

## **NEW AND OLD.**

### **MATTHEW 13:52.**

The word of the Lord is indeed well compared to a rich treasure house, or a precious box of jewels. Out of this treasure it is the Christian's privilege to bring forth one precious thing after another, for admiration and encouragement; and it is the teacher's duty and privilege, as represented by the Scribe, to bring forth these precious things for the edification of the flock of God, over which he is Overseer.

When we receive Christ as our own – not a set of ideas merely about Christ, but Himself as a living, personal and loving Saviour – we receive the whole truth. "I am the Truth." The whole box of jewels is ours, though at first we may know but little of what it contains. It is the life work of the Christian to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." 2 Pet. 3:18.

That a perfect knowledge constitutes one a member of the body of Christ is a sad and dangerous error. A babe in Christ is a member of the body, as really as the well developed Christian. The capacity differs but not the relationship. The youngest and weakest child is a son as really as the oldest and strongest. It is in Christ we are to grow up in knowledge and Christian stature, and not out of Him in order to become members. It is in the Vine, and not separate from it, that the young and tender branch becomes a strong branch bearing fruit in abundance. "Without me [i.e. separate from me] ye can do nothing." John 15:5.

The lambs and the sheep make one flock, and there is but one Shepherd, who superintends and cares for all. "He shall feed His flock like a Shepherd: He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom." Isa. 40:11. There are under shepherds to

whom a share or agency in this work is appointed. In addressing Peter, Jesus said, "Feed my lambs," and also, "Feed my sheep." John 21:15,16. Was not this saying: Neglect no part – Feed the flock? Peter so understood it, for he lays special stress upon it when he exhorts the elders as under-shepherds: "Feed the flock of God, which is among you. ...And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." 1 Pet. 5:2-4.

Paul, in his address to the elders of the church at Ephesus, makes the same thought prominent: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseer, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with His own blood." Acts 20:28.

One remarkable feature of the word of the Lord is that, it is adapted to the varied necessities of all grades of Christians. There is milk for babes and strong meat [food] for them that are of full age. Heb. 5:12-14. In this variety and adaptation is seen the fullness of the Shepherd's care and love.

Babes are not to remain babes always, as the above passage shows, but are to grow – which is a gradual change, and thus leave the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, and go on to perfection. Heb. 6:1. The babe cannot be expected to grow up to manhood instantly, and Peter exhorts such to "desire the sincere milk of the Word, that (they) may grow thereby. 1 Peter 2:2.

From what we have seen above the teacher is to look after the young and the old. Is it not then dangerous to neglect, and presumptuous to willingly ignore this Divine command? Is "it rightly dividing" the word in every true sense to attend exclusively to the wants of those who can take strong food, and let the lambs of the flock die of starvation?

It is true that the plan of the ages is the key to the right application of the scriptures, and to give a clear view of the progression of the word as one grand whole. But while the Lord speaks of and deals with all His people as one person, and the truth is thus a lamp that lights their way, and "shineth more and more unto the perfect day," is not the principle of progression "first the blade, then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear" as true of each individual Christian, as of the whole spoken of as one person? This is evidently so, and therefore while the general plan is treated of, the plan of God as to each person should not be neglected. This we ought to do, and not to leave the other undone.

The principle of growth in knowledge seems to be the key to the idea of "things new and old." In an important sense, all truth is old, but what is old, in reality, is new to us, when it comes to our view. What is old to one is new to another, hence those who are far advanced should be interested in and have patience with those who are not so far advanced, but who are following on to know the Lord. What was once obscure to us has now become apparent, and what is now obscure may yet become clear to our minds. Let none be discouraged because others seem to see what he cannot see, and let none condemn the other because he cannot see as his brother. **[R119 : page 6]** Indeed it is a small matter for any of us to be judged of another man's judgment; to his own Master each one stands or falls.

All truth is in harmony, whether old or new. What was true at any time in the past must be true yet. If the presence of Christ – which was and is the gist of the harvest message – was advanced truth between 1875 and 1878, it must be true yet; and if it is not true now, instead of being advanced light then it was terrible darkness. If the equality of the two dispensations, the other beautiful time arguments, and all the parallels were developed by the virgins, while they were all in the darkness of sleep, as is claimed by those who say they "all

slumbered and slept" until the Spring of 1878, then those glorious truths were and are nothing but a glorious dream, and are therefore a very insecure and unworthy foundation to build upon after waking up. Why build upon the parallels, as the ground of expecting Christ at any time in the future, when if Christ's coming is wholly in the future, and we are not "in the days of the Son of Man," there are no parallels between the ending of the Jewish and Gospel ages? An essential feature of the parallelism, as is well known by all who understand the time arguments, lies in the fact that Christ's coming was due to begin in 1844. That as He left heaven at His coming in the flesh, so he left the Most Holy – "heaven itself" in 1844.

We have sometimes been accused by unbelievers for teaching that the true way to advance was to displace the truth we learned yesterday by new truth learned to-day; but we utterly repudiate the absurd charge. To grow in knowledge is to retain the truth we have and add to our stock.

We believe we are and should be as willing as ever to learn new truth, and unlearn error, whether old or new, but we are not willing to accept as advanced light what is not in harmony with the prophetic foundation on which we are building, until that foundation is proved false. We hope also for the sake of the flock of God that no one will claim to build on the same foundation and give what is called "advanced light," while virtually ignoring that foundation. All are not able – (Some are able) – to detect the sophistry, and therefore become confused. May the Lord enable those who do see, to help those who do not see, by a clear and earnest defense of the truth.

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