

“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.”—*Col. 3. 1.*

THE PERILS OF
COMPROMISE
SEEN IN THE LIFE OF
JEHOSHAPHAT.

An Address (Revised)
At The Meeting Room of Believers,
61, Upton Lane, Forest Gate, E.,
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“Christ is All.”—*Col. 3. 11.*

“Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.”—

Heb. 13. 13, 14.

A FOREWORD.

It may be that the reader owns the precious Name of Christ, and desires to please Him. It is for such that these pages are sent forth, with a longing to help in the pilgrim path. As fellow-pilgrims, we have no boast to make (except in the Lord), but we would encourage in the wilderness of this world, and stimulate a holy expectation of the Coming of Christ.

It is well for children of God who are exercised as to His will to be in touch with "one another." Would you write, if this booklet is a blessing? Our gracious Heavenly Father has granted to us the privilege of issuing free Scriptural magazines and many leaflets, and also over 130 typewritten addresses be sent for a fortnight, God willing).

May we mention a few titles :—

- No. 1. Christ in the Psalms.
- „ 13. The Promised Reviving.
- „ 20. Predestination and Election.
- „ 27. Socialism in the Light of the Scriptures.
- „ 29, 30. Gathering to the Name of the Lord.
- „ 45. A Personal Antichrist
- „ 54. Unveiling of Messianic Prophecy.
- „ 88. The Hidden Treasure and the Pearl.
- „ 96. Phil. 4 (against Anxiety).
- „ 101. Baptism and the Lord's Supper (also 113).
- „ 109. The Believer and Commerce.
- „ 123. The Foolishness of Being Material.
- „ 130. Notes on Leviticus 1.

A list, and further particulars gladly posted.

JEHOSHAPHAT AND THE PERILS OF WORLDLINESS.

GOD is graciously pleased to *impress* well-known teaching. One almost hesitates to say "Well-known." We know nothing yet as we ought to know. But oft-noticed teaching sometimes comes with fresh power, and thus 2 Chron. 18. 1-3 was on my heart; and when it was on my heart a dear brother said, in a conversational meeting, that he thought this subject might be pondered. It was evidently on his heart too. God often emphasises upon several of His people the same portion of His own precious truth. Jehoshaphat is in many respects a beautiful character. It is encouraging to find him near to God at the *beginning* of his reign. It is encouraging to notice that he drew away from worldliness and returned to the Lord at the *end* of his reign,—but there were some manifest blemishes between, blemishes which seemed to have followed success. The greatest difficulty is not to have a difficulty, but when we have difficulties easily removed. The greatest problem is if we find, in large measure, a freedom from problems. When Jehoshaphat began his reign he strengthened himself AGAINST Israel (2 Chron. 17. 1), he sought to the Lord God of his father, and his heart was lifted up in the ways of the Lord. He arranged for princes and Levites to teach in Judah, and they had the book of the law WITH them, and they went about throughout all the cities of Judah and taught

the people. The result was that God kept him from war, just as He had kept Asa, when Asa was faithful. The Philistines brought presents. The Arabians brought flocks. Jehoshaphat waxed great exceedingly, and THEN we read the opening words of the 18th chapter, "Now Jehoshaphat had riches and honour in abundance, AND JOINED AFFINITY WITH AHAB." "Abundance,"—oh the danger of abundance! Deuteronomy 8 marks this clearly. When Israel were favoured with abundance they looked to the abundance. "Pride and fulness of bread" were manifest in Sodom. Never complain of trials. Wise was the servant of God who said, "Give me neither poverty nor riches." God's gracious provision of daily needs is very precious, but Jehoshaphat had riches and honour in abundance, and now he "somewhat naturally" joined affinity with Ahab. God had delivered him from wars, and he thought of the nearest kingdom,—the kingdom which was once identified with Judah. Did he wish to preserve a warfare against that kingdom? Did he wish to continue an opposition to those who were brethren of the family of Jacob? No. He would join affinity with Ahab. That is to say—intermarry. God had warned Israel of the danger of marriage with the nations around. Why? Because they would turn the hearts of the Israelites after false gods. God does not ever suggest "You will turn them to the true God by marrying into their families." There are some who tell us that a marriage of a believer with an unbeliever will probably bring the unbeliever to the truth. God gives us no hint of this. His teaching is altogether the other way.

Jehoshaphat might have said, "But Israel are not as the nations around." He little realised that Jezebel was of the nations around, and that Ahab was

under her control, and that Ahab sold himself to do wickedness in the sight of the Lord. It was a grievous mistake to join affinity with Ahab. God appointed marriage as a type of the union of Christ and His people, but Satan destroyed the blessing of the first union of Adam and Eve, and the Lord Jesus has indicated how often Satan will attempt to use the home, as where we read the bold and sinful excuse, "I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come." After this intermarriage, Jehoshaphat WENT DOWN to Ahab in Samaria. Truly this was a going down.—a sad going down spiritually. Ahab was READY to receive him. The man who did not scruple to oppose the prophets of God, and to allow them to be put to death, was pleased, for his political influence, to make friendship with the God-fearing king of Judah. If Ahab had principles against God's servants, why did he welcome Jehoshaphat? Here we see the wickedness of Ahab, but still more the failure of Jehoshaphat stands out. He knew Ahab's character, he knew what Jezebel had done to the prophets of the Lord, and yet he went down to see Ahab. He did not ask counsel at the mouth of the Lord. THAT was the initial mistake. We observe, therefore, the recorded errors are a wrong inference from prosperity, and result from marriage, against God's appointment, into the evil family of Ahab,—a most serious error in itself, and full of lasting bitter fruit. Thus we have arrangements for friendship WITH the ungodly, and willingness to go down to a meal,—a feast,—WITHOUT seeking counsel from God. You will observe the *steps* downward. It was "natural" for Ahab to provide a feast for the near-by king of Judah. The sheep and the oxen were slain for him, and for the people with him, and after a meal the evil increased, and grasped the poor, ensnared Jehoshaphat. There is a grave danger of a grave mistake

if we have fellowship with the ungodly. Meals are the greatest perils. It may seem a small matter to go out to tea, but this may hinder the spiritual life for months afterwards. Ahab entrapped Jehoshaphat in connection with a feast. When the physical comfort is being considered, when we are eating and drinking for the enjoyment of the physical body, we are taken off our guard. It is very difficult to do spiritual and physical things together, hence the especial *command* to eat and drink to the glory of God! One of the hardest things of the CHRISTIAN life is eating and drinking. I think we must agree on this point. Easy physically; but eating and drinking are among the hardest things OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. Let me repeat the words:—"To eat and drink to the glory of God is among the most difficult problems." If a child of God has reached this, and can eat and drink to the glory of God, he is a spiritually advanced believer. It is one of the highest lessons mentioned with regard to God's school.

I suppose it was quite "natural" with Jehoshaphat to go down to the feast without many thoughts of failure, and without many misgivings, for if we make one mistake we blind our eyes as to seeing the next. I am not for one moment suggesting that Jehoshaphat intentionally determined to depart from the Lord. I am convinced that Jehoshaphat would have wished to improve Ahab. Possibly he thought, (most children of God in similar circumstances think), that there might be some good result. He felt he could modify the iniquity of Ahab toward those who were the people of God in Israel. This seems a very reasonable interpretation of his friendship. We can always find a plausible excuse for that which we want to do. But to return to the feast:—When the sheep and oxen have been slain in ABUNDANCE for the man who has

honour in ABUNDANCE, persuading words are uttered. Ahab persuades Jehoshaphat to go with him to Ramoth-gilead. The word "persuade" has a deep meaning. It is used of Jezebel's relationship to Ahab. Jezebel his wife *stirred him up*. This is very striking. The same word is used elsewhere for "enticing," enticing to serve idols. Very beautifully in this same chapter the word occurs in verse 31, "God MOVED them to depart from him." It is wonderful after the poor weak king had been enticed and moved to listen to Ahab, God was pleased to persuade and move the captains of Syria to go away from His servant, and to spare the almost-forfeited life. God did not allow him the full fruit of his own way, only sufficient chastisement to prepare him for the prophet's message. And WE have received similar mercy, beloved friends, else we should not be here to-night. I presume you will agree with me that Jehoshaphat was not QUITE ready to go to Ramoth-gilead. He needed persuading, but he was in a position to be persuaded. Sometimes we endeavour to make up our minds very firmly. We pray "Lead us not into temptation" and then walk into the place of temptation, and wonder that we are ensnared. If we make up our minds firmly, if we pray definitely, *we must act in the power of the Holy Spirit, on the line of our prayers.* 'Tis after the persuading that Ahab says to Jehoshaphat "Wilt thou go with me to Ramoth-gilead?" The ORDER of words may give us a little hint. Did Ahab first of all suggest "Why do you not go up to Ramoth-gilead yourself?" and Jehoshaphat felt he was not quite equal to this, and so hesitated, and then Ahab said, "Well, will you go with me?" You will notice in 1 Kings 22. 3, the king talks to his servants attractively, "Know ye that Ramoth-gilead is ours?"—it belongs to us, it was appointed by God to be a city of refuge, and we

sit still ; and so with those overheard words to the servants, and the suggestion to Jehoshaphat, “ Will you go ? ” he bait is laid ; and when the king of Israel replies, the winning snare of Satan is seen, “ Well, I am going, will you come with me if you do not feel quite ready to go by yourself,” (for “ with him ” in verse 2 is in italics), “ If you are not quite ready to go by yourself, come with me to Ramoth-gilead.” At once Jehoshaphat feels that he must answer in a proper way, and with that frankness of character which is beautiful in a right place,—“ I as thou, and my people as thy people, and we will be with thee in the war.” Jehoshaphat does not like to hold aloof, Ahab has reminded him that Ramoth-gilead had been marked out as belonging to Israel, and Jehoshaphat’s heart is stirred to have back that which GOD appointed and which GOD marked out. And now the king of Israel holds to the city which God originally appointed as a city of refuge, will not Jehoshaphat that God-fearing man, be ready to associate himself with the earnest effort to win back the city which belonged to God ? Therefore he says “ I as thou, my people as thine.” The bargain is struck, the arrangement is made, Jehoshaphat is carried away with the attractive prospect of winning back a city which God gave, a city which God appointed. Are there not believers to-day who fall into a similar evil ? Are there not those who are willing to associate with the world in order to bring about some philanthropic or religious enterprise ? Do they not feel encouraged that the “ Ahabs ” of this age are willing to take a share in bringing back some Ramoth-gilead, and they say “ We MUST co-operate with them and help them, this is a laudable enterprise,” and so they link themselves, instead of asking counsel at the mouth of the Lord. In the book of Kings, Jehoshaphat’s words are

recorded with a solemn added statement "My horses as they horses." The king was commanded not to multiply riches to himself, nor to multiply horses to himself. The solemn words of Deut. 17 seem partly forgotten by the wandering king. Jehoshaphat's character has well been summed up at this stage of his career by the word "World-bordering," yet, thanks be unto God, he repented AT LAST.

But observe how Jehoshaphat feels, it would seem, a little awkward. He does not like to say "I have made a mistake." Perhaps he does not feel he has made a mistake. At least he does not appear to feel it very definitely, yet he is uncomfortable. Counsel has not been asked of the Lord. He has not set himself to seek the Lord as in chapter 20. 3. But now he attempts to put things right *afterward*. "And Jehoshaphat said unto the king of Israel, Enquire, I pray thee, at the word of the Lord to-day." It would have been rather out of place in Ahab's court to have put the word of the Lord first. Having conciliated the king, he will bring it in second. I do not say that such was Jehoshaphat's thought. I rather anticipate he was taken off his guard, and carried away by feelings, but there are many who fall into this error, which the Holy Spirit MARKS OUT AND IMPLIES BY THE LANGUAGE USED. They meet the world half-way, and then seek to sanctify the arrangements by asking the guidance and blessing of the Lord. "Ye cannot serve God *and mammon*." "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and *Him only* shalt thou serve." There is a grave danger, moreover, whenever we adopt the wrong order. Israel did not ask counsel at the mouth of the Lord in Joshua 9, they made their plans *first*. We read also how the father-in-law of Moses said to him, "If thou shalt do this thing, AND God command thee so" (Exod. 18. 23); and how under Moant

Sinai Israel said, " We will *DO AND* we will *HEAR* ;" and how on another occasion David in bringing up the ark of the Lord said to the people, " If it seem *GOOD* to you," and *THEN* he mentioned the will of the Lord *AFTERWARDS*. Now, beloved friends, the will of the Lord must be first. That is the only safe arrangement. We often fall in with usual arrangements, and then ask the Lord to bless them, whereas the Lord may intend to bless contrasts. Let us seek guidance at *HIS* mouth. To return, the king of Israel is apparently very willing to fall in with Jehoshaphat's request. He gathers 400 prophets,—400 prophets who are spared in Jezebel's court :—there must be something strange about them. They are not open idolators, at least on this occasion. They speak very respectfully of the Lord,—*BUT* they are men who know how to trim their arrangements to suit Samaria's wishes. When they are in Samaria they will do, in measure, as Samaria does. They are men who are able to compromise. They are invited to guide, and at once they reply " Go up, for God will deliver into the king's hand." What could be more encouraging? There seems a wonderful victory. Here are 400 men witnessing about *GOD* with a marvellous unity, in front of king Ahab. It almost seems as though he is won to the truth. Here is Ahab, ready to listen to prophets, in connection with the word of the *Lord*. Here is Ahab, concerned about the Ramoth-gilead of *GOD'S* appointment. Everything seems very encouraging. I need hardly say that there was a little part of history just before this which may have taken Jehoshaphat off his guard in a very natural way. Of Ahab we read, " When Ahab heard these words, he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly. And the word of the Lord came unto Elijah the Tishbite, saying,

Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before Me.” It was AFTER this that Jehoshaphat went down to the king of Israel. He *may* have inferred from his own opinion, and with a real desire for blessing, around which the parasite of SELF-decision had entwined,—“Ahab humbles himself, now he speaks about Ramoth-gilead; he is willing for prophets who are prophets of God,—everything is very encouraging, I am winning this dear man, I am gaining him for the truth,” and Jehoshaphat may have felt that he was on the right lines, but that he must go cautiously, that he must not be too outspoken, to “spoil things.” To many it seems—“If you take things too rapidly, you may break everything down; if you will only work slowly, you may win an Ahab.” But if this involves compromise it is vain. Yet the thought that was in Jehoshaphat’s mind may have been such, but he is not said to have asked counsel at the mouth of the Lord. He was deceived by appearances. If only he had been guided of the Lord, how different would have been the history.

But Jehoshaphat is still troubled. He has said “Enquire, I pray thee, at the word of the Lord,” and these prophets have a remarkable unity, *but* yet they do not employ the name “Jehovah,” they leave it out altogether. Jehoshaphat seems a little suspicious. He will repeat the name of Jehovah once more. “Is there not here a prophet of JEHOVAH besides, that we may enquire of him?” No man in the Spirit of God could call the Lord Jesus accursed, but no one in the spirit of a demon was allowed in the EARLY CHURCHES, to say “Jesus is Lord (Jehovah).” This is a very remarkable illustration of 1 Cor. 12 in connection with the false prophets in this passage. I do not mean they kept the name Jehovah out ALWAYS, but when they were specially speaking IN THE POWER OF A

LYING SPIRIT* there was a remarkable omission. “And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, There is one man, Micaiah, the son of Imla, by whom we may enquire of the Lord.” Jehoshaphat is encouraged!—“But I hate him.” All Jehoshaphat’s attempts seem brought to the ground. “I hate him.” Jehoshaphat hesitates and only replies, “Let not the king say so.” He will continue to conciliate, if at all possible. And so Micaiah is fetched, and Micaiah speaks parabolically and plainly, and gives the witness. He is mocked, and the king of Israel sends him back to prison,—and yet Jehoshaphat still hopes to work with Ahab. If we are in a wrong position, we shall look at things from a wrong standpoint. It is only when we are in fellowship with the Lord we shall be guided by the Spirit of the Lord. And now this God-fearing man adds an action of peculiar foolishness. Ahab says to him, “I will disguise myself, and will go to the battle, but put thou on thy robes.” The object of Ahab is clear. He wishes to escape the Divine threatened death. He will disguise himself, “Put thou on thy robes.” Jehoshaphat, again taken off his guard, falls in with the wicked arrangement, even an attempt to frustrate God’s words! The king of Syria, overruled by God, is DETERMINED to destroy king Ahab. He knows that Ahab is the instigator of the war, and that the Israelites would return in peace to their house if Ahab is slain. The ROBES of Jehoshaphat attract, he is nearly killed. But God prevents a single arrow touching him, and directs a seemingly “chance” arrow against Ahab. Both things, and ALL things, are in His power. When Jehoshaphat cries, he hardly likes to cry to the Lord under the circumstances, but he

* This must be carefully noted. One in the spirit of evil might, when not thus inspired, utter the Name, and thus Satan would seek to deceive.

cries out, and the Lord arranges which way the cry goes, because the man's heart is wishing to please Him. "The Lord helped him." He did believe in the Lord (Jehovah), and GOD moved those GENTILES to depart from him. And now JEHOSHAPHAT returns to his house in peace. Micaiah told Ahab that *he* could not return in peace. All the scheming of Ahab has not saved his life. All the failure of Jehoshaphat has been overruled. His life is spared. What wondrous mercy! Yet do not presume on mercy, but rather obey the Lord. And a prophet meets him, and with a holy definiteness says to him, "Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord?" The prophet does not shrink. His father was put in prison for speaking in this manner to Asa. He may also know what has just happened to Micaiah, but he will risk prison for the truth's sake. And so he witnesses, AND, thanks be unto God, Jehoshaphat is humbled, and he listens to the word of the Lord, and seeks to please the Lord, and meets his NEXT battle with prayer.

But yet even after this Jehoshaphat joined himself with Ahaziah who did very wickedly.—joined himself with him to make ships to go to Tarshish. Success—business prosperity,—the same aspect! And they made the ships in Ezion Geber. A prophet steps forward and says, "Because thou hast joined thyself with Ahaziah, the Lord hath broken thy works." And the ships were broken, they were not able to go to Tarshish. Oh, what a mercy when the Lord breaks things that we never ought to have made.

We find in 1 Kings 22 some further particulars. "Jehoshaphat made ships of Tarshish to go to Ophir for gold; but they went not; for the ships were broken at Ezion-geber. Then said Ahaziah the son of Ahab unto Jehoshaphat, Let my servants go with thy

servants in the ships, BUT JEHOSHAPHAT WOULD NOT." Thanks be unto God he resists now. He has learned the lesson, at least for the time being. But alas, we find in chapter 3 of 2 Kings that when Jehoram wrought evil he said to Jehoshaphat "The king of Moab hath rebelled against me, Wilt thou go with me against Moab to battle? And he said, I will go up; I am as thou art, my people as thy people, and my horses as thy horses." How could the dear man be ensnared once more? Why was he not guarded? Oh, how great is the danger of an affable temperament. Oh, how real the danger of an unreadiness to say "No." Let us be firm for the truth. If we know the will of God, let us cling to it, in the power of the Holy Spirit, at all costs. The result of this further compromise is that Jehoshaphat is soon in the wilderness, and there is danger of death because God has withheld water. And Elisha is called. Jehoshaphat again wants a prophet of the Lord when he is in an emergency. And Elisha says, "Were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee"—addressing the king of Israel. Oh what mercy to Jehoshaphat even when he puts himself in a wrong place. The Lord, who extricated David from the Philistines, extricates Jehoshaphat. You recollect how wondrously He delivered Paul after Paul took the vow, but mercy is no reason for our trifling with God's will. These are all beacons to us. How much some servants of God have lost through not standing firmly. The Lord give us grace to be definite, to *purpose in our heart* as Daniel, and to stand firmly in the enabling of the Holy Spirit. Alas, though Jehoshaphat more than once repented, and kept personally near to the Lord in such a way that he would not serve idols, *he sowed evil in his home*, for we read in 2 Chron. 21 that when Jehoshaphat died, and

his son Jehoram rose up, that though he reigned in Jerusalem, yet he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, *like as did the house of Ahab*; for he had the daughter of Ahab to wife; and he wrought that which was evil in the eyes of the Lord. He sowed compromise, and there was a bitter harvest. Oh, beloved friends, let us be careful for our own sakes, careful for the sakes of those related to us in our homes, careful for the sake of others, and careful in view of the Judgment Seat of Christ,—yea, careful unto the Lord's glory. We all have our temptations to turn aside and to parley with the world. Satan has many disguises. It is easier to be ensnared than we think. May we humbly confess our sins, and henceforth trust our gracious God, yielding not to fair speeches but going steadily forward, with spiritual discernment, in the Name of the Lord Jesus.

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**“Without the camp — a
clean place,”**

Lev. 6. 11.

THESE words are deeply suggestive. When the blood of a sin offering was brought into the holy place, the body was burnt without the camp (Lev. 4); we have a parallel as to the burnt offering. Heb. 13. 11-14 gives a precious key. If there is heavenly acceptance there must be earthly rejection in a ruined world. Christ is not yet exalted on earth : He is “without the camp:”

The believer has a two-fold position. Heb. 10. 19-20 and 13. 13 will make this clear. As we realize what it is to be in Christ, and the heavenly calling (Heb. 3. 1), we are cut off from worldly ideals and opinions. *There is no clean place in worldliness. There is no clean place in compromise.* The clean place is with Christ in rejection until He comes (John 15. 18-19). Any attempt to hide this is full of peril. But how great is the privilege given to a child of God, that, in the Holy Spirit's enabling, he may enjoy the outside *place with his despised Lord.* This sweetens the bitter trial, and the reproach of Christ is greater riches than the treasures in Egypt (Heb. 11. 26). Oh that our hearts and lives may experience the Lord's appointment.