

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

OUR EMANCIPATOR

If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. John 8:36

True freedom is possessed only by the LORD GOD who is IMMORTAL and INVISIBLE, dwelling in the LIGHT to which no man can approach. HE is thwarted by nothing and has both the power and ability to do according to HIS will in the army of Heaven and among the inhabitants of the Earth, completely unlimited or unhindered by anything but HIS own will and purpose. *“Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it.” (Isa 46:9-11)*

Man, on the other hand, being a creature, is only free insofar as HIS CREATOR is pleased to grant him “freedom”. As we see with our earthly progenitors, our corrupt nature (i.e.; falling short of the glory of GOD; see Rom.3:23) moves us to rebel against HIM and to desire our own will above HIS. Thus, by nature, we consider that we can be “free” if we can just throw off the “shackles” (as we would view them) which HE has placed upon us. Was this not the temptation that caused Adam to eat of the fruit which the serpent deceived Eve into eating? Even though the LORD told Adam exactly what he was going to do and the result thereof, he, in unbelief, went ahead and did it anyway, thinking that true freedom would be his if he ate what he was forbidden to eat. Thus, he plunged his posterity into the same endless cycle, expecting freedom but finding bondage.

The United States has more people incarcerated in prisons, per capita than any other nation on the earth. (629 per 100,000) Every individual in those prisons is convinced that he would have “freedom” if he could somehow be released outside of those prison walls. Yet the recidivism rate (over 70% in five years) proves that they are still in bondage even when clear of those institutions. One of the old Puritans, (I believe it was Samuel Bolton), said that unless a man knows what it is that has him bound, he will never be able to know what it is to be free.

We are often led to believe that the institution of human slavery was invented by white men in this country. Yet slavery has existed in every culture and country on the Earth at one time or another. In fact, it still exists in many countries today. The Bible does not condemn human servitude to a human master. Paul even exhorts those believers who are such servants to be obedient to their masters with willing hearts as unto the LORD. *“Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.” (Eph 6:5-6)* By such we learn that it is quite possible to be a slave and yet be free at the same time.

We do not desire that our comments about this sort of servitude should in anywise be construed to justify the form of slavery which was practiced in this country prior to the Civil War. There can be no justification for capturing men and women for the sole purpose of forcing them into such servitude. Those who practice such are called “*menstealers*” (see I Tim.1:10); condemned by Paul.

In order for a man to be “free” he must be given an understanding of what his bondage consists of. Paul describes the bondage of men, without CHRIST, *“For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.” (Rom 6:20)* Being “free from righteousness” is the type of freedom

which all men by nature desire, yet this type of “freedom” is in reality the most dark and abiding bondage that it is possible to be in. It is from this “bondage” that the LORD JESUS CHRIST came into the world to free HIS people, completely, by HIS LIFE, HIS death, and HIS resurrection.

As long as the sons of GOD are in these earthly bodies, they are constantly aware of the “bondage of sin” due to their corruption inherited from Adam (i.e.; their flesh). Thus, the preaching of the Gospel is given that they might be fully reminded, that while they are “*by nature*” exactly the same as “*the children of wrath*” (see Eph.2:1-8) who are rightly appointed to destruction, they are, by the grace of GOD, now made “*new creatures*” in CHRIST, wherein old things have passed away and all things are become new. The scriptures speak of this change by using the terms “*the old man*” (when they were in total bondage) and the “*new man*” (which they are now by the grace of GOD). “*Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.” (Rom 6:6) “*Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds.” (Col 3:9) “*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” (2Cor 5:17)***

This is that freedom which CHRIST (“*who cannot lie*”) promised to give to HIS disciples. To be made a “*new creature*” by the operation of HIS SPIRIT, is to be “*free indeed*”. (i.e.; certainly and absolutely). Thus, we rejoice in HIM who makes HIS people to enjoy true freedom which is only found in HIM. This freedom is enjoyed by them as HE causes them to “*know the TRUTH*” by giving them ears to hear the sweet sound of the Gospel such as that declared by Paul when HE said, “*For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.” (Rom 6:7-14) Paul gave testimony to this reality in his epistle to the Galatians; “*I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*” (Gal 2:20)*

CHRIST has set HIS people free from the curse of the Law. The curse of the Law in its most basic form is this, “*thou shalt surely die*”. “*Death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.*” (Rom.5:12) The “*curse of the law*” is manifest as men labor under its lash, who “*through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.*” (Heb 2:15) Yet CHRIST has come to destroy death and take away its sting forever. “*O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*” (1Cor 15:55-57)

CHRIST has set HIS people free from “*going about to establish their own righteousness*”. (Rom.10:3) “*But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” (1Cor 1:30) “*For Christ is the end (i.e.; fulfilment of HIS purpose) of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.*” (Rom 10:4) Those who hear the freeing sound of the Gospel and are given FAITH to believe it, rejoicing for they are convinced that in themselves dwells no good thing, but in CHRIST they are made “good” by that which HE has suffered for them. They are not striving to demonstrate their own righteousness, but are satisfied with HIS. Those who were “*free from righteousness*”, by nature, have now become willing bondslaves to HIM whose RIGHTEOUSNESS, alone, is now their own.*

CHRIST has made HIS people free to worship and serve HIM, and no other. When they walked according to the “*course of this world.*” (Eph.2:2) they could do neither. But now they are quickened from the dead by HIS mighty POWER. “*Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.” (Rom 6:18) “*For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*” (Eph 2:10) Free from sin, free from death, free from a pursuit of self-righteousness, and free to serve the KING of kings. “*Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.*” (Gal 5:1) Are you free in CHRIST?*

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