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The Sin of Compromising With Error

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A compromise is "A committal to something derogatory, hazardous, or objectionable; a surrender of character or right." —Webster. It is apparent, in the light of this definition, that it is sinful to compromise with error. Many want to adjust all religious differences by compromise—by making mutual concessions. They insist that each party should surrender some of the ground he occupies. This means that if one person is wholly right, and the other altogether responsible for the difference because of his error, still the one who is right must abandon that which is scriptural and true for the sake of peace and fellowship with one who is not willing to unite on the basis of "Thus saith the Lord." It is evidence of shallow thinking and lack of respect for the Bible for people to insist that one who is right should make any concession whatever. Those in error must come to the doctrine of the Bible if they desire unity and peace, for no Christian can afford to compromise the truth at any time.

Sinful To Compromise in Preaching

Instead of committing ourselves to something hazardous, and surrendering that which is right, we are taught to "reprove, rebuke, and exhort" those in error to come to the truth. (2 Tim. 4:2; Titus 1:13.) We must "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." (Jude 3.) It is our duty to "dispute" with those in error (Acts 17:17), and to "debate" with them. (Prov. 25:9.) Let those who oppose controversy remember that Jesus and his apostles were the world's greatest controversialists. We must preach and practice the religion of Christ, not to please ourselves, nor those about us, but to please God. Paul asked, "Do I now seek to please men?" and answered: "If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." (Gal. 1:10; Note also Rom. 15:3 and Luke 22:42.) Paul had no inclination to surrender any part of the gospel, but declared: "I am pure from the blood of all men," and gave this reason: "For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." (Acts 20:26-27.) He was unwilling to compromise with those who objected to any part of the gospel, but he preached "all the counsel of God." This should be the attitude and determination of every gospel preacher today. Do you suppose Paul would join in with denominational preachers in a "Union meeting" where he would be shackled? Would he compromise (surrender) the truth and that which is right because false teachers were present? Can you feature him as a member of the modern "Ministerial Alliance"? Do you think that he would "exchange pulpits" with a Jewish "Rabbi" who does not believe in Jesus as the Christ? Do you suppose he would fraternize and compromise with those in error? Do you imagine that he would withhold the will of God on any subject just because some in the audience had not obeyed the truth on that topic, and might not like for him to discuss those things about which they differed? If you think Paul would NOT compromise with error, is it consistent for you to suggest that preachers "go easy on baptism" (or some other subject) when you see someone in the audience who does not know or believe the truth on that subject? No preacher can please God by compromising the truth, and he not only jeopardizes his own soul, but also loses the opportunity to save those in darkness and error.

Some in the church object to, and criticize, what they call "Fighting preachers." But does not the New Testament represent the Christian as a soldier? (See Eph. 6:10-17; 2 Tim. 2:3.)

The Word is his weapon of offence and defense. (2 Cor. 10:4-5; Eph. 6:17.) All Christians (preachers included) are required to "Fight." (1 Tim. 6:12; Eph. 6:17.) Paul was "set for the defense of the gospel," (Phil. 1:17, 27), and commanded members of the church to "Stand"—not surrender. (Eph. 6:11, 13, 14.)

Paul instructed Timothy to "Preach the word; be instant IN SEASON (when men agree with the word, like it, and want it preached), OUT OF SEASON (when they disagree with it, and don't like it). (2 Tim. 4:2.) Like Timothy, all gospel preachers are obligated to preach the truth, even "When they will not endure sound doctrine." (2 Tim. 4:3.) The preacher is charged with the responsibility of preaching the Word, regardless of the consequences. No man has the right to alter or compromise the truth, for the curse of God rests on any man who preaches a different doctrine than that in the New Testament. "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." (Gal. 1:6-9.)

Sinful To Compromise in Worship

His strange wives (foreigners who worshipped idols) led Solomon to compromise in worship, influencing him to introduce idolatry in Israel. (1 Kings 11:1-11.) Solomon and Israel surrendered what was right, and committed themselves to the hazardous and objectionable worship of idols. (Read again the definition of compromise in paragraph one.) When the Jews returned from Babylonian captivity, Solomon's example was held before Israel in these words: "And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughter unto your sons, or for yourselves. Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin." (Neh. 13:25, 26.) This was in the Old Testament; but let us read in the New: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you." (2 Cor. 6:14-17.) 1 Cor. 7:39 plainly states that a Christian widow may marry "only in the Lord."

Many ignore these principles, and after their marriage the one who is a Christian is approached by the other about like this: "You go with me to my church one Sunday, and I'll go with you to yours the next; we'll always take Sunday about going to each church, and that'll be fair." But wait! Is it

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fair? Let us see. If a man has been telling two lies per week, and offers to tell only one lie each week provided his wife will tell one—it would make a better man, but it would make a liar out of her too. Likewise if he has been attending some place of false worship every Sunday, if he begins coming to the Lord's church half the time, that would bring him under better influences; but if she ceases to attend regularly where the worship is directed by the Scriptures, that makes her guilty of sin. Since the church of Christ has every item of worship that sectarians contend is essential, PLUS those other items authorized in the Scriptures, is it fair to insist that a Christian leave that worship and go where they have perverted the service to suit human opinions? For a Christian to thus miss the true worship and go to some denomination whose worship is known to be unscriptural, is to compromise in worship. This compromise is like a wife's agreeing to get drunk every other week with a husband who has been getting drunk every week, provided he will remain sober every second week. Heb. 10:25 plainly says, "Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another, and so much the more as ye see the day approaching."

Some church members also go into denominationalism as a result of their marriage to non-members. Instead of converting the lost companion, they compromise—surrender that which is right, and commit themselves to something hazardous and objectionable—and go with husband or wife just to be together. Such members have no real convictions, for they prefer to be IN ERROR with husband or wife, than to abide in the TRUTH regarding the worship. It is also a compromise when a family of members moves into a community where there is no church, and join sectarian churches, instead of worshipping at home and starting a congregation after the New Testament order.

Another compromise in worship is to call on sectarian preachers to lead the prayer in our service. If they have not been added to the church of Christ, they are not saved. (Acts 2:47.) Let us be consistent, brethren! The doctrines they preach are not the gospel of Christ. (Gal. 1:6-9.) Will all of us never learn to obey Rom. 16:17, 18; Titus 3:10; and 2 John 9:11?

Some members of the church sin by yet another compromise: when sectarians take up their collections, some members give to the support of unscriptural denominational practices. I might just as well PREACH their false doctrines as to support them while they do it!

When members of the church stay away from the worship because worldly company has come to see them, they manifest a compromising attitude toward the worship. They surrender that which is right, and commit themselves to the hazard of neglecting the worship. (Heb. 10:25.) Brethren, we should learn that it is far better to attend the service and let our light shine (Mt. 5:16), even if it offends our guests, than to neglect our duty and be lost.

Some Temptations Which Lead To Other Compromises

Popularity and the desire to have the praise of men, caused some to compromise (John 12:42, 43), and many today are led into sin by the same cause. Aspiration for political office causes many to compromise, and, like Absalom, (2 Kings 15: 4-6, 12) some will sacrifice the truth to get votes or to win the appointment to the positions they desire. Others compromise to obtain, or to hold, their jobs. Secretaries, clerks, bookkeepers, and others, have been known to give the "boss" certain liberties which were not his; but they compromised their character because they wanted to hold their jobs. Some yield to sin for fear of persecution or harm. Peter denied his Lord, cursed, lied, and swore: was he not afraid of personal injury? We should fear nothing more than we fear God. (Eccl. 12: 13, 14.) Many compromise their character and the principles of the gospel for the sake of money, or to hold the trade of customers who would leave them if they adhered to the truth altogether.

If a farmer yields to the briars and bushes at the end of

the rows, and in the fence corners, they will soon take the field. Likewise, sin encroaches upon, and soon takes possession of, those who compromise. Sin will drive them away from God and they'll be lost. Remember that when a person boasts that he is "broad minded," he usually means that he expects you to compromise with him. But no man has any right to be more "broad minded" than the Bible makes him. Jesus demands that his disciples stand for truth and right, whether they are at peace with others or not. (Mt. 10:25-37; Luke 12:51-53.) There is to be no peace at the expense of compromising the truth, even if such a course drives one from his home and family.

"Pity the minister who never reads anything and who has no passion for reading."—Selected.

"Faith in prayer is like a bicycle: it only stands upright when it is in motion—when it is out of action, it flops over on its side."—S. M. Shoemaker in The Pulpit Digest.

"Man takes his life into his own hands and wrecks it; he lets God take it, and God redeems it."—S. M. Shoemaker in The Pulpit Digest.

CHURCH DIRECTORY

Note: This directory lists only the churches of Christ that subscribe regularly for THE TENNESSEE VALLEY CHRISTIAN. If you need information concerning the location of other churches of Christ, write us. We will help you if possible.

Atlas—Philip Thigpen; Killen, Ala., RFD.

Cedar Grove—Curtis Haraway; Rogersville, Ala., Rt.

Cloverdale, Ala.—Reeder Clanton.

Courtland, Ala.—Lester W. Frawley.

Collinwood, Tenn.—R. H. Holt.

Decatur, Ala. (Grant St. Church)—Rufus D. Underwood, minister.

Florence, Ala.

Pine Street—Lindsay Allen, minister.

Poplar Street—Rufus Hibbett, 637 N. Cherry.

East Florence—E. G. Macon, minister, 1721 Central.

Sherrod Avenue—John D. Cox, minister.

E. Alabama St. (Colored) V. E. Williamson, minister.

Glendale—H. F. Koonce, Florence, Ala.

Hatton—P. W. Thompson, Town Creek, Ala., Rt. 3.

Hopewell—Floyd Vandiver, minister, Leighton, Ala., Rt. 1.

Jacksonburg—Mrs. Huston Call, Florence, Ala., Rt. 3.

Kilburn—Mrs. John Finley, Florence, Ala., Rt. 1.

Killen, Ala.—W. H. Rorex.

Laurel, Miss.—305 10th St.

Lawrenceburg, Tenn.—B. G. Hope, minister.

Leighton, Ala.—Bill James, Rt. 1.

Lexington, Ala.—Charles McMeans.

Lynville, Tenn.—Miss Mamie A. Gill.

Mars Hill—Dr. Wm. W. Alexander, Florence, Ala.

Moulton, Ala.—W. T. Pruett, minister.

Mt. Zion—J. A. Wade, Florence, Ala., Rt. 5.

New Antioch—J. P. French, Hillsboro, Ala., Rt. 1.

New Hope—Horace J. Sewell, Florence, Ala., Rt. 4.

Oak Grove—J. G. Jackson, Cloverdale, Ala., Rt. 1.

Oakland, Ala.—T. N. Smith; Florence, Ala., Rt. 3.

Pleasant Valley—Alton Tays; Killen, Ala., R.F.D.

Rogersville, Ala.—T. O. Rose.

Roanoke, Ala.—Paul Keller.

Shiloh—V. J. Johns, Florence, Ala., Rt. 1.

Stewartville—Tom Richardson, Florence, Ala., Rt. 4.

Stony Point—Edgar Underwood, Florence, Ala., Rt. 3.

Town Creek, Ala.—E. R. Graham.

Tuscumbia, Ala.—Flavil Nichols, minister.

Waterloo, Ala.—T. N. Moore.

Woodlawn—James W. Gooch, Florence, Ala., Rt. 5.

All of these congregations observe the Lord's supper each Lord's day and endeavor in all their worship to follow the pattern of worship in the New Testament churches. "Come thou with us and we will do thee good."