**Treats for Children**

On the day before Halloween, I would like to emphasize the importance of submitting our will to the will of Christ instead of the other way around. The obvious question is, what in the world does one have to do with the other? Bear with me for a few moments and I think you will see the connection.

In the minds of many, Halloween is just a secular fall festival with fun and games, silly costumes and free candy. To others October 31 is considered the eve of All Saints Day and is observed with religious significance. Of course the Scriptures offer no hint of divine authority for such a religious observance, but many Christians feel comfortable enjoying the secular festivities. Others avoid participation in the holiday altogether. The purpose of this study is not to discuss factors bearing on the decision to, or not to, celebrate Halloween. Instead, I would suggest that there is an important lesson to be learned by considering how the celebration came about in the first place.

According to the History Channel’s webpage, the Celts lived 2,000 years ago in the area that is now Ireland, the United Kingdom and Northern France. They celebrated the festival of Samhain (pronounced sow-in) when people would light bonfires and wear costumes to ward off roaming ghosts. By 43 AD, the Roman Empire had conquered the majority of Celtic territory and, in the course of the four hundred years that they ruled the Celtic lands, Samhain was combined with the Roman festival of Feralia, a day in late October when the Romans traditionally commemorated the passing of the dead.

While Boniface IV had instituted All Martyrs Day on May 13, 609 AD, pope Gregory III (731-741) expanded the festival to include all saints and moved the observance to November 1. Establishing a “Christian” holiday commemorating dead saints to correspond with existing pagan celebrations for the dead was no coincidence. It is no surprise that the big bonfires, parades and dressing up in costumes of the “holy day” were a mirror image of the pagan festivities of Samhain. The implication seems to be, “these folks insist on continuing their pagan traditions; we may as well give them a ‘Christian’ focus for their activities.” I see no problem with giving kids a little candy, but this philosophy amounted to throwing a few “treats” to the spiritually immature instead of setting the divine expectation that they grow out of their carnality.

**What does the word of God say about it?** 2 Peter 1:3-4 says, “Seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.” God has provided everything we need spiritually with the expectation that we will escape the corruption that is in the world and become partakers of His nature. ***If we expect God to bend His will to accommodate our fleshly desires, we are woefully ignorant of His divine character.***

In 1 Corinthians 3:1-4, Paul chastised the Christians in Corinth for being “men of flesh” (carnal) instead of spiritual men, and their worldly attitudes led to a whole host of problems for them. Paul didn’t concoct a watered-down set of expectations to accommodate their immaturity, he demanded that they grow up! He loved them enough to tell them what they needed to hear.

Paul told the Galatian pagans who had been converted to Christ, “At that time, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those which by nature are no gods. But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again? You observe days and months and seasons and years. I fear for you, that perhaps I have labored over you in vain” (Galatians 4:8-11). ***God didn’t create “Christian” observances to cater to their childish desire to perpetuate their godless activities, He expected them to grow up!***

**What is discipleship all about anyway?** This lesson really has nothing to do with Halloween parties and everything to do with the power of the gospel to *change us*. God has no interest in fashioning Christianity to conform with our will. We must come to Christ with the same commitment as those Ephesians in Acts 19 who publicly burned their books of magic. We don’t come to Christ to please ourselves, we come to Him to glorify God.

**Christians mature when they are treated as adults.** Creating unscriptural activities to pamper worldly-minded converts **is** an affront to the authority of Christ and is paternalistic. So is initiating unauthorized innovations in worship with the goal of entertaining a carnally-minded ”audience”. When will folks grow up and realize it’s not all about *them*? The spiritually-minded Christian worships with every intention of glorifying God and provoking fellow saints to love and good works, then finds that they are edified themselves in the process (Hebrews 10:24-25). Catering to the whims of the weak and worldly is like offering treats to children – fleshly satisfying, but spiritually worthless.

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