

What Makes The Difference?

by Bill Crews

"If a man has money and is not willing to have it examined, people think it is counterfeit. If a man is afraid to take a lie detector test, people think he is guilty of crime. If a man conducts a business and is unwilling to let anyone investigate it, folks think he is running a crooked business. BUT, many preachers teach doctrines that under no circumstances will they test or allow to be tested by the Bible. Yet thousands -- even millions -- of people will accept them as upright, honest teachers of the truth, and will risk their salvation upon them. What makes the difference? The Bible instructs us to try the teachers (1 John 4:1). The truth never fears investigation!" (author unknown)

1 John 4:1 says: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world." The Son of God commended the church in Ephesus with these words: "I know thy works, and thy toil and patience, and that thou canst not bear evil men, and didst try them that call themselves apostles, and they are not, and didst find them false" (Revelation 2:2).

I do not know who wrote the words quoted at the beginning of this article, but I heartedly endorse the sentiments expressed by them, and this "shoe" must be worn by me and my brethren just as surely as we plead with denominational preachers and members to wear it. You can be sure that anyone who does not want to or who is unwilling to have what he believes and practices in religion subjected to investigation does not have the truth. Something is definitely wrong when a man refuses to discuss or to hear a discussion of his own faith and practice. In times past faithful elders of congregations and faithful preachers of the gospel were delighted when either outsiders or their own members and brethren asked for Bible authority for anything taught or practiced in a local congregation, but since so many churches of Christ (perhaps that should read, "Churches of Christ") today are now engaged in all sorts of practices which cannot be supported by the Scriptures, more and more elders and preachers live in dread of such questions.

What about you? Are you willing to hear both sides of opposing religious views? (And I am not talking about hearing "both sides" from one person.) Do you search for all the information -- Bible information of course -- on all religious questions? The truth does not produce the fruit of anonymous phone calls and letters, refusal to read any tract, paper or book that does not agree with what one already believes, unwillingness to re-examine one's faith and practice, and rejection of invitations to hear discussions of religious differences.

It should be to their shame and embarrassment, but did you know that the people who call themselves "Jehovah's Witnesses" and go door to door "testifying," selling literature, and handing out literature expect you to read all of their material, but will absolutely refuse to take and read anything that you give them to read. May our minds never be that closed.

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