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"MY SHEEP HEAR MY VOICE."

– JOHN 10:27 –

CONSIDERING the mental imperfections, the unbalance of mind, prevalent in the world, we sometimes wonder that our differences of understanding are not greater than they are. The secret of the measure of unity amongst mankind on various subjects undoubtedly is that the majority are in almost total ignorance on such subjects, and hence make no claim of intelligent reasoning thereon, but merely follow some leader of thought. Just as soon as people begin to use their own thinking apparatus they begin to differ, and sound minds being in the minority the wonder is that more mistakes do not result. In the ordinary affairs of the world, in the ordinary affairs of life, there is no test as respects the soundness of theorizing, reasoning, except such as comes from the pages of history, showing the outworking of various theories, or such as are demonstrated by the mistakes of those about us. On these various subjects of life, each must do the best he knows how.

Only on subjects dealt with in the Scriptures have we a positive basis of information and positive lines along which to use our reasoning faculties. Hence the Apostle declares that those who follow strictly, implicitly, the divine instructions possess more than others "the spirit of a sound mind." (2 Tim. 1:7.) Yet even amongst those who are seeking to follow the guidance of the Word there is some room for differences, misunderstandings, false reasoning, etc. Hence the Apostle Paul urged Timothy, who was an elder in the Church and who had been reared under the teachings of the holy Scriptures, that he should still continue to search and to rightly divide the Word of Truth, that thus he [R3785 : page 168] might be a workman in the Lord's cause who would not need to be ashamed. (2 Tim.

2:15.) What was true of Timothy is true respecting all who endeavor to honor the Word of God. It behooves us all to be very careful, very circumspect, to look carefully on all sides of every important question, to endeavor to get the proper bearings and not be led off in any specious or false reasoning or sophistry which would entangle ourselves and others in error. Even with our best strivings for the truth, with our greatest care, there is still danger, especially amongst those who are awake and using their brains.

"KNOWLEDGE PUFFETH UP, LOVE BUILDETH UP"

It is safe to say that no other class of religious people in the world do as much thinking, studying and reasoning on the Scriptures as do the forty or fifty thousand readers of ZION'S WATCH TOWER. Their senses have been awakened by reason of use; they are earnestly desirous of knowing the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth; they find the promises of the Lord's Word assuring them that he will guide them into all truth, and hence they go forward with the greater sense of rest and security that they shall know the truth and that the truth shall make them free.

Nevertheless, there is a danger point in connection with the study of the Truth. It was along this point that the Apostle cautioned some in his day, saying, Be not many of you teachers, brethren, knowing that a man shall receive the greater testing – the severer trial of his faith, etc. The spirit of meekness is very essential to all of us. We need to realize that of ourselves we know nothing, that our own judgment and reasoning are not to be depended upon, that we must be continually looking to the Lord for the help which cometh from him alone. We have learned not to look to human institutions of learning, Doctors of Divinity, etc., but to the Word of God. We must learn also that, even with the Word of God in our hands, we need the Spirit of

God to direct us in its use, that we may understand it aright. We are to remember, too, that God's people have had the Bible in their hands for lo, these many years, yet have generally failed to understand it. Let the thought, then, make and keep us very humble, very dependent upon the great Teacher, the Head of the Church – the Church which is his body.

"ALL TAUGHT OF GOD"

We remember the story of Philip and the eunuch. The eunuch had the Scriptures and was reading them at the very time, yet he did not understand them until the Lord specially sent Philip to expound them to him. We remember Philip's question, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" We remember the eunuch's reply, "How can I unless it be interpreted to me?" We remember that the interpretation was sent by the Lord and accepted as from the Lord and that the blessing followed. We remember the Apostle's discourse along similar lines saying, How shall the heathen hear without a preacher? How shall any teach unless he be sent? How can any really interpret the Word of God and make it plain without divine assistance and guidance? This assistance apparently comes in two ways: first, a preparation of the heart, as the Lord denominated it, a hearing ear; and, second, a message sent of the Lord, an exposition of his Word for the hearing ears and for them alone. Humility is everywhere necessary, not only essential to the hearing ear but also essential to the tongue that would be the Lord's representative and ambassador and the exponent of his truth.

We remember the narrative of Peter and Cornelius, as illustrating the above. Cornelius was already devout; he revered God, was benevolent, gave much alms, was a good man in general, and he had a hearing ear, and yet in the Lord's providence it was necessary to send Peter to tell him the words by which himself and his house might be saved – might come

into harmony with the Lord. It was not sufficient merely to send Cornelius a copy of the Scriptures; but necessary to expound to him the way of the Lord. Let us not forget these things: let us not become self-conscious, boastful, proud, heady, highminded, for such conditions of heart would surely interfere with our learning further lessons in the school of Christ; [R3786 : page 168] and not only so, but some of the lessons already learned would speedily begin to fade away, and if the light which is in us become darkness how great will be that darkness – it will be greater than it is in those who never saw the light of Present Truth. – Matt. 6:23.

The Apostle tells us that the ox knoweth its owner and the ass his master's crib – although brute beasts they learn where to go for their nourishment. The same is true of barnyard fowls and all domestic animals – they not only have an appetite for food but soon learn the incidents connected with their feeding. The Lord seems to intimate that some of his people are less wise in these respects than are the dumb animals – they forget how, when and where they got their previous food. This is not true, however, of the Lord's flock. The true sheep know the green pastures and still waters and the Shepherd's voice, and a stranger will they not follow because they recognize not the voice of strangers – "My sheep hear my voice and they follow me."
