

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

AN EVERLASTING PORTION

*My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart,
and my portion for ever.* *Psalms 73:26*

According to their nature, men like to compare themselves among themselves. Paul warns the sons of GOD of this very trait and speaks of the lack of wisdom that such a course of action most often indicates. *"For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise."* (2 Cor 10:12)

Out of this natural state and propensity arises all manner of competition and the enjoyment of contests wherein men desire to get the best of their fellow competitor. This competitive spirit is not in itself wicked but it does give rise to wickedness when men pursue it to the point of not holding one another in a proper esteem or use it as a means of selfish self aggrandizement.

When a man is born from above (i.e.; born again) he does not automatically lose this competitive nature, (since he does not cease to dwell in the flesh) but as the LORD is pleased to give him a measure of faith, and the SPIRIT begins to work in him both to will and to do of HIS good pleasure, he can begin to see how contrary his fleshly nature is to that pure and perfect commandment from the LORD to love his neighbor as himself.

Asaph, (the writer of Psalm 73), describes the carnal view that often arises in the sons of GOD as they (in their flesh) survey the world around them and the oft seeming prosperity of the wicked. *"For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men. Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment. Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish."* (Psa 73:3-7) This is the flesh comparing itself to the fallen sons of Adam.

When the LORD convinces a man of his sin and unworthiness, HE often does so by bringing him to a place of weakness through trials and deprivations. In this state he is exercised in heart and mind and laments his fallen state which he can begin to see more clearly as he is given light. He might look around him and see the seemingly (comparatively) happy lives of those men who are not exercised and vexed in heart and soul as he is. In his flesh he assumes that the wicked are perhaps better off than he is, and unbelief whispers in his ear, and he envies them for their trouble free lives (as he would assess them).

Thus we see manifested the warfare between the flesh and the SPIRIT (see Gal. 5:17; Rom. 7:14-25). Just as the children of Israel murmured in the desert and pined for their lives in Egypt (forgetting the bondage in which they were held and had presently escaped by the grace of GOD), so too do the sons of GOD sometimes, foolishly, consider that the way from which they have been delivered is actually to be preferred over their present state of trouble and conflict.

Was it not for the grace of GOD they would soon turn back from the arduous journey to which they have been called according to the purpose and mercy of GOD. *"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)

The same gracious FATHER who has ordained that they should begin this journey will indeed keep them upon it, and their “chastening” along the way will serve not to ultimately weaken them but to cause them to be strong as they are taught in WHOM all of their HELP is to be found. HE will never forsake them and will sustain them until HE accomplishes HIS purpose in them. *“For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.” (Heb 12:6-8)*

The goodness of GOD leads the children of GOD to repentance (see Rom. 2:4). It is because HE reveals, to them, HIS willingness to forgive their transgressions that ever binds them unto HIM and causes them to hope in HIS mercy in spite of their sinful flesh which would continually seek to turn them from that HOPE. *“If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared. I wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope.” (Psa 130:3-5)*

This is the “portion” of the sons of GOD which is in complete contrast to the “portion” of the wicked. A “portion” is something that must be bestowed by someone else. A man cannot labor for his “portion” but it is that which he receives by decree. The prodigal son desired to have his “portion” (i.e.; his inheritance) earlier than he otherwise might have gotten it. He assumed that he should receive a certain amount of his father’s goods, but the reality is that he actually had no right to anything which his father possessed and it was only because his father was pleased to grant him his “portion”, that he in fact had anything. The father determined what his portion was.

GOD in HIS sovereign purpose does indeed allot to every son of Adam a certain portion as it pleases HIM. To those whom HE has made HIS sons he bestows a certain portion and to those who are merely men of the flesh, HE bestows another portion as it hath pleased HIM. Who can question HIS doing or anywise accuse HIM of doing wrong with HIS own creation?(see Rom.9:20)

In HIS own time HE is pleased to manifest the portion of the righteous as well as the portion of the wicked. To those whom HE calls HIS children, chosen in CHRIST from before the foundation of the world, HE bestows a “portion” which can best be described as “dwelling in HIS presence” forever. Even as Paul said, *“For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.” (Rom 14:8)* Or as David described it; *“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.” (Psa 23:6)*

Yet those who are not included in that privileged number receive a portion which is best described as being cast out of the presence of the LORD forever, for as David said, *“The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.” (Psa 1:4)* Solomon summed their fate up quite succinctly, when he penned these words *“the name of the wicked shall rot.” (Pro 10:7)* *“Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup.” (Psa 11:6)*

In all things which the LORD does, HE does according to HIS character and in keeping with HIS purpose which cannot be altered by any other. HE will do all things according to HIS justice and in keeping with HIS mercy. Those to whom HE gives that portion of enjoying HIS presence forevermore, HE also supplies with a will that embraces HIS truth and delights in HIS presence as well as providing for them a SACRIFICE which is satisfactory in satisfying the laws which they have broken. Those to whom HE gives that portion of the unrighteous, HE causes to continue on in their created nature and they are in no wise treated unfairly, receiving the just recompense deserved by all who have despised the way of GOD. That man who is not born again cannot love the way of GOD anymore than those, who are, can despise it. The glory of GOD’s grace is seen in HIS calling of sinners from their natural path towards destruction to a place of rejoicing in HIS mercy and confessing a lasting HOPE in CHRIST as their PORTION forever as did Asaph. mam