

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

OARSMEN

And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.

Ephesians 1:22-23

The most glorious message that the born again child of GOD can hear, is that one which proclaims that JESUS CHRIST is the absolute LORD of all. Nothing can bring more comfort to the soul of the redeemed than the proclamation of the preeminence of CHRIST. Paul said "For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?" (1Cor. 14:8). Is it any wonder that there is such a running to and fro among those claiming to be the followers of CHRIST in our day, tossed about with every wind of doctrine, when there are so many uncertain declarations concerning CHRIST and HIS LORDSHIP over all things?

If one listens to the average message being preached today, (purported by many to be the gospel,) one hears about a savior who is trying to save, one who would be lord if only men will let him, or one who must wait till men open their hearts. One who is dependent on the creature to carry out his will or bring others to him. This weak kneed "Jesus" that is "preached" far and wide is not the GOD of the Bible. He is a figment of men's imaginations and is an impostor who has no real power.

A man who knows himself to be a sinner, lost and undone, can find no comfort in one who must ask his permission to save him. That man who has been acquainted with his own hopeless condition is longing to hear about ONE who is mighty to save, ONE who has all power in heaven, earth, and hell. ONE in whose hand is the power of life and death, who is able to save to the uttermost. Paul here declares that "CHRIST is ALL". HE has no rival, nor is there any who can thwart HIS will nor overturn HIS purpose. All things have been put under HIS feet.

Some tell us there is coming a day, even a thousand year period of time when HE will reign in the earth. That message is two thousand years too late. HE came into the world as a KING, HE is the KING now, and HE shall be the KING forever. It was this message that Peter preached on the day of Pentecost saying, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." (Acts 2:36) There remaineth nothing to yet come under HIS dominion that is not already under HIS feet.

This is such a clear message throughout the New Testament that it is unthinkable that a person could overlook it or neglect to proclaim it from the housetops. "Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him." (Heb 2:8) The LORD JESUS, himself, said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." (Matt 28:18) Even the demons and Satan himself are but pawns in HIS mighty hand. As someone has said "the devil is GOD's devil", he is like a dog on a leash that can only fulfill the purpose the LORD has for him until the day he is finally destroyed in the pit of hell.

In keeping with this train of thought Paul goes on to say that CHRIST is the head over all things to the church which is HIS body. Now obviously Paul does not here have reference to HIS body of flesh with which HE arose from the dead, for it is in this body that HE ever liveth to make intercession for the saints. It is this body in which HIS disciples saw HIM ascend into heaven, which body the angels testified that HE should come again in. (see Acts 1:11) No, Paul speaks here in a figurative sense of a real body (i.e. that which can be seen) made up of those whom HE has purchased with HIS blood and with which HE has an eternal union. They are those who were given to him from the foundation of the world and for whom HE came into the world to redeem. A body is not the creation of men but of GOD and this body is made one with CHRIST by the operation of HIS SPIRIT without the will of man. (see Jn.1:13)

This body is made up of many members and there are no parts of this body which are less important than any other. (see 1 Cor.12:14-27) Each member of this body is vital to the health and well being of the body as a whole. This is most clearly demonstrated in the manifestation of HIS body as is set forth in specific assemblies of the saints (local churches). HE is THE HEAD of this body and leaves its guidance in the hands of none, rather HE has sent HIS SPIRIT into the earth to lead HIS body into all truth and to bear witness to them of the preeminence of the HEAD. *"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you."* (John 16:13-14) There are multitudes of usurpers and those who clamor for recognition, (as Diotrephes, see 3 Jn.1:9) but there is only ONE HEAD and HE will share HIS glory with none.

This word which is translated body in this passage is the same Greek word which is translated, slaves, in Rev. 18:13. This is an interesting thought because the church of JESUS CHRIST (HIS body) are indeed bondslaves to HIM. Each member has willingly had his ear bored through with an awl and has desired to serve HIM forever. (see Ex.21:6) They were captured by HIM and held fast with cords of love which can never be severed. HE is their PROTECTOR and MASTER and they shall never perish. Each one was bought from the auction block of sin and delivered from a cruel taskmaster and tyrant which daily threatened their destruction. Even now from time to time they may still feel the lash of correction from the hand of their new MASTER but even HIS rod is a blessing to be desired by each one of them, for HE applies a healing salve to all of their wounds and feeds them with wine and milk which the rest of the world knows not of.

Then Paul says that HIS body (the church) is the fullness of HIM that filleth all in all. The word used for fullness here is the same word used in Mark 6:43 where it has reference to the fragments which filled twelve baskets of fish and loaves when the LORD fed five thousand. Yet we are made to wonder how it can be that those who are so inadequate could yet be the "fullness" of HIM who already fills all in all. This word fullness has a literal meaning or definition of a ship full of soldiers or oarsmen (i.e.; rowers). This may be puzzling until one considers that in the day in which this was written those who were oarsmen on ships were generally those who were pressed into service rather than those who signed up in order to see the world. If a person has ever seen the movie, Ben Hur, then they could get a mental picture of these oarsmen. Some in our day would use this example to try to show that this ship moves under the power of the oarsmen. The reality is however that these oarsmen stroke the water with their blades because of the power of the CAPTAIN of the ship. Was it not that HE was their MASTER they would never make it to any port. HE has appointed ONE (HIS SPIRIT) to orchestrate their every movement that their oars may move in unison according to the purpose of HIM who has charted the course and HE will bring this ship safely into the harbor. It is the CAPTAIN, returning with the spoils of battle that shall receive all of the glory as the berth where the ship is to be docked is surrounded by multitudes who HE has already brought safely to this port and they sing HIS praises night and day for HE is worthy to be praised. *"Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."* (Rev 19:6)