

A LETTER TO THE EDITOR.

TORONTO, Monday night, Jan. 15th, 1894.

Dear Brother Burns:

I have just arrived in the city, and it is too late and I am too tired to come up and see you. I want to see you however, to talk over certain matters. I am going east to-morrow, and do not expect to return for nearly two weeks, and if I can manage it then, I will run up and see you.

You may remember the last conversation we had, at which time you gave me a new thought to the effect that Jesus nowhere recognized any law for himself, or taught others to recognize any law, but the direct and immediate guidance of God. That Jesus did not give his followers any commandment for their guidance other than to be guided by the Holy Spirit.

I have also been reading the last number or two of the EXPOSITOR, and you there state the same thing in substance. You also take Paul to task because he did not limit his teaching to the same simple doctrine. In the December number you quote extensively from him to prove your statements that Paul did lay down rules and regulations, and that by so doing he dishonored the Holy Spirit, and was not true to the doctrine or teaching of Jesus, viz., that the Holy Spirit was to be guide alone.

You may not know how it goes against my natural inclinations to say that I cannot follow you in this teaching, but such is the double fact.

First, you are clearly wrong in your statement that Jesus taught as you say; for he certainly did give commandments and make rules for his followers. I have read over again his teachings, I confess with the hope that my examination would justify your statement, but I am compelled by the evidence to say that you are mistaken, and that in my opinion your zeal for a theory has beclouded your otherwise clear judgment.

Second, I see no reason to believe that Paul was anti-Christian in his teaching, or that he in any way belittled the guidance of the Spirit in most of the passages you quote, while as to the rest of them, I can see that they only apparently do so, and that if we knew all the circumstances, these passages would also be in full harmony with the doctrine of Pentecost.

But third, I do not believe, and never have, that the absolute guidance of the Spirit precludes the idea of my making rules for myself in a great many things, or that I may not give direction to others, or make rules for them on a great many subjects.

There are certain matters, and a great many of them that I know, and which will be good for others to know; and so on such matters I teach "as one having authority," and I advise all to follow the rules I lay down on such questions.

With my children, for instance, and for ought I know with others, I stand in the place of a teacher who must be obeyed, that is, I am the voice of God to them. A man who has been over the road, and is a careful observer, should know the way better than a stranger walking

that way for the first time, notwithstanding the fact that the stranger may be led of God.

If there should be a wash-out in the road a stranger was driving on during a dark night, it would be criminal, in one who knew that fact, to commit the stranger to the guidance of the Spirit without warning him of the danger of the road.

There are certain moral and spiritual rules that are as well established as the rules of mathematics, or the laws of gravitation, and a man who is acquainted with them can teach them as ultimate truth. And just as he can teach them he may practice them as rules that are settled and fixed without any need of opening them up to the Holy Spirit for his particular or special guidance as touching such rules.

When a man will not believe that twice two are four without a special revelation, he is on a par with the man who will not be governed by the great spiritual and moral laws that have come down the ages without being guided by the Spirit so to do.

To accuse a teacher of christian ethics, as Paul was, of being untrue to the doctrine of the guidance of the Spirit, and for no other reason than the fact that he was a teacher of ethics or rules of conduct, is, in my estimation, unfortunate; and, as I believe, subversive of the truth as taught by Jesus.

If you are logical and consistent and apply the same rules to the teachings of Jesus as you do to Paul's, he too must be ruled out as an authority, and then what have you got more than the heathen?

If Jesus did give commandments and also taught that the Holy Ghost was to be teacher and guide supreme, then such commandments or rules must be in harmony with the mind of the Spirit, just as the rules I make for the government of my family will be in harmony with the daily advice and instruction I may give.

It is a clear case that no rules can be in sufficient detail that the parents' personal presence is not necessary in the family, but whether the rules are minute or general, they will all harmonize with whatever of oral or personal instruction may be given from day to day. This illustrates in a good degree how a man may be absolutely under the law of the Spirit while he also observes all the other laws of God.

Faithfully yours, T. S. LINSOTT.

I send the above for publication in the EXPOSITOR, although it was not at first intended for any eye but that of Mr. Burns. I was about to write a communication for the EXPOSITOR setting forth my attitude towards recent developments in that journal, and in the Association work, but on reading over the above letter I see it expresses my views on one phase of the subject, and so I send it without change. There are other matters of even greater importance that I may desire to refer to in the future, in a public way, either in this magazine or through some other medium, but it seems the time is not yet opportune. T. S. L.