

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

DISREGARD

And the harp, and the viol, the tabret, and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts: but they regard not the work of the LORD, neither consider the operation of his hands.

Isaiah 5:12

The first commandment the LORD gave to Moses on Sinai was, "*Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*" (Exo 20:3) HE was not telling Moses, it is fine for you to worship whoever or whatever you will, but just be sure to put me first. HE was not establishing a pecking order and merely giving HIMSELF top billing. Rather HE was declaring to Moses that HE alone was GOD ("*I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.*" (Exo 20:2)) and the DELIVERER of Israel and that it is an affront to the glory of GOD to even entertain any object of worship or devotion apart from HIM. Literally HE meant, "thou shalt have no other gods before my face or in my presence."

Isaiah recognizes that these natural Jews to which he spoke did indeed observe the times and seasons appointed by the LORD. They were careful to play skillfully upon their instruments of music and worship at their feasts and holy days, yet he said they had no regard for the work of the LORD. He meant that they were satisfied with the external practices of their religion but they had no consideration to the fact that apart from the work of GOD in their midst, these things were but a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. They were pleased with their activity, order of service, and empty doctrines and were not seeking the presence of GOD in their heart and soul.

The natural man always values the husks of religion. These husks are the trappings of fine meeting houses, respectable meetings, great crowds, skillful preachers, singers, and musicians. They are most encouraged when someone is stirring them up to excitement through great oratory or displays of entertainment which hold their rapt attention. Those preachers which can incite men to perform great feats of "devotion" (such as soul winning, bible reading, tithing, etc.) are those who are held in great esteem and command large salaries for their services.

Just as these Jews had no regard to the "*work of the LORD*" so it is in great measure among most of the religious assemblies calling themselves Christian churches today. They have little concern for the work of the LORD since they generally believe they are the ones who perform it for HIM or at least in a partnership agreement of sorts. They are convinced that their god has no hands but theirs and no feet except their own. He is just like the gods of the heathen which David describes in Psalm 115:3-8

The performance of men (and women) is that which is both encouraged and highly valued in their service of god as if the true and living GOD had need of men in some fashion. This same line of thought is carried over in the predominant message which we hear preached all around us that would lead men to believe that their salvation is some kind of cooperative effort between them and the LORD. Most especially demonstrated by the thought that men will not be saved if they don't exert their own powers to persuade the lost to take advantage of the gospel which they believe is a cheap offer made to all men, much like the blue light special at Kmart.

It is not enough that men mention the work of CHRIST in salvation, rather, it is an affront to the glory of GOD when men have regard to any other work than that which CHRIST has performed. To do so is

to disregard the work of CHRIST as being the sum total of that which is needful for the deliverance of the children of GOD. To add anything to this salvation, which men must perform, is to disregard the completeness of CHRIST's redemption and thereby to disregard HIS glory.

It is not enough for men to study the Bible and thump upon it claiming to believe every word in it. The Pharisees believed the scriptures and were avid students of them yet the LORD rebuked them and told them they were missing the whole meaning and purpose of the scriptures. *"Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me."* (John 5:39) If a man can quote the whole Bible from memory, yet does not see CHRIST on every page, that man has missed the truth and disregarded the work of the LORD.

It is not enough to preach that men "can" be saved, if one does not preach that those for whom CHRIST shed HIS precious blood, "must" be saved. *"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."* (John 6:37) *"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."* (Acts 4:12) *"And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."* (Acts 13:48) To deny that CHRIST obtained eternal redemption for HIS elect is to disregard the work of the LORD.

It is not enough to say that the blood of CHRIST is of such value as to be sufficient to save all men when one does not declare that HE shed HIS blood solely and specifically for those whose names were written upon HIS breast when HE entered the Holy of Holies with HIS own blood as a direct and definite atonement for their sins. To consider that some of those for whom the blood of CHRIST was shed shall perish is to disregard the work of the LORD. *"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."* (John 10:27-28)

It is not enough to declare the wideness of GOD's mercy if one does not declare that HE reserves the sovereign right to show mercy to whom HE wills and to harden whom HE wills. *"For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy."* (Rom 9:15-16) It is to disregard the work of the LORD to intimate that mercy is somehow owed to men or bestowed upon all indiscriminately by HIM whose mercy endureth forever.

It is not enough to preach that "whosoever will" may come, if one does not declare that HE alone can give a man the gift of faith and make him *"willing in the day of thy power"* (Psa 110:3) *"There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God."* (Rom 3:11) To encourage men to "have faith" without telling them who is the AUTHOR and FINISHER of faith is to disregard the work of the LORD.

It is not enough to tell men that they must be born again if one does not make it plain that this new birth is completely and totally the operation of the SPIRIT of GOD upon men without any active participation on their part. *"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."* (John 3:8) *"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."* (John 1:12-13) To tell men that they can be born again by an act of their free will is to disregard the work of the LORD who *"quickeneth whom he will."* (John 5:21) *"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing."* (John 6:63)

May the LORD our GOD give us a proper regard for the *"work of the LORD"*. *"Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands: Sing forth the honor of his name: make his praise glorious. Say unto God, How terrible art thou in thy works! through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee. All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee; they shall sing to thy name. Selah. Come and see the works of God: he is terrible in his doing toward the children of men."* (Psa 66:1-5)
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