

The Respectful Contrary!

In this edition we demonstrate the idea that brethren can have different understandings of a set of scriptures without taking adversarial positions against one another personally. Indeed, as the scripture says, there is an Adversary and our brethren are not it. As the result of recent discussions related to images in this magazine, we present a point-counter point discussion for you, our readers!

In the page 7 article, “A Second Look at the Second Commandment” by R. Herbert, we find a treatise that states that the second commandment forbids the making of images of any kind—whether for the purpose of worship or not. But, this editor disagrees with his conclusions, and for the same reasons that the controversy has continued for over 1000 years.

Where Mr. Herbert takes the position that other scriptures don't allow the making of images of any kind for any purpose, it is clear that other scriptures provided for doing exactly that. It is also clear that the scriptures quoted are broken apart for the convenience of the position taken but in context are not separate at all. To me, all of the scriptures taken together indicate that it was merely the creation of images of anything in heaven or on the earth for the purpose of veneration that was prohibited.

One of the problems with using the iconoclast versus iconophile controversy is that the controversy was in fact over the making of images for the purpose of worship or which could potentially be used for worship. In the online edition of the encyclopedia Britannica we are told that the fear of having images was that they would be used for worship—not that having images themselves would be wrong. The ban during the time of Leo III of the Byzantine Empire sought to prevent icon worship by virtue of the ban on the making of any image, using the second commandment as the basis for the edict.

An appeal is made to Jewish writings, out of context, in the attempt to prove that Jews understood that the making of any image violated the second commandment. This is not true for several reasons. First, as Brother Herbert admits, the scriptures did indeed provide for images to be created, i.e., the oxen and the bronze sea created to be in Holy of Holies, not to mention the Cherubim whose wings covered the mercy seat. God certainly does not command us to not sin and then command us to sin. That would be confusion and God is not the author of that.

Next, it is well established that the Jews got a great many of the ideas of the scripture wrong. In fact, a great deal of the friction between Jesus Christ and the Pharisees was over those wrong ideas generated by the religious establishment of His day and before. The use of those writings is called into question by Christ Himself.

Also, Mr. Herbert admits that an image of Yeshua/Jesus as a human male might be OK since He was not God at that time. Some would dispute the claim that He was not God at that time. But, using the strict interpretation suggested by him of the Second Commandment, Yeshua/Jesus was a man on the face of the earth which would make even that image a violation of the Commandment. We can't have it both ways!

The point is made that if the Second Commandment was only about not creating images for worship, then why was it needed at all since the First Commandment already prohibits having false gods, or a god in place of the true God. This is a valid point but it doesn't deal with the difference between the prohibitions. The First Commandment deals with having an actual god which is not the God who created all things. The Second Commandment deals with creating articles that could be used to repre-

sent God for worship, thus making two different commandments dealing with two different problems. One problem was a false god and the other was an image representing the True God but capable of being venerated. One example we can look at is the golden calf of Exodus 32 in which it was said that “these are the gods which brought you up out of the land of Egypt.” One might think that this proves up Mr. Herbert’s point. But notice in verse 5 where we find, “Tomorrow is a feast to Jehovah.”

This was truly an image made to worship God, and not creation of a false god.

Like the Bereans we ought to prove all things for ourselves. Likewise, we ought to observe what we understand to be right while allowing God to fix the misunderstandings we and our brethren have in the scriptures.

This controversy has existed over 1000 years! Mr. Herbert and I are not going to solve it now! But, we ought to do what we see to do—and give room for other brethren to believe and practice what they read.

Mr. Herbert is my brother whether or not we agree on the meaning of the Second Commandment. I value his wisdom and input on a number of issues. But, I’m sure that there are other things on which

we don’t agree, too. One thing is clear to me is that there is sufficient ambiguity to allow for those differences in understanding! And, that is what the Bible Sabbath Association is all about!

We offer this magazine to allow us all to find out how our brethren in other groups see the scriptures. We believe that in the dialog we remove the fear of the unknown and innate resentment to different understandings of scripture. This opens the door to cooperation and genuine out-going love for one another while at the same time empowering us to continue in the faith once delivered—as we understand it to be.

It is this context that allows my friend, Mr. Herbert, and I, to have this friendly discourse over our different understandings of the Second Commandment! He will continue to believe what he believes about it and that I will do the same—and that’s fine! But, and I feel I can speak for Mr. Herbert in this respect, our differences of understanding will in no way diminish our love for one another that the Christ indicated we ought to have! This author believes that when we reach the point where we can believe what we understand, and allow our brethren to believe what they understand, then we will have come close to the command to “love one another” Christ indicated would evidence His disciples.

Oh No, It’s Sabbath Again *

*And I’m Not Ready!

By Yara Young

ITEM B253

\$8 + \$2 shipping

If you're sick of the Friday “beat-the-sun” housework blues, this can help you take control of your home and schedule so that your family and the Sabbath are once more a delight. Young, an Adventist homemaker, offers practical guidelines for home maintenance and organization that actually make Friday the lightest day of the week.

