

# COMPROMISE WITH THOSE IN ERROR

In correspondence with another gospel preacher, it became apparent that we did not teach the same gospel. Since Paul wrote in Galatians 1:8,9 "But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. 9 As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed," we must conclude that there is only one gospel that God will accept. For this reason, I set about to determine from the pages of God's Word what He would have us to teach. In the course of our correspondence, our differences became more apparent.

I expressed my concern to him for those who are willing to "compromise with those who teach and practice error." I referred to a specific event where a preacher who was unsound concerning the subject of Divorce and Remarriage was used in a gospel meeting. He pointed out that when he had personally been in error on this subject, an Elder who "knew the truth," still "accepted me as a faithful brother though I believed error concerning remarriage." He went on to explain, that they "understood that a situation could arise in which we would, because of our beliefs, act or advise differently and might have to part company because of that. But until that time arose we would work together and use what opportunities we could to study together and help each other gain a better grasp of the truth." Since both were serving as "elders" at the time, what kind of leadership were they providing for the flock? One elder going one way, and the other elder headed in a totally different direction. He excuses this by saying that it is simply a difference "as to

application of this principle -at least in this one area."

A few questions are in order in this regard. What if we had two elders who had a difference "as to application of this principle -at least in this one area" on the subject of Baptism? One believed that it was INTO CHRIST and the other believed it was AN OUTWARD SIGN OF AN INWARD GRACE? Could they peacefully coexist until the subject came up, and then have to go their separate ways? What is the difference? God has spoken, two men do not agree, and only one can be correct. Who will sit in judgment and tell us which things we can differ on, and continue to work peacefully together, and upon which things we must divide? Will we have to have a pope or a president? Or perhaps a non-profit corporation to give us a list to follow? When we start making our own rules without regard for God's Word, there can be no place to stop.

Another question I posed to him was: "When you believed error, and advised someone with a marital situation, were you telling them the truth? And when they practiced what you told them, were they obeying the will of God? Now you know that the answer to both of these questions is NO! On this basis, would you say that you were a "faithful brother" at that time? If so, how many erroneous doctrines can we embrace and practice, and still be a "faithful brother?" For more than six years, I have been waiting for this brother to answer these and many other probing questions. Wonder what is so difficult about these questions?

It is imperative that we understand the meaning of such vital passages as 2 John 9-11; Ephesians 5:11; and 1 Corinthians 5:11. Look at each of them carefully.

2 John 9-11 "Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. 10 If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him;"

"for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds." Now, does this mean "We can lend our support to a gospel preacher who tells people they can continue to live in an adulterous relationship?" Are we "greeting" him or "bidding him Godspeed {to wish joy, to bid, hail, salute} by attending meetings he preaches, or encouraging congregations that support such false teachers? We cannot "receive him into our house" without "sharing in his evil deeds," but we can we give him our encouragement by attending meetings he preaches? Think on these things.

In defense of his ongoing association with elders whom he acknowledged as being in error on this subject, he stated that the elders know what he believes on divorce and remarriage and that he sees their practice as wrong. But, when he attends their meetings and has fellowship with the congregation, I will guarantee you that there are a number of people in the congregation who DON'T know what he believes, and they will see his presence as an ENDORSEMENT of what the false teacher in the pulpit preaches. This brings us to the next verse: Ephesians 5:11 "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them." Now, does this mean: "We can take the initiative to go and WORSHIP with those who would have full fellowship with a adulterer and an adulteress?" It is impossible to see how anything good can come from glad-handing those who refuse to

come to the truth. I am made to think on an example I have used in trying to keep people from getting involved in worldly things. That is, you can't save a drowning man by jumping in and drowning beside him. You need to throw him a life preserver, and pull him to safety. Likewise, you cannot cause those who are steeped in sin to see the seriousness of it by continuing in fellowship with them as if nothing is wrong.

Brother J. W. McGarvey learned this lesson the hard way. He was opposed to instrumental music and would not hold membership in a church that used it, but he did have fellowship with other churches that did use it. In his declining years he admitted that no more than about a half dozen young preachers who had studied under him would oppose the instrument. He came to realize too late that your influence goes with your fellowship.

Now, consider 1 Corinthians 5: 11 "But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner— not even to eat with such a person." Does this mean: "We can knowingly go and worship with those who are living in an adulterous relationship, in full acceptance and fellowship with the local church?" We cannot EAT with them but we CAN WORSHIP with them? How can we do this with impunity?

What do you suppose the apostle Paul meant in Romans 1: 32 when he said: "who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them?" To approve here means "assent to, with the dat. of person (Romans 1: 32)." When a preacher

teaches people that they can continue to live with a partner that God has not granted them to have, they have "assented to" or "approved" the practice, and are as guilty as the ones who practice the adultery. How then can we do anything that might be construed as "assenting to" or "approving of" those who are guilty of such sins by supporting them in a gospel meeting?

It is this attitude of compromise with those in error that leads congregations who purportedly support the truth on divorce and remarriage to willing "merge" with congregations where a faithful gospel preacher has not worked regularly for more than twenty years. A congregation like this is a bomb just waiting to explode. An example of this was seen in Southern California about six years ago. The elders did not agree on the subject of Divorce and Remarriage, and a situation arose that called for sound guidance from the eldership. Here is an Email I received from one of the members who saw what happened: "Once again I've seen the folly of opposing error while fellowshipping it. When will we learn? When will we stop worrying about what people will think of us if we stand firm for the truth? If they hated our Lord, why should we expect any more consideration? To agree to disagree is to arm the ticking time bomb. Someday a real live case is dropped on your doorstep and then it's not an academic question anymore (as though it ever was). That's what has happened here. The agreement to disagree evaporated quickly in the face of a couple who desperately needed a strong, clear, and unanimous leadership to the truth. We let them down. We let the truth down. But, there are still some who haven't bowed the knee to Baal. Pray for the shepherds and their scattered sheep."

My heart bleeds for innocent souls who have been caught up in the

compromising tactics of those who love peace more than they love God. It is my sincere prayer that eyes will be opened, truth will shine with the brightness of the morning sun, and souls will be saved from the damnable errors of the compromisers of this world.

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