

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

THE FOOT OF PRIDE

Let not the foot of pride come against me, and let not the hand of the wicked remove me.

Psalms 36:11

The very first of the seven things which are an abomination in the sight of GOD is a "proud look". *"These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren."* (Prov 6:16-19)

The very last of these; *"he that soweth discord among brethren"*, is caused by the very first, since we read, in the Proverbs, that *"Only by pride cometh contention."* (Prov 13:10) Jude admonishes the children of GOD to, *"earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."* (Jude 1:3), yet this "contending" must never be done with "contentiousness" lest we be swallowed up with pride and any supposed benefit of "contending" be overturned. *"Be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves."* (Phil. 2:2-3) Paul goes on to say that this is the very *"mind which was in CHRIST JESUS"* when HE *"humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."* (Phil 2:8)

It is impossible that brethren shall always be in agreement on every point of doctrine and practice. The LORD has dealt to each of HIS children a *"measure of faith"* (Rom. 12:3) which is not the same "measure". Along with that *"measure of faith"* is a measure of understanding and a diversity of thought. Paul, very ably, points this out to the Romans (read chapter 14), concluding with this principle *"Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another."* (Rom 14:19)

The unity which the children of GOD are exhorted to endeavor to keep (see Eph. 4:13) is not one of rote uniformity where everyone is a clone of each other but rather where each one exhibits the *"mind of CHRIST"* in seeking the benefit of the other. This cannot be achieved by the power of the flesh, nor by the strongest bonds of religion, but will only be seen in its beauty as the LORD works in HIS people both to will and to do of HIS good pleasure. *"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore."* (Psa 133:1-3)

Differences of opinion cannot destroy this sort of unity because it is not built upon the fickle grounds of human agreement nor does it depend on the approving glances of those who compare themselves among themselves and find satisfaction in mutual approval and orthodoxy. The only conformity which the sons of GOD are exhorted to seek after is to be conformed to the image of

CHRIST and to not be conformed to the world. This is the antithesis to most organized religion which has numerous plateaus of conformity which is demanded of its adherents.

True unity is not destroyed by confrontation, rebuke, or instruction which may run contrary to one's present state of mind. This is demonstrated in Paul's rebuke of Peter when Peter was guilty of dissimulation with the Jews. (see Gal.2:11-21) Though this was a forceful rebuke on the part of Paul there is no evidence that it was not given in humility nor that it was not received in the same fashion by Peter. Paul had no ulterior motive of self promotion, and sought nothing but Peter's (and the rest of the brethren) benefit and considered his own advice (*"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."* (Gal 6:1)) in the delivery of his admonition. It is obvious that Peter, thereafter, had nothing but the highest regard for Paul. *"Even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you."* (2Pet 3:15)

It is necessary that both the hearer and the preacher be of a humble mind and meek spirit, so that there be no sowing of discord among brethren. Those who take offence at the word of GOD when it is spoken in love and truth, are no different than those who desire to stir up strife among brethren by majoring their teaching on doubtful disputations and endless genealogies. *"If any man --- consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself."* (1 Tim 6:3-5)

In David's prayer to the LORD he desires to be delivered from the *"foot of pride."* I believe he has reference to those who meant to do him harm. He speaks of wicked enemies (perhaps Ahithophel, David's own counselor who conspired with Absalom; see I Sam.15,16) whose desire for domination caused them to hate his position as king. It is this same *"foot of pride"* which moved the Jews to seek the destruction of the LORD JESUS CHRIST and ultimately to take HIM and have HIM crucified in order to fulfill the ordained purpose of GOD. *"Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain."* (Act 2:23)

We read of this *"foot of pride"* again in the Psalms, *"Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me."* (Psa 41:9), a prophecy which clearly has reference to Judas since the LORD reiterates it. *"That the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me."* (John 13:18) The very thing which the LORD hated (a proud look) is that which HE ordained against HIS only BEGOTTEN SON, as HE was betrayed and ultimately delivered to HIS tormentors. Is this not a demonstration of the fact that HE was tempted in all points as we are? Is this not a manifestation that HE has borne our sins and carried our sorrows? Is HE not acquainted with grief; as HE was wounded in the house of HIS friends?

That which David prayed to be delivered from, the LORD JESUS CHRIST, did willingly subject HIMSELF to, that HE might destroy all of the enemies of HIS people. That HE might take away the *"foot of pride"* and any others that would destroy the apple of HIS eye. David also prayed *"Let not the hand of the wicked remove me."* (Psa 36:11) The LORD JESUS has granted his request and has hidden HIS sheep in the palm of HIS hand. *"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)

Let all fruitless searches go,
Which perplex and tease us;
We determine nought to know,
But a bleeding Jesus.

#315 Gadsby's Hymns, by Joseph Hart.

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