

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

SATISFIED WITH FAMINE

The LORD knoweth the days of the upright: and their inheritance shall be for ever. They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied. Psalm 37:18-19

The Kingdom of GOD is quite in contrast to the realm of flesh and blood. It is impossible for a man to identify and understand those differences unless he is shown them, by Divine revelation. Not only can the natural man not grasp the nature of this Eternal Kingdom, but he is actually at enmity with this kingdom and loves to have it so. *“And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.”* (John 3:19) This natural enmity is manifested in the reaction of men to the advent of the SAVIOR of the world. *“He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.”* (John 1:10) *“He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.”* (Isa 53:3)

Thus, it is no great wonder that man (according to his natural religiosity) has devised many theories concerning the GREAT and MIGHTY GOD who rules Heaven, Earth, and Hell. Nor is it surprising that the vast majority of these theories place various limits upon HIM according to the whims of the natural mind. Man cannot conceive of anything which is eternal or infinite, since by nature he is limited in his scope to those things which are carnal. Therefore, each one of his opinions about GOD is bounded by that natural manner of thinking. The natural law of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth is “written in his heart”. We see that principle in action each and every day, as each man seeks out his own benefit.

This same principle is at work in his mind as he is convinced that he has within his own power the ability to gain the blessing of GOD by his various endeavors. Most religious activities are geared around this notion and it is futile to attempt to correct his thinking. He reads the law of GOD and he is certain that it is useful to keep part of it even if he cannot keep all of it. He is sure that his faith and obedience will somehow be beneficial to him in influencing GOD to bless him.

The radio and TV airwaves are bursting at the seams with those who insist that a man can cause the blessings of GOD to fall upon his head by such acts of devotion and faith. Most especially as it is tied to financial gain as one sows seed faith and enriches the coffers of the con men and witch doctors who perpetuate this notion accompanied by theatrics and “miracles” of one sort or another, designed to ensnare the gullible. While there are cartoonish examples of this which are in abundance, the same principle is at work in more sedate settings where various duties are enjoined upon the erstwhile followers of CHRIST, such as bringing all the tithes into the storehouse and keeping various times, seasons, and days. The underlying principle is that if these things are faithfully performed then blessings are sure to follow.

GOD's blessings cannot be bought, coerced, earned, or “deserved”. When a man has done everything which the LORD has commanded him to do, he is yet an unprofitable servant, and cannot go beyond that which is required of him. *“So likewise ye, 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) All of the blessings of GOD are a product of HIS mercy and grace which emanates from HIS purpose. Obedience and faith are the result of HIS blessing rather than its cause. “Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name. But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee. For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding. O LORD our God, all this store that we have prepared to build thee an house for thine holy name cometh of thine hand, and is all thine own.” (1Ch 29:12-16) “Can a man be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself? Is it any pleasure to the Almighty, that thou art righteous? or is it gain to him, that thou makest thy ways perfect?” (Job 22:2-3) “For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?” (1Cor 4:7)

The LORD shocked Nicodemus, when HE told him, that “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” (John 3:3) Nicodemus, being a Jew, expected that the LORD would give him some sort of advice or instruction in religious duty. Yet the LORD laid the axe to the root of his tree of learning and duty and let HIM know that the Kingdom of GOD is not gained through human endeavor of any sort. HIS Kingdom, cannot be “seen” (i.e.; grasped or understood) apart from a supernatural work by the SPIRIT of GOD to awaken him from the deadness of his sin to Eternal life in CHRIST. HIS Kingdom is not one of flesh and blood, but one of LIGHT and LIFE which can only be gained by the operation of HIS grace. “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.” (John 3:8)

The joy and blessing which the LORD is pleased to bring upon HIS people, is that which HE has purposed to give them as those who are hidden in CHRIST who is the “JOY of the whole earth”. Paul describes this purpose for us. “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.” (Rom 8:28) The natural thinking of man causes him to consider the first phrase of the verse and disregard the last one. Yet apart from being the “called according to HIS purpose” the first phrase has no basis. In like fashion the same is true when men examine Paul’s exhortation and instruction given to the Philippians “Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” (Php 2:12-13)

The Psalmist, Asaph, says; “the LORD knoweth the days of the upright”. David understood this as the reason for his deliverance, “My times are in thy hand: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me.” (Psa 31:15) Jeremiah knew the same, “O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.” (Jer 10:23) The LORD “knows” the days of the upright because HE “knoweth them that are his.” (2Tim 2:19) “we spend our years as a tale that is told.” (Psa 90:9) HE alone is the TELLER of this tale.

Thus, great blessings are assured to those upon whom the LORD is pleased to visit HIS love and affection. This is demonstrated for all the world to see as HE has sent forth HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, born of a woman, and made in the likeness of sinful flesh, to cancel their sin debt and pour out HIS blessings upon them as HIS children. The world cannot grasp either the scope or the nature of this blessing while the awakened sons of GOD desire no other. “in the days of famine they shall be satisfied”. Job understood this very concept as he stated, “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him”. (Job 13:15) Peter declared the same when the LORD asked him if he would depart as others had, “Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.” (John 6:68) That which the world counts as “famine”, the sons of GOD take their greatest delight in. “For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.” (1Cor 1:18)

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