

ACQUAINT YOURSELF WITH GOD

"Strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." – Heb. 5:14.

IN THIS text the Apostle uses a well-known physical truth to illustrate an important spiritual truth. As human babes would be choked or have their digestion ruined by the stronger kinds of food which they could when older use to advantage, so, as the Apostle says, spiritual babes have need of the simpler truths, that they may grow thereby and develop character, as well as learn to appreciate the Divine Plan. That strong meat belongs to them that are of full age is an unquestionable fact. Adults may exercise discretion as to which foods would be expedient for their use – which would be palatable, which would be productive of the best results – that they may choose wisely. We all find that certain foods that agree with one do not agree with another. The food that is palatable to one would not be palatable to another.

In proportion as one appreciates and uses the food that is best for him, he will find development and gain strength. So with those in Christ. There is such abundance spread on the table of the Lord that when we come to the table each may find the food adapted to his particular need at the time. Some may need faith; some, patience, some perseverance, etc. As each one comes to a considerable development in Christian knowledge and Christian experience, he should be able to determine which features of the Word of Truth are necessary for the supplying of the deficiencies of his own character. At the beginning of his Christian experience one is unable to discern clearly good and evil. A childish mind might misinterpret Scripture, or might combine texts so as to [R5326 : page 302] arrive at erroneous conclusions, separating

them from their respective contexts. But a mature mind would see that such putting together of Scriptures would do harm.

DEFICIENT APPRECIATION OF GOOD AND EVIL

Some Christian people stumble over Bible Truths, and make evil out of them. For instance, our good Brother Calvin evidently did not have a sufficiently clear appreciation of good and evil. As a result, instead of getting good out of the doctrine of the Election of the Church, he brought out of it a very evil doctrine, namely, that all those who are not elected are damned. His new mind was not sufficiently developed to rightly divide the Word of Truth. (2 Timothy 2:15.) Any one who appreciates God's character sufficiently would have known, in spite of wrong teachings, that God would not deliberately doom our race to eternal torture before they were created.

Many people of today have not their senses sufficiently exercised by reason of use. They charge the Almighty with something that no human being would even think of doing. This expression, "have their senses exercised," does not refer merely to minds, but includes the heart also. Brother Calvin had a very able *mind*, apparently; but the thing lacking was a proper heart-fellowship with the Lord; for if he had known the character of the Lord, he would have known that the doctrine of everlasting torture was contrary to every element of the Divine character. – See Jeremiah 7:31; 19:5.

So far as we can judge, Brother Wesley must have been considerably developed along the line of spiritual appreciation of the Lord's character. We doubt whether Wesley was any more logical than Calvin – perhaps less so – but evidently he was in heart-harmony with God. Wesley very properly concluded that it would be impossible for God to make any such plan as that set forth by Calvin. In our own cases, we know that we might have a surface

knowledge, and yet not have this spiritual development – the *heart knowledge* of God. We are to seek not only to have an intellectual knowledge of the Bible, or a familiarity with the *words* of the Bible, but also to appreciate the sentiment, the spirit, that lies behind the words – the *character* of our Heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus Christ – the spirit that They are of, and that we also would be of.

DEEP STUDY PROFITABLE

When the people of our day speak of Bible study, they very rarely mean a study and appreciation of the deeper spiritual truths there presented. Rather, they seem to be content with a study of the geography, the history, the psychology, etc. As we see these conditions, we are forced [R5327 : page 302] to the conclusion that the majority of Christian people of today, just as in the Apostles' day, have need that some one teach them again what are the first principles of the doctrine of Christ.

The Apostle Peter (I Peter 2:2) says also, along the same line, "Desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby." We all have need of the simple things. But the spiritual babe that does not grow will never reach manhood's estate. He will never be a king and priest. We need a real acquaintance with God. "And this is life eternal, that they might *know Thee*, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent! – not merely know *about* God, and know *about* Jesus Christ, but that they might *know* Them in the sense of being personally acquainted with Them – know Them by having the same Holy Spirit, and growing therein – know them by a study of "the deep things of God."

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