

2 Corinthians 6:14 (Things New & Old) 52126

Christian Truth: Volume 1, Be Ye Not Unequally Yoked With Unbelievers (6:14)

2 Cor. 6:14

For the Christian to keep himself free from being yoked with unbelievers, becomes more and more difficult because of the many confederacies that are formed on every hand, and for every purpose.

It is well that it is seen that this applies to marriage, for there is scarcely anything that leads to greater dishonor to the Lord, and to the hindrance and discomfort of the Christian, than a mixed marriage; and yet, alas, even this is disregarded by many Christians, who are often satisfied with a profession where there is no reality.

It was a law in Israel that they should not give their daughters in marriage to the sons of the Canaanites, nor let their sons marry the daughters of the land. Even Solomon disregarded this, and sad was the result. We read that "king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites; of the nations concerning which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love." 1 Kings 11:1-2.

Now Solomon was the wisest man, but his wisdom was no protection when he was in disobedience. The wisdom that cometh down from above is first pure; and Solomon had departed from that which was pure, and only evil could be the result.

"For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD." vv. 4-6.

Solomon may have thought that he would make proselytes of his strange wives, and that they would have worshipped the God of Israel, in a similar way to the thought that many Christians have had, that they will be the means of the conversion of their unbelieving partners. But, alas, in Solomon's case, instead of the wives becoming worshippers of Israel's God, he became a worshipper of their idols, and erected high places before Jerusalem for their abominations.

So with many a Christian, the unbelieving partner has not been converted, but the believer has been dragged into the world, lived a miserable life, and been dealt with in discipline by God.

How sad an ending it is, after the victorious reign of David, and the glorious reign of Solomon, that God should say, in reference to Solomon's idolatry, "Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant." (vs. 11). And all this was the result of loving "strange women," who turned his heart away.

Let all take warning from the fall of this wise man. We all have the flesh remaining in us, and it is only when walking in obedience to the Word that we are in the path of safety, or can count upon His keeping us from falling. The injunction is very plain: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." And if a Christian marry, it must be "only in the Lord."

But there are many ways in which a Christian may be unequally yoked with unbelievers besides in marriage; indeed, the passage in Corinthians does not mention marriage, so that the injunction is general. And it is amplified in a very full way. The Apostle asks what fellowship there is—what is there in common between

Righteousness and unrighteousness?

Light and darkness?

Christ and Belial?

He that believeth and an infidel?

The temple of God and idols?

These things may sound harsh, and be deemed uncharitable, when applied to those who dwell in what is called a Christian country; but are not the terms simply the characteristics of the Christian and of the unconverted? And the passage asks, what communion, what concord, what part, what agreement, can there be between the one and the other? He sums it up by declaring of the Christians to whom he was writing, "Ye are the temple of the living God."

And this is followed by the injunction, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

To be yoked with unbelievers in matters of business, or in having shares in a company, is one of the great snares laid for the Christian. The question is, Is it being yoked with the world? Is it becoming a member of any worldly organization? If so, surely it comes under the above injunction, that we are not to touch the unclean thing. Many a Christian has touched them, and has become a shareholder with unbelievers, and has greatly suffered there from. God has given the promise that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." Rom. 8:28. But if I place myself in a union in which God cannot make things work together for my good, without making them work for good to the unconverted in the same community, how can I possibly reckon on this promise? No indeed, I have placed myself outside the sphere in which God has promised to make things work for my good. He has not said that He makes them work for good to the unbeliever. Again, we may surely say that the path of obedience is the only place of blessing, as well as of safety. May God keep all His beloved people in this path.

There is also the snare of association with the world on the plea of philanthropy—doing good to the poor and afflicted. It is urged, how much better this can be effected in associations than it can be done by individuals; and why need the same strict rule be enforced when the purpose is a good one, and not for one's own profit?

God's word is "Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." Gal. 6:9-10. Now, here it is "well doing"—doing good—and while caring for the needs of the body, how can this be separated by the Christian, from the need of the soul in the gospel to the unconverted and the word of truth to God's people? And how can association with the world help in these higher aims? It can only hinder and destroy them. If we can associate with other Christians in the path of obedience in doing good to all, it is well; but if not, let each do that which his hand findeth to do, looking for God's guidance as to when and where to do it, and count upon His blessing on what is done. The injunction, not to be yoked together with unbelievers, cannot be in view of doing evil simply, but for all and every purpose; there must be no fellowship with such.

There is also, in these days, a great temptation to both employers and employed to form unions for the maintenance of their several rights; indeed, in many places great efforts are being used to compel the workmen to unite for protection, as it is called, against what is held to be the oppression of the employers. Christians are, at times, placed in great difficulty as to such demands, and many give way and join the unions.

Well, the simple question is, Is it being unequally yoked together with unbelievers? And if so, how can it be attended with the blessing of God? It may seem to lead to quietness in some instances, but in others it has led to distress; for joining a union has involved joining in a strike, and that too, where the Christian had to own that he had good wages, and had no personal complaints; but for some grievance the majority of the union had decided on a strike, and all the members were compelled to submit.

Ah, that word "member" shows what a false position a Christian would be in. He is a member of the body of Christ, and should not be a member of any human society. "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing." And what then—get on the best way they can by themselves? No, but God says, "I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you." Cannot such a Father guide and protect you?

Yes, our heavenly Father has helped many a one who has been faithful to Him, and delivered them out of their difficulties; for "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation." 2 Pet. 2:9. And "When a man's ways please the LORD, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." Pro. 16:7. He gives instructions to both masters and servants, to which all do well to take heed.

The times are indeed difficult, as has been foretold, but our God is the God for difficult times, as well as when all is smooth and easy; and often has He intervened for the welfare of His saints who trust in Him; and indeed, He is ever true to His promise in making all things work together for good to those that love Him, and are the called according to His purpose.

May God increase the faith of all His beloved people, in separating from this dark and evil world through which we are passing, of which Satan is the god. Satan's great effort, where he cannot destroy, is to seduce, and lead God's saints into union with the unbeliever, knowing only too well how this will hinder their progress, and bring them under the discipline of their Father in heaven. May God keep the feet of all His saints in these difficult times; they will soon be over, and faith will be consummated in sight.

"Things New and Old"

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