

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

IN THE DAYTIME AND IN THE NIGHT

Yet the LORD will command his lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life.

Psalms 42:8

When he was asked how old he was, "Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage." (Gen 47:9) Such an answer as this would surely be labeled as "negative thinking" by the modern psychoanalysts, masquerading as gospel preachers. Yet Jacob was testifying to the truth as a man given to understand the vanity of this world and the corruption that is in all men by nature. Esau's testimony, in contrast, was much more upbeat, as he said to Jacob, "Take, I pray thee, my blessing that is brought to thee; because God hath dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough." (Gen 33:11)

The religious moralists of the world would opine that Esau gave a better testimony than Jacob. Yet Esau's appraisal of the "blessings" which he had received were what any carnal man might observe. His testimony is not unlike that of the rich man who said, "And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." (Luke 12:19) The LORD called him a fool and predicated HIS parable with these words, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." (Luke 12:15)

The blessing of GOD upon a man is not seen in the profusion of outward joys he might experience any more than HIS blessing is withheld from those who appear in great straits and an abundance of trouble. We can see this clearly demonstrated in the book of Job. Job's "friends" ("miserable comforters" and "physicians of no value") were the original "health and prosperity" preachers. They expressed to Job that if he was truly "righteous" then he would not be having such problems. Eliphaz told him, "Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off? Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same. By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of his nostrils are they consumed." (Job 4:7-9) It is interesting to note that Esau's firstborn son was named Eliphaz, possibly, this same individual who had the same carnal understanding of GOD's blessing as his father. If this Eliphaz is not the exact same person, as Esau's firstborn son, he is a close descendant, since Eliphaz named his own son, Teman, and Eliphaz is called "the Temanite".

Their philosophy is that which is ingrained in the very nature of the carnal man, showing "the work of the law written in their hearts" (Rom.2:15) "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." (Pro 14:12) Men assume that they can influence the blessings of GOD upon themselves by their own actions. In this understanding they "go about to establish their own righteousness" and thereby disregard and disrespect the "righteousness of CHRIST" as the sole grounds upon which any of the sons of GOD enjoy the blessings of GOD.

Job confessed the only HOPE that he had. HIS HOPE had no dependence upon anything which is of or in man, or that can be experienced in this state of mortality and corruption that men are in by nature. *"And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me."* (Job 19:26-27) This is that same confession which Paul made, saying, *"Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead."* (Php 3:8-11)

Job, like Jacob before him, understood the vanity of this world, the shortness of life, and the certainty of death. *"Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not. And dost thou open thine eyes upon such an one, and bringest me into judgment with thee? Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one. Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass."* (Job 14:1-5)

Yet far from this being an empty complaint or an attempt to accuse GOD of unrighteousness, he is moved to praise HIM who does all things according to the good pleasure of HIS will. He expresses his HOPE and glories in the REDEEMER's cancellation of his sin. *"If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands. For now, thou numberest my steps: dost thou not watch over my sin? My transgression is sealed up in a bag, and thou sewest up mine iniquity."* (Job 14:14-17)

Thus, he and all saints, take delight, not, "in" the trials of this life, but recognize the hand of GOD in them, and rejoice in the tender mercies and watch care of the SHEPHERD of their souls. Is this not the exact testimony of the Psalmist as he recounts the "lovingkindness" of the LORD at all times, (be it day or night) towards those whom he loves. Paul reminds us of this very fact in Romans 8:28 (which the puritan, Thomas Watson called "A Divine Cordial") *"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."*

The LORD *"will command HIS lovingkindness in the daytime."* Thus, HE blesses the saints openly, though not as the natural man might count "blessings". HE gives HIS children *"meat to eat which the world knows not of."* Even as HE gave carnal blessings to Israel as typical of that which HE has laid up for HIS Bride. *"The LORD shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto; and he shall bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee."* (Deut 28:8)

The Psalmist is reminded of HIS continued kindness even when the darkness of life overwhelms him and he finds himself in a dry and thirsty land where no water is, saying, *"in the night HIS song shall be with me".* Though the children of GOD find themselves "cast down" and their soul "disquieted" within them, yet they are visited by HIM in these night seasons in the time which HE has appointed. *"For I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance."* (Psa 42:5) HE is their CONSOLATION in darkness.

Even our "prayer" is that which is "commanded" by GOD. Quite often men think that they will gain comfort by praying. Yet the truth is that prayer is the gift of GOD bestowed upon HIS children and is, itself, the blessing. *"But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him."* (Mat 6:7-8) Oh how sweet are the times of refreshing sent from the LORD to that soul bowed down in night which surrounds them in this land of sin and sorrow. HE is acquainted with our grief.

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