

# The Importance of Doctrines

THE quality of the faith of anyone who professes Christianity does not depend on his oral acceptance of Jesus Christ but on the soundness and purity of the doctrines he believes. If the doctrines are pure or true in the sense that they are established in the Holy Scriptures, then the faith is also genuine and well founded; but if on the contrary the doctrines are false, the obvious fact is that the faith, no matter how elegant or gigantic its outward structure, is as well spurious. And Jesus warned, “beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees”!

## Spiritual Malnutrition

As lack of good food is capable of impairing bodily health and causing death, so too doctrines that are devoid of truth are harmful to the spiritual health of all people and can send them to destruction. Thus spiritual malnutrition is more dangerous than the physical one.

The fact remains unfortunately, that many still suffer from spiritual malnutrition. They have been so tied to the apron-strings of false apostles and prophets, hypocritical ministers and visionists or dreamers that they can swallow without question any dogma no matter how unreasonable and unscriptural it may be. Such are the people who are fed with stones, (lies) instead of bread (truth).

Some people think that once they express their belief in God, attend church services and pay dues in their church organizations they will be saved. They do not care whether the doctrines of those organizations are in total harmony with the Scriptures or not. This indifference on the part of certain people in regard to doctrines has made false prophets and teachers to gain undue advantage of them. But except such ones go out of the grip of blind leaders to follow the light of Jesus Christ, the end will be gloomy. God said: “A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?” – Jeremiah 5: 30, 31.

## Leaven of Pharisees

Jesus Christ does not want his followers to believe false doctrines because he knows that they cannot lead to salvation. In the course of his ministry on earth, he warned his disciples against the teachings of the Pharisees and Sadducees. He said: *“Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.”*

Not understanding what the Master meant his disciples thought he was talking of ordinary bread. After Christ had advanced a few points more, “then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees”.-Matthew, 16: 6-12.

The apostle John stated: “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.” 1st John 4: 1

And St. Paul said: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." (1st Thessalonians 5: 21) But how many pay heed to these admonitions of the apostles? How many people take time to examine doctrines before they believe? Do some not just stick to certain church organizations because of unspiritual reasons such as being born into that particular church group or for its being one of the oldest orthodox churches or for having married in that church or for attending the college or university founded by that church? To remain in a church, which teaches false doctrines, for these unscriptural reasons is wrong and disastrous in the end -Proverbs 16: 25. However, we thank God that through the publications of God's Kingdom Society (GKS) and some other christian groups, many people are now getting out from the shackles of dogmatism and ignorance and are seeing the light of Jesus to appreciate the importance of doctrines. They no longer want to be led by the nose. It was Christ who said: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."-John 8: 32.

Owing to lack of spiritual knowledge and because of simplicity many people have been deceived with the result that they base their faith on errors or false teachings. There is need to be critical of doctrines, not with the aim to find fault but to ascertain the truth of our beliefs. Said St. Paul: *"That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ."* – Ephesians 4: 14, 15; Hebrews 13: 9.

Many institutions of learning have become places where children are fed with lies about God and His purposes of creation. Some of those who are employed to teach religious knowledge in the colleges do not know God, they themselves being sceptics or nominal Christians. It is most unfortunate that certain people who do not believe in the Bible are made to be religious teacher: merely because of paper qualifications. In- stead of imparting divine knowledge to their students they preach their own imaginations and doctrines of devils and consequently the children become godless and come out of schools as atheists or agnostics.

In certain public examinations the answers to some of the questions which have been given credence in the subject of religion and for which some obtained credit are a farrago of untruth. Of course, it is not from secular, academic authorities people should expect to gain the knowledge of God's revelation that will make them to be saved; it is from ministers of religion who preach the truth of God without corruption as recorded in the Bible. – Proverbs 12: 17; 14: 25; Jeremiah 3: 15.

## **Invented Dogmas**

Also in many church organizations the ministers, priest and catechists teach a lot of things for which they have no scriptural authority. They always stick to the vain traditions of men and invented dogmas of their predecessors, though some of such teachings are against their own conscience.

Let us examine some few points of doctrine that are being taught today:

- For instance, many have been taught to believe that God's Kingdom is only in heaven which they say is the home of all the righteous. Yet they pray for God's Kingdom to come to the earth. And Jesus Christ said: "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit

- the earth.” (Matthew, 5: 5) And if all the good are in heaven and the wicked are in hell-fire as they believe, why did Jesus Christ say that in the day of resurrection all the dead, both good and bad would come from the graves? He did not teach that the righteous would descend from heaven or that the wicked would come out of fire but that all of them would rise from the GRAVES!- John 5: 28, 29; see also Acts 24: 15.
- Some say that the soul can never die. But this view is the very opposite of the truth of the Scriptures. St. Peter said that unbelieving souls shall be destroyed. (Acts 3: 23) If “the soul can never die” as some churches are teaching why did St Peter make such statement? Look up also Psalm, 89: 48 (Psalm, 88: 49-Douay); Ezek. 18:4,20; Matthew, 10:28 and Revelation 16:3.
  - It is also held as an article of faith in certain circles that Mary is the mediatrix between God and men but this has no foundation in the Scriptures, rather the Bible states positively that there is “ONE MEDIATOR between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1st Timothy 2: 5), NOT Mary.
  - It is also believed and taught that Mary was carried body and soul by angels to heaven. This is a blatant lie. We challenge anyone to cite a single proof from the Scriptures, which all churches agree is the AUTHORITY, to substantiate this view. The human corruptible body CANNOT go to, or dwell in heaven. It is written clearly in the Scriptures that “flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God” in heaven. (1st Corinthians 15: 50) Jesus himself went there, NOT with human body, but with the spiritual body by which God raised him from the dead.-I Pet. 3: 18-20; Acts 1: 1-9; 1st Corinthians 15: 40, 44, 49-50.
  - There are certain religious organizations that allow women to preach from house to house or to mount the pulpits to preach sermons in the churches. But St. Paul says, “Let your women KEEP SILENCE in the churches: for it is NOT PERMITTED UNTO THEM TO SPEAK.” (1st Corinthians 14: 34,35) And he further stated: “BUT I SUFFER NOT A WOMAN TO TEACH, nor to usurp authority over the man.” 1st Timothy 2: 11-14.

We have brought the foregoing few points to light to show how many errors have been accepted by people knowingly or unknowingly, and to stress the need for vigilance.

Any doctrine that is not in conformity with the holy Scriptures is counterfeit and must be discarded. If anybody tells you to accept a dogma whose authority is derived from a source outside the Holy Bible, never must you give in-even if he calls himself the most holy angel. Here is St. Paul’s stern warning: “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.”-Galatians 1: 8,9; see also Isaiah 8: 20.

Furthermore, St. Paul in his first letter to Timothy stated: “If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings as of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.” – 1st Timothy 6: 3-5.

Doctrine of Christ The importance of doctrines cannot be over-stated. True doctrines are from God. Jesus Christ said: *“My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me. If any man will do His will,*

*he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.*" (John 7: 16, 17) These true doctrines cannot be obtained from anywhere other than from the Holy Bible.

And St. Paul stated emphatically: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." – 2nd Timothy 3: 16,17.

Anyone who wanders from the teachings of Jesus Christ as revealed in the Scriptures will lose the favour of God and the grace of life. It is worthwhile to warn people therefore not to take things for granted nor do anything to support false religious ministers and to promote the cause of falsehood and unrighteousness. John the apostle wrote: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God."

"He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." – 2nd John 9-11.

True Christians of today must follow the example of Jesus Christ and see to it that his doctrines are jealously guarded against corruption. St. Paul said: "For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ." (2nd Corinthians 2: 17) And knowing the importance of doctrines he (Paul) charged Timothy: "If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained. But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." – 1st Timothy 4: 6-7,16.

The apostle also counselled Titus to be a pattern of good works, and added, "In doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you." -Read Titus 2: 1,7-8.

The facts are quite clear. *Let no one expose himself to the poison of false doctrines and so suffer spiritual malnutrition. Rather let everyone ensure that he receives but the untarnished truth of the saving gospel of Jesus Christ as clearly recorded in the Bible for his spiritual well-being and salvation.*