

Seek The Old Paths

"Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths...and walk therein."
(Jeremiah 6:16)

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LIBERALISM AND ITS FRUIT

Frank Chesser

Once liberalism pierces the mental door and commences its erosive work on man's trembling reverence for the absolute authority of every "thus saith God," there is no end to its destructive work. There are no warning signs or stop signs on the road of liberalism. The biblical road is replete with such signs, but liberalism has removed every one of them.

Liberalism is diabolical. It originated in the mind of the chief adversary of man just as surely as truth finds its origin in the mind of God. Liberalism is one of the most formidable weapons in Satan's arsenal to the subversion of truth. Jesus said, "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. 1:20). The fruit of liberalism bears witness to its fiendish nature.

Liberalism divides. Liberalism creates a division between man and God. The spirit of liberalism separated Adam and Eve from the perfection and innocence of Eden. If Eve had not allowed the "no big deal" spirit of liberalism to surmount her "very big deal" attitude toward God's prohibition regarding the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, she and Adam would never have lost their purity and been severed from the Tree of Life.

For approximately half a century, Isaiah preached to the dying nation of Judah. The nation had wrapped itself in the filthy garments of sin. Every national pore oozed with iniquity (Isa. 1:5-6). Like Sodom, Judah wore her sin as a symbol of pride (Isa. 3:9). Truth lay dead in the street

(Isa. 59:14). Like those of Noah's day, "their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity" (Isa. 59:7). They refused God's counsel so they could "add sin to sin" (Isa. 30:1). They called "evil good and good evil" (Isa. 5:20). Therefore, the prophet affirmed, "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear" (Isa. 59:2).

Judah would never have descended into such depths of human depravity had she not developed an insouciant attitude toward the Word of God. During the normal course of its useful life, an automobile will not deteriorate into a non-usable state as long as it undergoes regular maintenance. Even so, the spiritual mind cannot wane in its attitude toward the Word of God from a "trembling reverence" status to a "no big deal" status as long as it experiences consistent maintenance. However, apart from such diligence, the spirit of liberalism will work its devious, erosive power on the mind until one acquires the disposition that "will not hear the law of the Lord" (Isa. 30:9).

The church is presently reeling under the divisive power of liberal-

ism. Liberalism does not ascend to the podium and exclaim, "I have come to divide and conquer." Liberalism dons the cloak of a coward. Liberalism is a dissembler. Liberalism is a "wolf in sheep's clothing" (Matt. 7:15). It "creeps in unawares" (Jude 4). It works house-to-house until it amasses sufficient numbers to raise the flag of victory. The faithful remnant are often left with no alternative but to leave the work to which they have devoted the better part of a lifetime, lest they be numbered among those who, refusing to abide "in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God" (2 John 9). At the apex of its evil work, the X-ray of liberalism is now plain for all to see. Its detestable picture is reminiscent of the loathsome sight that Ezekiel beheld when he finally dug through the wall of the temple (Ezek. 8:7-12).

Liberalism deceives. Herein lies much of its power. It sounds so good to those who have neglected to have their spiritual "senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb.

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Liberalism...



The front page article in this issue is one chapter from a new book called *"The Spirit of Liberalism"* by Frank Chesser. There are 20 chapters in this book and every one is a jewel. After obtaining permission to reproduce a chapter of this book, it was difficult deciding which one to print because every one of them need wide distribution. We would love to print the entire book but such is not possible. The best thing for our readers to do is purchase a copy and literally absorb its contents. Brother Chesser has "hit the nail on the head" in dissecting liberalism — its philosophy, approach, undermining, back-handed, diabolical scheme to destroy the Lord's church and everything that is true and right.

Chapters include: Liberalism Does Not Tremble, Liberalism and the Past (Part 1, 2, 3), Liberalism and Grace, Liberalism and the Cross, Liberalism and Love, Liberalism and Faith, Liberalism and Law, Liberalism Gospel and Doctrine, Liberalism is Progressive, Liberalism and Preaching, Liberalism and Missionaries, Liberalism and Youth Ministers, Liberalism and Christian Schools, Liberalism and Marriage, Liberalism and the Role of Women, Liberalism and Pride, Liberalism and its Fruit, Liberalism and Exclusiveness.

"A preacher for the liberal movement in the church has described the use of the mechanical instrument in worship as 'no big deal.' ... These three words sum up the spirit of liberalism. In spite of its intense denial, liberalism has no respect for the absolute, unmitigated authority of the Word of God. Liberalism is self on the throne. It is self with a propensity for its own way. It is emotions over mind, flesh over spirit, and man over God. ... Liberalism is man's feigning reverence for God and His Word while paying homage at the shrine of self-will. Liberalism does not trem-

ble" (pp.12-13). ... "If liberalism possessed the ability to tremble, it would literally shudder to the core of its being at the sound of the names of Nadab and Abihu" (p.18). "Had Nadab and Abihu ever had and thus maintained the frame of mind, 'it's a very big deal,' toward even the most meticulous aspect of God's revelation, the fire of Leviticus 10:1 would have been authorized fire, not strange fire. There is as much New Testament authority for the use of machinery in worship as there was Old Testament authority for the fire which Nadab and Abihu used. Wherein lies the difference in unauthorized strange fire and unauthorized strange music? If God refused to accept the very element He had requested because it was secured from an unauthorized source, is it not presumptuous of liberalism to assume that God will accept a totally different kind of music from that He has authorized? Paul affirms that there are lessons to be learned from Nadab and Abihu (Rom. 15:4). What has liberalism learned? That entering into the presence of God with unauthorized acts of worship is 'no big deal'? God obviously viewed what Nadab and Abihu did as a 'very big deal'" (pp.20-21).

Liberalism believes and practices "that there is no such thing as a pattern for approaching God in worship, that grace covers deviations from God's will, that feeling that something is right makes it right, that worship experiences that fail to stimulate the flesh are not spiritual, that old ways of worship must bow to new ways if we are to attract a crowd, that placating the flesh with worship that feels good is more important than glorifying God by yielding to His will, that approaching God in worship with unauthorized acts is 'no big deal'" (p.27).

"Liberalism preaches a grace that it does not understand and to which it will not listen. Grace fur-

nishes a pattern for entrance into God's presence, but liberalism denies even the concept of a pattern. Grace teaches, but liberalism will not learn. Grace tugs at man's heart, imploring him to move in harmony with its melody, but liberalism is too busy marching to the beat of its own drum. If liberalism were teachable it would cease to exist" (p.36).

"The spirit of liberalism is Cain's receiving the 'grace of God in vain' (2 Cor. 6:2) at the altar of self-will (Gen. 4:5); Nadab and Abihu's nullifying grace with 'strange fire' (Lev. 10:1-2), Jereboam's sinning against grace with a perverted pattern of worship 'devised of his own heart' (1 Kings 12:33), and the Pharisees' spurning grace with humanly contrived 'vain worship' (Matt. 15:9)." ... "The brazen, unauthorized liberties of the grace of liberalism include audible prayers of women in the presence of men; the efforts of a choir, soloist, or praise team to draw attention to itself and fostering entertainment; an expensive playground called a 'family life center;' and childish activities such as clapping, hand raising, and swaying that intrude upon the solemnity of spirit and truth worship." ... "The grace of liberalism is alien to the grace of the Bible" (pp.36-37).

"The spirit of liberalism loathes the exclusive church of the New Testament. The liberal spirit detests the very concept of exclusiveness. Every humanly devised religious institution on earth is a monumental lie, a product of the spirit of liberalism's intent on having its own way, a counterfeit for the real thing, and an enemy of the cross of Christ. Not a drop of the blood of Christ was shed for Islam, oriental mysticism, Catholicism, or denominationalism. Reverence for the blood of Christ, the New Testament ratified and sanctified by that blood, and the church purchased with that blood would bring an end to their existence in a mere moment of time" (p.42).

"There is no blood on the mechanical instrument. There is no blood on clapping, praise teams, choirs, and solos. There is no blood on family life centers — empty substitutes for the home, and exhibitions of parental neglect. There is no blood on the act of women's praying audibly in the presence of men. There is no blood on the dedicating babies, the-

atrical performances, and non-Sunday days for partaking of the Lord's supper. There is no blood on second marriages following a divorce, void of fornication and an innocent party. If strange fire unconfirmed by the blood of animals brought death, what of strange music, teaching, and actions unstamped by the blood of

Christ?" (pp.42-43)

"The 'no big deal' spirit of liberalism is a playground for man's self-will. It is an invitation for men to 'cease not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way' (Judg. 2:19). It is a license for man to elevate feeling above objective truth. It destroys spirit and truth worship. It nullifies

the distinctiveness of the church. It is the path to total apostasy from New Testament Christianity. Indeed, it is an adversary of the cross of Jesus Christ" (p.43).

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Liberalism...

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5:14). Liberalism deludes man into confusing emotionalism with spirituality. Hands extended heavenward with a strained, teary countenance, goose flesh, and feelings of mental lightness are not evidences of spirituality. A warm, fuzzy feeling, physical exuberance in the assembly, and conversations laced with "praise God" and similar expressions are not proofs of spirituality. A soft, sweet voice, a saintly look, and a Bible on the dashboard of one's car do not certify spirituality. Charisma, a pleasant disposition, and involvement in religious activity do not confirm the presence of spirituality. Dimmed lights, hand holding, swaying, hugs, and spine-tingling sensations in an emotionally charged assembly are not signs of spirituality.

Spirituality grows out of faith, and faith is based on the Word of God (Rom. 10:17). Spirituality is a manifestation of one's attitude toward God and His Word. One's attitude toward the Word of God is one's attitude toward God. Spirituality reveres the Bible. One can no more sever spirituality from a trembling reverence for every jot and tittle of the law of God than he can cleave blue from the sky. Spirituality exclaims: "I have respect unto all thy commandments" (Psalm 119:6); "Teach me thy statutes" (Psalm 119:12); "I will delight myself in thy statutes" (Psalm 119:16); "Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight" (Psalm 119:35); "So shall I keep thy law continually for ever and ever" (Psalm 119:44); "And I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved" (Psalm 119:47); "The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver" (Psalm 119:72); "O how I love thy law; it is

my meditation all the day" (Psalm 119:97); "How sweet are thy words unto my taste; yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth" (Psalm 119:103); and, "I love thy commandments above gold; yea above fine gold" (Psalm 119:127).

Spirituality is man's discarding self-will and submitting to God's will. It is faith's responding to the source of faith (Rom. 10:17) in the "obedience of faith" (Rom. 16:26). It is love's obeying God (John 14:15). Spirituality is "faith working by love" (Gal. 5:6), responding to the "teaching" of grace by "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts," and living "soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world" (Titus 2:11-12). Spirituality is faith's and love's exercising diligence to grow and mature spiritual virtues so as not to be "barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:5-8). Spirituality is faith's and love's refraining from the "works of the flesh" (Gal. 5:19-21) while engaging in the "fruit of the spirit" (Gal. 5:22-23).

Spirituality is the practice of pure and undefiled religion in caring for widows and orphans and living godly in this evil world (James 1:27). It is restoring the fallen (Gal. 6:1); working to "keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3); being "tenderhearted, forgiving one another" (Eph. 4:32); abounding "yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment" (Phil. 1:9); "in everything giving thanks" (1 Thess. 5:18); seeking "first the kingdom of God and his righteousness" (Matt. 6:33); and loving God supremely in addition to one's neighbor as one's self (Matt. 22:37-39).

Spirituality is: "Thus did Noah, according to all that God commanded him, so did he" (Gen. 6:22); "Thus did Moses, according to all that the Lord commanded him, so did he" (Exodus 40:16); "Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son

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of Josedech the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the Lord their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the Lord their God had sent him, and the people did fear before the Lord" (Haggai 1:12); "And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith, and arose and was baptized" (Acts 9:18). Void of argument, debate, human reasoning, and expressions of self-will, spirituality is love's compelling faith to obey God.

Spirituality is Aaron's submissive silence in the presence of his slain sons (Lev. 10:6-7); Moses and Aaron's incarceration of the man who violated the Sabbath until they received instructions from on High (Num. 15:32-36); Samuel's, "Speak, for thy servant heareth" (1 Sam. 3:10); David's, "We sought him not after the due order" (1 Chron. 15:13); Micah's, "What the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak" (1 Kings 22:14); Job's, I "repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:6); Peter's bitter weeping (Matt. 26:75); and the publican's, "God be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18:13). Spirituality is man in reverent fear of God; man in veneration of the Word of God; man's acknowledgement of his sinful state in the sight of God; and man's pleading for mercy as a gift from God.

Liberalism's spirituality is fleshly, emotional, shallow, and fleeting. Biblical spirituality is mental, spiritual, profound, and constant. Liberalism's spirituality has a ho-hum attitude toward any aspect of divine law inconsistent with its own view of truth. Biblical spirituality possesses a deep, inflexible reverence for every letter in every word in every verse in every chapter in every book of God's revelation to man; for the "judgment, mercy, and faith" matters as well as the "mint, anise, and cummin" matters (Matt. 23:23). Liberalism's spirituality is raucous, showy, and theatrical. Biblical spirituality is quiet, unpretentious, and personal. Liberalism's spirituality applauds the speaker. Biblical spirituality pays homage to God. Liberalism's spirituality is self-centered. Biblical spirituality is God-centered.

Liberalism deceives man into viewing humanly devised family life centers as an authorized, divinely acceptable work of the church. What

does a two-million-dollar material structure complete with a gymnasium, walking track, theater, popcorn machine, pool tables, and various other toys have to do with evangelism, benevolence, and spiritual edification? In connection with its amusement center, the sign of a particular congregation issued an invitation to sign up for basketball and cheerleading. That is light years away and in some book other than the Bible as contrasted with, "Join us for worship and Bible study." In a weekly publication placed in various business establishments throughout the city, this same congregation has a prominently displayed advertisement which reads in part,

Upward Cheerleading. As an Upward Cheerleader you will enjoy an Upward Cheerleading shirt, pom-poms, spirit decals, parent's handbook, the Upward Bible, end-of-the-year awards, individual award after each game, and one-hour practice and game each week. Cost per cheerleader is fifty-five dollars.

The co-sponsor of this advertisement is a local denominational church. The Upward Bible contains testimonials from professional basketball players.

The spiritual mind stands aghast at such palpable foolishness. There is not a reasonable man in the church who would argue for such puerility's being associated with the church in Jerusalem, Antioch, Philippi, or Thessalonica. Laodicea? Perhaps. By such conduct, this congregation has demonstrated its inability to discern the nature, mission, and work of the church for which Jesus died. This congregation is joined by many others of kindred spirit throughout the brotherhood.

Suppose spiritually minded elders are characterized by deep love for God, the truth, the church, and the souls of dying men. Acutely aware of their stewardship accountability for proper use of His money, they have at their disposal two million dollars. They can either construct a physical edifice full of amenities to appease the flesh, which provides a place for those under their oversight to relax

and recreate, or they can send ten missionary families to some receptive mission field and support them fifty thousand dollars each for four years with the potential of saving hundreds, perhaps thousands of souls destined for eternity. Is there any doubt whatsoever as to which decision they would make?

There is a family life center in God's plan for man. It is called the home, and it is God's center for family life. Each room in God's blueprint is designed for man's happiness and well-being. There is the "instruction" room. Children receive instruction from various sources and, upon the basis thereof, they build a life. God's formula for child-rearing is threefold: Love God with all your being, receive His Word into your heart, and teach it incessantly to your children (Deut. 6:4-9). Children are admonished to "hear the instructions of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother" (Prov. 1:8). There is no substitute for parental instruction.

There is the "example" room. The best of instruction can be quickly nullified by a bad example. Children must have parental visual aid to accompany their teaching. Jehoshaphat "walked in all the ways of Asa his father, he turned not aside from it, doing that which was right in the sight of the Lord" (1 Kings 22:43). Ahaziah "did evil in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the way of his father, and in the way of his mother" (1 Kings 22:52). The difference in Jehoshaphat and Ahaziah was the difference in the example of their parents.

There is the "entertainment" room. God's blueprint has the entertainment room in the home, not the church. Zechariah pictures the return of God to Jerusalem and the restoration of the city with the delightful scene of children "playing in the streets" (Zech. 8:5). There is a time to play. Families need to spend some fun-time together. Instead of "go play," there is a time when parents need to say, "Let's play." Innocent fun and merriment is the responsibility of the home, God's family life center — not the church.

Consequently, a humanly devised family life center as an adjunct to the church is an empty counterfeit for the real thing. Family life centers are monuments to the

flesh. They are indicative of modern society's propensity for materialism, pleasure, and self-indulgence. They are shrines to the "one" generation. They constitute a monumental misuse of God's money laid aside for spiritual purposes. It is frightening to reflect upon elders' having to account to God on the day of judgment for such flagrant abuse of His money. *"But all the silver and gold and vessels of brass and iron are consecrated unto the Lord; they shall come into the treasury of the Lord"* (Josh. 4:19). Not one penny of the spoil of Jericho was to be taken by Israel and used for common purposes. If Achan and his family suffered death for Achan's misuse of a handful of items consecrated to God, what must be God's attitude toward elders who would take massive amounts of financial gifts consecrated by God's will for spiritual uses and build entertainment centers for fleshly gratification? Only a philosophy as patently deceptive as liberalism could convince men who once understood the spiritual nature, mission, and work of the church of the legitimacy of such obvious profane use of financial gifts intended for evangelism, benevolence, and spiritual edification to the glory of God.

Liberalism deceives man into viewing "children's church" as a practice acceptable to God. The Bible is silent on children's church. Inherent in the title is its own condemnation. The same philosophy would allow teenagers' church, senior citizens' church, singles' church, young marrieds' church, divorcees' church, blue-collar's church, and professionals' church. The Lord established His church (Matt. 16:18). However, the world has never accepted it, and some in the church are eager to revise it.

There is no divine authority for children's church. The absence of a *"thus saith the Lord"* says that God doesn't want it, like it, or approve of it. A thousand reasonings within the human mind cannot alter God's pattern for the church. Man's thoughts are not God's thoughts (Isa. 55:8). What man likes, feels, and thinks are not the criteria for determining things acceptable with God.

Children's church is a blatant intrusion upon God's legislative prerogative. By such action, man has

tampered with God's design for the worship of the church. He has disrupted the unity of the assembly. Children's church is not an expression of faith, for faith is based on what God says (Rom. 10:17), and there is no word from God authorizing this practice. Grace "teaches" (Titus 2:11-12). Children's church is not a response to the teaching of grace, for there is no word from grace granting permission for this practice. The blood of Christ has ratified the New Testament (Matt. 26:28). Children's church is not a demonstration of reverence for the ratifying power of the blood of Christ because there is no confirmation of this practice in the New Testament.

A mind severed from divine truth is an indescribably appalling thing. When a man refuses or neglects to allow the illuminating power of God's truth to continually shine in his heart, hence molding and shaping his thoughts, the fountain source of all actions (Prov. 4:23; Matt. 15:18-19), the results are always tragic.

The rupture of the family is a national tragedy. On almost every level parents have turned over the responsibility for their children to someone else. One of the many blessings of the assembly is in its promotion of family unity. A family united in a worship assembly of the church is a portrait of loveliness. Children's church destroys this bastion of family oneness.

There are lessons for children to learn in the worship assembly as designed by God. Observing adults sitting quietly in an assembly in reverential awe of God, engaging in divinely ordained acts of worship, can have a profound influence on a child. When a parent leaves the assembly with a child, he should

learn quickly that it is for the purpose of discipline, not play. It is not unusual for a small child to amaze an adult by what he has gleaned from a worship assembly of the church.

On one occasion a two-year-old child was playing in a pew during the Sunday morning worship hour, seemingly oblivious to the sermon being preached. During the course of the lesson, a few brief references were made regarding the yoke that Jeremiah wore, symbolizing the yoke of Babylon on the neck of Judah (Jer. 28). Several days later, having received no input from the parents concerning the lesson, the child approached the preacher and said, "Tell me about Jeremiah's yoke."

The church has a weekly appointment to meet with God and one another in "one place" (1 Cor. 11:20; 14:23). Children's church is an effort to fulfill man's desire, not God's will. There are some elders who are concerned about truth, but have implemented this practice due to insufficient study and reflection. There are others who have been so deceived by liberalism as to render them incapable of discerning its true nature.

Liberalism darkens. Christianity is a taught religion. God foretold the nature of His will under Christ when He said, *"I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts"* (Jer. 31:33). God writes His will on the heart of man through preaching, teaching, and study. The last words of Christ on earth mandated the preaching of His will to the world (Mark 16:15). Only God can draw men to His Son (John 6:44). That drawing power is exercised through teaching. *"It is written in the prophets, and they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me"* (John 6:45).

Emanating from God, that which is taught is truth. Pilate raised the question, *"What is truth?"* (John 18:38)? Jesus answered that question one chapter earlier when He affirmed, *"Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth"* (John 17:17). Truth enlightens. The psalmist averred, *"The entrance of thy words giveth light"* (Psalm 119:105). The good news from Christ is a light that shines (2 Cor. 4:4).

A mind severed from divine truth is an indescribably appalling thing. When a man refuses or neglects to allow the illuminating power of God's truth to continually shine in his heart, hence molding and shaping his thoughts, the fountain source of all actions (Prov. 4:23; Matt. 15:18-19), the results are always tragic. Cain closed his mind to the light of truth and subsequently, reddened the earth with his brother's blood (Gen. 4:1-8). The antediluvian world discarded the light of God's truth and transformed the world into a cesspool of sin (Gen. 6:5). The first generation of Abraham's descendants to exit Egypt rejected the light of God's will and were buried in the wilderness.

An unnamed man dismissed God's instructions for observing the Sabbath day and died under a hail of stones (Num. 15:32-36). Korah, Dathan, and Abiram spurned God's authority in Moses and the priesthood in Aaron and perished in the heart of the earth (Num. 16). The period of the judges was a ceaseless cycle of Israel under subjugation to foreign nations because they succumbed to their own will instead of walking in the light of God's truth (Judges 21:25). David's temporary departure from the light of God's way led to the dark world of adultery and murder (2 Sam. 11).

In the closing years of his reign, Asa left the lighted path of truth he had so faithfully walked, and died in the grip of a great disease (2 Chron. 16:12). Walking in the light of truth brought prosperity to righteous Uzziah (2 Chron. 26:5).

But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction, for he transgressed against the Lord his God and went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense upon the altar of incense (2 Chron. 26:16).

Smitten by God, he died a leper (2 Chron. 26:21). The Pharisees substituted the murky world of tradition for the clear light of truth, thus sealing their own doom (Mark 7:1-13). The Roman world rejected the light of God's word and *"their foolish heart was darkened"* (Rom. 1:21). A state of almost incomprehensible perversity is demanded for the God of all love,

mercy, and longsuffering to be left with no alternative but to say, "I have given up on you." However, these divine sentiments are affirmed three times in Romans 1:22-32. When time comes to its inevitable end, having repudiated the light of God's truth, the masses of the world will hear those mournful words, *"Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels"* (Matt. 25:41).

Liberalism wraps the mind of man in a veil of darkness. The spirit of liberalism abrogates the enlightening power of truth and brings on the night. Inherent in each of the foregone examples is the "no big deal" spirit of liberalism regarding the truth of God. Sin resulting from fleshly weakness succeeded immediately by penitence and prayer is one thing, but willful, planned, and continuous sin can only ensue when one possesses the indifferent spirit of liberalism toward the Word of God.

Liberalism desecrates. Intrinsic in one's love for God is an ineffable, venerate spirit for everything associated with God — every syllable of the Word of God. It was this very spirit that motivated Enoch to *"walk with God"* (Gen. 5:22); Noah to cautiously follow the pattern from God in constructing the ark (Gen. 6:22); and Bezaleel and Aholiab to exercise exceeding diligence in following the meticulous blueprint for the tabernacle and the apparel of the priest (Exodus 35-39). It was this very spirit that motivated Moses to comply with the will of God and take the blood of the ram of consecration and *"put it upon the tip of Aaron's right ear and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot"* (Lev. 8:23).

It was this profound sense of veneration for God and His will that provoked the faithful in Israel to refrain from eating the meat of the peace offering on the third day (Lev. 19:5-8); planting two kinds of crops in the same field or wearing a garment made of wool and linen (Lev. 19:19); eating the fruit of newly planted trees in Canaan until the fifth year (Lev. 19:23-25); covering the ark of the covenant with badger's skins of any color than blue (Num. 4:5-6); using fruit trees in bulwarks in besieging a city (Deut. 20:19-20); taking the mother in addition to the

young from a bird's nest (Deut. 22:6-7); and yoking an ox and a donkey to the same plow (Deut. 22:10).

It was this very spirit that impelled Jehoshaphat to say to Ahab, *"Is there not here a prophet of the Lord besides that we might inquire of him?"* (1 Kings 22:7); that motivated Obadiah to risk his life in saving a hundred prophets of God from Jezebel's wrath (1 Kings 18:13); Jehosheba to save Joash from Athaliah (2 Kings 11:2); and that incited young Josiah to initiate spiritual reforms in the dying years of Judah prior to the Babylonian captivity (2 Chron. 34).

It was this very spirit that urged Paul to say, *"That ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment"* (1 Cor. 1:10); to warn against preaching *"any other gospel"* (Gal. 1:8), or any "other doctrine" and to withdraw from those who did (1 Tim. 6:3-5); to hold forth the church as the one body of Christ (Eph. 4:4; 1:22-23), the object of God's love (Eph. 5:25), the only sphere of reconciliation (Eph. 2:16); and that which Jesus saves (Eph. 5:23); and to present God's exclusive pattern for the worship of the church (1 Cor. 11-16), reinforced with *"If any man think himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord"* (1 Cor. 14:37).

Liberalism extracts the sacredness from spiritual things. A disposition of heart that would open the door of fellowship to religious groups unknown to the hallowed halls of divine truth, deny the exclusiveness of New Testament Christianity, characterize the intrusion into God's holy presence with an unauthorized act of worship as "no big deal," and assert that the church for which Jesus shed His blood must change or die is profane. A disposition of heart that would hold up the church that belongs to Christ before an assembly of sectarians as an object of scorn, reduce the profound nature of spirit and truth worship to shallow theatrics and emotionalism, and categorize doctrinal matters as merely optional is irreverent.

Referring to the Holy Spirit as a "guy," to Jesus Christ as "J. C.," and

commencing one's prayer to the majestic God with "Dear Daddy" is evidence of liberalism's desecration of sacred things. A youth minister from a congregation drunk on the spirit of liberalism appeared before an assembly of high school students at a Christian school. Slovenly dressed, he began his remarks with derisive references to the school's dress code. At that moment his cell phone rang. He lifted the phone and said, "Hello, God, I'll get back to you." Such is the shameless, disparaging irreverence of liberalism. In November of 1992, Andre Resner, a professor at Abilene Christian University, wrote an article for *Wineskins*, edited by Rubel Shelly and Mike Cope, entitled "Christmas at Matthew's House." He initiated his article with a crass description of Judah's adultery with Tamar (Gen. 38). He then proceeded to suggest that what transpired between Boaz and Ruth at the threshing floor (Ruth 3:8-14) was far from innocent. Having referred to David and Bathsheba's adultery, he brazenly culminated his blasphemous piece by depicting Mary, the mother of Jesus, as "another sexually questionable woman." Such are the unspeakable depths of the coarse, vulgar, irreverent desecration of spiritual things to which liberalism can descend.

Liberalism dominates. Jesus said, "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin" (John 8:34). Sin demands subservience. Sin wants to reign (Rom. 6:12). Sin is not satisfied with anything short of total dominance. This trait is innate to liberalism. Liberalism enslaves the mind. Liberalism is determined to wield the scepter over man's mental activities. Liberalism is jealous. It is territorial. It allows no room for conservative thinking. Liberalism will not crack its mental door to a single conservative thought. Conservative contemplation is liberalism's worst nightmare.

When one enthrones the spirit of liberalism in his heart, he is no longer free. As is characteristic of communism, liberalism does not permit man to think for himself. Independent thinking is liberalism's enemy. Liberalism does not share its space. Liberalism shouts, "It's my way or no way!" It imprisons the mind. At the height of its power, its

walls are impenetrable. Generally speaking, one just as well attempt to bore through concrete with a toothpick as to drill through the mental wall of liberalism.

The dominating power of liberalism renders one incapable of giving ear to those of a converse spirit. It is not possible to tell one something who already knows everything. Liberalism has no questions, because it already knows the answers. Liberalism demands an audience, not a discussion; an assembly, not a debate; spectators, not participants; a lecture, not dialogue. There is no equal time in liberalism's world. Liberalism's feelings of superiority brand those of contrary convictions as unworthy of its attention. It views with eyes of pity those who would be so presumptuous as to assume a position counter to its own.

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The demon-possessed man of Gadarea was controlled by Legion (Mark 5:9). He lacked the ability to speak for himself. It was the unclean spirit who confessed the deity of Christ (Mark 5:7); who answered the question of Jesus concerning his name (Mark 5:9); and who pleaded with Jesus to be allowed to remain in the country (Mark 5:10). When Jesus broke Legion's dominion, the man was found "clothed, and in his right mind" (Mark 5:15). Liberalism is demonic. It possesses the mind. It enters to retard, injure, wreck, and ruin. Questions posed to a man dominated by liberalism fall on mentally deaf ears. The ability to answer requires autonomous study and thought, conduct prohibited in liberalism's domain. Occasionally, the power of truth will shatter the repressive might of liberalism. The

result is spiritual freedom and the restoration of one's right mind. Liberalism destroys.

Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man. But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death (James 1:13-15).

When sin can draw a man to the close of his life and inscribe "the end," the result is always death. Such is the nature of liberalism. Unchecked, the spirit of liberalism will carry a soul ever downward to its inevitable destruction.

Once liberalism pierces the mental door and commences its erosive work on man's trembling reverence for the absolute authority of every "thus saith God," there is no end to its destructive work. There are no warning signs or stop signs on the road of liberalism. The biblical road is replete with such signs, but liberalism has removed every one of them. A man traveling on the unhindered road of liberalism who says to himself, "This far, but no further," is self-deceived. Liberalism's appetite for something new, different, exciting, and emotionally titillating is insatiable. The search for experiences to placate the flesh is unending.

Only the most supreme form of arrogance would reserve for itself alone the right to apply the "no big deal" spirit of liberalism to some biblically addressed matter. If one man has the right to attach this spirit to a selected aspect of biblical teaching, every man has that right. The end result is every man's doing that which is "right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25), the elimination of any need of the Bible, the destruction of New Testament Christianity, and eternal perdition for every soul that bears the fruit of liberalism.

From the book "The Spirit of Liberalism" by Frank Chesser. Used by permission. Ordering information for this book is found at the close of the editorial.



SEEK THE OLD PATHS

“Thank you for sending *Seek the Old Paths* monthly publication of the East Corinth Church of Christ. Ten copies have been sent to our congregation for a long time. We appreciate the cost and effort you have made to produce and distribute this paper. However, we would prefer that you discontinue sending it to us at this time. Please take us off your mailing list” ...**South Madison Church of Christ, Ridgeland, MS.** “I was in the Dallas area last week. The predominate black congregations are falling away fast. I spoke with several ministers some from out of there about your paper and they were very interested. The anti brethren were there and confused and upset a lot of people. Maybe one day soon STOP can address the anti movement” ...**TX.** “Please remove the following from your mailing list of *Seek the Old Paths*: Keith S. Turner, Elder & Danny Peabody, Elder, North Oak Church of Christ, ...**Keith Turner, Mineral Wells, TX.** “May God bless and keep you” ...**Larry Albritton, Evansville, IN.** “We appreciate the time and money you use to send the church in Pauls Valley your bulletin. We ask that you please remove us from the mailing list at this time” ...**Beverly Killebrew, Pauls Valley, OK.** “You are holding us up on this end. Keep up the good work” ...**Tony Grant, Lyman, MA.** “It was a pleasure to see you in Dyersburg at the Phillip’s Street congregation awhile back. I have learn about the unjust criticism that your work in *STOP* has received. We support your efforts. The Glendale congregation would like to receive a bundle of *Seek The Old Paths*, if you send them out in that way. Thank you for your hard work” ...**Dustin Fortin, Newbern, TN.** [NOTE: We send *STOP* in bundles. You can have 10, 20, 30, etc.] “I am enjoying your publication. The articles are timely and very well written” ...**Weldon Blake, Huntsville, TX.** “You have a fine publication and only the dawn of eternity will tell what good it has done for the cause of Truth” ...**Darryl Harrison, Bristol, TN.** “We appreciate *STOP* and the hard work that it entails. Thanks” ...**Steve Yeatts, Murfreesboro, TN.** “Thanks for all your hard work in our Lord’s kingdom” ...**David Williams, Milan, TN.** “I want to continue to get *STOP*. Thanks for your help” ...**Wayne Blake, Azle, TX.** “I would like to receive a copy of your newsletter. Thank you very much. I love your publication. Please let me know if I owe you any money” ...**Sandy Hayes, Monroe, LA.** [NOTE: There is no subscription charge for “*Seek The Old Paths*.” It is free. However, we do accept donations and contributions. As you can see from the financial report, we do not have a surplus of funds right now and we need to buy another 75,000 sheets of paper this month that costs about \$1,000. Any help on these expenses will be appreciated.] “I enjoyed visiting your web site. It has many interesting articles in which I am interested. I plan to visit again as I have opportunity. I especially liked being able to view the past articles in your publication. I realize it must be a lot of work maintaining a site such as this. Thanks for making this available” ...**Don Shaw.** “Please remove me from your mailing list. Thank you” ...**Scott Carmell, Iowa Park, TX.** “I would like to get the *Seek the Old Paths* and other literature that you have because I love to read it. I read the October one from Willie Touchton yesterday. Thank you” ...**Leonard Wroblewskief, Hardwick, GA.** “I appreciate getting your paper. Please keep up the good work” ...**Louise Welch, Union City, TN.** “Thanks to everyone at East Corinth for all your work and for your prayers” ...**Tyler, TX.** “I have really appreciated receiving *Seek the Old Paths* over the past year or so, and value your resolute stand for the truth of the Gospel. Please begin to send me a monthly bundle of 20 of your good publication so I can give them out to the faithful brethren in our congregation here. May God continue to bless your labors with much fruit” ...**Maurice Brown, Rockford, IL.** “I enjoy reading it very much and I’m grateful to the Lord for brothers like you. I didn’t only read every word of it but I passed it on to one of our elders. May God continue to bless you and the East Corinth church” ...**Jerry S. Gooch, Mt. Juliet, TN.** “Would you please send me your paper *Seek the Old Paths*? My minister gave me a copy to read and I enjoyed it very much. Thank you” ...**Lola Beadnell, Hanoverton, OH.** “Thanks much for the work you are doing. Wish

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