

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

HEAVENLY KNITTING

That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ.

Colossians 2:2

Rugged individualism is the most prevailing characteristic that would have been found among those who founded this nation. The concept of individual accountability and self reliance was the very basis upon which our constitution was believed to rest. Ideally, no one would expect the government to curtail their individual freedoms and no one would desire that the government should be expected to provide for their needs. This attitude is epitomized on the Gadsden flag which has a picture of a coiled rattlesnake and the words "don't tread on me".

There is much benefit to be had in this carnal world, by having such an attitude since this fits well with fleshly nature of men. Sadly, though, men, because of that same innate sinful nature, quickly developed the understanding that by the manipulation of government that they could feed their own individualistic desire for gain, by framing laws which gave them unfair advantages in one way or another. The very self centered attitude that framed the constitution ultimately led to its weakening until the present day where most depend on the government and gladly relinquish individual freedoms for the promise of security of one type or another. At the root of it all is a self-centered and self serving outlook whether one is a Libertarian or a Socialist.

The Kingdom of GOD which is manifested in the establishment of the church of CHRIST in the earth, is built upon the exact opposite principle. The LORD established this principle when HE declared, "*But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.*" (Mat 23:11-12) The LORD demonstrated this very principle when HE gave HIMSELF as an offering for the sin of those whom HE loved with an everlasting love.

When HE prayed for them in Garden, HE asked the FATHER to give them the same sort of unity, which exists between the FATHER and the SON, four times. "*That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.*" (John 17:21)(see John 17:11,22,23)

It is commonly conceived, by the natural religious bent of men, that the manner in which the world might bear witness to the manifestation of CHRIST's people in the earth, is by the establishment of distinctive doctrinal creeds and faithful adherence thereto. Thus men (even many who have claimed to be HIS followers) have set about to wrangle and war with one another over various distinctive points of doctrine which they each are convinced will prove them to be the true followers of CHRIST.

Yet of all the things which the LORD could have said, to define the manner in which HE would bear witness to the world of those who are HIS disciples; HE said this; "*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)

While anyone can learn doctrines and follow after patterns of various practices and ordinances, it is only by the operation of the SPIRIT of GOD in men that they can truly love one another as brethren, in the fashion which HE is pleased to describe in HIS word.

The very distinctive which is set forth in the establishment of the New Covenant is the fact that the LORD would perform a work in those who are the people of HIS choice. *“But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” (Jer 31:33-34)* This “new covenant” is not manifested by men teaching one another about it but rather by the power of the HOLY GHOST making them new creatures, implanting HIS truth in their inward parts, and causing them to demonstrate this new birth by love for HIM and one another.

GOD is the epitome of love and all true love must be spiritually given. This true love is not that which is demonstrated in the carnal desires and natural relations of mankind. The love of a man for his family is noble, even as is the love of men for their fellowman in general. Yet this love of which the LORD spoke in John 13:34-35 is a supernatural love which cannot be attributed to any natural inclination, yet one which is stronger than any which might arise from natural bent.

This is that love which is contrasted to the natural when the LORD said, *“If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.” (Luke 14:26)* It is that which HE spoke of when HE defined HIS own family. *“For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.” (Mat 12:50)*

The relationship which the LORD would work in HIS people, (i.e.; those whom HE is not ashamed to call HIS brethren), is after the same pattern. Thus the apostle Paul speaks of the saints as being *“knit together in love.”* This Greek word (which is here, as well as v.19, translated as knit together) is *“sumbibazo”* and means “to cause to coalesce” or in essence to become as one. The same word is used in Ephesian 4:16 where it is translated as *“compact”*. *“From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.” (Eph 4:16)*

The powers of darkness working in concert with the sinful flesh of men would do everything in their power to overturn this “unity”; most often by making it of some secondary importance to matters which are more apparent and, in some measure, more appealing to the flesh, in which men can operate in the power of the flesh without the need for the working of the HOLY SPIRIT. This is the very description of organized religion. Thus men will often emphasize teaching and doctrinal study, sometimes even in very true and sound doctrines, above the value of esteeming one another above themselves and bearing one another’s burdens, even though it is here that the *“law of CHRIST”* (the principle of love one for the other) is fulfilled. *“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.” (Gal 6:2)* *“He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?” (1John 4:20)*

The church is the “body of CHRIST” and this body has its earthly manifestation in the local assemblies where HIS people are gathered together to remember HIS death until HE comes and to strengthen one another in the most holy faith. It is the manifestations of love one for the other that is the bond or glue that holds the sons of GOD together in the local church. The body of CHRIST is not knit together by “preaching” however true and faithful to sound doctrine it may be, rather it is the body ministering to one another, with every joint supplying that which the body is in need of. This is that “compacting” or “knitting together” which is only performed as the SPIRIT of GOD is pleased to manifest HIS power as HE walks among the candlesticks. (see Rev.1:20) This is a rare sight in our day. May the LORD visit us is our prayer.

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