

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

SOME NEW THING

For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing.

Acts 17:21

This is an apt description of the religion of the flesh which places great emphasis on the opinions of men, doctrinal novelty, and the discovering of new “methods” of attaining various heights and stages of “spirituality”. There is no shortage of “how to” books which have been written, in the last one hundred years, to “instruct” and “coerce” those, who profess faith in CHRIST, in this or that area of obedience and endeavor.

New “discoveries” are made every day as clever ideas for “spiritual” growth and getting GOD in a bind by the exercise of faith, are concocted and set forth by eloquent and learned “teachers” whose own “growth” is primarily in their bank accounts as the present day “Athenians” line up to hear some new thing and buy their newest offering of entertaining advice, anecdotes and clichéd platitudes; masquerading as scriptural truth..

We live in an age of “personality” driven “ministry” among those who, (at least ostensibly) are recognized as the followers of CHRIST. This is not a new problem but has grown exponentially in the present day. (see I Cor.1:12; 3:4) Great numbers of those who would call themselves believers and followers of CHRIST, in reality follow the “ministries” of many physicians of no value because they are attracted to their personalities, new ideas and entertaining methodology. Their religious conscience is salved by hearing regular “pontifications” by these great philosophers and counselors whose “authority” is primarily in their persona and celebrity.

Modern Athenians, under the spell of some of these hucksters of hubris, fork over loads of cash to build massive “worship centers” and “cathedrals of praise”, and then proceed to fill them with all sorts of entertainments of the flesh in order to attract more of their own countrymen to hear and tell these “new things”.

Modern worship (so called) meetings are completely unrecognizable compared to those meetings of the saints which are described in the scriptural record. The leadership of the SPIRIT has been replaced by “trained worship leaders” and rigid formats. The “ministry of the brethren” one to another has been supplanted by those who promote “pastoral authority” and “one man ministries” to the exclusion of every joint supplying that which the body is in need of.

True worship is singularly centered in a consideration of the finished work of the REDEEMER of sinners and the triumphs which HE has accomplished as the KING of kings and LORD of lords. The awakened sons of GOD are not seeking “some new thing” but rather are interested in the unchanging Gospel of an Immutable SAVIOR, and the demonstration of love one to the other according to the work of HIM who causes such to abound. (see Phil.2:1-5)

Paul declared to these Athenians, that judgment was sure and that CHRIST JESUS the risen LORD is the ONE seated upon that throne. (see Acts 17:31) This message, though quite simple is yet amazingly profound and forms the basis of all that those who are born again seek after. A

continual consideration of the “preaching of the cross” is considered by modern Athenians as too elementary and lacks the pizzazz of learning how to triumph over their problems, get what they want from god, and convert the masses into those who emulate their own quest.

Yet the transcendent glory of CHRIST can only be set forth in the message of redemption which declares HIS utter and absolute triumph over all of HIS enemies and HIS accomplishment of the redemption of that Bride which HE has loved with an everlasting love. This redemptive work is only demonstrated as the members of HIS body love one another, esteeming the other better than themselves. This is not an endeavor of the flesh, though it is most surely demonstrated in the lives of those who are called according to HIS grace. *“In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.” (1John 3:10-11) “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.” (1John 3:14)*

There are many who say that they delight in the preaching of the gospel, and even that they desire to see CHRIST glorified, who nonetheless do not demonstrate a love and concern for those who they would call their brethren. It is the seeking of a “new thing” for men to profess that they love the “truth” when they do not manifest an abiding love for those who are themselves the disciples of CHRIST. This is not in keeping with that simple and ancient teaching which came directly from the lips of our LORD, *“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” (John 13:34-35)*

Preaching and teaching the “truth” (even though it be sound doctrine) is but a *“sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal” (see 1 Cor.13:1-2)* if it is not coupled with a fervent love for those who are the called according to HIS purpose. *“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.” (1Pet 1:18-23)*

The religious flesh of men will take delight in the outward structure of doctrine and exalt it above the very purpose for which that doctrine is to be preached. To delight in the letter of true doctrine (however pure and sound) and to glory in the same without a love for CHRIST which manifests itself in a love for the brethren is to emulate the Athenians who sought *“some new thing”*

The NAME of CHRIST is magnified not simply in the verbal “preaching” of HIS word but in the demonstration of the power of HIS gospel applied by HIS SPIRIT as the children of GOD love one another. *“For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” (Gal 5:13-14)* It is for this very reason that Paul declares that he preached the gospel. *“So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.” (1Thes 2:8)*

Some “preachers” and their hearers take great delight in the sound of their voice in declaring the unsearchable riches of CHRIST. Paul was not such a preacher nor did he desire “hearers” of that sort. Rather he declared, *“And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.” (1Cor 2:3-5). “Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men.” (2Cor 3:2)* This is no new thing. mam