

"I GO THERE, BUT I DON'T BELIEVE IN ALL THAT THEY PRACTICE"

By Donald Townsley

This is a common expression made by many members of the church today who are attending "liberal" congregations. This expression is made to those of us who are "conservative". I have no way of knowing whether these people go to the elders and preacher where they attend and make the same expression of protest or not -- I know they should, and that it is their duty to express their disagreement with the practices they believe to be out of harmony with Bible teaching. They must do it because it is the duty of every Christian to express his disagreement with every practice he believes to be out of harmony with Bible teaching. Bible proof that Christians must do this is found in many passages and principles of Bible teaching. Jude said that Christians are to "*contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints*" (Jude 3 - NASB). Peter said that every Christian is to give a reason for the hope that is in him (I Pet. 3:15). Every Christian is an heir in the Will of Christ, and anytime an eldership, a preacher, or anyone else begins to try to administer the Will out of harmony with the way it is written, he has a right to protest because it affects his inheritance in the Will.

Brethren who are a part of "liberal congregations" and who claim they oppose the "college-in-the-budget", recreation and ball teams being sponsored by the church, "youth rallies" and church-operated kindergartens, (just to name a few things) but continue on in the fellowship with such a congregations - giving their money every week - are just as guilty of wrong-doing as those who planned it and believe in it. Let us now quote 2 John 9 - 11 to prove what I have just charged: "*Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him Godspeed: For he that biddeth him Godspeed is partaker of his evil deeds.*" John says when one comes who does not abide in the doctrine of Christ (the faith), and a Christian gives that one Godspeed (or greetings and encouragement), he is a "*partaker of his evil deeds*".

Churches are to be "*established in the faith*" (Acts 16:5; 14:22). All churches of Christ that are established in the faith (or doctrine of Christ) practice the same thing (I Cor. 7:17; I Cor. 14:33). When a local congregation runs on ahead of God and does not hold to the Head (Christ), it cannot have spiritual nourishment ministered (Col. 2:19). If a man is a part of a congregation that "runs on ahead" of God, does not hold to the Head, and has departed from the faith (I Tim. 4:1), and he knows this to be the case -- yet he continues in the practice of error and makes no effort to get out, but only makes a mild protest of his disagreement -- his words of unhappiness may not be enough to save his soul when he stands before God in judgment! I personally would not want to risk it !!

Someone may say, "I know all these things that are going on in churches are wrong, but where can I go? It seems to me that all churches are doing these things." I say to those who have this attitude -- "No, all churches are not doing these things!"

I say to many of you in "liberal" churches in the words of Elijah, "*How long halt ye between two opinions?*" (I Kings 18:21). If you sincerely believe it is wrong for the church to support colleges from the church treasury, for the church to sponsor recreation, for the church to operate a kindergarten, and for the church to support the sponsoring-church arrangements, why don't you come out of apostasy before it is too late to save your soul??? Question: How long would you stay if they moved in an instrument of music to be used in worship to God?? Is one innovation any more sinful in the sight of God than the other??

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