

"MIND THE SAME THINGS"

"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren,... that there are contentions among you." – 1 Cor. 1:10,11.

SO accustomed have we become to differences of opinion that many of God's children have come to feel that if there is perfect unity of thought, of mind, it must surely betoken a wrong condition, a subserviency. In the words quoted above the Apostle Paul shows that he is not in agreement with any such sentiments. He is criticising such a sentiment. Doubtless there were "Independents" in the Church then, as there are today, some who set themselves up as teachers, and boast of their independent thinking, boast that they do not agree with the "Dawns" and "Towers" on certain features of Truth, and by implication give the impression that they should be the more highly thought of on account of this independence.

It is not for us to judge of their motives and intentions, but we believe they are deceived, and working more injury to the cause of the Lord than they probably are aware. The Apostle's conception of Divine Truth as above set forth was that all who are speaking and teaching should *speak and teach the same things*; and elsewhere he says that we should all *mind the same things*. He goes into the subject in considerable detail, and shows wherein the differences have been fostered, and wherein is the error. He points out that these conditions are the result of a party spirit, a sectarian spirit, one claiming to be of Paul, another of Apollos, another of Peter, etc., whereas they all should have recognized the error of such a course – all should have recognized

that Christ is not divided, and that his Gospel is not discordant, but that it is one glorious, harmonious message of Divine revelation.

Are we asked how it would be possible for "many men of many minds" to view Divine Truth in exactly the same light? And are we pointed to the various creeds of Christendom which contradict each other on so many points of doctrine? Our answer is, that these divisions of sectarianism are all evidences of the truth of the Apostle's words quoted at the head of this article. The sectarian spirit has torn the Word of God to pieces. The Spirit of Christ, which would have preserved the unity of the Body, the Church, in the bonds of peace, was neglected, and a spirit of "independence" was fostered until the result is – Babylon, confusion.

The remedy is the one which we have sought to present in all of the Society's publications, namely, the ascertainment of the mind of Christ, the spirit of the truth, by the acceptance of the entire Word of God, and the bringing of every interpretation into alignment with it, and the rejection of everything found contrary to it.

The questions of the hour, which may as well be faced one time as another, are these: Have we who believe in "Present Truth" greater mental acumen and greater ability in the interpretation of the Word than all of our forefathers for eighteen centuries? Or, are we living in the glorious epoch which is designated the harvest time? And is not the Lord to receive the credit for having brought to our attention the harmonies of the Divine Word?

We believe that all who have a proper conception of "Present Truth" realize it to be indeed the Divine Plan of the Ages, and realize, too, that it is so far above and beyond the natural man's ability that it would be a miracle for him to construct such a

theory – the most stupendous miracle of which we have any knowledge. If its discernment now is not of man, nor by man, but by the holy Spirit, then the holy Spirit should be looked upon as the Teacher and not the human instrumentality through which the presentation has been made to the Church. And if this be accepted as a reasonable and truthful solution of the matter, is it not equally true that the "independent thinker" and the "independent teacher" is more likely by his independence to lead into darkness than to lead into further light?

It is surely in vain that we pray in the hymn, "Be **[R4446 : page 234]** thou my teacher, Lord," if in practice we give no heed to the Lord as the Teacher, but, on the contrary, encourage great *independence* of thought, and encourage the suggestion that anybody could strike a spiritual match which would give greater light and throw the Divine Plan of the Ages into the shadowy back-ground.

Whoever believes this to be possible cannot believe that the Divine Plan is the Truth – the true plan of God. It cannot satisfy his longings as nothing else could do, else he would not be longing for or seeking for something further, an independent and special light. Rather, he would be so over-awed with the wonderful grace of God in the light of Divine Truth, which had percolated through the blindness of his previous superstitions and given him the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, that he would be bowed down in humility and gratitude. He would fear to lift his eyes even for a moment from the beatific vision lest a single feature should be missed. Nor could he rationally expect to find a grander one, if he has really seen and really tasted the riches of God's grace and truth, as now made manifest to the saints.

The only explanation that at all fits or explains present conditions, and the present bright-shining of the Divine Word, is

that given us by the Master himself. He assured us that at his second coming he would make himself known to those who would be at that time his true, loyal, faithful servants. He assured us that he would gird himself, become their servant, and cause them to sit down to meat, and bring forth to them from the treasuries of Divine Truth things new and old. (Luke 12:37.) This is the only explanation of the wonderful light on the Divine Plan now shining; the only explanation of the bounties that crowd the table of the Lord's faithful ones. Meat to eat indeed have they of which the world knoweth not.

The Lord is proving us to see to what extent we recognize him as the *giver* of all good; to what extent our hearts are *feeding* upon the Truth; to what extent they are being *nourished* spiritually; and to what extent in others there is merely a feverish excitement and dissatisfaction, and looking for something new. We may be sure that to those who are in this dissatisfied condition Satan will present himself as a messenger of light, offering them other food and other light – "newer and better." We may be equally sure that God will be pleased to permit him to bring such delusions upon his people to prove them, to test them.

Our Lord's parable of the wheat which fell on the highway and was devoured by the birds of the air, and on the stony ground where the earth was shallow and the sun of persecution wilted it, and on the thorny ground and was choked by the cares of this life, and on the good ground where it brought forth thirty, sixty and an hundred fold, has fulfilment in our day as well as in the past. Truth tests the character, and God desires that it should do so. We must see to it that whatever we might have been by nature, by God's grace our hearts shall be in a productive condition, and that if possible [R4447 : page 234] we shall be of those who bring forth a hundred fold.

Only those who take heed to the Lord's Word and cultivate its spirit, and recognize the Master, and his providential leadings and care, and the feeding of the flock, will be ready to mind the same things, and be able to bring forth much fruit, and to gain the Kingdom.

Since writing the foregoing we have received inquiries from several quarters on matters closely allied to this subject and give our responses herewith:

(1) What shall the Lord's sheep do when those who have been leading them object to references to and quotations from *Dawn-Studies* in the church meetings, at which there is otherwise full liberty of expression? The specious claim is that this is "man worship, or book-worship," and that God's people should use God's Book only – the Bible.

We reply that the answer which should be openly made is this: We are unable to see the difference between hearing a teacher expound orally and having his teachings in printed form read or quoted by another. If teaching by the printed page is wrong, then all teaching is wrong. If it is not unreasonable for us to hear with respect the words of one who *claims* ability to assist us in the right understanding of God's Word, it cannot be unreasonable for us to hear the words from these books which *already have* actually and truly taught us nearly all that we do understand of God's Word. If we ever conclude to have only the one human channel of instruction our decision will be to stick firmly to the one God has used and blessed to our enlightenment rather than to an oral teacher, who thus shows his *opposition* to the agency God has owned, used and blessed to us. To do otherwise would be not only unwise but dishonoring to the Giver of all good.

(2) Our chosen class-leader or Elder is a clever brother, and yet we often think his expositions slightly in error – different

from our own views drawn largely from our study in the light of the *Towers* and *Dawn-Studies*. When we call the Elder's attention to the matter, he generally replies that it is a good while since he read the *Dawn-Studies* and, that as for the *Towers*, he really is too busy to read them. What would our duty as a class be in this case?

We reply that there are two duties to be considered: (a) The duty towards the leader or Elder would be to tell him in love and kindness that according to his own statement he is "*overcharged* with the cares of this life," and that it is your duty toward him to excuse him from the leading of the class that he may have proper time for personal study and development. (b) The duty toward the class would be to set as leader of its Berean Lessons a naturally less talented brother possessed of more time for study or more zeal for Truth. Elect him Elder and then all turn in and help him by studying well the questions for each lesson. We feel sure that the Lord will bless this courage and loyalty to the principles of his Word.

Remember that we and our forefathers have had Bibles and attempted to have Bible studies, Bible classes, etc., for centuries, without gaining much wisdom or light as a result. Did the light which you now enjoy come to you by "independent Bible study"? We doubt it!

What are the "*Dawn-Studies*" but *the Bible arranged topically*, with citations for every point and paragraph? Is it not probable that the great Adversary who delights to pose as an angel of light and an upholder of the Bible is really deceiving some of our dear friends – attempting to gradually draw them away from the great light which our Lord has now provided for us all, back to the methods in vogue before the true light shone upon our pathway?

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