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## **KNOW OF THE DOCTRINE**

– *DECEMBER 29. – JOHN 7:17. –*

**"If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself." – John 7:17.**

WE are living in a day when the very word doctrine seems to be offensive to the majority of Christian people. Each denomination realizes that its own system of doctrines is imperfect, unsatisfactory, undefendable. And the same is believed in respect to all other doctrines. Hence by mutual consent Christian people seem disposed to henceforth and forever ignore doctrines; for they believe that, if after nineteen centuries they are thus confused, the matter never was clear and never will be clear to anybody.

All this is a great mistake; the doctrines of Christ, as presented by the Great Teacher and His Apostles, was a great message, of which none of them were ashamed. The difficulty with the Lord's people today is that we gradually fell away from those doctrines – we gradually put darkness for light and light for darkness, and thus gradually got into the spirit of Babylon, and into the spirit of bondage to human traditions and creeds. Instead of shunning doctrines, we should realize that they are the very things needed to cause the scattering of our darkness and superstitions, and to draw all of God's people nearer together.

The doctrines of Christ and the Apostles is what we need to inspire us to break down all our creed fences, which so long have separated us as God's people, the one from the other, in various denominational folds, all of which are contrary to the Divine arrangement; for [R5137 : page 361] God has but the one fold for all His "sheep" of this Age, as He will have another fold for the Restitution "sheep" of the next Age – the Messianic Kingdom Age.

## **"ONE LORD, ONE FAITH, ONE BAPTISM"**

Can we doubt that if as God's people we put away sectarianism and the creed spectacles of our forefathers, and if we go with pure, sincere hearts to the Lord and His Word, we will there find again the "one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father over all, and one Lord and Savior Jesus Christ," and "one Church of the First-Born, whose names are written in heaven"? (Eph. 4:5,6; Heb. 12:23.) Let us hearken to the words: "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward," "But remember the former days, in which, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; partly whilst ye were made a gazing stock both by reproaches and by afflictions; and partly whilst ye became companions of them that were so used." "For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise." (Heb. 10:35,32,33,36.)

The time seems long to all of us, even though we remember that "a day with the Lord is as a thousand years." When we think of the fact that it is thirty-nine hundred years since God's promise to Abraham, that his Seed should bless all the families of the earth – when we think of the fact that Israel did not receive that great privilege of being the spiritual Seed from which primarily that blessing should go forth, and that the "elect" are receiving it; when we think of the fact that God has been nearly nineteen centuries in selecting the "elect" from Israel and from all nations, it is enough to stagger our faith unless we hold firmly to the Divine promise and remember that God confirmed it with an Oath. By these two immutable, unchangeable things, the Divine Word and the Divine Oath, we know that the Seed of Abraham is to be developed, and that eventually it is to bless all the families of the earth. It is the Divine will that we allow our faith in this great promise of God to be "an anchor to our souls, sure and steadfast, entering into that within the veil." – Heb. 6:19.

## **THE DOCTRINES OF CHRIST**

What we all need as God's people is to put away human theories and other gospels and take hold afresh on the Gospel of Christ. These other gospels are other messages of hope, aside from the one which the Bible presents. For instance, Theosophy is one of these; Evolution is another; New Theology is another. These all hold out a different gospel from that which Jesus and the Apostles presented; the one that was given to us for our sanctification, and through the holding fast of which, and the obedience to The Faith, we are to be saved and given a share with Messiah in His glorious Empire of the world.

The doctrines of Christ mean those doctrines presented in the Bible by Jesus and His mouthpieces, the Apostles. These doctrines relate to the Church and to the world, and God's blessing for each; these doctrines relate to sin and its forgiveness; the terms of that forgiveness, the basis of that forgiveness – the death of Jesus – and the hope of that forgiveness, release from Divine condemnation, fellowship with God, and everlasting life obtained through resurrection of the dead.

### **A PREREQUISITE TO KNOWLEDGE**

But some one will inquire, Why is it so difficult to understand the doctrines of Christ? Why are there six hundred different denominations of Christians? Why do they all so misunderstand the matter – that these different denominations have resulted from the differences of **[R5137 : page 362]** theory respecting the teachings of the Bible? The simple explanation is that, shortly after the death of the Apostles when the Church began to be in a measure of prosperity, the Adversary came in and sowed the seeds of false doctrines, using human lips and human pens in his service, through pride and ambition. The darkness became so great that, looking back today, we speak of the period as the "Dark Ages."

The various denominations of Christendom are evidences of honesty, perseverance and love of the Truth, because our forefathers, who made these creeds, were each trying to get more and more out of the dark and back to the "True Light." They all made the mistake, however, of holding too much to the creeds and theories of the past. Let us not make the same mistake; let us cut loose entirely from every authority outside the Word of God. Whoever can help us understand God's Word – we should be glad to have his assistance; but we cannot acknowledge as inspired or authoritative the teachings of the "Fathers" of the early times, however conscientious they may have been, because we cannot recognize that there were any such authorized successors to the Apostles.

God, who foretold through the Prophets this long period of darkness, and who has blessed and guided His saintly children throughout it, without removing all of their blindness, has promised that with the end of this Age will come a great blessing and enlightenment upon His people, when the "wise virgins" will find their lamps burning brightly, and be able to understand and appreciate the deep things of God: "The wise shall understand, but none of the wicked shall understand." In the end of this Age the curtain was to be drawn, and the "true light" was to shine forth, scattering all the darkness. We are in the dawning of this New Age today, and therefore may see much more clearly than did our forefathers, the Divine character and Plan for human salvation.

### **WILLETH TO DO HIS WILL**

Today's study is a message from the Master's own lips. He gives us the key to a clear knowledge of His doctrines, namely, that the student must be fully consecrated to God and fully desirous of knowing His Will and His Plan. In order to see light in God's light – to see the Truth, from the Divine standpoint of the Divine revelation, we must draw near to God in the spirit of our minds, consecrated in our heart. We must will to do His will.

But what does this mean? What is it to will to do His will? God's will represents actual perfection of thought and word and deed, toward God, toward our fellows in the Body of Christ, and toward all mankind. This is the Divine Standard set up, but we are no more able to fulfil its demands than were the Jews. As St. Paul declares, "We cannot do the things that we would." Weakness of the flesh, frailty and imperfection, we all have with the world; the best that we can do is to *will* to do right, and to the best of our ability carry out that covenant with the Lord to do His will. At the very best all will come short of perfection.

But for those who have come into harmony with God, through Christ – for those who have made a covenant with Him by sacrifice – for those who have Jesus for their Advocate, a provision has been made, whereby the willing, all desiring to do the Divine will, and manifesting endeavors so to do, are counted as righteous – as though they did the Divine will perfectly. This class, in the Scriptures, is known as the "saints"; they are the prospective members of the Body of Christ. It is to these that the promises of our text apply, that they shall know to do the Divine will, shall know whether Jesus merely made up these teachings of Himself, or whether He was the active agent of Jehovah in what He did and in what He taught.

At the close of the year, and on the threshold of another, shall we not determine to give our hearts, our wills, fully to the Lord – determine in our wills to do God's will? If so, following the instructions of the Word of God during the coming year, we shall doubtless be blessed and enabled fully to know, to appreciate, to understand, the doctrines of Christ – the deep things of God, which are revealed to this class by the Spirit of God.

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## TWO YEARS MORE

Two years more, and I shall see Him, whom not having seen I love,  
This grand prospect, daily, hourly, holds my heart on things above;  
Now by faith, I'm pressing onward in the footsteps of my Lord,  
Rough the pathway, steep and narrow, 'tis the path my Master trod.

Oh, the rapture of that meeting, Oh, what ecstasy 'twill bring,  
When with open, perfect vision I shall gaze upon my King!  
I shall feast upon the beauty of the One I love so well,  
And with tongue no longer stammering, all my love for Him I'll tell.

Two years, and I'll see the Father, when the Son with loving pride,  
Shall conduct me to His presence, with the rest of His dear Bride.  
What a sense of awe will fill me, as with unveiled face I gaze  
On that grand and mighty Being, whom all Heaven unites to praise!

Shall I know myself, I wonder, when He takes me to His heart,  
And of all that heavenly glory I shall find myself a part?  
Heaven not complete without me, mine, eternities of bliss?  
Oh, my soul, thou must not stagger, for thy God hath promised this!

Oft a secret fear assails me, that I may be left behind;  
Then I bid my soul take courage, 'tis that Enemy of mine!  
He would use to cause my downfall censure sharp, or flattering breath,  
For he hates God's holy children with a hatred strong as death.

But my Father will not leave me to his mercy, but prepare  
Heavenly armor to protect me, which, if I will always wear,  
Every fight will prove me victor, as I wield the two-edged Sword,  
World and flesh and powers of evil, all must fall before His Word!

Oh, my soul, thy life dependeth on thy faithfulness alone;  
While the days and hours are passing, art thou holding fast thy crown?  
Keep this thought before thee always, let it daily strengthen thee,

***"Two years more decides forever thine eternal destiny!"***

Then the thought, Oh! how it thrills me, any day He may send word –  
"Child, thy work on earth is finished, enter into thy reward."  
But, if I need further testings, crosses heavy, trial sore,  
I can wait, ***for at the longest, it is only two years more!***

– ***Unknown.***

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