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The Lord's Supper.

THE thoughts of the Lord's consecrated people being more particularly directed toward the Memorial of His death at this time of year, we cannot fail to be benefited by a review of the institution of this Supper, which our Lord established shortly before the close of His sacrificial life on earth. It was celebrated on the day before the Passover proper began—on the fourteenth of Nisan, the first month of the Jewish sacred year.

The Law respecting the Passover was very exact. The lamb was to be taken on the tenth day of Nisan, was to be killed on the fourteenth, and was to be eaten during the night before the dawn of the fifteenth. In the antitype Jesus offered Himself at Jordan and was killed 31 years later, on the fourteenth of Nisan, after all except His faithful few neglected to receive Him. It was in the same Jewish day in which He was crucified that He ate the Passover and later on was betrayed. (The day with the Jews began at sundown and lasted until the next evening.)

One evangelist records that our Lord said to His disciples, "With desire have I desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer." It was His last commemoration of the Jewish rite, which as a Jew He was bound to observe legally, fully. We may not know the particular hour of the fourteenth day at which our Lord and the disciples partook of the Lord's Supper, but probably it was near midnight, after the Passover had been eaten, that our Lord instituted the new Memorial of His own death, substituting it for the Passover Supper of the Law, and intimating this in His words, "Henceforth, as oft as ye do this, do it in remembrance of me." "This" represented the anti-typical Lamb, "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," and doing this—breaking the bread and drinking of the fruit of the vine—showed forth our Lord's death and not any longer the death of the type, because the anti-type had now come, and in this same day, a few hours later, He would be killed, crucified. Our Lord was thus laying a deep and broad basis for the New Creation, His Church, and separating it from the Jewish type by pointing out to the believers Himself as the antitype, and the higher meaning connected therewith—the deliverance of all the true Israelites, not from Pharaoh, but from Pharaoh's antitype, Satan, the deliverance of all the first-born of God's people from death into life more abundant, eternal life.

It was while the Lord and His apostles were eating the Passover Supper, the typical roast lamb, that our Lord said to them, "One of you shall betray me." John tells us that our Lord was "troubled in spirit," manifested emotion, at the time He said this. His emotion was not caused, we may be sure, by the matter of His betrayal, for He evidently foreknew the particulars as well as the fact of His death. The cause of

His sorrow, we may reasonably suppose, was the thought that one of those whom He had so tenderly kept and cared for should now prove so ungrateful, unthankful, unholy—evidently His sorrow was for Judas. His statement drew forth inquiries from the disciples, “Lord is it I?” Or rather, as the Greek word would seem to indicate, the question signified, Lord, do you mean to accuse me? I am not the one, am I? And the disciples in general were sorrowful, too. It was well, perhaps, that they should pass through this experience at this time, as they evidently needed it all, in order to prepare them for the trying times just before them.

Judas asked the same question with the rest, for not to have asked it would have implied that he admitted his guilt. Our Lord’s answer was that it was one who supped with them, and dipping the sop He gave it to Judas, who forthwith went out. (John 13:25-30.) So far from these incidents melting the heart of Judas and leading him to change his course before it was too late, they seem to have aroused in him a malevolent spirit, just as Divine mercy toward Pharaoh, in the stopping of the plagues, hardened his heart. Instead of resisting the Adversary’s suggestions, Judas entertained them more and more, until he was filled with the Satanic spirit. “Satan entered into him,” fully, completely—took possession of his heart as an instrument of evil, and it was doubtless because he felt out of place in such society that he went out.

It thus seems that Judas was not with the others when our Lord instituted with the bread and the fruit of the vine the Memorial of His death. It was better that he should be absent; and so it would be preferable, where possible, that only the true, loyal, devoted disciples of Christ should meet together to celebrate His death on its anniversary. Nevertheless, let us remember that we are not competent to judge the heart, and hence in coming to the Memorial table all should be invited to come who trust in the precious blood of Christ for redemption and who profess a full consecration to the Lord. Let us leave it to Divine providence to scrutinise those who profess to be fellow-disciples.

In presenting to the disciples the unleavened bread, as a Memorial, our Lord gave a general explanation, saying, “Take, eat; this is my body.” The evident meaning of the words is: This symbolises or represents My body. It was not actually His body, because in no sense of the word had His body yet been broken; in no sense would it have been possible for any to have partaken of Him actually or antitypically then, the sacrifice not being as yet finished. But the picture is complete when we recognise that the unleavened bread represented our Lord’s sinless flesh—leaven being a symbol of sin under the Law, and specially commanded to be put away at this time. On another occasion our Lord gave a lesson which interprets to us this symbol. He said, “The bread of God is He that came down from heaven and giveth His life for the world. I am the bread of life.”—John 6:33, 35.

In order to appreciate how we are to eat or appropriate this living bread, it is necessary for us to understand just what it was. According to our Lord’s explanation of the matter, it was His flesh which He sacrificed for us. It was not His prehuman existence as a spirit being that was sacrificed, although that was laid down and its glory laid aside, that He might take our human nature. It was the fact that our Lord Jesus was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and without any contamination from father Adam, and hence free from sin—it was this fact that permitted Him to be the Redeemer of Adam and his race—which permitted Him to give His life as a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. And when we see that it was the pure, spotless human nature of our Lord Jesus that was laid down on behalf of sinners, sacrificed for us, we see what it is that we are privileged to appropriate. The very thing which He laid down for us we are to “eat,” appropriate to ourselves: that is to say, His perfect human nature was given for us and redeemed Adam and all his race from condemnation to death—to a right to return to human perfection and everlasting life if they could. The Scriptures show us, however, that if God would consider all of past sins cancelled and should recognise us as having a right to return to human perfection, this still would not make us perfect nor give us, therefore the right to everlasting life. In order for the race of Adam to profit by the redemption accomplished by our Lord’s sacrifice, it is necessary that He should make a second advent, and then to be to the whole world a Mediator and King, to assist back to perfection and to

harmony with God all who will avail themselves of the privileges then to be offered.

It is this same blessing which the Gospel Church in this age receives by faith from the Redeemer, viz., justification by faith—not justification to a spiritual nature, which we never had and never lost, and which Christ did not redeem; but justification to human nature, which father Adam did possess and lose, and which Christ did redeem by giving His own sinless flesh as our ransom-sacrifice. The partaking of the bread, then, means to us primarily acceptance and appropriation to ourselves, by faith, of justification to human rights and privileges secured by our Lord's sacrifice of these.

Likewise, the fruit of the vine symbolised our Lord's life given for us—His human life, His being, His soul, poured out unto death on our behalf; and the appropriating of this by us signifies primarily our acceptance of restitution rights and privileges which our Lord has thus, at His own cost, secured for us.

As we have already seen, God's object in justifying by faith the Church during this Gospel Age, in advance of the justification of the world through works of obedience in the Millennial Age, is for the very purpose of permitting those who now see and hear and appreciate the great sacrifice which Love has made on their behalf, to present their bodies living sacrifices, and thus to have part with our Lord in His sacrifice—as members of His Body. This additional and deep meaning of the Memorial our Lord did not refer to directly. It was doubtless one of the things to which 'He referred, saying, "I have many things to tell you, but ye cannot bear them now; howbeit, when the spirit of truth is come, it will guide you into all truth, and show you things to come."

The spirit of truth, speaking through the Apostle Paul, clearly explains the matter of this secondary and very high import of the Memorial, for he says, writing to the consecrated Church: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the participation of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the participation of the body of Christ?"— to share with Christ as joint-sacrificers even unto death, that thereby they may be counted in with Him also as sharers of the glory which He has received as a reward for His faithfulness. "For we being many are one loaf and one body.- (1 Cor. 10:16, 17.)

Both views of this impressive ordinance are important; it is necessary that we should see, first of all, our justification through the Lord's sacrifice. It is proper, then, that we should realise that the entire Christ is, from the divine standpoint, a composite body of many members, of which Jesus is the Head, and that this Church as a whole must be broken, and that in this respect each member of it must be a copy of the Lord Jesus and must walk in the footsteps of His sacrifice. "We do this by giving our lives, "laying down our lives on behalf of the brethren," as Christ laid down His life for all. It is not our spiritual life that we lay down, even as it was not our Lord's spiritual life that He laid down in sacrifice; but as He sacrificed His actually perfect being, so we must sacrifice our justified selves, reckoned perfect but not actually so. Likewise, the cup represents suffering. It is one cup, though it be the juice of many grapes, even as it is one loaf, though it be from many grains. The grains cannot maintain their individuality and their own life if they would become bread for others; the grapes cannot maintain themselves as grapes if they would constitute the lifegiving spirit; and thus we see the beauty of the Apostle's statement, that the Lord's people are participants in the one loaf and one cup.

Our Lord distinctly declares that the cup, the fruit of the vine, represents blood, hence life; not life retained, but life shed or given, yielded up, sacrificed life. He tells us that it was for the remission of sins, and that all who would be His must drink of it—must accept His sacrifice and appropriate it by faith. All who would be justified through faith must accept life from this one source. It will not do to claim an immortality outside of Christ; it will not do to declare that life is the result of obedience to the Law; it will not do to claim that faith in and obedience to any great teacher will amount to the same thing and bring eternal life. There is no other way to attain eternal life except through accepting the blood once shed as the ransom price for the sins of the whole world. "There is no other name given under heaven or amongst

men whereby we must be saved.” Likewise, there is no other way that we can attain to the new nature than by accepting the Lord’s invitation to drink of His cup, and be broken with Him as members of the one loaf, and to be buried with Him in baptism into His death, and thus to be with Him in His resurrection to glory, honour and immortality.—Rom. 6:3-5; 8:1 7 .

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While it is our intention that these columns be used for teachings strictly in accord with the Lord’s Word, we cannot accept responsibility for every expression used, either in the correspondence or in the sermons reported.

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Bible Translations.

IN recent years the attention of Christians has been directed to a considerable number of translations of the Bible, a number of which the majority of the Lord’s people have perhaps been unable to examine. Sometimes, over the radio, a Bible reading is heard in modern language from the translation of one or another of these recent publications, and often the expressions, while perhaps plain, seem quite out of place to record the sacred information contained in God’s Word.

Those of the Lord’s people who have become acquainted with the language of the Authorized Version, perhaps from childhood, seem to find in its general expression a flow of majestic language which adds beauty and blessing to the message from the Lord and His servants of both the Old and New Testaments. As an illustration, we quote the opening words of Paul’s Epistle to the Hebrews—”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.” Could there be more beautiful language to present such an amount of truth respecting God’s Plan of the Ages and His methods of communication to those who had, and have, ears to be “spoken unto” throughout the ages of the past and present? We know of no other rendering to compare with this translation of the opening words of Paul to the Hebrews, and the same can be said, in a general way, for the language of the

Authorized Version as a whole.

This does not mean, of course, that the Authorized Version is sufficient for the students of God’s Word. The Lord has permitted many valuable manuscripts to be found since the Authorized Version was translated in 1611, and as sincere students of God’s Word we do well to appreciate and use the additional helps available, especially those which are based on the oldest MSS. From these oldest manuscripts it is found that many statements in the Authorized Version of the Bible are not really Scriptural; this comes as a shock to some people, but when it is understood that mistakes have crept into the sacred text through copyists’ errors, and this can be proved by comparing Scripture with Scripture, then all who love the Lord’s true Word only, will surely give thanks to God that He has overruled that these mistakes are

revealed to all who are sufficiently alert and interested enough to detect them by means of the additional helps now available. However, for Bible study classes etc., where practically all members have the Authorized Version before them, it seems that this 'Version is the most helpful for general reading, and where occasion requires, a variation can be quoted as giving a clearer presentation of the truth on any particular subject. To hear verses read from other translations, when there may be no real necessity, seems to take away some of the blessing in which all may share when all are following the same words from the Authorized Version.

Amongst the numerous translations of the New Testament there can be no doubt that the Emphatic Diaglott is one of the most valuable for comparative study, and for those who have Tischendorf's Notes (based on the three oldest manuscripts, including the Sinaitic; but now, unfortunately, out of print) much additional help is available. For the complete Bible the Revised Version has served very well indeed over many years, and now the recent Revised Standard Version of both the Old and New Testaments is undoubtedly most helpful for the Bible student. As an illustration of the clarity of the R.S. Version we quote Genesis 4:7, being the Lord's words to Cain—"If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not well, sin is crouching at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it." (Compare Authorized Version, and note the improvement of the R.S. Version.)

A note of warning is offered against accepting any translation of the Bible without careful examination. To indicate the necessity for proving all things, the following is presented from one of our brethren:—"A copy of the Epistles by J. B. Phillips in modern version has been sent to me. I don't know if you have heard of this man's translation, but I regard it as the poorest of all for doctrinal teaching, for he does not abide by the original words, but brings his sectarian creed into it so many times. For instance, in 1 Cor. 15:51—"We shall not all sleep"—he puts 'We shall not all die.' One can trace the sectarian view in many important passages. In portions not relating to doctrine I think it is perhaps a good translation, but to a student is very mischievous, leading away from the real point . . . I see that Moffatt, too, puts the same text--'Not all of us are to die,' which seems to show that these men have expressed their own views instead of what the Lord intended to teach. Again, in 1 Thes. 4:15-17, Phillips says—'One word of command, one shout from the archangel, one blast from the trumpet of God, and God in person will come down from heaven.' It gives the wrong thought, don't you think?"

There can be no doubt that the translations above quoted are very misleading, and it is necessary for all the Lord's people to thoroughly test all that they receive as truth. To this end the Bible Concordances, especially Strong's and Young's, are most helpful in determining the meanings of the Hebrew and Greek words; indeed, one or other of these concordances is essential for detailed study of the Bible.

Then, along with all the careful study given to determine correct translations, it is most essential that the spirit of the Lord be the guiding power to bless the truths of His Word to the hearts and lives of God's people, that the truth may have the sanctifying effect, to the Lord's praise. Thus, and thus only, may sincere Christians grow both in grace and knowledge of their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Passover Memorial, 1954.

The anniversary of the institution of the Memorial of Christ's death falls this year on the evening of Good Friday ; after sundown on Friday evening, the 16th of April, will therefore be the appropriate time to observe the Lord's Supper by all true followers of the Master.

Friends desiring the unleavened bread and wine may procure these from this office. Early application should be made, preferably by the end of March, and please state the number of persons to be served.

Memorial Services.

The following Memorial Services have been arranged, at which all sincere believers in the ransom sacrifice of Christ will be welcome.

Melbourne.—Good Friday, 16th April, at 7 p.m., at Masonic Hall, 254 Swan Street, Richmond.

Adelaide.—Good Friday, 16th April, at 7 p.m., at Builders and Contractors Rooms, Waymouth Street, Adelaide

Sydney.—Good Friday, 16th April, at 7 p.m., at 87 The Boulevard, South Strathfield. (Visitors should leave Strathfield Station on the left side coming from the city, and 87 is on the right side of Boulevard, only 10 minutes' walk, or the 4th bus stop from the station.)

Perth.—Good Friday, 16th April, at 5.30 p.m., at The Literary Institute, 1st Floor, corner Hay and Pier Streets, Perth.

Adelaide Easter Convention.

The brethren in Adelaide wish to announce that their usual Easter Convention is to be held again this year, commencing on Good Friday, 16th April, and continuing till Easter Monday evening (D.V.) . The gatherings will be held in the Builders and Contractors Rooms, Waymouth Street, Adelaide, and a hearty invitation is extended to all friends able to attend these meetings. Further information may be obtained from the Convention Secretary--Mrs. H.

Bartel, 10 Winston Avenue, Clarence Gardens, Adelaide, South Australia.

The best preparation for service is the knowledge of our own weakness, and faith in the almighty power of God.—A.S.

Christian Life and Doctrine.

(Convention Address)

“Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them, for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.”—(1 Tim. 4:16.)

THE Apostle Paul, in Ephesians 4:1-6, urges Christians to walk worthy of their calling, in the spirit of lowliness and meekness with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; and urges them to endeavour to keep the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace, and then lays down seven fundamental doctrines upon which Christian fellowship can be maintained, as follows:—One body, one spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of all. Without appreciation of these teachings there cannot be genuine Christian fellowship.

One might also refer to Heb. 6:1, 2 where the Apostle urges holy (consecrated) brethren, -associates of the heavenly calling (chapter 3:1), to leave the first principles (the beginnings of the words of Christ) and go on to maturity of Christian development. These beginnings — the first principles of Christian life and teaching—are repentance, faith toward God, the doctrine of baptisms, the laying on of hands (this was the way the holy spirit was imparted to believers by the Apostles) , the doctrine of resurrection, and eternal judgment. These are referred to as the milk of the Word and there can be genuine Christian fellowship upon these principles, but we must not remain there; rather, we are to build upon these a faith structure of life and doctrine and thus be able to understand the deep things of God—the strong meat, the solid food.

We might also consider the prophetic or dispensational truths fulfilling now at the end of this age, keeping in mind that some of the fundamental truths quoted in Ephesians 4 were once prophetic truths, and were fulfilled during the first advent of Christ and in the end of the Jewish Age. The Messiah who was to come had come, henceforth there must now be recognised and worshipped among God’s consecrated people one Lord (Jesus) in addition to one God (Jehovah) .

The doctrine of faith justification, without works, was foretold and must become a fundamental doctrine among the consecrated Christians. There must also be one spirit; this is a fundamental doctrine insisted upon in the early Church. One heavenly calling must also be taught in the Church; the dispensation had arrived in which this truth must be taught. Any one of these doctrines could not be omitted or considered unimportant by any, of the Lord’s people without spiritual loss in Christian life and knowledge.

Without recognising and appreciating these teachings in the Church do you think there could be real unity of the spirit among believers? No. Neither could there be real spiritual character development, sound doctrine or reliable teachers, as the Apostle states in Heb. 5:12-14. He says many of the Hebrew Christians were dull of hearing; i.e., sluggish in understanding. Instead of being teachers they had to be taught again the first principles of the truth, and were thus unfit to occupy the position of teachers in the Church.

We too have reached the end of the age when prophetic truths and dispensational changes are due, and the understanding of which greatly strengthens Christian fellowship, and is a sanctifying power in our lives. The importance of this can best be gauged when we contrast our present Christian experience with our confused and perplexing state in the nominal church.

The 24th chapter of Matthew was once prophetic, but now much of it is being fulfilled and we recognise that the changes now occurring in the world and the Church are the result of the presence of Christ. This is an important dispensational doctrine and many other associated truths have been greatly clarified because of this. Dispensational truths have a definite time of fulfilment and blessed are people, whether in

the beginning or close of the age, who recognise the truths then due, and discern the changes associated with these truths.

For instance, the nature and purpose of the second advent of Christ has become clear and harmonious. The oneness of suffering and sacrifice of Christ and the Church, the oneness of honour and glory in the kingdom is now better understood. The same is true of the ransom; the philosophy of the ransom and its application is grand—first to the Church and later to the world. The covenants also have become clear, as to how they apply and when fulfilled.

All these teachings have their place and are important, playing a great part in our sanctification and separation from nominal Christianity. We are glad to speak of these things to the Household of Faith, and fellowship upon these truths is precious. All may not see these doctrines in the same light; nevertheless, there are many truths on which we can have fellowship.

However, the position is different when a congregation elects representatives or teachers. These must be sound in the faith and in Christian character, the Apostle says—"Holding forth the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and convince the gainsayers,"—to confute those speaking against or opposing the doctrine. The combination of Christian life and doctrine is necessary for all Christians, and is very essential for teachers in the Church; in other words, it means - growing in grace and knowledge."

The word "life" in a general sense means the natural functions of an organized being—animation, vitality. Also the manner or conduct of living with respect to virtue or vice,—"To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." (Rom. 8:6.) An additional meaning is supreme felicity, eternal happiness; the Author and

Giver of supreme happiness is spoken of as "The Way, the truth and the life." (John 14:6.)

The meaning of "doctrine" is, Whatsoever is taught; a principle or position of any science, whatever is laid down as true by an instructor or master; the act of teaching, learning, knowledge; the truths of the Gospel in general, and the instruction and confirmation in the truth of the Gospel. Jesus said, "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine." (John 7:16, 17.)

The way to full and complete life cannot be attained by fallen, sinful beings without doctrine, teachings, the knowledge of the whole counsel of God. Jesus said—"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God," and again—"This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." (Matt. 4:4; John 17:3.) And it is God's will that all mankind be saved and come to the knowledge of this truth for "the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth."

These Scriptures reveal that from God's standpoint sound doctrine is necessary, and this has been imparted to us through the words of His Son and the Apostles and prophets. It is also a necessity and advantage that mankind become acquainted with these teachings or knowledge of God, some in this Age, but the majority in the next Age.

The Scriptures urge Christians to hold and teach sound doctrines; that is, sound in the sense of perfect principles, true, free from corruption, appealing and satisfying to sanctified reason. The perfect doctrines of God produce perfect life. To know God and Jesus Christ is (or will result in) everlasting life. This knowledge and the spirit of that knowledge received into the heart has a sanctifying power. "Every man that has this hope in him purifies himself." (1 John 3:3.)

Not only do sound teachings affect the life: they also serve as a protection against unsound teachings, fables and wrong conduct. The Apostle Paul predicted that the time would come- when they (professing Christians) will not endure sound doctrines. (2 Tim. 4:3.)

The doctrines or teachings of Christ and His Apostles are those set forth in the New Testament. Jesus, in His prayer to the Father, declared—"I have given them the words which thou gavest me." Jesus here indicates that the doctrines of the Christian religion originate from God Himself; He has spoken unto us by His Son, and Jesus communicated these teachings to His Apostles. Therefore we need not go outside the Bible for a knowledge of the truth which sanctifies. "For I am convinced that the scripture given by inspiration is able to make us wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for all good works." (2 Tim. 3:15-17.)

The necessity for individual study of the Scriptures is thus evident. It is a fact, they do make us wise; they develop in us a spirit of a sound mind; they give us better judgment — able to form a better estimate of the things that matter in comparison with things that are secondary. The Scriptures make us better men and women —better husbands and wives, better workmen, better business men, better neighbours, and produce a better and kindly spirit toward enemies and even to the animal creation.

Sound teachings have a good, helpful, uplifting influence upon ourselves, which is really the main purpose of receiving a knowledge of the truth of God. (Psa. 119 :9 ; John 17 :17.) The Apostle Paul urged a young Christian and elder in the Church to "meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." (1 Tim. 4:15, 16.) And again, in 2 Tim. 2:15, the same Apostle declares—"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

This responsibility is placed upon all consecrated Christians; indeed, each member placed in the Body should not so much regard this as a responsibility, but rather as a great privilege a gracious favour of the Lord to have inclined our hearts and minds toward the things that are spiritual. As Jesus said to some of His disciples—"Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous ones have desired to see the things you see, and have not seen them; and to hear the things which ye hear, and have not heard them." (Matt. 13:16, 17.)

The Apostle Peter also says that the prophets in past ages have enquired and searched diligently, and prophesied of the favour that should come unto us Christians; but it was not revealed to them. This Apostle added that angels desire to look into the things concerning our great salvation (1 Pet. 1:10-11.) Is it any wonder that we are urged to be on our guard lest we be beguiled of our reward, or deceived with another gospel. (Col. 2:18.)

We need to distinguish between the doctrines of God and the doctrines of man. The teachings of men, as represented in the creeds, do not satisfy nor sanctify. If any who support the teachings of men give evidence of being sanctified and renewed in heart—and there have been these men even in the dark ages—it was not the creeds and traditions that accomplished this. The erroneous and superstitious teachings the Apostle Paul calls "doctrines of devils." (1 Tim. 4:1, 2. See also Tit. 1:10-13.)

All the consecrated Christians have a charge or stewardship placed upon them concerning the truth. Besides conforming their lives to the teachings they are also set for the defence of the Gospel, whether opportunities are large or small. This often has the effect of dividing; the Lord said it would in Matt. 10:34-36—"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I

am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law; and a man's foes shall be they of his own household." Why is this so? "Because the word of God is quick (living) and powerful (energetic), and sharper than any twoedged sword . . . dividing soul and spirit," that is, dividing the natural from the spiritual. (Heb. 4:12, Diaglott.)

Because of this there is a tendency in these days to set little importance upon sound Scriptural doctrines, and the urge is to concentrate on Christian living only. This kind of philosophy sacrifices truth—right doctrines and principles—for the sake of greater numbers in fellowship, and many denominations (and some groups of the Present Truth Movement) are trying in this way to overcome their divided state, and present a united front to the enemy. But this is not Scriptural. The Founder of Christianity said His message would be as a sword, causing division and spiritual warfare. The Apostle Paul urges consecrated Christians to avoid those who are contrary to the doctrines of Christ. (Rom. 16:17, 18.) He wrote to Christians in Corinth (2 Cor. 11:13, 14), and warned them of false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the servants of Christ. We are urged to hold fast the faithful words. (Tit. 1:9.)

The Apostle Jude urges us to earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints, because of ungodly men turning the grace of God into lasciviousness and denying the Lord Jesus Christ. (Jude 3, 4.) These are some of the warnings that there is indeed a great controversy between light and darkness, truth and error, Christ and Satan; and this has continued all down the age to the present day. Errors of doctrine take away our Christian liberty, and this has happened time and again, even in the midst of the Present Truth Movement. Therefore it is truly said, Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty.

From these references to the words of our Lord and the Apostles, warning of false teachers and their errors, who would say that sound doctrines are not important? If they are not very important, perhaps it is because we have not seen their value in the plan of God. Do you think the understanding of the manner and purpose of our Lord's second presence is very important? And what relationship this bears to the Church and the world? The correct understanding of this has changed much of our wrong thinking and teaching.

"The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down (human) reasonings, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." (2 Cor. 10:4, 5.) The weapons referred to are the teachings of the Scripture, which are indeed mighty. If we did not know what these were how could we counteract and resist false teachings, and how could we resist an enemy if we are urged to leave our armour off, as not important? No! The fact is that Christians are engaged in a warfare not only against the natural, evil propensities and weaknesses of the flesh, but against wicked spirits in high places, and against religious teachers who by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple, the unsuspecting. (Rom. 16:18.) From this standpoint, Christians are referred to as soldiers under Jesus, their Captain or Leader. The fact that we are exhorted to hold fast the faithful words implies there are some who would try to wrest them from us by false philosophies. And the Apostle Peter declares—"Many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of." (2 Pet. 2:2.)

There is a close relationship between Christian life and Christian doctrine, like faith and works; to be effective they must operate together. These two halves make one truth, and produce one result—our salvation. The same can be said of sanctification and witnessing to the truth; you cannot separate these two; our building up in Christ and witnessing to the Gospel go together, otherwise spiritual stagnation will set in.

Doctrines or teachings have a definite effect upon our conduct. If we believe in teachings which are

unkind, cruel, unreasonable, our conduct will be confused; likewise our thinking on religious subjects will be more or less the same. The hell-torment theory has made people very cruel. The supposed heretic, those who dared to differ from popular religion of the established church, were persecuted and tormented in a most cruel way before death. The tormentors believed that this was the right thing to do to heretics and that they were only beginning the torments which God proposed to give them in hell. You see, “as a man thinketh in his heart so is he.” It is not the threat of eternal torment which makes people good; it does not produce repentance. No, but as the Scriptures—the true doctrines—say, “The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance.” And “Thy gentleness hath made me great.” (Rom. 2:4; Psa. 18:35.)

Let us take examples from the Scriptures. There is Mary Magdalene out of whom the Lord had cast seven demons. What prompted her to bathe the Lord’s feet with her tears and wipe them with the hair of her head? It was the goodness and gentleness of the Lord Jesus. We are reminded also of that once timid, and yet great Apostle Peter. On that tragic night when the Shepherd was smitten and the sheep were scattered, the Lord warned Peter of his coming trial, but declared—”I have prayed for thee,- and “Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.” During that mock trial of our Lord, Jesus turned and looked at Peter in his fear; Peter remembered, “And he went out and wept bitterly.” Then three days later, when Jesus was risen from the dead, He declared—”Tell the disciples and Peter”; and later— ”Peter, lovest thou me more than these?” “Thou knowest I love thee,” was the response. “Feed my sheep,” our Lord stated. It was the gentleness and ‘goodness of the Lord which made Peter great.

Is not that also our experience? Many broken reeds shattered hopes or despairing efforts have been revived by the gentleness of the Lord. “My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass.” (Deut. 32:2.) The influence of the Lord’s doctrines is like the dew descending softly on the tender grass, penetrating into the affections, renewing the spirit, reviving hope. “The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life,” said Jesus. (John 6:63.)

We need to rightly divide the Word of God, to search the Scriptures. One seed of truth is the revelation of other truths; it is sown in us to bear fruit, not to lie dormant. The power of the mind by which the truth becomes prolific is freedom, and “the truth shall make you free.” Our duty, and especially that of a chairman in Bible Study, is to try and encourage vigorous action of the mind in others. This takes time and experience. This was the purpose of the Apostle Paul’s instruction to Timothy—”Give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Meditate upon these things, give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all.” The greater number of free and vigorous minds brought to bear upon a subject, the more truth is promoted. No one should contend for an opinion or doctrine merely because some

Brother has set it forth, without being convinced that the said doctrine is true.

Aside from the fundamental truths, we should exercise great moderation toward the brethren on any point of doctrine not clearly declared, such as a parable not explained in the Scripture itself. All consecrated Christians should be individuals, at the same time exercising great care that they circulate no doctrine or matter not ,specifically and clearly stated in the Scriptures,’ and especially never to teach or attempt to teach speculations of which he himself is not thoroughly convinced. “If in anything you be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule.” (Phil. 3:15, 16.)

The Apostle Paul refers also to those who are contentious and obey not the truth, in Romans 2:8 This condition develops when attempting to grow in knowledge without growing in grace—in love, kindness, meekness, goodness and patience. To the attainment of an ideal well-balanced Christian character we need to live up to the truths we have already recognized as true and pure. (See Psa. 19 :7-12.)

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