

The Christian.

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EDITORIAL.

FREE FROM RIGHTEOUSNESS.

For when ye were the servants of sin ye were free from righteousness. Rom. vi. 20.

Perhaps there is not a stranger anomaly in the Bible than the expression "free from righteousness." How can anyone be at liberty to do wrong and be free from right doing? An outlaw may engage in every crime within his reach, but he is not free but a fugitive from justice. We can scarcely meet a man who will affirm that he is free to injure others whenever he has the opportunity, but the apostle says, "Ye were free from righteousness."

The word of God often addresses men according to their own estimation of themselves, and reasons from what they assume as true to convince them of their errors by their own admission. When the Pharisees and Scribes murmured at Jesus for eating with sinners and giving so little attention to them, who in their own opinion were so righteous, He met them on their own ground. He told them that when one of them lost a sheep he would leave all the rest and hunt for it, and would rejoice more when he found it than over all the rest that went not astray. "So," said Jesus, "there is more joy among the angels over one of these lost sinners when he is found than over ninety and nine of you righteous persons who went not astray. By this means He showed them their error and deep depravity in blaming Him for seeking lost sinners, and desiring a Messiah like themselves, who cared so much less for lost souls than they did for lost sheep (Luke xv.).

In this place the apostle describes the state of his brethren before their conversion to Christ. They were in sin and the servants of sin. They could not serve two masters. If bound to serve sin they were free from righteousness. At their conversion they changed masters. They gave up sin and became servants of God. Both in those days and now men who are servants of sin declare openly that they are free from righteousness. Not that they are at liberty to wrong their fellowmen, but they are at liberty to wrong the Son of God though He has given Himself to save them. Ask an unconverted man the following questions and he will give about the following answers:

"Do you go to hear the gospel?"

"I go sometimes when convenient and sometimes I do not. I am free to go or not. I don't profess to be a Christian."

"Is it not right to go always when it is possible?"

"O yes; but I am free as I am not a Christian."

"Do you assist in paying the expenses of the Lord's cause?"

"O yes: I do something in that way, for my wife is a member of the church and the children like to go, and I pay on their account; but I am free myself and under no obligation, although the thing is right and proper enough."

"Are you in the habit of praying in the closet and in your family?"

"No."

"Is it not right to do so?"

"Yes, it is right; but I am not a Christian and hence free to omit it."

So with other Christian duties. The man who is not a Christian says and feels that he is free from their observance. He carries with him the constant impression that he is rejecting Christ—is not under His government—will not have Him to reign over him and is free from righteousness. How absolutely necessary, then, it is for all men who hear the gospel to believe in Christ and submit to Him, to cease to do evil and learn to do

well, to be freed from sin and become the servant of God. If the Son shall make you free ye shall be free indeed (John viii. 3).

Paul asks his brethren what were the fruits of their former service. How did they feel in remembering that the strength which they had received from God was spent against Him and in the service of that enemy who was forging chains to bind them in everlasting darkness? The wages would surely come. Christians should constantly remember that they have, by the Son of God, been made free from sin, free from its service as well as from its wages, and have become the servants of God and are to have the fruits of holiness here and in the end everlasting life. God's claims bind them and will come up for consideration in the day of judgment. The cause of Christ is loudly calling for aid and on them to give it. His gospel is to be preached among men and they are to see that it is done. His needy brethren are to be attended to and they are called to see that this is done. His people are to be the light of the world—the salt of the earth—and in order to be this they are to be holy and without blame before Him in love. Brethren, beware lest any of you take the opposite side and feel and act as if you were at liberty to do what is right when it is suitable but not bound to do it by the high authority and complete ownership of the Son of God.

Original Contributions.

MORE LIGHT.

I do not wish to encumber the pages of our valuable paper by a fruitless contest of words to no profit, but as I have introduced a subject, and called for some seasonable hints in the way of broadening its premises, and to throw more light thereon I feel it my duty to answer in brotherly kindness the contribution to the same in the May number of THE CHRISTIAN. I wish to state that my elucidations (hastily written) may not have been as clear as they should, and as there seems to be a misunderstanding, calls for my second letter on the subject. It is not my intention to enter into controversy with Bro. Harding, for the simple reason the time can be better occupied. But as he has led me in the way of reply, I wish to say first that many of the references made and questions asked in my former letter was not for the purpose of predicating my own personal views and must not be held as such. Bro. H.'s exposition is, to my mind, more difficult to comprehend than the parable in question. When certain premises are taken up for treatment, either orally or by pen, the deductions therefrom should have some direct bearing upon the subject at issue. But I fail to see it in Bro. H.'s remarks. In beginning his letter he was about to treat of the Kingdom, but unfortunately he stops to inquire if I know that Wilson is wrong in the translation of Matt. xiii. 24 (Empt. Diaglotte). (Well, I feel somewhat delicate in criticising a man who claims to know more than myself). And he further adds that Wilson was a materialist and that he did not believe in future punishment. All this has nothing to do with the subject at issue. These were Wilson's opinions, and they were his property; they will not alter the Greek text a particle. If it were a question of rhetoric, rather than logical reasoning, our mental visions might give birth to, and our tongues express many things that might look plausible. But the question at issue demands thought and reason.

Bro. H. says there is a misunderstanding of the term Kingdom of Heaven. I agree with him—they are sometimes misunderstood; and in this we find the cause that led Bro. H. into a mistake. And for a solution of them he refers us to Daniel ii., which, to my mind, confutes the very proposition

he is endeavoring to establish, when he came to the conclusion the Kingdom of Heaven is the man. If this be so, Daniel made a mistake, for he spoke of a kingdom to be set up not a man. I look at the stone of Daniel and the man of the parable as one. The stone of Daniel is the corner stone of Paul. The foundation of Paul (1 Cor. iii. 11), upon which rests the church. The sower of the parable sows the seed; we see in this a foundation work which produces fruit, forms the church through the instrumentality of the sower.

Again, I look at the stone of Daniel as the king to reign over and stand at the head of his church. In like manner the man of the parable is master of his vineyard. Now if the stone of Daniel and the man of the parable represent Christ in figure, how can Bro. H. harmonize the fact that the man is the Kingdom, when he plainly affirms that the church is the Kingdom? But, says our brother, Christ and the church are one. I admit this is true; but how do we understand them to be one? On what conditions are they one? The Apostle Paul tells us that the Church is a building fitly framed together. Christ is the head. Looking at this allegorical structure with the mind's eye, it forms a living body, *spiritually*. But we want a definite idea of this union. This union is effected by conformity to law (spiritual law). For instance: two persons enter into matrimonial contract. They comply with the marriage law, and are said to be one flesh. How are they one flesh? Materially? No. But by reason of the contract they have legitimately entered into. Even so the union existing between Christ and the church is by reason or virtue of conformity to spiritual law or the claims of the gospel on the part of those who form the church. What, then, shall the conclusion be? Shall I say Christ is the church and the church is Christ? This would be tautology. But we conclude it takes both to comprise the church and we cannot separate them and have a church. Hence it took the man of the parable, a field, and some seed to complete the parable Christ holds up as a figure of the Kingdom of Heaven, or church if you please. Bro. H. says we misunderstand the term Kingdom of Heaven, and refers us to a prophetic symbol by Daniel, and then strikes out on a mission and leaves us to paddle our own canoe. We are aware, Bro. H., it is the duty of the church to spread the gospel, but what has that to do with the definition of the term Kingdom of Heaven? What do they mean? he interrogates, and still leaves us in the dark. Well, what do they mean? We will hear Bro. A. Campbell on the definition of the term *Basileion ouranon*—reign, or Kingdom of Heaven. Also hear Dr. Campbell: The reign of heaven is at hand (Living Oracles, App. p. 82). Now let us hear Bro. A. Campbell on the parable in question: The Kingdom of Heaven may be compared to a field in which the proprietor has sown good grain. He does not say the Kingdom of Heaven is compared to a man in which the proprietor sowed good grain. Hear him again. "Jesus answered and said unto them, He who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world—people. The good seed are the sons of the Kingdom and the darnel are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world or conclusion of this state, and the reapers are the angels." Now, Bro. H., notice the language has direct reference to the conclusion of this state or Reign of Heaven, spoken of in the parable: And the Kingdom of the interpretation is the Kingdom of God to come, or at least after the resurrection of the just, and the unjust, the wheat and the tares: Identical with Matt. xxv. 31-34, Concerning the sheep and the goats, also with the first verse of the same chapter concerning the ten virgins—Note the adverb of time, then—qualifying the verb *shall*. When? At the end of this state or Reign of Heaven. Again, in the parable