



# The Tri-Cities Edifier

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## Truth and Error: How to Tell the Difference

- by Steve Klein

We learn about a thing by experiencing it. Babies learn sweet from sour, hot from cold, and wet from dry by experiencing these things. Even so, we learn spiritual truth by experiencing it in God's word, which is truth (John 17:17). Our use of God's word enables us to readily distinguish between truth and error. Haddon Robinson relates the following story that illustrates this point:

A Chinese boy who wanted to learn about jade went to study with a talented old teacher. This gentleman put a piece of the stone into the youth's hand and told him to hold it tight. Then he began to talk of philosophy, men, women, the sun, and almost everything under it. After an hour he took back the stone and sent the boy home. The procedure was repeated for weeks. The boy became frustrated - when would he be told about jade?- but he was too polite to interrupt his venerable teacher. Then one day when the old man put a stone into his hands, the boy cried out instantly, "That's not jade!" (Biblical Preaching, p. 102).

In Hebrews 5:12-14, the inspired writer is addressing Christians who were not mature enough to tell the difference between right and wrong. He admonishes them with these words:

"For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. 13For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. 14But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."

There are two words in the text that shed much light on our current topic. The first is the word "unskilled" and it means "inexperienced." The Hebrew Christians had not progressed and developed because they did not have enough experience in the word. As a result, they were like children who cannot discern right from left; they were spiritual babes who could not tell right from wrong. The second word to consider is the word "exercised." It comes from the Greek word "gymnazo" from which we get our word "gymnasium" - the place where athletes practice and train. Those who regularly use God's word have their senses trained to "discern both good and evil."

Why is it that some brethren don't seem to be able to identify obvious error when they hear it? Why are so many Christians bogged down in their spiritual lives by moral relativism and compromises with the world? Can we not tell the difference between good and evil? Could the root of the problem be that we have had no meaningful experience with the "word of righteousness"?

My friends, may we this day resolve to hold God's word in our hearts - to study it, meditate on it, and practice it -- so that when we're given something else we will be able to simply exclaim, "That's not truth!"

## You Can't Pick and Choose

by Alan Smith

Here is an "urban legend" regarding exams at Cambridge University which is still fun to read.

It is said that during an examination one day a bright young student popped up and asked the proctor to bring him Cakes and Ale. The following dialog ensued:

Proctor: I beg your pardon?

Student: Sir, I request that you bring me Cakes and Ale.

Proctor: Sorry, no.

Student: Sir, I really must insist. I request and require that you bring me Cakes and Ale.

At this point, the student produced a copy of the four-hundred-year old laws of Cambridge, written in Latin and still nominally in effect, and pointed to the section which read (roughly translated): "Gentlemen sitting examinations may request and require Cakes and Ale." Pepsi and hamburgers were judged the modern equivalent, and the student sat there, writing his examination and happily slurping away.

Three weeks later, the student was fined five pounds for not wearing a sword to the examination.

When we are studying the law, we sometimes are careful to find those things which may benefit us, while trying to ignore the rest. It happens with the Bible all the time. Ever known anybody who only quoted the Bible when it was convenient for them ("Judge not that ye be not judged")? They want to get their "cakes and ale" but ignore the part about "wearing a sword."

God's Word isn't like a cafeteria. We don't get to go through and pick out which parts we want and which parts we don't like. "For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. For He who said, 'Do not commit adultery,' also said, 'Do not murder.' Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty" (James 2:10-12).

Take delight in those parts of God's law which give delight, but be ready to take the responsibility given by the rest of His law as well. Search For Truth, 11/13/22

## Courage in Times of Trouble

After Pentecost when the gospel began to be preached throughout the city of Jerusalem, the apostles Peter and John were imprisoned. An angel of the Lord brought them out of prison and gave them this instruction, "speak to the people all the word of this life." The next morning they were in the temple teaching. They were taken again and brought before council and reminded how they had been strictly commanded not to teach in the name of Jesus. Now Peter and John had a choice, listen to these men or listen to God. With truth on their side, they courageously replay "We ought to obey God rather than men." Acts 5:29. We need not be ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ for it is God's power unto salvation. The people around us need us to be courageous and speak the truth. The truth alone will make them free. John 8:32

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