

Friday, February 29, 2008

A Fifth Improvement for the PMW

For a long time now, I've pointed out that testing the spirits (1 John 4:1) is not an exercise of the Keys. How do I know? Because sometimes the "spirits" that need testing don't belong to living people. For example, doesn't that passage apply when Christians are reading theological writing from the controversies of the 16th Century? Are they not to test those spirits? Yet, if a Christian, reading Calvin's [Institutes](#) or the [Variata](#) of Melanchthon, finds something doctrinally suspect, how is that an exercise of the Keys?

Short answer: it's not. The Keys are for opening and closing heaven, but Calvin and Melanchthon are now beyond their influence. If they were still living, then maybe our reading and hearing them would eventually lead to an application of God's Law, but a Christian's own judgment of their teachings in itself would still not be a use of the Keys.

It is evident where the confusion arose. Christians possess the Keys by virtue of being Christians, that is, having Christ as their God and Savior by faith in His Word. Christians also have a responsibility to judge the teachings they find on earth, a responsibility to test the spirits. Christians have many other things by virtue of their faith, but not all of them are the Keys.

Presently, the PMW says this:

Christians also use the keys to judge the teaching of their pastors and teachers; they are to beware of false prophets (Matthew 7:15-16, 1 John 4:1, 2 Timothy 3:16).

If it must be treated here, I suggest this wording instead:

All Christians have the right and the duty to judge the teaching of their pastors and teachers; they are to beware of false prophets (Matthew 7:15-16, 1 John 4:1, 2 Timothy 3:16).

Doesn't that make sense?

Posted by Jesse Jacobsen in PMW at 07:51