

CONFLICT BETWEEN TRUTH AND ERROR

The great controversy which began in heaven is in reality a universal struggle between truth and error. Speaking of Lucifer's defection, Christ said in John 8:44 " He was a murderer from the beginning, and **abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him.** When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." The importance of understanding the truth cannot be overestimated. John 8:32 says "And ye shall know the truth, and **the truth shall make you free.**" And the Wiseman declared, "Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding " Proverbs 23:23.

It is the possession of truth which makes a church the object of God's supreme regard. Paul asked the question in Romans 3:1-2, "What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? much every way: **chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.**" Christ said "I am the way, **the truth** and the life." And in 1 John 5:6 it tells us "And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth." "God's holy, educating Spirit is in His word. A light, a new and precious light, shines forth from every page " Christ Object Lessons p.132.

So to reject truth is to reject both Christ and the Holy Spirit. That is why there are serious consequences in rejecting truth. ". . . because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness " 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12. This warning is especially pertinent to us today when God has promised to give us greater light as we approach the end.

IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING A RIGHT ATTITUDE

Satan has conditioned us at the present time to reject or ignore anything in the line of advanced light by sending a lot of spurious messages. We have been bombarded with many novelties such as the feast days, the holiness name, the re-interpretation of the prophecies and various views on the Trinity. Satan has been raising a lot of distractions to keep our minds occupied so that we will have no time to fortify our minds with present truth. We have also had major issues over women's ordination and acceptance of the LGBT faction. These have been like so many 'brush fires' that need to be tended to so that it is difficult to concentrate on the positive truths God would have us understand.

We should be guarded against two dangers—receiving dangerous error and rejecting important truth. In ST April 22, 1889 we read, "We do not want to be found receiving dangerous error as truth. We do not wish to imperil our souls by rejection of God's messages of warning and counsel. **Our greatest danger lies in our tendency to refuse increased light, and our only safety is to see and understand for ourselves 'what saith the Lord.'** "

One of the negative attitudes that will hinder our understanding of truth is prejudice. Someone has defined prejudice as being 'down' on something you are no 'up' on. That is what lay at the root of the problems which Jones and Waggoner faced in 1888. The loud cry of the third angel was rejected and the coming of Christ delayed because of the prejudice against the truth which God had sent to His people. Ellen White warns against the dangers of prejudice. "When men listen to the Lord's message, but through temptation allow prejudice to bar the mind and heart against the reception of truth, the enemy has power to present the most precious things in a distorted light. Looking through the medium of prejudice and passion, they feel too indignant to search the Scriptures in a Christlike spirit, but repudiate the whole matter because points are presented that are not in accordance with their own ideas "

When a new view is presented, the question is often asked, 'Who are its advocates? What position do

they hold in the church that would qualify him or her teach us who have been students of the Bible for many years? Inspiration answers that question in these words: "God will send His words of warning by whom He will send. And the question to be settled is not what person is it who brings the message; this does not in any way affect the word spoken. By their fruits ye shall know them" EGW 1888 Materials p.1023.

We must not mark out the way or by whom the Lord will send light. "The Lord often works where we least expect Him; He surprises us by revealing His power through instruments of His own choice, while He passes by the men to whom we have looked as those through whom light should come" Testimonies to Ministers p106. When a point of doctrine comes to our attention we should do what the noble Bereans did – search the Scriptures to see if these things are so. We have this Inspired counsel: "When a point of doctrine that you do not understand comes to your attention, go to God on your knees, that you may understand what is truth and not be found as were the Jews fighting against God. While warning men to beware of accepting anything unless it is truth, we should also warn them not to imperil their souls by rejecting messages of light, but to press out of the darkness by earnest study of the word of God" Testimonies to Ministers p.110.

EVADING THE TRUTH INEXCUSABLE

Some people may think they can avoid having to make a decision on a message of truth by shutting themselves away from coming in contact with it. But in the day of judgment they will be without excuse. Christ said in John 3:19 "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

Ellen White writes about her brother's experience around 1844 when the message of Christ's return was being heralded by the Millerites. "My brother said at one time that he would not hear anything concerning the doctrine we hold, for fear he should be convinced. He would not come to the meetings, or listen to the discourses; but he afterward declared that he saw he was as guilty as if he had heard them. God had given him an opportunity to know the truth, and He would hold him responsible for this opportunity" 1 Selected Messages p. 413. Therefore, when God sends light to His people, no matter by whom it is sent, they cannot avoid looking into its claims without being guilty of rejection of light.

"When a message comes in the name of the Lord to His people, no one may excuse himself from an investigation of its claims. No one can afford to stand back in an attitude of indifference and self-confidence, and say: "I know what is truth. I am satisfied with my position. I have set my stakes, and I will not be moved away from my position, whatever may come. I will not listen to the message of this messenger; for I know that it cannot be truth." It is from pursuing this very course that the popular churches were left in partial darkness, and that is why the messages of heaven have not reached them" Counsels on Sabbath School p. 28.

" When new light is presented to the church, it is perilous to shut yourselves away from it. Refusing to hear because you are prejudiced against the message or the messenger will not make your case excusable before God. To condemn that which you have not heard and do not understand will not exalt your wisdom in the eyes of those who are candid in their investigations of truth. And to speak with contempt of those whom God has sent with a message of truth, is folly and madness. If our youth are seeking to educate themselves to be workers in His cause, they should learn the way of the Lord, and live by every word that proceedeth out of His mouth. They are not to make up their minds that the whole truth has been unfolded, and that the Infinite One has no more light for His people. If they entrench themselves in the belief that the whole truth has been revealed, they will be in danger of discarding precious jewels of truth that shall be discovered as men turn their attention to the searching of the rich mine of God's word" Ibid. p. 32.

SHOULD WE EXPECT FURTHER LIGHT

In 1890 Ellen White was asked whether the Lord has more light for us. Her reply was, "We have only the glimmerings of the rays of the light that is yet to come to us" 1 Selected Messages p. 401. She also stated in Counsels on Sabbath School Work p. 32, "God has precious light to come to His people at this very time, and you should strive earnestly in your investigations to aim at nothing less than a thorough knowledge of every point of truth, that you may not be found in the day of God among those who have not lived by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

There are repeated references in Inspiration regarding more light to come as we near the end. Proverbs 4:18 tells us that "But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." And increased light, especially from the sanctuary, will shine upon God's people in these end times because God's "way is in the sanctuary." Christ Object Lessons p. 133 tells us that "The significance of the Jewish economy is not yet fully comprehended. Truths vast and profound are shadowed forth in its rites and symbols." The Third Angel's Message, which is present truth for these last days, points the minds of the believers to the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary. See EW 254. It tells us that "These messages were represented to me as an anchor to the people of God. Those who understand and receive them will be kept from being swept away by the many delusions of Satan" Early Writings p. 256.

Christ is the way, the truth and the life. To reject truth is to reject Him. But when we open our hearts to greater truth, we are blest with a greater revelation of His character and love. Our worship can only be acceptable if we "worship Him in Spirit and in truth" John 4:24.