

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 BOOK BURNING

And many that believed came, and confessed, and showed their deeds. Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.

Acts 19:18-20

We have all read about the plans of a "church" in Gainesville to burn a copy of the Koran. While this is a clownish act designed to draw attention to its participants, there is indeed a scriptural example of a book burning that took place in Ephesus. Yet this burning of books was not a publicity stunt or an attempt to garner attention but rather was an act of repentance on the part of those who were former participants in witchcraft and occultic practices and were now converted to become the followers of CHRIST. They burned their own books without regard to the cost because they despised that which they once loved and practiced and wanted nothing else to do with it. (see II Cor.7:10,11)

If these modern day pyromaniacs were former Muslims who had been brought out of darkness and into the light of CHRIST, and desired to rid themselves of all vestiges of that which once held them captive, then such an action would have some foundation in the scriptural example. Yet it is but a foolish gesture of ignorance (in my humble opinion) to burn a book simply because one does not agree with its contents or to entertain the notion that one can rid themselves of false doctrine by physically destroying written documents.

There is an increasing public opinion (it seems to me) that Islam is somehow a danger to the gospel and Christianity. This follows the same train of thought that arises from time to time that immorality, liberal politics, abortion, or gay marriage threaten to destroy the same. The gospel can in no wise be overturned by any of these things. All of these problems are but an illustration of the natural depravity of men and pose no spiritual threat to the children of GOD. It is likely that physical persecution of the followers of CHRIST could increase with a rise in the prominence of Islam. If this occurs it can but strengthen the true followers of CHRIST and serve to purge the false professors from their midst even as was demonstrated in the early days of the church. The LORD will thoroughly purge HIS floor. (see Mat.3:12).

Those who are the enemies of the cross of CHRIST are much more subtle in nature than the obvious errors of those who embrace Islam or any number of other false religions in the earth. The greatest dangers that face the children of GOD are those errors which most closely resemble the truth of the gospel and embrace portions of the truth while actually denying the foundation of it. Paul mentions them when he says. *"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of*

godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (2Ti 3:1-7)

The greatest enemy of the sons of GOD is right in our own bosom. This sinful flesh which we possess is a constant warrior against the truth of GOD in the inward parts. It seldom relents in its continual warfare against the SPIRIT. *“For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.” (Gal 5:17) “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” (Jer 17:9)*

The external errors which most closely resemble the true gospel while denying the very foundation of truth, are widely preached in our day and pose a much greater threat to the truth of the gospel, than all of the forces of Islam combined. They include:

Teaching that men can be saved by an act of their own free will. The modern era of “evangelism” is mostly built around this error. *“No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.” (John 6:44) “And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.” (John 5:40) “There is none that seeketh after God.” (Rom 3:11)*

Teaching that CHRIST died for all men and yet actually saved none. The vast majority of those professing to be believers in our day embrace this error. They say that CHRIST has done all that HE could do to save men and now it is all up to them to make a decision and thus make the work of CHRIST effectual for them. *“Thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.” (Mat 1:21) “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.” (Heb 9:12)*

Teaching that men are “justified” by an act of faith rather than by the OBJECT of faith. This is quite a subtle error, yet deadly, since it not only denies the source of true faith but misses the whole point of the basis of Justification. *“But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.” (1Cor 1:30-31) “Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification.” (Rom 4:25)*

Keeping the free born sons of GOD under the lash of the law. This is an outright denial of the principle of free grace, trying to make service to GOD a matter of duty rather than delight. This takes on many forms; from demanding tithes to pastors lording an imagined “authority” over the sons of GOD. *“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” (Rom 8:1-2)*

Teaching GOD’s people that they can merit or forfeit the blessings of GOD by their own actions. This is nothing but legalism. The promises of GOD are yea and amen and HIS blessings are bestowed upon HIS people according to HIS sovereign purpose. HIS people are not blessed because they serve HIM and walk in obedience to HIS commands but rather HIS blessing is manifested in causing their obedience and their blessing is to be enabled to worship HIM in SPIRIT and TRUTH. *“For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” (Phil 2:13) “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.” (Eph 1:3) “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” (Eph 2:10)*

Teaching anything other than CHRIST and HIM crucified. *“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” (Gal 6:14)*

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