognize their own inability to perform even one good deed apart from HIS grace bestowed upon them as HE is pleased to work in them *"both to will and to do of his good pleasure." (Phil 2:13)* The scripture never exhorts the people of GOD to stir up their flesh to perform anything. (see II Pet 3:1) The man who is spiritually minded knows that in his flesh dwells no good thing and that he cannot even perform the things that he knows to do nor avoid the things which he knows to avoid. *"I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do." (Rom 7:18-19)*

Man is of few days. The LORD has set the bounds of our habitation and we cannot pass the number of years allotted to us. The prophet said, *"All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand forever." (Isa 40:6-8)* The wisest of men, Solomon, when surveying the grandeur of all that he possessed and had accomplished said, *"Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity. What profit hath a man of all his labor which he taketh under the sun?" (Ecc 1:2-3)*

And full of trouble. Why should it be that men grow angry at GOD when calamities come and they are troubled on every hand? Should we be surprised when things don't work out as we planned or our desires and dreams are not fulfilled? Not if we have any understanding at all of the sin nature of all men and the blackness of sin's night which has fallen like the Stygian darkness upon the whole human race. Rather than complaining when things don't occur as we would like, we should, rather, be thankful that we ever receive even one blessing from the LORD, since we deserve nothing but death and destruction. That is not the message of the "miserable comforters" who apply tainted salve to the wounds of men and promise them that they can solve their problems by their own effort whether it be by some great endeavor or by following some formula of faith and obedience.

There is only one HOPE or HELP for those who are the objects of GOD's mercy and have been awakened to their own dire condition. *"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." (Isa 45:22)*