

GRACE GAZETTE

Volume XVI

Issue 50

Published occasionally for Zion's mourners

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

THE SACRIFICE OF PRAISE

By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. Hebrews 13:15

Paul exhorts these Hebrews, who confess faith in CHRIST, (as he does in practically all of his epistles) not to be “*carried about with divers and strange doctrines.*” (Heb 13:9) Thus we have evidence that from the very beginning of the New Testament church that there were various and sundry errors and falsehoods that were declared and promoted in its midst which were either contrary or an addition to the one true message which he was faithful to declare to the exclusion of all others. He sums this up in the verse which is just prior to this exhortation when he says, “*Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.*” (Heb 13:8)

There can be no sound doctrine, set forth by men, which is a new revelation or a truth which is not already summed up and revealed in HIM, “*Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.*” (Philip 2:6-9)

He made this quite clear in the opening statement of this Epistle, when he declared, “*God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.*” (Heb 1:1-3)

A “*strange doctrine*” is any teaching, tradition, or commandment which does not recognize the complete sufficiency and efficiency of that which CHRIST came into the world to perform. Strange doctrine is that which denies that CHRIST has procured and completely obtained eternal redemption for that people for which HE undertook this work of redemption. One would have to consider that, based upon that definition, there is much strange doctrine which is proclaimed in the earth today, under the guise of “*gospel preaching*”. It is one level of a weak understanding to entertain the notion that “*CHRIST died for all men*” but it is yet an egregious error to deny the sufficiency (of that which CHRIST did), to expiate sin completely. To propound such a message is to preach another gospel which is a damnable lie.

I have often said that it can be more readily proven from the scriptures that CHRIST died for all men and that subsequently, all men are saved, than it can be shown that HE died for all men and yet some of them shall yet perish. The latter is a “*strange doctrine*” for sure. “*The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*” (1John 1:7) “*When he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.*” (Heb 1:3) “*By his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.*” (Heb 9:12)

It seems quite clear in the scriptures that some men shall indeed perish, so we are quite sure that CHRIST has **not** taken away their sin by HIS blood, else what is the basis upon which they would be condemned since “*the wages of sin is death.*” Since CHRIST has made a purchase with HIS blood, it is readily apparent that HE shall take possession of that which HE bought.

Those “*divers doctrines*” are all sorts of frills and adornments which men, who do not believe in the efficiency of CHRIST’s death, would set forth as necessities or desirable additions to the lives of GOD’s children to enhance their standing with HIM. One of the chief errors of the Jews was in

seeking to perpetuate the rite of circumcision, which Paul clearly negated by saying, "*For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.*" (Gal 5:6) "*But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.*" (Rom 2:29)

Another of these "*divers doctrines*", is the promotion of days, times, and seasons and commanding men to abstain from various foods or substances. Paul addresses this by using the example of those Judaizers "*who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage.*" (Gal 2:4) While he has specific regard to the matter of circumcision, it was the same spirit of legalism that seeks to bind the freeborn sons of GOD to various customs which are at the heart of fleshly religion. Paul does not condemn the keeping of any day, or the abstaining from various foods, yet he plainly points out the total insignificance of such. "*One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.*" (Rom 14:5-6)

Yet he cautions all believers to consider their brethren, (in such matters), above their own desires. "*But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse. But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak.*" (1Cor 8:8-9) "*Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.*" (1Cor 8:13) "*In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.*" (Philip 2:3-4)

Even yet another "*divers doctrine*" is the notion that the sons of GOD can be indifferent to, or even enjoy the wickedness of their flesh. Paul addressed this aberration when he said, "*What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?*" (Rom 6:1-2) The greatest heartache for any of those who born again, is the corruption of their flesh with which they are engaged in battle daily. This is what Paul describes in Romans, chapter 7, and he concludes his lament with great HOPE. "*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. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.*" (Rom 7:22-25)

We have not the wherewithal to delineate and define all of the "*divers and strange doctrines*" which are constantly cast up before the sons of GOD as stumbling blocks. But we can exhort those who confess to be the followers of CHRIST to turn neither to the left or to the right, but to be constantly and solely; "*Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*" (Heb 12:2) It is by HIM and unto HIM that we must continually offer "*the sacrifice of praise.*"

That man who is engaged in this "*sacrifice of praise*", "*by HIM*" cannot be led astray. For when the SPIRIT is come, HE will not speak of HIMSELF but will glorify CHRIST alone. Thus the true worship of CHRIST is contrary to all other doctrines and allows no place for glorying in any thing but CHRIST alone. "*Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.*" (Col 3:11)

That man who is engaged in this "*sacrifice of praise*", "*continually*"; will not have time to entertain "*divers and strange doctrines*", for his mind and heart will be occupied in praising HIM who alone has wrought salvation in the earth for that people which HE loves.

The work of the SPIRIT in the sons of GOD keeps them from falling as HE marks out their path and sustains them in the faith. The "*fruit of their lips*" is the testimony of praise unto HIM whom they know as the SHEPHERD of the sheep. Another shepherd they will not follow for they hear HIS voice and they follow HIM. A man cannot serve two masters. "*Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion: and unto thee shall the vow be performed.*" (Psa 65:1) "*Thy vows are upon me, O God: I will render praises unto thee.*" (Psa 56:12)

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