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Lakeland Hills Leader

“Prejudicial History”

By Robert F. Turner

From Spiritual Sword, Jan. 76, we quote: From about the middle of the 1950s to the middle of the 1960s the main issues with which the Lord’s church was plagued were those of radical (erroneous) conservatism. Among those issues were such questions as: (1) simultaneous Bible classes, (2) women teachers of classes of women and/or children, (3) individual drinking cups for the fruit of the vine, (4) located preachers, (5) orphan homes, (6) local churches giving benevolent assistance to non-Christians (especially orphan children), (7) one church assisting another church in preaching the gospel. Church historians are in for a big surprise when they learn that one to four (generally assigned to the later 19th. - early 20th. century) are dated mid-1950s to the mid-1960s issues. Of course, to this day one can find issues of the first century; but such statements as above are clearly for one purpose only to prejudice the reader by classing the institutional issues with older problems, likely now to spark a negative reaction. It’s an old dishonorable trick.

We can understand how institutional advocates (having a more liberal conception of matters) might charge all they consider to be ultra-conservative as cut from the same pattern. Although it is a cheap debate maneuver, we can even understand how in a heated discussion they might throw in an Anti now and then — we try to take these things philosophically. We just expected a little better grasp of the facts by the associate editor of the afore named journal.

Well, we live and learn — that the institutional issue is not nearly as dead as they would have the public believe — that the associate editor has either (a) actually been made to believe the propaganda of the mid 50's to the mid 60s and has never made an independent study of the matters, or (b) is much less objective than better statements would lead us to believe. What a pity!! Such tactics disgust those who know better, and serve only as sectarian bindery for a party of the less informed — whether dealing with yesterdays or todays issues.

“Proving Our Practices As A Christian”

Proving practices isn’t merely proving that I’m right in what I do, but more importantly, an examination of my willingness to do what pleases God. Shouldn’t that be the motivation? I should be afraid of proving my practices to score points against opponents, or to achieve self-satisfaction. I need to know how I’m right and for what reason.

We have seen that proving our practices demands a standard rule to measure the rightness in practice. This three-pronged rule is used in all areas of life; it requires respect and obedience to authority. I hope you see the direct command as authorizing what one must do, and that silence disallows all other practices. If a mother gives her son money to buy bread, we can understand that excludes all other kinds of purchases. Although we recognize divinely approved examples as superior to all other kinds of examples, we

understand that a parent, through their actions, conveys to their children approval for emulation, whether good or bad, right or wrong. But to stay with the positive example, if the father shows his son the process of taking care of the lawn, then he expects the child to do the same thing. If the son was shown to edge the sidewalk and he does not, then we know he didn't do right by example. The same is true if he was shown to cut the grass 3", and he cuts the grass 2".

The New Testament church shows us by example what to do, and by necessary inference we know all other actions are prohibited. Therefore, we learn it isn't our inability to understand how to know if an action is authorized. The reason we do the things we do as a Christian, if this is our mindset, is because it pleases us. We may get satisfaction; we're no less active in religious practices than our denominational neighbors. In other words, we want our religious tally sheet to be as full and impressive as others. We may be attached emotionally, receiving a sense of moral virtue. Who doesn't want to relieve the sorrow and pain of others, no matter their faith? So, we contrive the means to provide for the needs of the down-trodden, arguing from emotions. After all, if you're really a Christian, you will care for the needy. Typically, Jesus will be held over the head of those who suggest that they need to find authority to practice general benevolence as the church. A final fallacy is judging the righteousness of an act simply from the human social experience; assuming God perceives these issues the same way we do. Remember we are sinners and need His salvation. He sees things from the eternal perspective. Our lives are but a vapor, yet our spirits are prepared for eternity. Eternity is God's view of all activity, and all God's plans are designed for that purpose. We need to walk by faith and not by sight. [2Corinthians 5:1-10] Let us liberally do all that God has commanded, and shown by example and necessary inference, refraining from all else. We will be eternally enriched with all God has planned for us. [Phil. 1:9-11]

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