

A Proper Balance

OUT OF THE WORD

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It is interesting to me how as Christians we say we believe in truth and yet in the practice of truth, we face many untruths in the church. I do not believe this is a new problem. As far as I can recall, the early church had councils that were in error along with the medieval church up until the Reformation which reformed the biblical faith into the present Restoration. The biblical teaching is clear. As the bride of Jesus Christ, the church is to keep itself pure and faithful (Eph. 5:22-27). To be effective in this area the Lord's true church will need to uphold sound doctrine without compromising sin *and* upholding a true observable love and oneness (John. 17:21) among all Christians regardless of who or where they are. In practicing the truth, I want to point out two extremes that can take place within the Christian life that we must beware of and be on guard against. *First*, salvation by knowledge. For anyone who thinks Christianity is nothing but moral precepts and bedtime stories, they need to turn off *Netflix* and read some ancient worthies such as Saint Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, or even Karl Barth. Christianity is truly a thinking man's religion. We above all other false cults have the loveliest compelling intellectual heritage. But, even in this, we must be on guard. The early church had a collective group within the church called Gnostics. They believed salvation depended on a certain acquisition of higher knowledge. They believed in some secret information upon death that would carry them beyond the material order. They believed there was a difference between the God of the Old Testament and the God of the New. Many are this way today- They believe if you don't know certain things or if your doctrine doesn't line up 100% with mine, then your lost as a rock. Be careful here, that is a fine recipe for creating a little legalist. All I knew when I came to Christ was, I was a train wreck and God is holy. I just wanted to be obedient to what the Bible said. I didn't understand Greek modes, voices, or tenses. I understood I was a sinner and put my faith into action. *Second*, is the Hyper-Grace Movement. This movement is completely opposed to any biblical knowledge and is in love with the term 'blind faith'. This system asserts that to obtain salvation one must reject facts. They say "I agree, Jesus died for my sins; that is all that is required for me just to fill out a decision card and agree!" I believe this is a deficient view of biblical faith. We must remember even the demons believe who Jesus is (Mark 1:24), that does not mean their saved (James 2:19). If you reject the command to grow in your salvation (2 Peter 3:18), then I would say be careful. That is a fine recipe for turning yourself into a little liberal. Next thing you know, you'll be denying miracles, the resurrection, and supporting same-sex marriage. It is true we must uphold certain intellectual truths as real and as fact,

including Jesus saving work on the cross, but this is not all God commands. But lest we forget, the number one fact we must be aware of is that only those who are fully committed to the Lordship of Jesus Christ are saved (Matt. 12:30, Luke 6:26). That will be manifested by one's allegiance to the Kingship of Christ within their lives. That is the only way a Christian can live a truth-led life resulting in truth-ignited worship. This in return, will result in a proper balance.