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"WITH JESUS AND LEARNED OF HIM"

HOW much is told in the few words respecting Peter and John, and what their opponents thought of them, in the expression, "Now, when they saw the boldness (courage) of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus"! – Acts 4:13.

One of the remarkable things connected with the "present truth" is its effect upon those who receive it – its transforming effect, its renewing effect. As the Lord foreknew and foretold, the Gospel message has not specially appealed to the rich, the learned or the great. These feel themselves above the Master's teachings and are comparatively satisfied with their conditions. They are [R4460 : page 255] led to believe that God would give them a preference any day over the ignorant, the stupid, the ignoble. Thus they do not so much and so deeply feel their need of spiritual healing from the Good Physician.

The Gospel message takes hold chiefly upon those less favored in the present life. And this is true as well of the special features of Present Truth as of the general features of the Gospel message. In every case, however, the marked effect of the Gospel of Christ is manifested where it is received into a good and honest heart. It lifts up. It gives courage instead of fear. It gives hope instead of despondency. It gives an aim and object in life, instead of brutish stupidity. It cultivates the will and manifests itself in the intelligent expression of the eye, in the alertness of the step, the increased deftness of the hand, and loosing of the tongue to speak of the Lord and his grace.

Our enemies take note of all these things, and frequently marvel at the intelligence on every subject of those who for a little

time have been students of the Divine Plan of the Ages as presented in the six volumes of "Scripture Studies," and in the columns of this journal. This is well. We are glad of it. Yet there is a danger here. If the spirit of self-satisfaction, or pride of knowledge of the Scriptures, or of ability to present the Divine Plan, be cultivated, it may mean spiritual injury.

It is well that with us as with the Apostles our adversaries should take note of our courage; that we have the courage of our convictions; that we fear the Lord only, and that our highest aim is to deliver forth the good tidings of great joy to all who have the hearing ear. Here, however, we wish to call attention more particularly to the importance of the second feature mentioned in the Scripture quoted, namely, that they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus; that they were his disciples, learners in his school. This, truly, is the important thing for us – to learn of Jesus, to become copies of our Master.

All of our readers will bear us witness that we give due weight to doctrinal knowledge of the divine character and plan as set forth in the Divine Word. But while emphasizing all of this, and contending for its absolute necessity to growth in grace, we feel the necessity of continually urging upon the Lord's followers those features of the Master's teaching which constitute more particularly his spirit, his disposition. The sum of these is called Love. As of our Heavenly Father it is declared that "God is love," so love also is the special characteristic of our Redeemer, who was the image, the very reflection of the Father.

The analysis of love, as given by the Apostle, may be understood to be an analysis of the *divine character* as exemplified in our Lord Jesus – meekness, gentleness, patience, longsuffering, brotherly kindness – love. And since all his followers are invited to become disciples, or learners, under him

as their teacher, it follows that all who learn of him will gradually attain to these same elements of his character.

How could we better proclaim our relationship to him? How could we better recommend to others the School of Christ? How could we better show forth the praises of our Master than by living out his example, representing his character before men? Is not this the significance of his injunction, "Let your light so shine before men that they, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father which is in heaven"? It is proper, indeed, that we let our doctrines shine out before men, but it is specially important that we let the character of Christ shine out. It is specially important that the doctrines and the character shall correspond and co-attest each other.

We remember our Lord's words, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." This was the new commandment that we should love one another as he has loved us – with a pure, unselfish love which thinketh no evil, vaunteth not itself, is not easily offended, and seeketh not its own, selfishly – the love which lays down time, energy, and even life itself, for the brethren.

We may never become entirely satisfactory to ourselves in thought, word and deed while in the flesh; and we may never, therefore, be entirely satisfactory either to others; but we can, we should, we must, and by the grace of God let us each resolve that we will, attain to all of this so far as our hearts are concerned. Nothing short of this will be satisfactory to our Lord, to whom we are "betrothed" as members of the chaste, virgin Church. If we fail to come up to this reasonable, possible, standard, we will fail to make our calling and election sure to a place in the Bride Company. But if we do these things, if at heart we are at this standard, and are daily seeking to live it to the best of our ability, the heavenly Bridegroom will rejoice to own us as members of

his elect. Oh how much depends upon our learning this lesson!
"If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."*

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