



LIBERALISM REAL CAUSE FOR MEDITATION

From the 1950s till this very day, there has been constant pressure on members of the Lord's church to give up, "*thus sayeth the Lord*", and give in to "liberalism". They are like the Israelites in the days of Jeremiah who were admonished to "*ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it*", but they said, "*We will not walk in it*" (Jer. 6:16). Brothers and sisters, we all must be like Paul who declared, "*...the whole counsel of God*" (Acts 20:27) remembering that if say less—it's not enough and if we say more—it's too much! As members of the one true body we know how "*ought to conduct*" ourselves, because we are, "*the pillar and ground of the truth*" (1 Tim. 3:15).

So that we may be able to fight this spiritual fight, let us all come to a clear understanding of two terms which mold attitudes in the minds of members.

CONSERVATIVE AND LIBERAL DEFINITIONS

From the online dictionary are these two definitions: **Conservative**: "holding to traditional attitudes and values and cautious about change or innovation, typically in relation to politics or religion". **Liberal**: "open to new behavior or opinions and willing to discard traditional values".

Spiritually thinking members who are conservative are committed to the whole counsel of God, and willingly hold fast to the standard, "God's Word", as such will then strictly follow and defend the said standard without variations, additions or subtractions. These are the warriors who, "*contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints*" (Jude 3) and these lovers of the truth have accepted the word of God as the only authority in all things pertaining to life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3), and these are they who refuse to go beyond or let go of what is written knowing full well that type of spirit pleases God and results in a secure relationship with the Father and the Son (2 John 9).

On the other side spiritually are liberal thinking members who are **not committed** to the whole counsel of God. These do not "*see*" innovations or changes to the "*pattern*" (2 Tim. 1:13; Phil. 3:17) for the church as a problem and as defined above are "willing to discard traditional values", that is, willing to accept unauthorized changes to be made. Of this Paul clearly warns, that anyone,



"But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, 21 keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

even an angel who changes or perverts the gospel will be accursed of

God (Gal. 1:6-9). Between 1875-1925 it was liberally minded brethren who fought to allow the addition of instrumental music in worship and the creation and addition of missionary-societies as part of the organization of the church. Sadly, in weaker congregations they won. Meditate on these things and see that liberalism, is a tool of the devil, and an ever-present danger to the church. The devil is ever roaming and seeking the weaker congregations to separate them, like the wolf that he is, and then to devour them. His innovations—be social and let others do the work.

The first is “Centralized Organization”, or “let others do the work”. Back in the early 1950’s something called, “The Sponsoring Church Arrangement” promised a format that would allow many smaller churches to send donations from their collection to a larger church. This church would decide how to spend the funds, which gospel preachers would be supported, and which congregations would receive benevolent help. The result is the local church gives oversight and responsibility to what eventually becomes a board of directors, replacing God’s pattern for the church which is elder oversight in every church (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5; Acts 20:28). Contrary to His plan is the human plan of centralizing the work. This made many congregations take a back seat to evangelism and many became “pew sitters”. Many churches under one central rule is liberalism and sadly a reflection found in denominationalism and Catholicism. Peter wrote, *“but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct”* (1 Pet. 1:15). The Greek word, [hágios] properly, different (unlike), other (“otherness”). Holy for every believer means to have a likeness of nature with the Lord because of being different from the world. We must always ask ourselves, are we imitating Christ (1 Cor. 11:1) or the world (1 John 2:15; 1 Cor. 2:12)?

Second on the list is “Social Activities”. By this I’m not saying that to be involved in social activity is sinful. I love food, fun and fellowship with my friends and family. Parties with friends, golfing, baseball, camping, canoeing, hiking and such things are not sinful. **But the church is not a “Social Club”, it is spiritual, and is not in the business of physical entertainment! When the church adopts the social club mentality—it is sin!** According to the inspired word the New Testament church has but three “spiritual” responsibilities, namely—Benevolence, Evangelism and Edification, and until the 1950’s this was standard practice for most every church. Sadly, the devil again influenced some weaker members and soon some began to provide social activities such as social meals, parties, and ball games and it wasn’t long after that the churches treasury was tapped to special rooms called “fellowship halls”, “kitchens and dining rooms”. Today liberal churches now have additions of gymnasiums and family life centers, secular schooling, and some even have commercial food services. Make no mistake, if you cannot find a chapter and verse to authorize the church to do social and recreational work, it is sin to do such. All these innovations are a form of liberalism.

What is behind these changes? How can the devil affect such spiritual damage, and even spiritual death? I believe the most powerful emotion is invoked by that old devil and that is the spirit of compromise. Nobody wants to fight, and most would rather give a little to obtain peace. Make no mistake, this is what spiritual compromise is; simply a form of giving up something you believe to appease another. **Liberalism is made manifest by the spirit of compromise and liberalism is destroyed by the spirit of warfare against sin and error (2 Cor. 10:3-5).**

Liberalism calls for “positive, soft and unoffensive preaching”. Jesus and the apostle Paul both spoke out against leaders compromising nothing (Matt. 16:12; 2 Tim. 2:16-18), but liberalism fails miserably in exposing false doctrines, false religions, and false teachers by name for fear that some may be offended. Spiritual compromise becomes hypocrisy when liberal churches preach on the need to live a pure and godly life from the pulpit but do not openly fight against worldliness. A member of the church once told me, “Don’t preach against sin, that only tears people down. Preach what makes people feel good and you’ll lift them up.” Now, I know there needs to be a balance, but no preacher should avoid lessons simply because someone, usually the one involved in the sin, might be convicted, that is bothered. Paul charged the evangelist to *“Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering*

and teaching” (2 Tim. 4:2). Balance in preaching as defined by God is “*Convince, rebuke, exhort*”, and not avoid the subject. Liberal mindedness leads to fear of exposing the sinfulness of social drinking, smoking, gambling, immodest dress, profanity, dancing, fornication, adultery, unscriptural divorce and remarriage, “*and such*” (1 Cor. 6:9-11; Gal. 5:19-21). Compromise leads to the refusal to “*hold fast to sound doctrine*” (Titus 1:9) especially in cases of discipline or the command for withdrawal from unfaithful members (1 Cor. 5; 2 Thess. 3).

My beloved brethren, as God’s people, the Lord’s church we are “*holy*”, which by the definition already given, means we are distinct, different and set apart from every other. When we lose our distinctiveness, we lose something far more valuable. We lose our place in heaven, our inheritance, our soul’s salvation.

The formula for spiritual survival, the way to win the battle, is for every child of God, every citizen in the kingdom not to just avoid every form of liberalism, but we all must “*contend earnestly for the faith*”, preach “*the whole counsel of God*” and “*fight the good fight of faith*” against every form of sin and error (Jude 3; Acts 20:27; 1 Tim. 6:12).

In Love

Dave Scarpino

