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Subject: THE TEST OF DOCTRINE

Posted by [Mel\\_SDR](#) on Sat, 03 Oct 2020 14:57:18 GMT

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## THE TEST OF DOCTRINE

I feel thankful that it is the privilege of every one to do as we have just sung,

"Tear every idol from Thy throne, and worship only Thee."

I am thankful that it is not too late for wrongs to be righted; it is not too late to examine our own hearts, and prove ourselves, whether we are in the faith or not; it is not too late to assure ourselves that Christ is abiding in our heart by faith.

If we compare ourselves with the great moral standard, we shall understand what are our defects of character. But whatever our defects and short-comings, we should not be discouraged. We must see our sins, and put them away; for Christ cannot abide in a divided heart.

Our greatest sins which separate our souls from God are unbelief and hardness of heart. Why is it that we are so unbelieving and unimpressible? The reason for it is, we are filled with self-confidence. We feel self-sufficient. If we receive some token of God's blessing, we take it as a guarantee that we are all right; and when reproof comes, we say, "I know that God has accepted me, for he has blessed me, and I will not accept this reproof." What a terrible condition we would be in if the Lord did not bless us! We must study Christ, the Pattern of character that God has given us. If we have a garment to cut, we study the pattern. And in the Christian life, we must give up our own ideas and plans, and go according to the Pattern. But instead of this, we work away from the Pattern. We should not be full of self-conceit. We must say as did John, "He must increase, but I must decrease."

The more you study and copy the Pattern, the less confidence you will have in self. How the enemy has brought his own spirit into our work! We do not love one another, as Christ has enjoined upon us, because we do not love Christ. If your track is crossed in any way, if any one differs in opinion from you, then in place of feeling humility of mind, in place of carrying your burden to Christ, and asking him for wisdom and light to know what is truth, you draw from him, and are tempted to present your brother's views in a false light, that they shall not have influence. We know that this manner of spirit is not of God, no matter by whom it is manifested. When you see your case as it stands before God, you will have different ideas in regard to your own defects of character than you now have. When views are presented that do not seem in harmony with your own, it should drive you to study your Bible, and investigate it to see if you yourself hold the right position on the subject. That another holds a different opinion, should not stir up the very worst traits of your nature. You should love your brother, and say, "I am willing to investigate your views. Let us come right to the word of God, and prove by the law and the testimony what is truth."

We should feel the necessity of searching the Scriptures for ourselves. We should study God's word until we know that our foundation is on the solid rock. We should dig for the gems of truth.

We are to test every man's doctrine by the law and the testimony; for, says the prophet, "if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." John says, "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." Those who claim to have light from God, and yet turn away their ear from hearing the law, are under great deception. Those who understandingly reject the fourth commandment are in darkness. Says James, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." It is vain for us to think that we are prepared for the finishing touch of immortality, while we live in willful transgression of any of God's holy precepts.

Suppose a brother should come to us, and present some matter to us in a different light from that in which we had ever looked at it before, should we come together with those who agree with us, to make sarcastic remarks, to ridicule his position, and to form a confederacy to misrepresent his arguments and ideas? Should we manifest a bitter spirit toward him, while neglecting to seek wisdom of God in earnest prayer,--while failing to seek counsel of Heaven? Would you think you were keeping the commandments of God while pursuing such a course toward your brother? Would you be in a condition to recognize the bright beams of heaven's light should it be flashed upon your pathway? Would your heart be ready to receive divine illumination?--No; you would not recognize the light. All this spirit of bigotry and intolerance must be taken away, and the meekness and lowliness of Christ must take its place before the Spirit of God can impress your minds with divine truth. We should come right down to the root of the matter presented, and should not be in a position where we shall have no love for our brother because his ideas differ from our views. If you do take this position, you say by your attitude that you consider your own opinion perfection, and your brother's erroneous.

When a doctrine is presented that does not meet our minds, we should go to the word of God, flee to the Lord in prayer, and give no place to the enemy to come in with suspicion and prejudice. We should never permit that spirit to be manifested that arraigned the priests and rulers against the Redeemer of the world. They complained that he disturbed the people, and they wished he would let them alone; for he caused perplexity and dissension. The Lord sends light among us to prove of what manner of spirit we are. We are not to deceive ourselves. In 1844 when anything came to our attention that we did not understand, we kneeled down, and asked God to help us to take the right position, and then we could come to a right understanding and see eye to eye. There was no dissension, no enmity, no evil-surmising, no misjudging of our brethren. If we only understood the evil of this spirit of intolerance, how we would shun it! We join ourselves to the enemy of God and man when we accuse our brethren, for Satan was an accuser of the brethren. We bear false witness when we add a little to our brother's words, and give them a false coloring; and in the sight of God we are not doers, but transgressors of the law. We are not on the Lord's side; we are on the side of him who hurts, destroys, and tears down the cause of truth. We should pray for one another, instead of drawing apart.

He who keeps the word of truth abides in Christ; in him is the love of God perfected. We should be ready to accept light from God from whatever source it may come, instead of rejecting it because it does not come through the channel from which we expected it. When Jesus opened the word of God at Nazareth, and read Isaiah's prophecy of his work and mission, and declared that it was fulfilled in their hearing, they began to doubt and question. They said, "Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? and his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things? And they were offended in him." They did not expect light from him, and they rejected the message of God.

When he who had been born blind, received his sight, and came to the Pharisees and told them of Jesus, they said, "Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out." They settled themselves in unbelief, in rejection of Christ, though they professed to believe in God.

God has commanded us to love one another. If you see defects in a brother, do not say, "I have lost all confidence in him." Have you any right to speak in that way of another? The Scripture commands us to build one another up in the most holy faith. We are to be holy in all manner of conversation. Are your minds broad enough to take in all the circumstances, perplexities, and trials of the brother you condemn?

There are many whose religion consists in criticising habits of dress and manners. They want to bring every one to their own measure. They desire to lengthen out those who seem too short for their standard, and to cut down others who seem too long. They have lost the love of God out of their hearts; but they think they have a spirit of discernment. They think it is their prerogative to criticise, and pronounce judgment; but they should repent of their error, and turn away from their sins. Peter asked of the Lord concerning John, "Lord, and what shall this man do?" Jesus answered, "What is that to thee? follow thou me." We are to follow the Example. A flood of light shines upon us, and all jealousy should be put away; for jealousy is cruel as the grave. Purge out the old leaven; for a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. Let us love one another. Let us have harmony and union throughout our ranks. Let us have our hearts sanctified to God. Let us look upon the light that abides for us in Jesus. Let us remember how forbearing and patient he was with the erring children of men. We should be in a wretched state if the God of heaven were like one of us, and treated us as we are inclined to treat one another. Thank the Lord that his thoughts are not our thoughts, nor his ways our ways. He is full of compassion and love, long-suffering, and abundant in tender mercy. If we have the love of Jesus, we shall love those for whom he has died.

SOURCE:

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By Mrs. E. G. White.