

THE TRUTH ASSAILED BUT NOT REFUTED
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THE subject selected for this occasion is "The Truth Assailed but Not Refuted." The text we wish to use is found in 2 Cor. 13:8, "For we can do nothing against the Truth, but for the Truth."

In these days when the Truth is injured in the house of its professed friends those who hold the Truth in sincerity are put to the test as to whether they will support and uphold the Truth or whether they will remain SILENT, while the Truth in its purity is being assailed, even though it is conceded that the Truth has not been REFUTED.

There is a tendency to be first PEACEABLE and then to try to be PURE, but this is the very opposite of the Scriptural admonition in James 3:17, "But the wisdom from above is FIRST PURE, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."

We should stand for the purity of the Truth as INDIVIDUALS, not merely as organizations or as classes. We should not only expect the elders to take their stand for the Truth, which has been received and of which we have been assured and know we have received it from the Lord, but we should INDIVIDUALLY take our stand and show our colors in SUPPORT of the Truth, for we know that it is only assailed and has not been REFUTED.

The INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIAN is not one who is INDEPENDENT or who seeks to be SEPARATE FROM others who are really the Lord's, because of their having accepted the sacrifice of Jesus and who have consecrated their all to the Lord and who are living lives of piety in harmony with their consecration, even though these do not see just as we do on other than fundamental doctrines. The thought is that INDIVIDUALLY we are to pick up our own responsibilities and not to allow others, whether organizations or individuals, to carry the responsibilities of our beliefs or our activities by our looking upon them as the channel or responsible Head of the Lord's people still on the earth. We should not fail to study out the Lord's will for us in both the large and small affairs of our lives. If we do not learn to INDIVIDUALLY decide the Lord's will in the little issues of life, how shall we decide in the time of great difficulty as of an overflowing flood? If we learn daily to decide quickly and correctly we shall be able to do the Lord's will when many troubles may come upon us at one time. If we make a mistake in deciding the Lord's will for us, we can ask forgiveness and change our course and profit by the mistake so that we will benefit by the experience as a scholar in school who profits by having made a mistake in their school lesson.

We are now in the "School of Christ" and with us it is EXAMINATION DAY. We cannot depend on our books in the class room on examination day. The scholars are watched on that day to make sure they do not bring their school books to school. I know this is so for I well remember, when a boy, how one had a book under his coat and the teacher took it away, saying that it was not a matter of what the book said but what had been learned from the books in our studies. It is now the time of test upon what we have learned and of what we have been assured. It is not so much a test as to whether we can accept all the new suggestions of Truth, but it is a matter of holding

on to the Truths which the lessons of past years have prepared us to receive and uphold.

One brother said that the Light was to grow brighter and brighter. We asked him where he found that text. He said OUT OF THE BIBLE. We told him he must have gotten that particular wording OUT of the Bible because it was not IN the Bible. It is outside of the Bible where such a thought predominates. The Bible shows that the Light of Truth was bright and clear in the days of our Lord and the Apostles. It shows that "After men slept," after the Apostles fell asleep in death, the enemy sowed tares of errors. These errors in due course produced professed Christians but not the true sacrificers who say not as I will but as thou wilt.

Now, in the end of the Gospel Age, the harvest message has come, not to make Christians, as the fundamental Truths have done, for there have been Christians throughout the entire Age who lived and died BEFORE the Harvest Truth was due, but the Harvest message came as a SICKLE to assist the true wheat to be CUT DOWN quickly and to be gathered into the Heavenly Garner, the Kingdom. This has no thought of being gathered into a class or party but has reference to the final gathering into the Heavenly Garner. Therefore we should not make a test of the Harvest message but should use it as the Harvest Sickle which will truly assist the ripened grain to be gathered quickly into the Heavenly Garner.

Just as the pure message of Truth was mixed with error after the death of the Apostles, so there has been the mixing of much error and contrary suggestion with the Harvest message since the humble and faithful brother whom the Lord used to present the Harvest message has passed beyond the veil. Indeed it is hard for a newly interested person to get the original Harvest message without being switched off here and there by additions to the message or by flat contradictions of the message. So that, instead of the light getting brighter, there is a confusion as to the true message—even as the light did not get brighter but confused after the death of its noble supporters. It is the "Path of the Just" that the Scripture says will shine MORE and MORE, or on and on, unto the perfect day. The same light of God's Word is the lamp to the footsteps as the justified one walks. As we take the step of faith we see enough for the next step—more and more, on and on.

Of course we have more and longer fellowship WITH those who see MANY points of Truth as we do than we have WITH those who only see the FUNDAMENTALS as we do, but we must ACCEPT IN FULL FELLOWSHIP those who have taken the necessary steps in harmony with the fundamental teachings of God's Word. We should also seek to have as much FELLOWSHIP WITH them as possible, although it is conceded that we do not fellowship each other BECAUSE of non-fundamental Truths but because of their being justified and consecrated and living lives in full accord with the fundamental Truths.

I believe a big mistake has been made by not making a test on the fundamental Truths. It is not sufficient that one believes that Jesus died and that consecration is proper. It is necessary that these truths be held, not only as intellectual knowledge, but that they be ACTED UPON by heart reliance to the taking of the steps of justification and consecration. Those not having taken these steps are not truly Brethren in justification or in Christ, even though some of them have a good knowledge of the Truth and can give fluent expression publicly concerning the same.

If it is thought a brother would be stumbled if asked if he has taken the steps of justification and consecration, we would suggest that he is more likely to be stumbled

into pride and a wrong course for us to place him in a responsible position because of what knowledge he has and not because of the vital steps he should take, based on this knowledge.

It is not my opinion that water baptism should be made a test of fellowship. I do believe that the TRUE BAPTISM, the full consecration of one's will and all, to do the Will of God and Christ, SHOULD be made a test of fellowship in the "One Body." Not that we should think lightly concerning the subject of water immersion, symbolic Baptism, or other important subjects that the more mature mind should reason upon, but rather that these subjects be considered but that the True Baptism be considered as important enough to MAKE A TEST UPON, while the symbolic or water baptism be viewed as a PHOTOGRAPH of the true baptism into His death. We are usually pleased to see a photograph of a friend, so we should be glad that the Lord has furnished us with this photograph of our immersion of our will into the Will of God and Christ.

The adversary often puts doubts in the minds of the consecrated. Sometimes it is a doubt as to whether we have really dedicated ourselves to the Lord. How nice it is at that time to have a PHOTOGRAPH which helps us to dispel these doubts. We can then look back to the little church or the pool or river where we symbolized our True Baptism. We can recall some of the Brethren who were witnesses of our outward symbol of the inward condition of our heart. We can thus retain the Peace of Christ which is the portion of those who follow Jesus, both in His teachings and in the steps which He took, leaving us an example.

It is to be regretted that many have been accepted into fullest fellowship because of accepting new thoughts of Truth and not because of having measured up to the fundamental Truths. These in turn have assisted in opposing the Truth already received and in persecuting faithful brethren who wish to hold on to the Truths received and to assist the dear ones to do likewise.

To silently stand by and see the Truth assailed and to see those who still hold to the Truth opposed, persecuted and boycotted, even though one does not do the assailing, is like the holding of the cloak of St. Stephen, the first Christian martyr in the footsteps of Jesus. This course needs to be repented of and ever remembered as a means to true humility, as did Saul of Tarsus, who became the great Apostle Paul.

The contracted vision, the poor eye sight, of the Apostle Paul was a continual reminder of his wrong course and, while used of Satan to buffet him and to attempt to discourage him, it was also used of the Lord to assist Paul in the development of True Humility, lest he be exalted above measure by being used so greatly in the support of the Truth which he previously opposed.

The MARKS upon those who assail the Truth, whether openly or by SILENCE when the Truth or its representatives are assailed, are evident. These marks are not easily removed, even through prayer, as Paul prayed for the removal of his marks but yielded to God's will.

These MARKS may be certain HINDRANCES even as Paul's marks were certain hindrances to service for the Truth. In spite of, or accompanied by these hindrances, Paul taught the Truth on Baptism, even though he was hindered from baptising many. He also presented the Truth to the Ecclesias, even though he had others write the Epistles for him, excepting the Epistle to the Galatians, which he wrote with his own hand in large letters or characters. This kept Paul from boasting of having baptised many or of claiming believers as HIS or as members of "The Lord's

Organization” of which he was a conspicuous leader. These hindrances also were ever present reminders of his past wrong course and he was thus guarded against using the wrong spirit against the newly found Truth and his newly found Brethren.

Your HINDRANCES, if you have recognized them, dear brethren, are not intended of the Lord to keep you from holding or serving the Truth. You are to recognize these MARKS, whether your influence is less because you remained with the persecutors while the Truth and its advocates were assailed, or whether in other ways your hindrances are evident. These marks should be acknowledged and should lead to a humble course and keep you back from ever entering into that which would represent a PARTY spirit again among your Brethren. You should look for all avenues of activity where the Lord’s providences have not placed hindrances or where Heavenly Wisdom and tact can be used IN SPITE OF or ASSOCIATED WITH these hindrances.

“For we can do nothing against the Truth, but for the Truth,” does not mean that God HINDERS all who would assail the Truth, nor that He FORCES or MAKES all do that which is FOR the Truth, but that ULTIMATELY the UNREFUTED Truth will prosper and that the wrath of men or of demons will praise God. Also that there will be such measure of restraint used as will cause all to work for the good of those who truly love God and for the carrying out of the “Divine Plan of the Ages.”

The EFFECT of the Truth is that of SANCTIFICATION or setting apart to God’s Holy will and service. That which is claimed to be Truth and which has not this effect, but which rejects brethren who continue to support the Truth in its sincerity, is to be tried and proven, and rejected to the extent that it does not conform to the spirit of the prayer of Jesus, recorded in John 17:17: “SANCTIFY them through thy Truth; Thy WORD IS TRUTH.”