

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

AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH

Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

Hebrews 9:12

The leaders of the Jews relished the notion of a MESSIAH who would come and establish the throne of HIS kingdom in the earth. They spoke of HIM often and longed for HIS appearing daily. Yet when HE came and walked in their very midst, (see Luke 17:20-21) they ultimately despised HIM and conspired to destroy HIM. *"And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him;"* (Luke 22:2) At first they marveled at HIS words and were amazed at HIS miracles. *"And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all."* (Luke 4:14-15)

Yet the day came when they began to realize that what HE was teaching and doing was laying the axe to the root of their long cherished traditions and seats of power. Not only that, but HIS doctrine was such that it gave no man a place that he might glory in his own obedience to the external code of the Mosaic Law. If what HE was saying was true then there would no longer be a religious hierarchy among men and their place of importance as leaders would be greatly reduced or completely eliminated.

Religion of one sort or another fills a very convenient need among natural men. It gives men the opportunity to compare themselves among themselves and by the setting apart of a "clergical (or priestly) class" of men, gives them an air of respectability and acceptance among the institutions of the world which highly prize strong leaders. If a man is a tither or a Sabbath keeper, or is skilled at oratory or public prayers, or wears certain garments or coverings, etc, then religion affords him an occasion to put that on display before other men. Such conduct might go completely unnoticed by others were it not for the ability to make a show of these things openly. This is what the LORD warned against when HE said, *"But all their works they do for to be seen of men:"*(Mat 23:5) *"Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them."* (Mat 6:1)

All men (according to their Adamic nature) love these convenient forms to some extent and all organized religion promotes such forms in one fashion or another, whether the excuse for their promotion, is tradition or a desire to encourage order and unity and/or the belief that adherence to truth can be perpetuated by these various forms, however subtle they might be.

SPIRITUAL worship is simply that, it is unadorned in any way, and is contrary to the desire of the flesh. This startling truth is set forth quite clearly by the LORD when HE spoke to the woman at the well; *"But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."* (John 4:23-24) The affiliations of the flesh along with its motions have no weight in the kingdom of GOD.

This is not to say that where there are "forms" and "traditions" that men cannot worship GOD, but it is to say that these "forms" cannot facilitate or "enhance" the worship of HIM who must be

worshipped in SPIRIT and TRUTH and their presence is superfluous to that end. The fact is that the religious flesh of men will often substitute and/or mistake these forms for true worship or rely upon them as if they were true worship. Such was the error of the Pharisees. *“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.” (Mat 23:27)*

The central message of the Gospel is clearly the redemptive work of JESUS CHRIST for sinners. *“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.” (1Tim 1:15)* *“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)*

It is the finished work of CHRIST in securing and obtaining the eternal redemption of those for whom HE came that completely renders as useless any religious work that might be offered by men as a means of being counted righteous before the face of GOD. One hundred percent of the standing of GOD's elect before HIM as those who are without sin, justified, and glorified is owing to the imputation of HIS righteousness to them. The manifestation and culmination of that imputation is seen in the finished work of CHRIST on Calvary's cross.

It is impossible to properly declare the scriptural doctrine of the atoning and redemptive work of CHRIST if one does not magnify the totality of that work as the redemption of those for whom HE came into the world to save. It is a perversion of the gospel to speak of that which CHRIST performed as being any sort of general offering for sin or a payment for sin which is only effective pending some response by men.

The whole fiber of modern “Christendom” (as some would describe it) is built upon the notion that CHRIST has merely made salvation possible by HIS death (for every individual in the world,) with the final outcome of whether or not it is effective depending on whether or not men believe it. The salvation of GOD's people, according to this notion, is therefore dependent on the free will of men. This becomes the actual basis of their salvation, rendering the work of CHRIST as a mere part of the whole. Such a doctrine was conceived in the pit of hell and designed to minimize the glory of GOD and maximize the glory of men.

Thus it is a very “inconvenient” doctrine which simply declares what the book of Hebrews clearly states. JESUS CHRIST “ob”tained eternal redemption when HE gave HIMSELF as an offering for sin. This doctrine strikes at the very root of man's religious pride taking away any other grounds upon which he could ever boast of being made righteous before GOD. Just as the Jews arose against the teachings of CHRIST when HE struck at their seats of power so too, does the natural religious man recoil at the message of the particular redemption and definite atonement of CHRIST as the SIN SUBSTITUTE for HIS elect children, hidden in HIM from before the foundation of the world.

Yet that which is despised by the religious work mongers is the greatest place of rejoicing for lost and ruined sinners who have no confidence in their ability to receive, believe, or obey anything which they are commanded, requested, or persuaded to by those who believe the gospel is a mere formula with GOD and man sharing equal parts.

The work of CHRIST alone is quite sufficient for those who, (having been awakened from the deadness of their sin and given faith, to) know HIM to be their RIGHTEOUSNESS. HIS work on Calvary has secured their redemption and they desire nothing else. As Paul testified, *“And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.” (1Cor 2:1-2)* A true gospel preacher can have no other message than this.

Complete atonement thou hast made, And to the utmost farthing paid

Whate'er thy people owed; How then can wrath on me take place,

If sheltered in thy righteousness, And sprinkled with thy blood?

[If thou hast my discharge procured, And freely in my room endured

The whole of wrath divine, Payment God cannot twice demand,

First at my bleeding Surety's hand, And then again at mine.] #227 Gadsby's by Toplady mam