

# 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*

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## THE HONOR OF THE SONS OF GOD

*Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.* *Isaiah 43:4*

Every culture has a certain “code of honor” which they will approve of in those that walk according to it and condemn those who do not. The Vikings had a code of honor wherein it was shameful for a man to show weakness of any kind. To die in battle was to them a great honor. We see this same mindset among those who embrace radical Islam. In the colonial period of this great nation and especially in the South prior to the Civil war, if a man was embarrassed by another or not esteemed as highly as one thought he ought to be, then a duel to the death could follow in order to satisfy the one whose “honor” was impugned. This same thought process was carried out if someone spoke evil of or to a woman whose “honor” or “purity” was brought into question.

This sort of “code of honor” served in some measure at least as a hedge against sexual impurity as the virginity of a woman was highly prized as she entered into courtship and ultimately marriage. Such a “code of honor” is sadly lacking in the present day when such an idea is roundly rejected by our present culture. The “code of honor” of our day, by and large, seems to be to indulge whatever desire that a person has. What ever perversion one may be inclined to is acceptable as long as they are “true to themselves.” If one should raise an objection to such things in the NAME of the LORD, then they are considered “unwoke” and most certainly without the “honor” which is esteemed among the rank and file, who have no consideration of the absolute standards of a HOLY GOD.

This “code of honor” is demonstrated quite freely in the skyrocketing divorce rate which essentially destroys the sanctity of marriage. It has become “honorable” for men and women alike to disregard their “marriage vows” if such become a hindrance to their “right” to seek out their own happiness and the fulfillment of their selfish desires. It has become dishonorable to submit one’s own desires to that of their partner. “*Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.*” (Eph 5:21) is considered a hopeless relic of times past which no self-respecting person would think of adopting.

Someone has said there is no honor among thieves. Yet that is itself a “code of honor” which is quite in keeping with our “every man for himself “ society. The only time that we are supposed to submit our views of right and wrong to another is if someone desires to change their gender or to seek sexual gratification with those of the same gender. It is quite dishonorable to think such things are themselves to be defined as shameful activities. “*Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.*” (Php 3:19) “*And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient.* (i.e.; in keeping with the truth of GOD; not becoming)” (Rom 1:28)

What a testimony to the depravity of men it is to have to admit that such conduct has even become acceptable among the rank and file of those who profess to be church members and erstwhile followers of CHRIST. Divorce and fornication are as rampant among religious men and women as it is among those who have no regard to the scriptures or the glory of GOD. We can only conclude that such are merely “*spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.*” (Jude 1:12-13)

Most religionists today consider that the judgment of GOD will come upon men because of their wickedness. Yet as we look at what the scripture says, we see that the truth is that this rampant wickedness is itself the evidence of the judgment of GOD upon mankind. We are not waiting for judgment but rather are observing it. *"Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet."* (Rom 1:21-27)

Moral wickedness is the result of GOD's judgment and not its cause. As bad as moral wickedness may be, however, it pales in comparison with that wickedness of men wherein they seek to rob GOD of the glory which is due unto HIS great name. *"they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind."* (Rom 1:28) By nature men think that they have the ability to choose a path of moral uprightness and thereby earn the favor of GOD. They think that this morality is to be equated with that "righteousness" which is acceptable to GOD. Yet the very best of mans "righteousnesses" are but as "filthy rags" before the face of a HOLY GOD. The most moral of men is worthy of the same destruction that rightly awaits all men, both profligate and "ethical".

The only "honor" of men, which is acceptable in the sight of HIM who will not look upon sin, clear the guilty, nor acquit the wicked, is that which is bestowed upon them by HIS sovereign grace. Men cannot earn the favor of GOD by any means which they possess. The granting of this favor is the sovereign right of HIM who *"will show mercy to whom HE will show mercy"*. HE revealed this TRUTH to Nicodemus who came to HIM by night, *"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."* (John 3:3) *"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. But there are some of you that believe not. --- And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father."* (John 6:63-65)

There are few doctrines in the scripture which are surer to raise the ire of natural religious men than this one. Religious men pride themselves in contemplating their service to GOD by their acts of devotion and obedience, not to mention their moral uprightness in avoiding the many pitfalls of the immoral and profane. It is contrary to their sense of "honor" that such conduct cannot gain for them any standing or consideration before GOD. Surely, they reason that, their "faith" is that which can gain for them HIS favor as they make a free-will decision to follow CHRIST. Does not their salvation depend upon what they do in this regard?

The LORD clearly defines the order in which HE considers HIS children to be "honorable". Because *"thou wast precious in MY sight"* therefore *"thou hast been honorable"* and *"I have loved thee"*. The LORD declares that those whom HE loves are precious in HIS sight and it is upon this basis alone that they are deemed "honorable" to HIM. CHRIST came not to call the righteous but rather sinners to repentance. HE died not for the upright but for the ungodly. Abraham's nephew, Lot, is hardly a paragon of virtue and morality yet the scriptures describe him as "just" (i.e.; innocent, set apart). (see 2Pet 2:7) He was delivered from the destruction of Sodom not on the basis of his character but by the sovereign mercy of GOD who declared him to be honorable. We think of Rahab, the harlot, who was "honorable" in the LORD's sight. The scriptures literally overflow with examples of those who men would consider "dishonorable", whom the LORD nonetheless deemed "honorable". Some would say that to declare such will encourage men to sin. Such statements are borne out of ignorance of the corrupt nature of all men and the basis upon which any man might be considered "righteous" in HIS sight. *"Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the LORD, and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel."* (Isa 41:14) Are you a man of honor? mam