

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

A PERFECT MAN

There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.

Job 1:1

In order to measure "perfection" one must have a standard to go by. If a man is bowling then a "perfect game" is 300. If a man is pitching baseball then a truly perfect game would consist of 81 pitches all of which were strikes. Yet a man might also eat a piece of cake and judge that such a cake is "perfect" because it meets his exact tastes and he is completely pleased with it. In HIS challenge to Satan, the LORD said of Job, *"there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?"* (Job 1:8)

The LORD's creation is described in Genesis as pleasing to HIM, *"And God saw the light, that it was good."* (Gen 1:4). At each stage of HIS creation HE pronounced it good because HE said it was and it pleased HIM and not because it met some standard other than HIS good pleasure. He said concerning Noah, *"And the LORD said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation."* (Gen 7:1) Did the LORD finally find a man who fit a certain standard or did the LORD declare that Noah was acceptable in HIS sight because *"Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD."* (Gen 6:8)

The moralists have a hard time answering that question since they consider that the reason for Noah's favor in GOD's sight was because he met a certain moral criteria. They are like the Pharisees who considered that a man could gain favor with GOD by keeping the law. The LORD overturned that concept when HE taught HIS disciples saying, *"when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do."* (Luke 17:10) Men cannot gain favor or find acceptance with GOD by simply adhering to those things HE commands them to do. Nor is it possible for a man to exceed that which GOD commands. (see Mat.19:16-26) Nor does HE grant blessings on the basis of comparing one man's obedience to another. *"Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand."* (Rom 14:4)

That man who is convinced (by the grace of GOD) of the innate depravity of the natural man (most especially his own) can see very clearly that grace must precede any and all blessings which proceed from the MASTER's hand. He is convinced that apart from the grace of GOD he will utterly perish and despair of ever being able to measure up to the standard of true holiness which was demonstrated by the LORD JESUS CHRIST who did no sin neither was guile found in HIS mouth.

Such a man can find no comfort whatsoever in the message of those blind guides who would seek to teach him that he can earn or merit GOD's blessing and favor by being faithful, obedient, or by simply following a prescribed path. He is convinced that grace must precede

faith and that any obedience found in him is the result of the operation of the SPIRIT of GOD in and through him. (see Gal.2:20, Phil.2:13)

Job was a man who had such an understanding of his own self. *“If I speak of strength, lo, he is strong: and if of judgment, who shall set me a time to plead? If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse. Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul: I would despise my life.”* (Job 9:19-21) So wherein did Job’s “perfection” lie, if the LORD said that he was “perfect”?

The perfection of all men who are found acceptable in the sight of GOD comes from ONE SOURCE and HE is the ONE who makes them to differ from another. JESUS CHRIST is the PERFECT MAN with whom the LORD is pleased, *“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.”* (Mat 17:5) Except a man be hidden in this perfect MAN he can have no hope of ever finding favor in the eyes of HIM whose true delight is found in HIS only begotten SON.

The LORD has been pleased to demonstrate HIS righteousness and justice (HE would be just and the JUSTIFIER) as well as HIS good pleasure in bringing many sons to glory by sending HIS SON to become sin for them and to forever take away any claim that HIS own law could ever bring against them. Rather than overturning HIS law (which HE most certainly could have done if it had pleased HIM), to which HE subjected them, HE has fulfilled it for them. HE has demonstrated HIS love and goodness towards them in not only satisfying the claims of the law in their behalf by HIS death on Calvary, but in also imputing HIS righteousness to them, making them priests and kings in the earth and heirs and joint heirs with JESUS CHRIST. *“Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”* (Luke 12:32)

Therefore all of the hopes and expectations of those who have been given faith to believe by the grace of GOD are found in JESUS CHRIST. They can testify with the apostle Paul, *“Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.”* (Col 3:9-11)

1 A Man there is, a real Man, With wounds still gaping wide,
From which rich streams of blood once ran, In hands, and feet, and side.
2 [’Tis no wild fancy of our brains, No metaphor we speak;
The same dear Man in heaven now reigns That suffered for our sake.]
3 This wondrous Man of whom we tell, Is true Almighty God;
He bought our souls from death and hell; The price, his own heart’s blood.
4 That human heart he still retains, Though throned in highest bliss;
And feels each tempted member’s pains; For our affliction’s his.
5 Come, then, repenting sinner, come; Approach with humble faith;
Owe what thou wilt, the total sum Is cancelled by his death.
6 His blood can cleanse the blackest soul, And wash our guilt away;
He will present us sound and whole, In that tremendous day.

23 Gadsby’s Hymns by Joseph Hart

“Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.” (2Cor 4:14-18)

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