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## THE AUTHORITY OF DIVINE TRUTH.

"And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind."

– John 9:39.

DIVINE truth comes to us with all the authority of its divine Author. With a gentle dignity consistent with its noble character it urges its claims upon the reason, the judgment and the conscience of men, and then leaves them, as free moral agents, to accept or reject its claims. Its true messengers also come with the same moral force of inherent worth, rather than with noisy demonstrations or "lying wonders," such as are used by the powers of darkness to attract idle curiosity into the snares of Satan. They come imbued with the spirit of the authoritative message they bear – the spirit of holiness and truth.

Thus our Lord Jesus, the great chief Messenger of the divine covenant, was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners; the prophets were holy men who spoke and wrote as they were moved by the holy spirit; [R2057 : page 258] and the apostles were holy men chosen of God and charged with the divine testimony. So also all of those called of God to preach the good tidings have this anointing of the holy spirit of God (Isa. 61:1-3; Luke 4:16-21) as their necessary preparation for this service, and without this anointing they are but as sounding brass and tinkling cymbals, having no commission from God to declare his truth. To any who, without the divine anointing, presumptuously take it upon themselves to handle the testimonies of God, attempting to expound them to others, "God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth, seeing thou hatest instruction and castest my words behind thee!" (Psa. 50:16,17.) Only those who have the anointing of the spirit of truth have any commission from God to preach the truth to others. And indeed only such can do it; for others, not being willing to admit its full sway and authority in their own hearts, yet anxious to justify

themselves before men, will pervert the truth, deceiving and being deceived, wresting the Scriptures to their own destruction.

Divine truth, flowing from the pure fountain of truth, God himself, who is all light, and in whom is no darkness at all (1 John 1:5), coming to us through the appointed channel of God's Word and declared by his faithful servants imbued with his spirit, comes with a moral and logical power proving its authority and enforcing it with an emphasis which carries warning with it, and which plainly says, "Take heed how ye hear." – Luke 8:18.

The message of divine truth conveyed to us through our Lord Jesus and his holy apostles and prophets, and from time to time, as meat in due season, called to our attention by such members of the anointed body as God hath set in the Church to be pastors and teachers, and even by the feebler members of the body, are not therefore subjects for mere idle consideration and human speculation and dispute: they are not common themes for reckless handling with irreverent hands: they are the eternal principles of truth and righteousness. They are the oracles of God and the principles of his holy law by which every man must be judged as worthy or unworthy of eternal life. They come, with a quiet insistence, demanding our candid, serious, careful consideration of their claims upon us in view of the fact of a coming judgment in which these principles of truth and righteousness shall surely triumph and prove a savor of life unto life or of death unto death to men, according as they are obedient or disobedient to their authority.

It was to establish these principles of judgment, and to acquaint men with them, as well as to redeem them from the sentence of the first judgment of the race in Eden, that Jesus came into this world. (John 5:24; 20:30,31.) Yet this judgment, while it begins in a measure with every man as soon as he begins to comprehend the divine testimony, is not, in the case of the world in general, to reach its final decision until the time appointed for the world's judgment, the Millennial age; for at his first advent Jesus said, "I came not to judge the world, but to save

the world. He that rejecteth me and receiveth not my words hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him *in the last day*" – the day of final reckoning, the Millennial or Judgment day. – John 12:46-48.

In view of these considerations what folly is it for any man blindly to ignore or foolishly tamper with and pervert or reject the authority of divine truth! On the other hand, how grateful to God we should be for his goodness in making known to us the principles of his law, the testimonies of his Word, by which we are to be judged. And how anxious we should be that our understanding of those principles of judgment should be clear and free from any bias of human prejudice which might blind our eyes to truths of such solemn import. As the Psalmist says, "The judgments of the Lord [expressed by his holy apostles and prophets] are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than **[R2058 : page 258]** honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned; and in keeping of them there is great reward." – Psa. 19:9-11.

The above statement of our Lord was called out by the contrast presented in the conduct of the Pharisees and of the blind man to whom sight had been given. The miracle gave unmistakable evidence of divine power manifested through Christ, and was a testimony to the truth of his claim to the Messiahship. The Pharisees, perceiving the logical deduction from the admission of the fact, and unwilling to admit the authority of a teacher greater than themselves, rejected even this undeniable testimony, and cast the man out of the synagogue, because he confessed the truth.

In this miracle our Lord had clearly taught the great truth that God was with him, and that he was indeed all that he claimed to be – the fulfilment of the law and the prophets, the long promised Messiah. These Pharisees, tho feeling the force of this testimony, nevertheless harbored so much envy and hatred in their hearts that it blinded them to

the truth. But not so was it with the young man upon whose sightless eyes the miracle had been wrought. Envy, hatred and the spirit of rivalry were absent from his mind, and wonder and gratitude prompted him to reason out the logical deductions from this marvelous fact. In his course we observe the steps of obedient and increasing faith and the results so blessed and so different from those to [R2058 : page 259] which the course of the Pharisees led. The act of hopeful obedience (based doubtless upon what he had heard of Jesus previously), in following the simple directions to go and wash his clay-anointed eyes in the pool of Siloam, was rewarded by immediate sight, although the man had been born blind; this blessing, gratefully realized, increased faith; the testimony of obedient, grateful faith, in the face of opposition, brought the reward of persecution; and persecution, accepted in preference to the approval of men upon terms of unrighteousness – *of stifled conviction and ingratitude*, – brought the reward of the clearer revelation of Him who was the hope of Israel and the world. And not only so, but this realization that Jesus was indeed the very Christ promised of God, and expected for four thousand years, came to the formerly blind man with this additional element of joy, that he had been specially favored and blessed by him.

Here we see in strong contrast the spirit of obedience on the part of the young man who received sight, and the spirit of disobedience and rebellion on the part of the Pharisees. In the one case the authority of truth was despised and its light rejected, the darkness being preferred because their deeds were evil; while in the other its authority was received and appreciated and from its blessed testimony were drawn the precious lessons of faith, obedience, gratitude, humility, fortitude and loving reverence. Thus, the same truth which blinded one enlightened and blessed the other. And so truth is always, as Paul tells us, a savor of life unto life, or of death unto death. It is only those who receive the truth into good and honest hearts that are rewarded with its blessed fruitage. – 2 Cor. 2:14-16.

Let every man, therefore, take heed how he hears the testimony of God: let him not be of those who receive it into a heart filled with selfishness or a spirit of vain glory or pride or irreverence or ingratitude; so that it may not have the blinding effect that it had upon the Pharisees, or the hardening effect it had upon them and upon Pharaoh, who thereby ten times precipitated upon himself and his people the plagues of divine wrath, which finally culminated in the destruction in the Red sea. But with a pure heart, a good and honest heart, let us receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save our souls. – James 1:21,22.

It is well for all the Lord's people ever to bear in mind that the present age, the present life, is our judgment day. Let us see to it that we conduct ourselves with that prudence and godly sincerity so befitting so solemn and momentous a time, and also that we come to the consideration of the divine testimony with that reverence and humility which insure the enlightening, and guard against the blinding, effects. Well indeed would it be for the world if they too would consider that "the eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good;" and that "God shall bring every work into judgment with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil;" and that "there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, neither hid that shall not be known." – Prov. 15:3; Eccl. 12:14; Luke 12:2,3.

This judgment in the case of the Lord's consecrated people culminates with the present life, and in the case of the world it will culminate in the age to come. There is, however, a judgment of the world as nations (not as individuals) which culminates in the present age. Thus, for instance, there was the national judgment of Israel which condemned them to blindness and to an overthrow, as unworthy of the continued favor of God. So also upon nominal spiritual Israel, the nations of Christendom, the judgment of God is also to blindness and to an overthrow in a great time of trouble. "Take heed how ye hear" the teachings of God's Word!

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