

PROVING WHAT IS ACCEPTABLE

"Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them. For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light" (Eph. 5:6-13).

Some people do not know a scriptural argument in proof of a proposition when they hear one. They do not know the difference between proof and an "off-the-issue" emotional appeal. Error grows best in the emotional appeals to prejudiced minds. When one wants to believe a proposition, it is not necessary for him to have proof; he finds ways of approving his position in the clouds and mists of confusion that result from emotional assertions. Paul said the deceiver uses "good words and fair speeches" to bring about "divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine" (Rom. 16:17, 18). If the heart wants to believe a certain thing it is all the more convincing.

The Baptists want to believe in the doctrine of salvation by **faith only**. It is not necessary to find a passage that teaches this; all that is needed is to pervert a series of statements from the word of God and make them sound like "salvation by faith only." The Methodists want to believe in sprinkling instead of baptism. A suggestion or two from some unrelated passage is sufficient "proof" for this practice. The Catholics want to believe in the authority of tradition, even above the word of God, and a perversion of some passage is enough to "completely prove" this. The Christian Church wants to believe in instrumental music in the worship. A misapplication of

a few passages in the New Testament coupled with practices under the law of Moses "proves" it.

We say these people do not have Bible authority for these practices, but they contend that they have "proved" them from the Bible. The reason why they make such a claim is that they do not realize a scriptural argument when they hear it. Their prejudiced minds and the "good words and fair speeches" of their promoters make for easy convincing.

A segment of the church today has developed the same attitude toward the authority of God as these "other denominations." Upon the emotional appeal to matters that do not touch the question they are made to believe (because they want to) that the human benevolent institutions are actually divine; that the churches should "cooperate" in supplying the funds for them to operate; that the church can do anything with its resources that the elders decide to do. Never mind about scriptural **proof**; they use the same perversions and vain assertions the "other denominations" use.

In addition to this some of the self-styled champions of the liberal cause completely misinterpret the fact that preachers will not engage them in debate. They appear as the roaring giant of the Philistines, charging right and left. The fact is that their deceit, lack of respect for the word of God, and total disregard for personal integrity are the reasons. When one will not debate the **issue**, it is a waste of time and effort to even try. "Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone" (Hos. 4:17). "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind..." (Matt. 15:13, 14).

We stand ready to "give an answer to every man" for our faith, and we shall do so by the authority of the Lord. We shall speak boldly "disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God" (Acts 19:8), with any man of integrity and respect for God's word. But we do not purpose to provide an audience for these to slander and vilify who have no respect for God's word.

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