

“Each One Of You Saith ...”

“Now this I mean, that each one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas; and I of Christ” (1 Cor. 1:12).

Many ills plagued the Corinthian brethren, not the least was their inclination to follow men rather than God, except in this instance, that allegiance had not been fostered by those these brethren declared they followed. Humanly speaking, Paul, Cephas, and Apollos were of different temperament. It would not be difficult to perceive outward characteristics which would attract different brethren.

The contrast between Paul and Apollos would be in their speaking abilities. Apollos is introduced in the sacred history in Acts 18 where he made his appearance in Ephesus and caught the eye of Priscilla and Aquila. He was a mighty man and eloquent in the scriptures. Paul did not claim eloquence and his detractors said *“his speech was contemptible”* (2 Cor. 10:10). It is easy to see why Apollos would “catch the eye” of some -- and such styles enthrall many today. An eloquent speaker often wins the affections of those whose ears are more attuned to rhetoric and speaking skills rather than soundness and reason.

The “difference” between Cephas and Paul would have been in that Jewish Christians, still filled with a sense of “Jewish superiority” and a strong attachment to the law, would feel that Paul had ventured too far in his appeal to Gentiles. To these, although they believed in Christ, Paul would seem an apostate from his family’s roots, heritage. Yet, the truth is that the perceived contrasts which some “saw” between Apollos and Paul or of Cephas and Paul, with the accompanying devotions to the respective men, was not an attachment fostered by either of the three. World history has many exhibits of men who attracted the admiration and yes, worship of the mass. Would Hitler have risen to the heights he did had not he had a vast appeal to the mass of his people? George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Franklin Roosevelt, Ronald Reagan, John Kennedy -- all were figures admired and esteemed.

Still, there is only one figure to whom the world should gravitate and follow: Jesus of Nazareth. He is the one who reflects perfection, selflessness, goodness; an eternal and perfect example to follow. Still, while those of the so-called Christian nations feign to be His disciples, most have been sidetracked in their real loyalties to man. Paul’s questions to his factious and divided brethren was sober: *“Is Christ divided? or were ye baptized into the name of Paul?”* (1 Cor. 1:13). Surely his brethren would respond negatively

to both these questions! Christ was not divided and while He said he came to bring division; such would come about because in the same family one would love and serve Christ, while others would not (Mt. 10:34). In truth Jesus came to break down the wall of partition between the Jew and Gentile (Eph. 2:14). He prayed all might be one, and we must be one because it is in one body we called; in one body we are reconciled to God, in Christ we have access (the only access, we must add) to the Father (1 Pet. 3:15; Eph. 2:16; 2:11; Jn. 14:16).

Just as Christ is not divided, Paul (standing for all men) was not crucified for us. It was Jesus who became a curse for us by being hung upon a tree (Gal. 3:13). It was he who spoke prophetically when He instituted the Supper: *"this is my body which is given for you ..."* (Lk. 22:19). Christ Jesus was the Supreme Sacrifice, the demonstration of both His and His Father's love for man. Jesus said it well: *"Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends"* (Jn. 15:13). Since Jesus is not divided, since it was He who was crucified for us, it is He, and He alone, who should have our affections and allegiance. Following men will bring everlasting regret. Following Christ brings eternal joy. Let us be His disciples, in word and in deed!

Jim McDonald