

Doctrinal Studies

Possessor vs. Professor

This is a difference between the man who is a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, and the man who merely makes a profession and knows nothing of the indwelling of Christ. There are many children of God who are unsettled and who are robbed of their assurance and happiness because they do not understand the Scriptures. As a result, they do not know whether or not they have eternal safety. They are in doubt and fear. All this trouble comes from the fact that they do not make a distinction where God makes a difference.

1. In interpreting Scripture, never take a doubtful passage and use it to contradict clear and positive passages. There are no contradictions in the Bible.
 - a. Passages may seem to be dark and paradoxical, but they do not contradict.
 - b. Illustration – Heb. 6:4-8. This is a favorite passage with the Armenians. They believe that a man may be saved one day, lost the next and saved again.
 - i. This was written to the Jews at a time when many, because of persecution, were giving up the Christian faith and returning to the old Jewish faith.
 - ii. It was written to the Jews when the temple worship was still going on. Judaism crucified Jesus. These Jewish believers who were going back to Judaism were crucifying Him afresh. The passage says nothing about being lost.
 - c. Illustration – Phil. 2:12 – “Work out your own salvation...” God works salvation in and then we must work it out.
 - i. Some may say there are those in the church who give every evidence of being saved, and then turn away and become deniers.
 - ii. We are not to judge the Word of God by the experiences of man, but to judge man’s experience in the light of God’s Word.
 - iii. Eternal life never can be lost; if it could be lost, then it would not be eternal. God’s Word is true. When He says a man is saved, then he is saved.
2. The difference between a possessor and a mere professor is a difference in character.
 - a. A possessor is a man who:
 - i. Possesses the nature God bestowed on him
 - ii. Is right in the sight of God
 - iii. Is Christ-centered
 - iv. Is a child of God
 - v. Has a living vital relationship with God
 - b. A professor is a man who:
 - i. Has no divine nature
 - ii. Has never been right in the sight of God
 - iii. Is a mere imitator of a Christian
 - iv. Is self-centered
 - v. Is a creature of God
 - vi. Has no relationship with God. He may be cultured, beautiful, moral, amiable, and religious, but still lack spiritual life.

3. Scriptures concerning a true believer.
 - a. He is saved. Eph. 2:8-10
 - b. He has eternal life. John 10:28
 - c. He is free from judgment for sin. John 5:24
 - d. He is saved from wrath through Christ. Rom. 5:9
 - e. He is a child of God. Gal. 3:26; Rom. 8:15
 - f. He is identified with Christ. Rom. 6:4-6
 - g. He is under God's favor. Rom. 5:1-2
4. The mere professor or imitator:
 - a. Is a religious hypocrite.
 - b. Is one who has been brought under the influence of the truth and Christianity, and being brought under that influence has assumed a religious appearance, but lacks true Christianity.
 - c. He may be an apparently successful Christian worker, but he does not bow to God's will. Matt. 7:21-23. He may do marvelous things, may proclaim the name of God, yet after it is all done, in the day he stands before the throne, the Lord will say, "I never knew you."
 - d. A mere professor may be intellectually reformed but not saved.
 - e. A mere professor in the church is just as truly lost as the greatest sinner in the world. The man who is a mere professor does not like to be told he is a sinner. (Every sinner is a sinner in the sight of God, and one is no more lost than the other.)
 - f. The trouble with the church is too much unreality. There are many hypocrites and there is unreality. This unreality is demonstrated in our worship. Worship is adoration and contemplation of God because God has done something for us. Ps. 107. There is unreality in testimony. There should be reality in testifying of Christ if it is to impress others. There is unreality in prayer; contrast to the length of private and public prayer.