

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

A POWERLESS MAN

How hast thou helped him that is without power? how savest thou the arm that hath no strength?

Job 26:2

Job's "miserable comforters" (see Job 16:2) were not totally ignorant of the absolute sovereignty of an almighty GOD nor were they totally wrong about the sinfulness of Job, his shortcomings, or the general sinful nature of all men. The grave error that they entertained which is common among those that believe man's will is free, is that they considered that a man could somehow influence the favor of GOD or that GOD's favor is bestowed on the basis of a man's ability to act in accordance with certain standards..

The mantra of "free-willism" is a "comforting message" for those unacquainted with the depths of their own depravity and ignorant of their inability to approach unto GOD or discover HIS whereabouts. It is especially appealing to those who are religiously inclined and convinced that they can render obedience to GOD whenever they feel like it and are satisfied with various acts of devotion and service. Such men soon weary of those who continually declare that there is none that seeketh after GOD and that all men without exception are lower than the worms which devour a rotting corpse and unable to perform even the slightest degree of righteousness which would be pleasing in the sight of a HOLY GOD.. They generally label such preachers as being "negative" and uncaring.

They will often accuse such preachers of accusing GOD of unrighteousness or of attributing a man's lusts and wickedness to GOD. That man who has been made aware of his depraved nature received from his parents knows that he was conceived in sin and has come forth from the womb speaking lies. He cannot lay the blame for his sinful and powerless condition at the feet of any but himself and can but lament the condition he finds himself in. Those who preach the total depravity of men are simply telling the truth without regard to result and in no wise make an excuse for the wickedness of men.

When the SPIRIT of GOD is pleased to convince a man of sin, righteousness, and judgment that man can find no help in the platitudes of men which are an encouragement for him to do something about his situation. The more that the SPIRIT is pleased to teach a man about his own corruption the less help he can find in any of the remedies which the physicians of no value set forth as a sure cure.

When a man is convinced of his own powerlessness to conform to that which is commanded by GOD or to find a way wherein he might approach unto the presence of GOD, he cannot be comforted by any deliverance which depends upon his own actions in any form. Such a notion leaves him in complete despair of any deliverance at all, even as Job confessed, eschewing the message of the workmongers who had come to "comfort" him..

There is no shortage of those preachers who declare that a man can be saved whenever he gets ready to be saved by an action of his own. They say all that a man must do is

believe. They view the action of belief as though it is something men can perform and spend no little bit of effort in trying to cajole and persuade men to do just that, thinking that men can believe as a function of the same free will that they are convinced a man can use to make himself pleasing in GOD's sight.

Now we are quite convinced that all who believe shall be saved,(see Acts 2:21, John 3:16); but we are also convinced that apart from the grace of GOD bestowing the gift of faith to a man, none shall ever do so. Not only that but we see the scriptures to teach that faith is the result of a man's favor with GOD rather than the cause of it.

So the man who knows himself to be a helpless sinner cannot ultimately be comforted by the same message which might bring comfort to the man who thinks he has the ability to perform acts of righteousness which cause his acceptance and favor with GOD.

In order for a man (who is convinced of his own wickedness and powerlessness to escape its clutches) to be comforted and encouraged he needs to hear about:

A SAVIOR who is mighty to save. *"Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save."* (Isa 63:1)

A SAVIOR who has accomplished the salvation of HIS people. *"Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD's hand double for all her sins."* (Isa 40:1-2)

A SAVIOR who has triumphed over all the enemies of the sons of GOD and taken away their sin. *"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it."* (Col 2:14-15) When Paul was confronted in his smitten conscience by the sin which did still so easily beset him, bringing him to the very brink of despair, it was here in his SAVIOR's triumph, that he, alone, found the strength to lift up his head, *"For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."* (Rom 7:22-25)

A SAVIOR who shall return to gather HIS purchased possession. *"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."* (John 14:3) *"Ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."* (Eph 1:13-14)

A SAVIOR whose deliverance of HIS people is without end. *"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, by (grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."* (Eph 2:4-10) In all of these things does the child of grace find great comfort and walks in the light of a fire which has not been kindled by his own hands but is that which is provided by HIM who is the LIGHT of those who sat in darkness. Blessed be HIS NAME forever! mam