

## *Discerning Truth from its Imitation*

**W**HERE SHALL we find truth, and how shall we know when we have found it? There is no use in seeking truth, or in knowing truth when we have found it, unless we put it to practical use in our life—and it does not follow that we will do that merely because we find it. There are people, comparatively many, who scour the civilized world to find rare treasures of ancient art—pictures or coins. There are many who manufacture imitations of the genuine articles, so the seeker after these things runs the risk of being duped by clever rogues, unless he has means of knowing the genuine from the spurious.

In this respect he is beset by the same danger as the truth seeker, for there are many pseudo-cults and clever inventions that may baffle us. The collector often shuts his find up in a musty room and gloats over it in solitude; and not infrequently after years, or maybe when he has died, it is found that some of the things he guarded most jealously and treasured most highly were spurious and imitations of no value. Similarly, one who finds what he believes to be truth may “bury his treasure” in his own breast, or “put his light under a bushel,” to find, maybe after many years, that he had been swindled by an imitation. Thus, there is need of an infallible final test, one which eliminates all possibility of deception, and the question is how to discover and apply it.

The answer is as simple as the method is efficient. When we ask how collectors discover that a certain article they prize is an imitation, we shall find that it is usually by showing it to some one who has seen the original. We may deceive all of the people part of the time and a part of the people all of the time, but it is impossible to deceive all

the people all of the time; and had the collector shown his find publicly instead of hoarding it in secret, he would have quickly learned by the collective knowledge of all the world whether his find was genuine or not.

Now mark this, for it is very important: Just as surely as the general secretiveness of collectors aids, abets, and fosters fraud on the part of the curio dealers, so also the desire to have and to hold for oneself great secrets not known to the “rabble” fosters the business of those who trade in “occult initiations” with elaborate ceremonial to beguile victims into parting with their cash.

How can we test the worth of an axe but by using it and thus finding out whether it will keep its edge in actual wearing work? Would we buy it if the salesman required us to put it in a dark corner where no one could see it, and forbade us to use it? Certainly not! We would want to use it in our work, and there it would show whether it had “temper.” If it were found “true steel,” we would prize it; if not, we would tell the salesman to take back his worthless stuff.

On the same principle, what is the sense in “buying” the wares of secrecy mongers? If their wares were “true steel,” there would be no need of secrecy, and unless we can use them in our daily lives, they are of no value. Neither is a good axe of value to us unless we use it; it rusts and loses its edge. So it is obligatory on every one who finds truth to use it in the world’s work, both as a safeguard to himself to make sure that it will stand the grand test, and to give others a chance to share the treasure which he himself finds helpful. Therefore it is very vital that we follow the command of Christ: “Let your light shine.” □