

## DOCTRINES MORE OR LESS IMPORTANT

THERE are certain features of the doctrine of Christ which are fundamental and indispensable, and without which none would be recognized of the Lord as one of His followers. There are other features which would seem to be useful, helpful, blessed, but not fundamental—not essential to membership in the Body of Christ. The fundamentals have been enjoyed by good, saintly ones from the Day of Pentecost until now.

We, the same class now, have the same fundamentals, and are permitted to have other privileges, truths, "meat in due season," for our strengthening. These latter are not necessarily essential to our membership in the Body of Christ; otherwise our forefathers who did not have them would not have been members of Christ, and there would have been no Christ Body for centuries.

The fundamental theory of the Atonement is as follows:

- (1) All men—all of Adam's children—are sinners.
- (2) None can be reconciled to God without a Redeemer's sacrifice.
- (3) Jesus came into the world to be that Sacrifice—and later to apply that Ransom-price for the sins of the world.
- (4) On the basis of faith in the Redeemer's work, the believer may consecrate himself to the Divine service, in acceptance of the Divine invitation, "Present your bodies a living sacrifice."
- (5) So doing, the believer may—up to the time of the completion of the Elect number—exercise full assurance of faith that his sacrifice will be accepted of the Father; and that he will receive a share of the anointing of the Holy Spirit—the begetting.
- (6) Such as meet these conditions are to be accepted as brethren in the highest sense of the term. This much would seem to have been always necessary, and more than this we believe is not necessary today. But if by reason of our favorable day we have more knowledge, we may also have corresponding trials, which our greater knowledge will offset.

Our advice to the Lord's dear people everywhere is that they put no yoke upon each other, beyond the fundamentals specified above—that otherwise they stand free, and leave each other free, and fellowship and agree as much as they can with each other.

If there be a disposition to crowd each other on more than this basic faith, and if it be considered necessary to separate in order to the progress of either of the parties, then doubtless rather than a continual contention a separation would be the wise course.

We are not criticising the views of any one. Each has a perfect right to hold whatever he believes the Bible to teach, and our views are doubtless well known to all of our readers. Briefly stated, they are as follows:

- (1) That the one that sinned was Adam, and that he and all his posterity were involved.
- (2) That a Redeemer was necessary, that Jesus became that Redeemer, and "gave Himself a Ransom for all."

(3) That God has invited some of the redeemed sinners—not to be the Ransom-price, nor to redeem anybody else, but—to be associates of the Redeemer, members of His Body, His Bride.

(4) The terms and conditions upon which these may have fellowship are that Jesus as the great Advocate shall accept them as His members—their flesh as His flesh—and that He shall impute to them the share of His merit which would be coming to them as members of the Adamic race. Then they are legally justified from all the shortcomings, weaknesses and imperfections inherited by them; and their own wills and all their remaining powers and talents being consecrated, their sacrifice may be acceptable to God—as part of the Sin-Offering by the great High Priest.

(5) Sharing thus in the Redeemer's *death*, these are privileged to share in His *life*, by the First Resurrection. The Redeemer does not now make application of His merit to the world, aside from the newly-accepted and added members. He will carry out the Divine Program, and sacrifice all His members before presenting, at the end of the Age, the merit of His sacrifice on behalf of the sins of the whole world, and will thereby seal the New Covenant for them.

In our judgment many err in attaching too much value to the Church's sacrifice; whereas other dear brethren err, we think, in that they do not see any value in the Church's sacrifice, nor that she is permitted a share in the Master's sacrificings at all. To us it seems like the swing of the pendulum from one extreme to the other; whereas *our* view lies in the center, as we have stated the matter.

If after fully considering these matters, a class finds that it cannot agree, and would make better progress as two classes, we would concur in that conclusion as a wise one, as much as we would deplore the necessity of a division. Such a separation would not necessarily alienate either class from the Lord's people, nor from the Society, because both acknowledge Jesus as their Redeemer, and both acknowledge that His blood is primarily efficacious.

=====