



Our two readings this morning were written at a time when Christian doctrine was being ratified and when there was a raft of heresies abounding outside and inside the growing Christian faith.

Some unintentional heresies (slip of the tongue from different pulpits);
“Jesus, we thank You that the tomb is not empty.”
“LORD, ALIGN YOUR WILL WITH OURS.”
“Because a sinful Saviour died, my sinless soul is counted free.”
“Lead us into temptation and deliver us in evil...”
“God, that you would decrease so that I may increase...”
#worshipheresy

Here’s a few unintentional heresies that have slipped from various Church Service Leaders and Preachers from time to time.

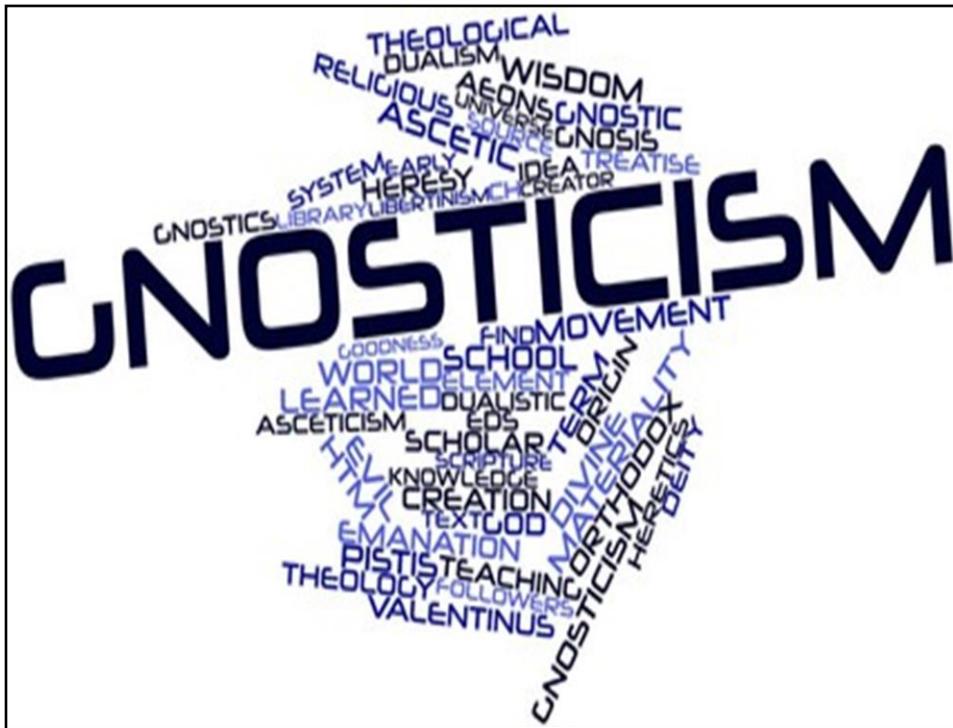
There are a lot of these on line – thankfully none of my verbal slip ups are on there!



One definition of how heresy might be thought if is;

"that which preserved the *appearance* of Christianity, and yet contradicted its *essence*". [Friedrich Schleiermacher](#)

We're going to look at some heresies which were prevalent in New Testament times and which are still around today albeit in a different guise.



Gnosticism originates in ancient Greece "having knowledge", is a modern name for a variety of ancient religious ideas and systems; these systems believed that the material world is created by a force of the highest God, trapping the [Divine spark](#) within the human body. This Divine spark could be liberated by [gnosis](#). (knowledge)

The Gnostic ideas and systems flourished in the Mediterranean world in the second century AD, in conjunction with and influenced by the early heretical Christian movements. It is in effect salvation by knowledge not by faith.



In simple terms this ‘having knowledge’ is not a million miles away from the playground chants of *‘I know something that you don’t know’*.

The given understanding by the heretic leaders is that they ‘know things’ that their followers have to aspire to know. It is an abuse of power and ‘spiritual knowledge’

It was the basis of some heresies then and now.



Ron Hubbard launched what he called Dianetics – it went bankrupt; he then relaunched the subject as a religion and renamed it Scientology, retaining the terminology, doctrines, etc.. Within a year, he regained the rights to Dianetics and retained both subjects under the umbrella of the Church of Scientology.

As a member 'progresses' they pay to gain the (flawed) knowledge (the hidden things) known to the leader. The Scientology cult is worth upwards of \$1.2 billion. (figures of April 2014) This is modern day salvation by knowledge.

Arianism

Adoptionism

[Arianism](#) - Jesus was a lesser, created being

[Adoptionism](#) - God granted Jesus powers and then adopted him as a Son

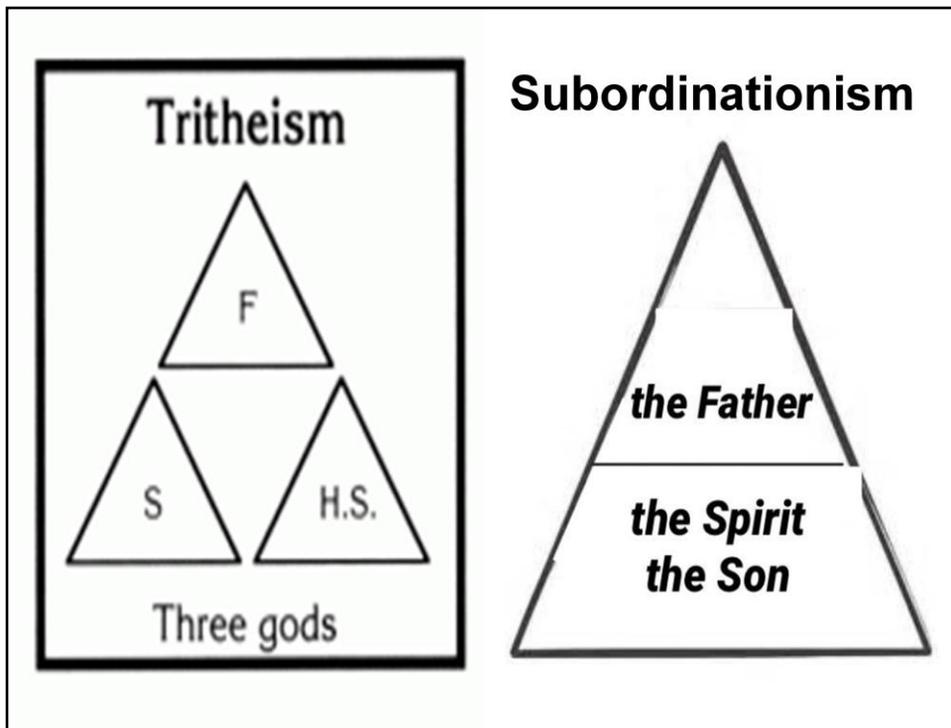
These heresies deny the divinity of Jesus and that Jesus is God – they also deny that God is a Trinitarian God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit.



These heresies is one of the many that the JWs believe.

The insidious aspect is that they now often refer to themselves as 'Christian Jehovah Witnesses'.

This is blatantly not true – you cannot call yourself a Christian if you deny the basis and foundation of the Christian faith.

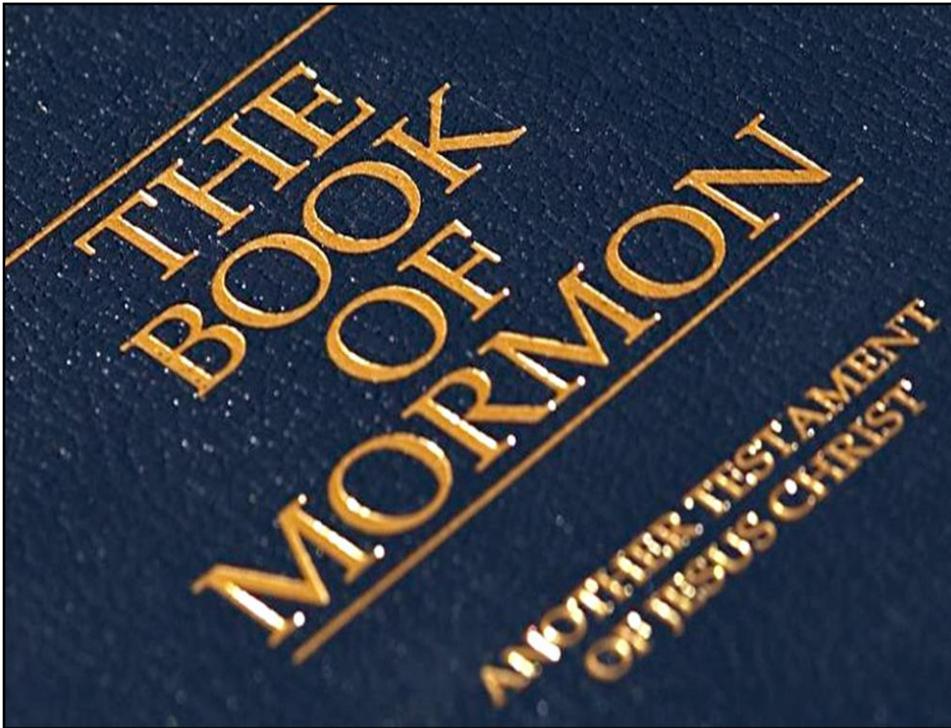


[Tritheism](#) - The Trinity is really three separate gods

[Subordinationism](#) - The Son is lesser than the Father in essence and or attributes.

Like the previous heresies, these too deny that God is Trinitarian, that God is three in one, and one in three. These directly contradict Scripture. E.g.

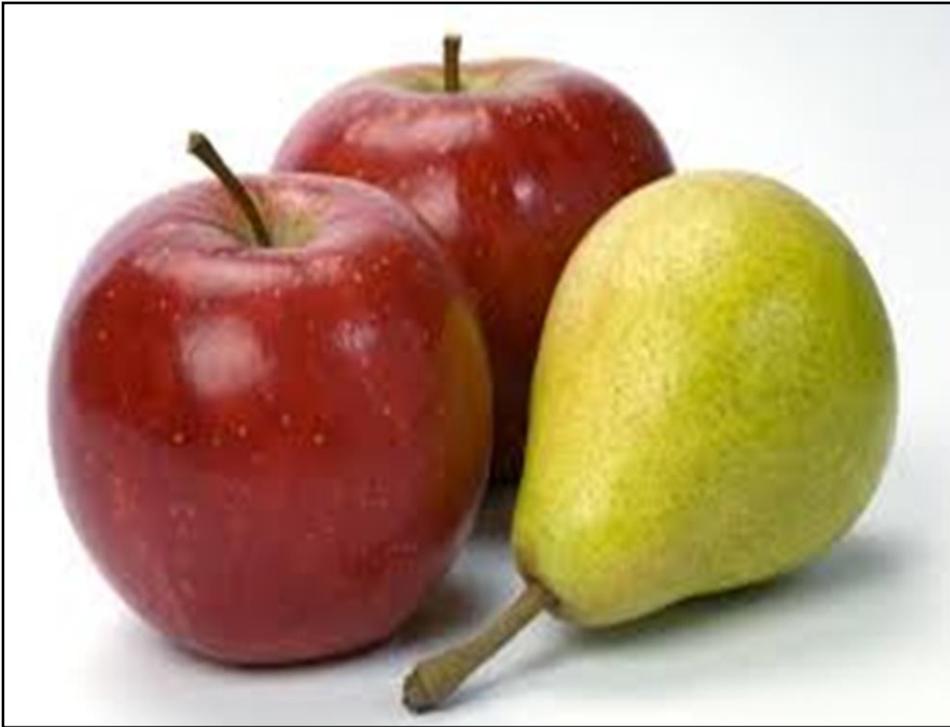
‘The fullness of the Godhead bodily dwells in Jesus Christ’ Colossians 2:9.



Unlike Christians who believe in one God existing in three Persons, Mormons believe that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are three separate gods.

God the Father is the literal father of all spirit-children, including Jesus and the Holy Ghost, whose divinity is derived from the parent-child relationship – it is passed down, say like he colour of your eyes.

Mormons refer to themselves as restored Christians...like the JW's you cannot be a Christian if you hold to heretical beliefs and doctrines.

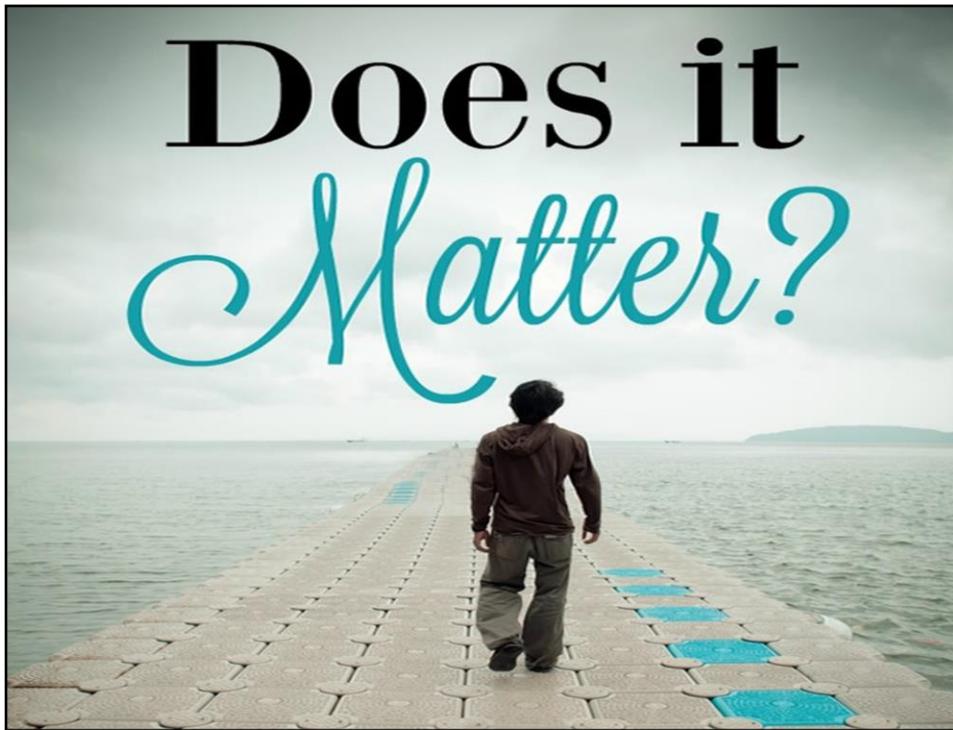


Using the apples and pears analogy.

An apple is an apple and a pear is pear – one is not the other and there is not such thing as a mixed fruit.

Each is genetically different.

An apple may call itself a pear and vice versa, but each is what it is and for everyone to see.



This matters a huge amount.

In John 10: 10 Jesus uses the imagery of a thief in describing satan, when Jesus says **‘The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy;’**

The devil uses heresies to undermine Christians in their faith – heresies sound plausible but they never stack up against God’s Word – Ephesians 5: 3 says

‘But everything that is exposed to the light becomes visible,’ God’s Word is Truth and exposes the truth.

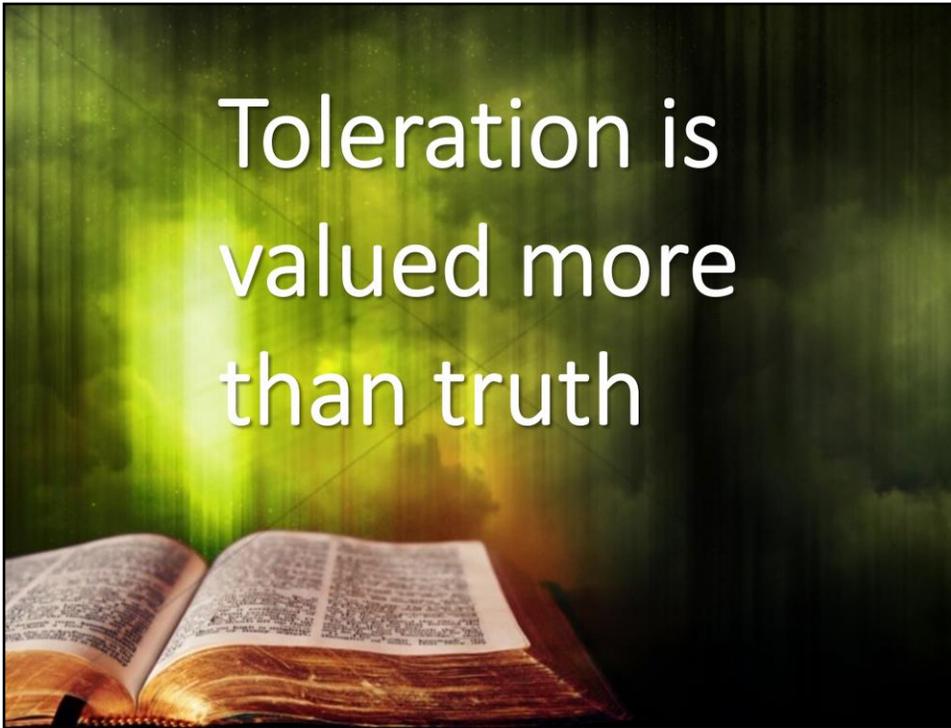


We're now going to have a visual and taste analogy of why it matters that we uphold the truths of our faith.

This a whisky in a glass (offer it to be sampled) – it is as it was from the bottle. How does it taste? (like what it is, whisky)

How about now? (pour in a large amount of water) Is it still whisky? Still worth drinking?

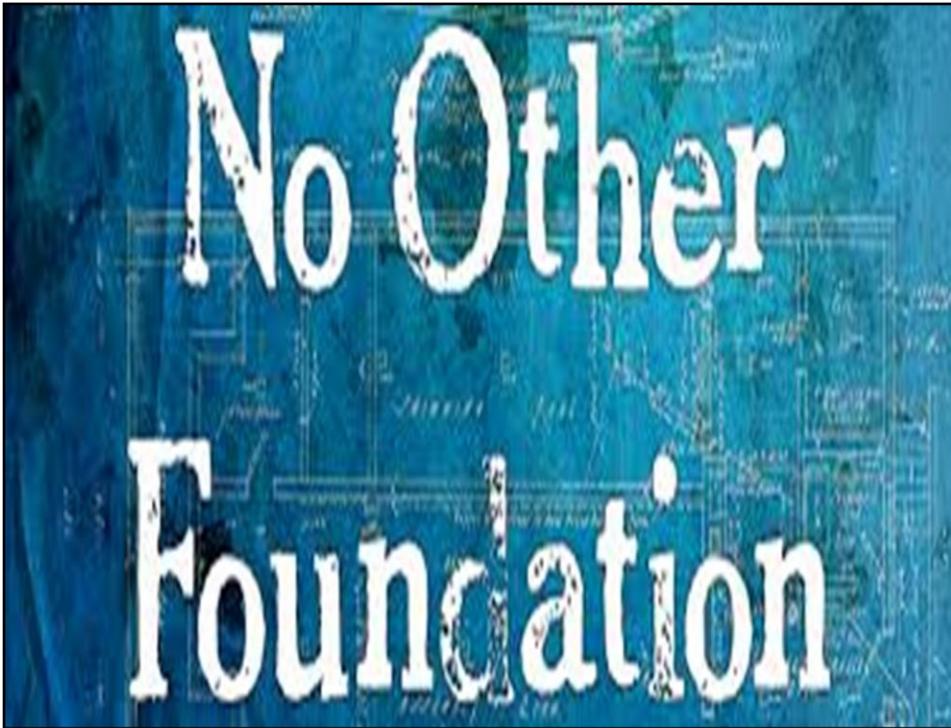
You get the point – our faith watered down by heresies makes our faith weak and not what it should be.



<https://www.kingdomcomment.com/blog/2017/uk-tolerance-europe>

Britain is deemed on 10 different criteria to be the most tolerant country in Europe.

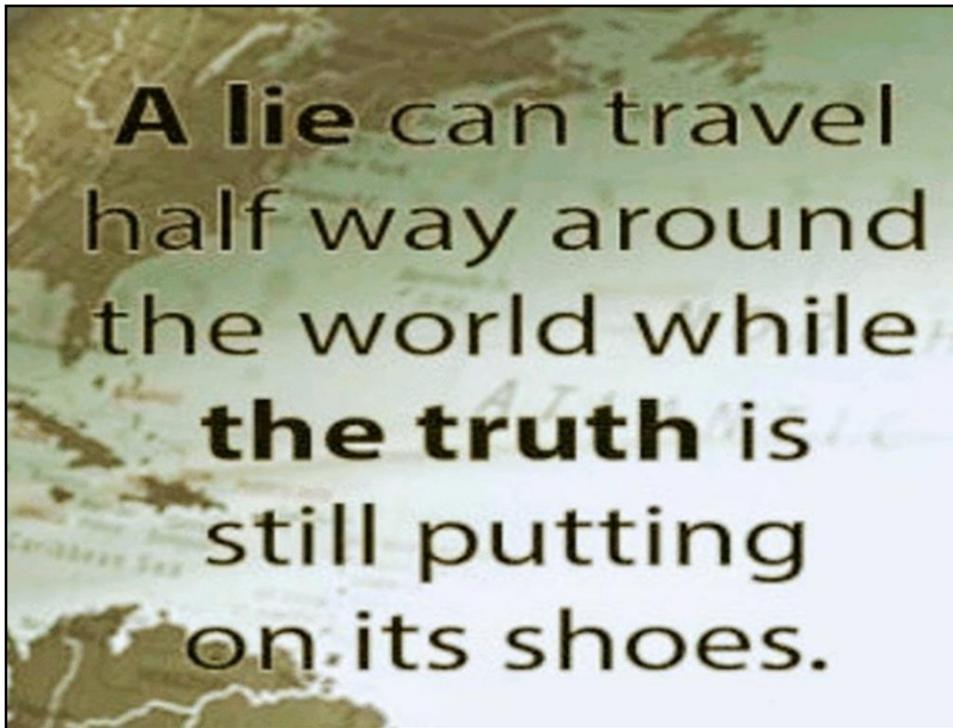
Whilst that in most cases is a good thing and we enjoy the freedom this gives us; the flip side is that without due care the sure Christian foundation of our nation can end up being eroded away by heresies and thinking which seems to be 'sort of Christian'.



Ephesians 2:19-22 New International Version (NIV)

‘¹⁹ Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. ²¹ In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. ²² And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.’

True for our lives, our church and our country.

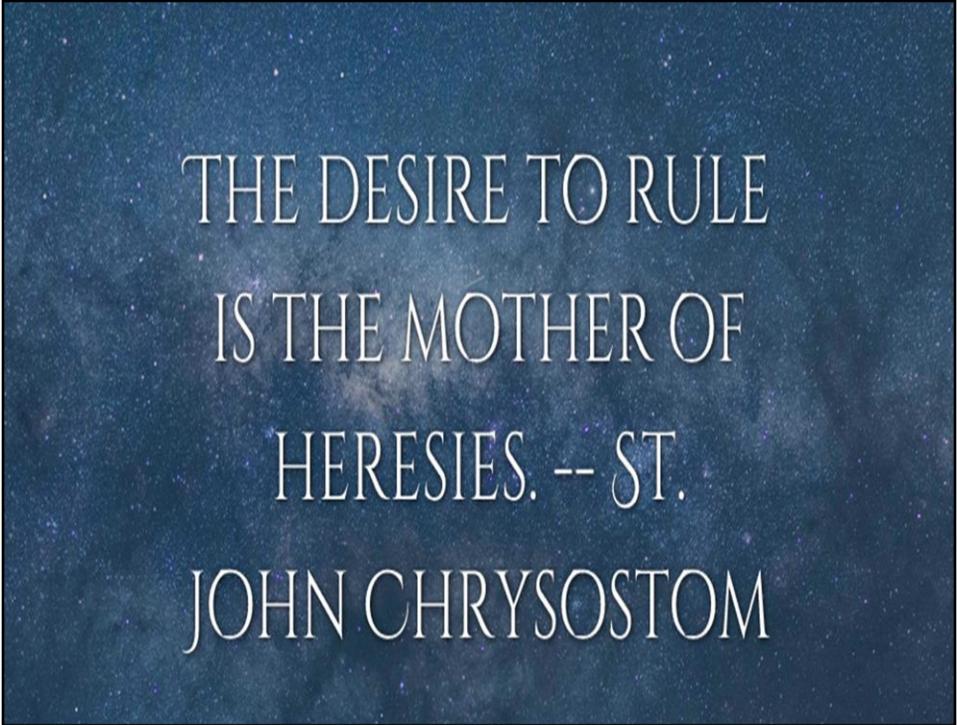


This a proverb coined in the mid 1800s but as with all proverbs it does contain at least grain of truth.

We need to be knowledgeable about our faith, know what is rightly Christian and what is deviant.

When we hear heresies of any sort we need to counter them, with Godly insight and love with the truth of God's Word and what the beliefs of our faith are.

This is not a new thing – this 'righting the wrong' has been necessary for Christians right back to the beginning of the early church.



THE DESIRE TO RULE
IS THE MOTHER OF
HERESIES. -- ST.
JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

Jesus does not impose His rule upon us; we invite His servant King - Lordship into our lives. In doing so Jesus brings us true freedom.

John 8: 36 says

‘So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.’

John 8:32



Then you will know the TRUTH,
and the TRUTH will set you free!

Out of our place of divinely given freedom we have the privilege to share with all who are chained and deceived by heresy, and heretical cults, to lead to Jesus with them with the same compassion that God has shown to us.

And to pray for the Holy Spirit to strip away the sin (and heresy) that clings so easily and would keep them enchained cf Hebrews 12:1

‘Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with

perseverance the race marked out for us,'