

EVILS OF RELIGIOUS COMPROMISE

"And Pharaoh called for Moses and for Aaron, and said, Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land." Exodus 8:25

"And Pharaoh said, I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness; only ye shall not go very far away: intreat for me." Exodus 8:28

"And Moses and Aaron were brought again unto Pharaoh: and he said unto them, Go, serve the Lord your God: but who are they that shall go? And Moses said, We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds will we go; for we must hold a feast unto the Lord. And he said unto them, Let the Lord be so with you, as I will let you go, and your little ones: look to it; for evil is before you. Not so: go now ye that are men, and serve the Lord; for that ye did desire. And they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence." Exodus 10:8-11

"And Pharaoh called unto Moses, and said, Go ye, serve the Lord; only let your flocks and your herds be stayed: let your little ones also go with you. And Moses said, Thou must give us also sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice unto the Lord our God. Our cattle also shall go with us; there shall not an hoof be left behind; for thereof must we take to serve the Lord our God; and we know not with what we must serve the Lord until we come thither." Exodus 10:24-26

This is an age of compromise. Its baneful influence touches every phase of human life. In the commercial world, the seller states the price and the buyer makes an offer; they dicker back and forth until the price is agreed upon and the purchase is made. In the political world, men confer and agree on a compromise candidate. In the religious world, some ignore certain things or accept wrong practices for the sake of numbers. Satan's method is not to repudiate God's plan, but to adulterate it. Read history of every great apostasy in Israel and you will find it was not omission of worship, but the substitution of something else for the plain commandment of God. Read the record of the dark ages and you will find religion abounded everywhere, but instead of a simple faith there was an elaboration of ritual. Modernism seeks to eliminate the Lamb of God Who taketh away the sin of the world. All who do not want to do the will of God are enrolled under that banner.

Consider four consecutive propositions submitted by Pharaoh to Moses. God through Moses had demanded of Pharaoh that His people should be allowed to leave Egypt and go three days journey into the wilderness to sacrifice to Him. Pharaoh peremptorily refused. But after four plagues in succession had fallen on Egypt, he began to propose compromises.

1. You may serve God, but it must be here in Egypt.

"And Pharaoh called for Moses and for Aaron, and said, Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land." Exodus 8:25. Moses rejected this.

2. You may leave Egypt to serve Him, but you must not go far away.

"And Pharaoh said, I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness; only ye shall not go very far away." Exodus 8:28. Moses rejected it and brought on Egypt three more plagues.

3. You may leave Egypt to serve God, and you may go away as far as you please, but you must leave your children in Egypt.

"Go now ye that are men; and serve the Lord; for that ye did desire. But let your little ones remain." Exodus 10:8-11. Moses rejected it and brought two plagues more.

4. You and your children may go out of Egypt, and as far as you please to serve your God; but you must leave your property behind.

"And Pharaoh called unto Moses, and said, Go ye, serve the Lord; let your little ones also go with you; only let your flocks and herds be stayed ... But Moses said, Our cattle also shall go with us; there shall not an hoof be left behind." Exodus 10:24-26.

Compromises suggested: --

I. You may worship Jehovah, but do so right here in Egypt.

God had commanded His people to separate from the Egyptians and that the separation should be an actual and a complete one. They were commanded to come from among them; and go to a place that He would give them. The compromise proposed was -- Worship God as you choose, but don't separate from us. Offer your sacrifices here in the land. In other words, we are willing to acknowledge that Jehovah is one of the gods, but we have gods also, so let there be a mutual recognition of claims of these various ones. We are willing for Jehovah to be one god, but our gods must be recognized among the number. Be charitable. Don't monopolize.

When this is put in modern phraseology it means, make a profession of religion and have your name enrolled as a member of the church, but don't think it necessary to alter your course of living. Enjoy the world all you want to. Act like a devout Hebrew on Sunday and enjoy the things of Egypt during the rest of the week. Many today accept this compromise. The only mark of their being Christians is that their names are on the church roll. We must insist on church people worshipping God in beauty of holiness.

In his farewell address to the people, Washington said, "Beware of entangling alliances." That is supreme earthly wisdom, and it is heavenly wisdom when applied to questions of religion.

Moses said, "What you propose we cannot do; our command from God is to come out and be separated. Egypt is not our place. We cannot obey the Lord half way. It is impossible for us to receive any blessing from Him while we trifle with plain and specific commandments which He hath given us."

II. If you won't sacrifice here in Egypt, then don't go very far away; let it be a little separation.

Let the line between us be a dim one. Take the twilight position -- not all light, nor all darkness. Make some changes in your life now that you are a church member, but do not become an extremist. Go to church once on Sunday, but don't think it important to attend Sunday School or prayer meeting. Make a little contribution once in a great while, but don't dare to tithe. Many are asking, How little can I do and give and still find a place in heaven by and by.

There is no weakness like that of a half-way position. Israel could not accomplish anything by separating just a little way, and Pharaoh knew it, and that is why he offered to compromise. Don't go very far. That will get you into trouble. A boy fell out of bed and his mother asked how it happened. He replied, "I went to sleep too near the place where I got in." God commanded Moses to lead the people three days' journey into the wilderness. Does that suggest the distance between the crucifixion and the resurrection? Too many followed Jesus to the cross but never passed with Him out of Joseph's tomb. Moses refused the second compromise, so Pharaoh comes back with the third --

III. You grown people may go into the wilderness, but leave your little ones here with us.

Be religious for yourself, but don't bother your family with it. He knew if he could hold the children, it would not be long until the parents would be back. Satan has never changed his tactics. Many parents are led astray by their children. What a pity that Satan is permitted to use children as a decoy for their parents. The Indian would catch a child and tie it to a tree. The parents would come when they heard its cry and they were killed. It is a duty of parents to guard their offspring. Parents should lead their children in things of righteousness. Satan says, if one must be a church member all right, but don't bother children with Sunday School and church. Wait till they get grown. Never say anything to children about God, etc. Let them grow up and decide for themselves. In religion let him alone. A French Count came upon Savannah with a

formidable army of French and Americans. It was easy to take immediate possession of it. The British general said, "Give me twenty-four hours to consider your proposition of surrender. I want to sleep on it." The Frenchman allowed it. The British general did not sleep on it. He stayed awake day and night; brought up reenforcements; strengthened fortifications; when twenty-four hours had passed, he was ready. The assault was made, but it was a butchery -- 1200 were killed and wounded because of the Frenchman's folly. Satan says the same thing about the children -- let them alone until I have fortified; then assault if you choose.

IV. Go and take the children with you, but let the cattle remain.

Be religious as you please, but don't dare dedicate your business. Acknowledge God's sovereignty over your person, but not over your purse. If He is not God over all, He is not God at all.

Notice Moses' answer of consecration:--

"Our cattle also shall go with us; there shall not an hoof be left behind." That was his answer to every suggested compromise. Let us make it ours. It means:--

1. A complete defiance of Pharaoh.

Less than two million slaves were hurling their defiance in the face of the greatest monarch on earth. The Passover was behind them, but across their path rolled the waters of the Red Sea, and away beyond stretched the untrodden wilderness. Not one of them had ever seen the land of Canaan or tasted of its milk and honey. To the eye of reason it was the maddest venture the world had ever seen. How it must have gladdened the heart of God to hear His chosen people hurl their defiance in the face of Pharaoh. What the world needs now is churches to hurl their defiance in the face of the world that seeks to enslave them and keep them from their promised possession. Again and again the people of God have undertaken the humanly impossible at His command, and He has never failed to make them victorious.

2. A refusal to leave anything in the land of Pharaoh that might later be used by the enemy.

It is a dreadful thing when one's family or business can be used of Satan to prevent him from leaving Egypt and entering Canaan.

3. The Cattle were needed for sacrifice in the wilderness.

They said we will not leave valuable things behind us for we are not coming back. As Christians we have turned our backs on the world and are journeying to a better country. Let us consecrate what we are and what we have to our Lord, and leave nothing behind that the enemy can use to hinder us.