

TRUTH VESUS ERROR

Satellite talk never given, series cancelled

Date unknown

May I invite you to one of the strangest concepts in the whole realm of religion. It is a new doctrine, one unknown to the ancient saints. It is, I think, Protestant in origin and has never taken deep root among Catholics.

It never entered the minds of the ancient apostles as they went forth to fulfill their divine commission of preaching the gospel and building up the ancient Church. But today it is almost universally accepted without, I hasten to add, without any particular forethought or analysis.

This strange concept is the growing feeling in the minds of millions of good and sincere people that all churches are true—at least all Christian churches—and that it doesn't make a real difference which one we belong to.

Most Christians, Protestants in particular, have a general feeling that all churches teach substantially the same thing; that they all believe in Christ and are founded on the New Testament; that their differences are more theoretical than real; and that members of all churches will be saved in a place called heaven, if they believe in Christ and live reasonably good lives. Many modern day Catholics partake, to degree at least, of this same feeling, though such was not the case among them in past centuries.

Come now and let us reason together as good friends should. Let us hear what the Lord Jesus has to say as to whether all churches are true. And let us ponder what the Holy Scriptures set forth for our guidance and enlightenment.

The basic issue is one of Truth Versus Error. If truth is that which in reality it is; if it always conforms to the facts and is always correct; if it is totally devoid of error or falsehood—then can two conflicting principles both be true?

No one ever contends that scientific truth is many variant and conflicting things. Mathematics is what mathematics is; chemical formulas are what chemical formulas are; physical laws are always the same. The law of gravity is there; it always exists; it operates the same under all circumstances. Galileo climbs the leaning tower of Pisa and drops objects and they always fall to the ground. Scientific truth is what scientific truth is; we are aware of this; and no one disputes it.

Inventions, machines, progress in all fields—these come because we obey true principles, because we conform to truth in whatever field is involved. Anyone who conforms to the same laws always gets the same results. Radio, television, atomic bombs, travel in space,

our man-made-miracles of every sort—they all come in this way. Why should it be any different in the realm of religion?

Let us ask ourselves such questions as these:

If one church teaches that God is Personal Being in whose image an is made, that he has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's, and that he is the personal Father of the spirits of all men; and another church identifies him as a spirit essence that fills the immensity of space and is everywhere and nowhere in particular present, and that any scriptures which speak of him as a Father are simply figurative—do both teach the truth?

If one church teaches that salvation is gained by faith, repentance, baptism, receiving the Holy Ghost, and enduring to the end; and another proclaims that belief alone, without more, is all that is needed—do both teach the same gospel?

We say that baptism is essential to salvation and that man can neither see nor enter the kingdom of heaven unless he is born of water and of the Spirit. Others say that believers may be baptized or not as they choose, but such is not a prerequisite to gaining a heavenly inheritance hereafter. Is someone in error?

We testify that the pure and perfect Christianity of the Lord Jesus Christ and his apostolic witnesses was lost, totally and completely, from among men; that there have been long ages of apostate darkness, without the gospel, without legal administrators who could bind on earth and seal in heaven, without saving power; and that the Lord in his goodness and grace has now restored the fulness of his everlasting gospel, so that once again salvation is available. Others have fixed beliefs that the gospel with all its blessings has continued without interruption from apostolic days to the present. Who is right?

As all of us are aware, there are believing Christians prepared to sustain both sides of such questions as these:

Did we live in preexistence as spirit beings before our mortal birth, or does our life commence when we first breathe the breath of life here on earth?

Is there a resurrection, or do we attain immortality only in our descendants?

Is there life after death in a spirit world or elsewhere, or does death end all?

Do some spirits go to a purgatory of preparation before they qualify for heavenly bliss, or do all go either to paradise or hell when they depart this life?

Was Jesus born of a virgin as the Son of God, or is this a pious tradition of credulous people in ancient times?

Are eternal rewards found in a heaven and a hell, or shall mortals go to varying degrees of glory in the hereafter?

Do angels minister to men in our day? Is the Book of Mormon the mind and will and voice of the Lord to all men who now live? Has there been a restoration of the gospel? Was Joseph Smith called of God? And so forth and so forth and so forth.

Or, does any of this matter, and is there any need to learn the truth? Does it make any difference whether we believe in Christ and in his gospel? Or would we just as well off worshipping Allah or Buddha? Or, better still, why not turn to atheism, reject any need for right living in this life, and discard all fear of a future judgment?

I find it difficult to believe that any sane and rational person, as he ponders the import of what I am saying, can do other than reach the conclusion that there are both true and false religions; that all men should seek truth and that there is no salvation in believing false doctrines. Truly, peace in this life and eternal life in the world to come are reserved for those who believe and live the truth.