THE MOTHER OF ALL BATTLES

Are we conquerors or conquered? The answer to this question is reflected by the surrounding society. Pro 16:32, He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city. No doubt this refers to Gen 34 where Levi and Simeon digged down a wall of a city in their anger, and thus inherited the wrath of God, Gen. 49:6. But that is not our study at this time. Our present concern is the battle for totalitarianism or freedom which takes place in the spirit.

There are at least eight implications with Pro 16:32:

First, spirit refers to more than just the uncontrolled spirit of wrath. The Lord clearly tells us that evil proceeds from the inside out, not from the outside in. Thus a person habitually does evil deeds because he is an evil person. A person is defiled outwardly because he is defiled inwardly. His fallen spirit rules him instead of him ruling his spirit, Mk 7 (21). Therefore, spirit also refers to other “spirits,” such as pride, lust and covetousness, James 1:14. (Personal servitude to covetousness is seen in our debt-ridden society: the borrower is servant to the lender primarily because the borrower is servant to his own lusts, Pr 22:7; Isa 44:2. Sin and bondage is the natural, unavoidable result of man’s unruly spirit.)

Furthermore, James 4:1 & 2 tell us that the end results of the unruly spirit are conflicts, contentions and an early death. Thus conflicts (wars) of all kinds (inner, interpersonal and international) are the direct results of man’s unruly spirit. Moreover, terrible depression and worry are obvious results of the spirit ruling over the individual: the individual is unable to turn his thoughts away from depressing and worrisome thoughts, Matthew 6:24ff. The most important battle each person faces is the battle for self-control; if this battle is lost, all is lost.

Though we do not normally think of our spirit being a member of our body, God says it is, 1 Cor 9:27. Furthermore, it is such an important member that the body is dead without it, Ja 2:26. The most dangerous adversary we have is the member of our body that is known as our own heart. Not only does the word of God warn what will happen if our spirit rules us, but it also commands us to rule our spirit, Eph 4:23.

Second, though the battle is within and unknown to others, it is real and constant. The enemy is within; it is our own fallen spirit, 1 Co 10:13, There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man...

The basic Christian battle is for control of the spirit, ie., self-control. God compares the control of the spirit to tearing down a strong, stone wall protecting a city, 2 Cor 10:4 & 5 (a strong wall was a city’s first line of defence in biblical times). That strong wall is not destroyed all at once, has many defenders (it seems that when one is defeated, two replacements appear), is high and lifted up (requiring supernatural power to tear it down [note the promise of the new covenant, Jer 31:33, 2 Cor 3:3]), and cannot be destroyed all at once. It is destroyed a block at a time. How many grow terribly discouraged because a “magic word” does not bring the wall down? Certainly, there are times when the wall might come down as did...
Jericho's, but they are exceptions.

The tools provided by the Lord to bring down this wall is the word of God, Eph 4:8. A great many lies make up this wall; therefore, we destroy it one block at a time by applying the truth from God's word to one lie at a time.

Mother of all Battles

The wise man compares the battle against the fallen spirit to defending a city against the continual attack of a relentless enemy, Pro 25:28. "The taking of a city is child's play, compared with this wrestling with flesh and blood." (Charles Bridges, Proverbs. First published 1846, reprint by The Banner of Truth Trust, 1981, p 250.) This battle is the Mother of all Battles. If it is lost, all is lost.

Mankind's primary battle is a spiritual battle against his own spirit. We wrestle continually, not with flesh and blood, but with spiritual wickedness exalted within our own spirit, Eph 6:12. The Christian warfare is won or lost without a shot ever being fired or a blow exchanged.

Defeat is Defeat

Those with uncontrollable spirits in one area cannot condemn others for being uncontrolled in other areas, Mat 7:3-5 (Luke 6:41). How can we see to pull the small speck out of another's eye when we have a large beam of an uncontrolled spirit in our own? Although we are ruled by men who are ruled by their vain passions, we cannot lay the blame for society's ills upon them. If the average person cannot control his own spirit and passions, how then can he expect those in authority to control their passions?

Who is king

Indulgence to one's spirit allows the fallen nature to rule over him. Thus the person captive to his own spirit is not a conqueror but conquered. If he is conquered by his own spirit, how can he complain when he is conquered by outside forces (even a "money-merchant")? In fact, the next logical step after being conquered by one's own spirit is being conquered by a fallen, physical enemy.

Freedom

Third, clearly, there can be no freedom apart from personal freedom from one's own fallen spirit. Outward freedom is a result of inward freedom; national freedom starts with individual freedom from personal passions. National slavery is God's judgment for individual slavery to an uncontrolled spirit. God will see that the uncontrolled individual is controlled: either the individual will rule his own spirit, or the despot will rule him. Totalitarianism is God's rule of the individual (society) that lacks self-rule. Those unwilling to conquer their own spirit will be conquered.

The Mother of all Battles is a relentless battle with no rest or discharge, Ec 8:8. Furthermore, only righteousness will deliver those who desire victory in this battle. If one lets down his guard for a moment, he is defeated. The spiritual armour must be put on and never laid down. No rest or compromise can be permitted in this battle, or wounds will be inflicted, and ultimately, the battle lost.

Dead Raised

Nor will this enemy ever be completely conquered; he returns from the dead no matter what is done to him. He will not be left dead on the battlefield of the heart; he will be lively until death do us part.

Slavery

If this battle is not fought, won and the victory retained, we will be a slave to the hardest and harshest of task-masters, our own spirit. Therefore, if we allow our own spirit to rule over us, how can we complain when others rule over us with rigor?

The Mighty Exalted

Fourth, the world exalts the mighty who are able to conquer a physical enemy; the Lord exalts the mighty who are able to conquer their own spirit. Governing people or "taking a city is child's play compared to conquering the spirit." "Czar Peter said, I can govern my people, but how can I govern myself?" (Ibid, p 251.)

Fifth, the Lord tells us that the spirit of man is revealed by the tongue as it verbalizes the inner spirit. Thus a person's religious profession is voided by his unbridled spirit, Jas 1:26. Moreover, only as the spirit of man is submitted to the Spirit of God can the wild spirit be tamed, Ja 3 (v. 8).

Sixth, the uncontrolled spirit has God as its enemy. (I dread being around people who seem to be on the edge of uncontrolled anger.)

Seventh, the quality of self-control or ruling one's spirit is one of the most important qualifications for any type of leadership in the Kingdom of God. (Cf. Ex 18:21; 1 Tim 3:1ff & Tit 1:5ff.)

Victory Assured

And finally, eighth, victory is assured.

Our hope lies in the second part of 1 Cor 10:13: but God [is] faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. Though the common enemy of mankind is exceedingly strong, victory over him both commanded and assured by God.

The word of God not only promises victory to those desiring victory, but it plainly gives us the method of victory. Because the Christian's warfare is a spiritual war and the battle is won or lost within, there are some basic things that must be done. The method of Christian conquest is always the same in every area: first, self-control and discipline through the power and grace of God. Just as one gives up smoking or drunkenness through Spirit-controlled discipline, so one conquers the enemy of his own spirit. Second, study, 1 Cor 10:6. Third, prayer, Phil 4:6 & 1 Pe 5:7. And fourth, Godly discipline of our conversation (all manner of life).

The enemy may have been stabbed at the heart; yet will he get up, and renew the fight. Thou must walk - yea sleep - in thine armour. It must be worn, not laid up. There is no discharge from this war,
The source of victory: **Rom 8:37**, Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

The promised reward for victory in the most difficult of all battles, the inner, spiritual warfare: **Re 3:21** To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

Freedom or slavery? It is determined by the Mother of all Battles, self-control under God.

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**The Destruction of God’s people.**

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge, Hosea 4:6, seems to be a favorite text for many who enjoy &/or make a business of exposing the deep, hidden things of Satan (or things generally unknown).

By justifying their “discovery” and revelation of conspiracies with this text, many raise vast sums of money to help bring the knowledge of the “hidden things of dishonesty” into the light of day.

Some people, even pastors, say that the Lord’s people are destroyed because they do not know enough about the depths of the enemy’s conspiracy. Though vs. 6 may permit this thought on a limited scale, it is its primary teaching, “My people are destroyed because they do not know enough about what is going on around them”? Is this verse a legitimate command to study the deep, hidden, conspiratorial things of evil in society?

If so, we are confronted with a conflict in the word of God: Hosea 4:6 & Matthew 28:19, 20. Whereas, Hosea appears to teach that the answer to man’s ills is knowing about wicked men’s secret conspiracies, the Lord, in Matt 28:19, 20, teaches that the answer to man’s ills is going and teaching all nations the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and teaching them to observe all things whatsoever Christ has commanded.

To hear some people use Hosea 4:6, evidently they have cut our Lord’s words in Matthew from their Bibles, and are basing salvation (as do the secular humanists) in knowledge about evil (besides, it raises money).

- **Rightly divide the Word**

It seems that there are those who suppose that rightly dividing the word of truth consists of knowing which verses to pull out of what places in the text of God’s word to support favorite doctrines. This practice developed as “Bible Readings” at the turn of the century, but the word of God cannot be divided up into small portions of here a little, there a little without destroying both the “divider” and his followers.¹ (Note Rev 22:19 [Det 4:2; 12:32; Pro 30:6], And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy... Those who remove passages from their context take away from the words of this book.)

- **A Little here – A Little There**

Here a little..., Isa 28:9-13. The ones Isaiah spoke to were babes; therefore, they had to be treated and taught as babes with a little doctrine at a time. But even small portions of doctrine were to them as a foreign tongue (Geneva Bible margin). Isaiah gives the reason that the people were unable to connect the whole of Scripture: that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken, v. 13. The implication is that the division of Scriptures into here a little, there a little (no continuity of texts, permitting about anything to be taught) is for a Divine purpose: the destruction of the sin-hardened people of God. One cannot take small portions of Scriptures, mix them all together and arrive at a proper conclusion; therefore, the context of my people are destroyed for lack of knowledge must be developed and maintained.

Obviously, Hosea spoke to the children of Israel, those called by His name, still inhabiting the land of Palestine (Hosea 1:1-2. In Micah, the people the Lord has a controversy with are identified simply as his people, 6:3, 3). What happened to this small group of people called by His name is preserved to show us how God works in the lives of individuals and nations. The application and substance of God’s message through the prophets (Hosea &c) are for all His people of all time, 1 Cor 10:11 (cf. Jn 14:15; 15:10; 1 Jn 2:3).

- **Who’s at fault**

The children of Israel, those identified as the people of the Lord, had departed from Godliness and stubbornly refused to forsake the pleasures of sin, 4:1-2. The prophet Hosea, speaking for the Lord to His sinful people, explains why and how the Lord is going to deal with those who departed from Godliness. He calls for repentance (6:1-3. Cf. 2 Tim 2:19), and promises the renewal of the covenant, ch 14 (note Whose work the renewal is, 14:4).

In order to properly understand v. 6, of course we must develop its context:

- **The great controversy**

V. 1, for the Lord hath a controversy..., Hosea 4:1. [Feud, dispute-lawsuit, litigation, conflicts outside of the courtroom use this term also.] God uses two illustrations to describe His dispute with His people: Husband/wife & Landlord/tenant.

First, the Husband/wife relationship: the Lord compares Israel’s unfaithfulness in the covenant between Him and their fathers to an adulterous wife. God’s people...
(Jehovah's wife) even paid her lovers to come to her, 8:9, &c. Jehovah God establishes His right to "divorce" His wife and turn her over to the mercy of her pagan lovers.

Second, the Landlord/tenant relationship: under OT law, the covenant people did not own the land; they leased it from its Owner. Therefore, the land, unless it was within walled cities, could not be sold. The different tithes also established (& still does) the Lord's ownership over all the earth and the fullness thereof; therefore, He gives it to whomsoever He will. And thus God's laws concerning the land continually reminded them that they were only strangers and pilgrims upon it, Heb. 11. The conditions for their continued possession of the land was written into their "lease agreement," cf. Deut chs 28-32. Also within the agreement was what would happen for its violation.

Throughout the prophets, the Lord told the land's inhabitants that He had a legal claim against them, 2 Chron 36:15. They were in open, deliberate and hardened violation of the agreement, and thus the Lord had the legal right to remove them from His land. He "threatened them with court action" to have them evicted by a stronger nation if they did not return to the covenant-agreement (Hosea 9:15-17), and pleaded with them to return to their agreement. Furthermore, the people's refusal to heed the word of the Lord caused the Lord to say, thou hast destroyed thyself, Hosea 13:9. (For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind... 8:7.) Moreover, we are told that the Lord Himself is the One Who sent the enemies against His people; He sent them to destroy His people because they violated the covenant, 2 Kgs 15:37; 2 Chron 36:17, &c. Thus God's people had plenty of knowledge; the problem was that they refused to act on that knowledge. And, as they refused to act upon the knowledge they had, the knowledge was removed from them: the knowledge of the Lord and His law was lost in the House of the Lord, 2 Kgs 22; 2 Chron 34:14. ("But, Bro. Need, that is OT." So is My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Paul very ably describes those who separate passages from their context in order to make the passage teach a pet doctrine as dishonest, crafty deceivers, 2 Cor 4:2.)

- Legitimate court case

Mat 5:25-26, advises to settle conflicts quickly and out of court because in court, the judge may force the guilty party to pay everything; therefore, the tenant should make peace with the landlord. Make an agreement with him before the tenant ends up in court. In fact, kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little, Ps. 2:12.

As one reads through Hosea, he sees the details of why the Lord cast His people from the land: no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land, 4:1.

Truth: ...no truthfulness, either in speech or action, no one trusting another any more. Love: ...is not human love generally, but love to inferiors, and among those who need help or compassionate love... They both have their roots in the knowledge of God, of which they are the fruit... "Truth cannot be sustained without mercy; and mercy without truth makes men negligent; so that the one ought to be mingled with the other" (Jerome...). Such knowledge not only produces fear of God, but also love and truthfulness toward the brethren (cf. Eph iv. 32, Col iii. 12). Where this is wanting, injustice gains the upper hand.²

nor knowledge of God in the land, v. 1, cf. 6:7, But they like men have transgressed the covenant... (Like sinful Adam. See 1 Jn. 2:3-4.) Knowledge about God and His word does not mean one knows God. It is said that Karl Marx could quote the NT. Because v. 2 goes on to properly define knowledge, we will develop its meaning as used in both v. 1 and v. 6. Knowledge:

¹847 2. esp. in WisdLit = discernment, understanding, wisdom... b. in the highest sense, knowledge of God (incl. obedience) Ho 4:1, 6.²

Particularly distinctive is the prophetic concept of "knowledge of God" which is particularly prominent in Hosea (4:1, 6, 6:6; cf. Prov 2:5). Knowledge of God is derived from those outstanding historical events in which God has evidenced and has revealed himself to chosen individuals such as Abraham and Moses. These revelations are to be taught to others. "Knowledge of God" appears in parallel with "fear of the Lord" (Isa 11:2; cf. 58:2; Jer 22:16) as a description of true religion. The man who has a right relation with God confesses him and obeys him. To do justice and righteousness and to judge the cause of the poor and needy is to know God (Jer 22:15-16). On the other hand where there is no knowledge of God there is swearing, lying, killing, stealing, committing adultery and breaking all bonds (Hos 4:1-2). Such will bring destruction upon a people (Hos 4:5; cf. Isa 5:13). Knowledge of God is more pleasing to him than sacrifice (Hos 6:6). The prophetic view of the messianic age is of a time in which the knowledge of God covers the earth as water covers the sea (Hab 2:14; cf. Isa 11:9). [Emp added. Note that knowledge of God is equated with righteousness, or right living, Isa 45:8, &c. Ed.]³

Observe: Samuel, when confronting King Saul, summed up the Biblical definition of knowledge as used in Hosea 4: Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to harken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee... 1 Sam 15:22, 23 (Hos 6:9).

Knowledge Defined

Thus knowledge is knowing the Lord, knowing His law-word and doing His will (righteousness) as revealed in that word. A lack of knowledge is identified in Hosea as: 1) swearing, 2) lying, 3) killing, 4) stealing, 5) adultery, 6) whoredoms, 7) pride, 8) unlawful sacrifice (to the gods of the pagans, 4:12), 9) unlawful training of children, 4:13, 10) intermarriage with pagans (unbelievers), 6:7, 10) permitting ungodly civil rulers, 8:4, 11) seeking guidance from sources other than the inspired word of God, 4:12, &c.⁴

Whoredom

Furthermore, the Lord, through the prophet Hosea, identifies sin as whoredom, eg., a wife's (Israel) unfaithfulness to her husband (Jehovah God). Sin is basically God's people's refusal to recognize His sovereign authority over them, Rom 1:21.

God's warning is always over the same issue. That issue is not really immorality as such; rather, it is over His people ignoring His authority to tell them how to act and how to do His work; it is over God's people ignoring His law, Hosea 4:6; Mal 4:4; Jer 9:14; Isa 50:1, &c. The
controversy is compounded because the spiritual leaders, much to the delight of God’s people, say it is okay to ignore His law (my people love to have it so Jer 5:31; Mal 2:1, 7; Isa 30:9-10). The leaders say, peace, peace when there is no peace (“We are in the midst of a revival!”), Jer 6:14. Can one blame the Lord for His hot wrath against the shepherds, Zech. 10:3?

Therefore, knowledge (Hos 4:1, 6) cannot be separated from God's action according to the law of thy God, v. 6.

One of the results of Israel’s rejection of knowledge (and thus hardness in sin) was that the Lord would give them “spiritual leaders” after their own sinful hearts, 4:9. God’s people rejected His covenant-law in their hearts, so He sent teachers justifying their rejection. These “leaders” would speak smooth things and deceit to comfort His people in their rejection of knowledge (cf. Isa 30:9ff), so the Lord could reward them for their doing. (But the Lord made it very clear, they destroyed themselves, Hosea 13:9.)

V. 3, all the land and its inhabitants pay the price for God’s people’s refusal to glorify Him as God.

These words affirm not only that the inanimate creation suffers in insouciance of the sins and crimes of men, but that the moral depravity of men causes the physical destruction of all other creatures. As God has given to men the dominion over all beasts, and over all the earth, that he may use it for the glory of God; so does He punish the wickedness of men by pestilences, or by the devastation of the earth. Thus all creation, creatures included, suffers when God judges man’s sin; He judges in the form of unseasonable rain, storms, droughts, earthquakes, &c. His judgment affects all of creation, not just guilty man.

V. 4, Yet let no man strive, nor reprove another... V. 3 speaks of judgment against God’s sinful people; v. 4 says that in the midst of judgment, one can neither blame God nor others. Rather, each must look to his own sin (they destroyed themselves). How like fallen nature to view surrounding judgment against sin with the assurance that the judgment is the fault of others. The individual needs to check his own relationship according to God’s Word. (We regularly hear of people who are willing to fight and even die to see civil government return to God, but they themselves are unwilling to do what they demand of those in civil authority. Such hypocrisy has not escaped God’s notice.)

strive with the priest, “... the nation resembled those who are described in the law as rebels against the priest.” (Keil.) The priests passed judgment upon sin according to the law, but the people rebelled against righteous judgment, Deut 17:12, 13. If striving against a priest is presumption worthy of death, how much more is presumptuous striving against God worthy of death, He 10:29? The people to whom Hosea was sent strove against their Maker with no more concern than if they were striving against a man of God or another person (cf. Isa 45:9).

Israel (“Prophets for Profit”). Led by these Profiting Prophets, the people departed from the law of the Lord. The Lord promises that both the prophets and followers will fall. And thus “…the destruction of the whole nation and kingdom is announced.” Keil.

V.6, My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge... (nor knowledge of God, v. 1). The people of God, encouraged by their Profiting Prophets, refused to obey the law-word of God.

The speaker is Jehovah; my nation, that is to say, the nation of Jehovah. This nation perished for lack of the knowledge of God and His salvation... This knowledge Israel might have drawn from the law, in which God had revealed His counsel and will (Deut xxx. 15), but it would not. It rejected the knowledge and forgot the law of its God, and would be rejected and forgotten by God in consequence...7

God’s people’s lack of knowledge was exhibited by the sins previously mentioned. Their lack of knowledge: first, lacked Godliness according to the law-word of God, 8:1, 12, &c., and, second, mixed Godliness with worldliness, 8:5, &c.

Furthermore, My people are destroyed... will not stand alone because it is followed with the reason for destruction: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee... God wrote great things of His law to His people, but they counted it as a strange thing, 8:12. His people knew/now what was/is required of them, but they refused/refuse to act on that knowledge. God’s controversy is over His people’s constant refusal to do what His word says (& what they know to do); it is over their refusal to recognize and submit to His authority over their every thought and action.

The Lord continues by explaining the results of their rejection: thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children. Forget - neglect - neglect to look into His law-word to find out what pleases Him in order to do it. Forgotten implies such absorption in the things of this world that one neglects His laws. If we neglect what is dear and important to Him, He will neglect what is dear and important to us, our children. (Ps 138:2. Cf. Mat 6:33).8

Obedience replaced by Sacrifice

Note Hosea 6:6 (I Sam 5:22; Isa 1:11; Jer 7:22, 23): His people ignored His Word, refused to obey Him, and then they substituted sacrifice in a vain attempt to appease Him. The Lord warned them of the results of disobedience through His prophets, but rather than turn back in obedience, they simply made sacrifices to Him in a foolish hope of appeasing His wrath and avoiding the results of their sin. Saul substituted a huge sacrifice for obedience, I Sam. 15. How many people attempt to cover their self-willed ways with giving or good works?

(Hosea 6:6 is not separating mercy from sacrifice. Mercy speaks of our relationship to others; therefore, one cannot obey God without showing mercy toward others. On the other hand, one can show mercy toward others without a proper relationship toward God. One of the main complaints the Lord has in Hosea is His people’s failure to show proper mercy to the needy. Faith cannot be


Ⅰ. Conclusion

As we note the following, keep in mind that Hosea is addressed to God's people.

I. V. 6 is not speaking of a lack of knowledge about:

First, the secret, conspiratorial plans of the wicked. There are many ministries today apparently built around uncovering secret conspiracies of the wicked who desire and work for a one-world government. ‘My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge’ is often misused to justify “uncovering” secret conspiracies and to influence people to give of their time and money and unite to help “uncover” hidden conspiracies. Using this verse in such a manner is totally contrary to the word of God, De 29:29; Eph 5:12.

Certainly, there is a conspiracy behind every evil taking place. It started in the Garden of Eden as a conspiracy against the authority of the word of God (“You don’t need His law to tell you how to act and think. You can determine that for yourself”), enlarged soon after the flood to include a desire for a one-world government, and is easily traced to the present time. What we see today in conspiracies is not new, nor should it surprise us.

Ⅱ. Conspiracies of wicked men not the problem

The root cause of conspiracy is found in those called by the name of the Lord. The conspiracy is against God and His law, Jer 11:9. The conspiracy is centered in the church, and the conspirators are led by supposed men of God who turn God’s people away from His law-word (primarily by ignoring the context of passages they teach). We will add that the conspirators against God’s law conspire in the name of “We are NT Christians,” in spite of Paul’s clear admonition in Rom 13:8-14 (the true conspiracy says, as it did in the Garden, “You are no longer accountable to the entire word of God.”), Ex 22:25. Thus the salt has lost his savour, and the light is under a bushel.

But the real conspiracy is against going into all the world, teaching the gospel to every person, baptizing the converts and teaching them all that the Word of God commands. Although this is the conspiracy that must be dealt with, we hear very little about it.

Therefore, knowledge about the world’s conspiracies will do nothing to stop them. The only thing that will stop the conspiracy is Godly knowledge, i.e., Godliness according to the total of God’s word by God’s people (cf. Ja 3:4, &c).

Second, the word of God. There are many verses which command thorough, in-depth study of Scripture (e.g., 2 Tim 2:15). But teaching and learning, thus knowledge, about God’s word concerning every area of life is only half the answer. Biblical knowledge that pleases God must include action according to that knowledge.

The ungodly say that “knowledge is power,” when, actually, it is godly action according to godly knowledge that contains God’s power. Knowing and not doing the truth is hated by God and only adds to the judgment of God, Ja 4:17.

II. Belief that knowledge will prevent destruction is anti-Christ.

First, knowledge alone about God will not prevent destruction; rather, it leads to deception, more sin and harsher judgment, James 1:22.

Second, knowledge about the secret things of Satan (conspiracies) in the world will not prevent destruction. As previously mentioned, those conspiracies are not the problem; the problem is in the church.

Third, knowledge about sin will not prevent destruction.

The ungodly say that the lack of knowledge about sex leads to pregnancy, the lack of knowledge about sodomy leads to AIDS, the lack of knowledge about drugs leads to more drugs, &c. The fallacy of the foolishness of the lack of knowledge is readily apparent as pregnancy, sodomy and drug use increase as knowledge in these areas increase. The “in thing” now among young people is “bi-sexual” experiments with sodomy.

III. When my people are destroyed for lack of knowledge is used apart from its context (knowledge is defined as godliness according to the total of God’s word), we fall into the same “education is the answer” trap which has the ungodly ensnared.

Hosea shows us that God’s wrath came against His people, not because they didn’t have knowledge (ie, know what to do; they had an abundance of prophets from God), but because they did not put action to their knowledge.

Ⅲ. Our Problem

We must honestly say that our major problem is not that we do not know enough about the word of God or about what “conspiracy” is currently taking place around us. Our problem is that we do not take godly action according to what we know from God’s word. If all people would act upon what they know is right, society would be transformed. (Note that godly action upon godly knowledge results in more knowledge, He 5:13, 14.)

IV. The enemy well understands how anxious fallen nature is to separate knowledge from godly action, so he works to increase the separation through his false Profiting Prophets. The people gladly receive the smooth, deceitful words they love to hear: words that require no confession of sin, personal responsibility, self-sacrifice, dedication and/or work.

V. Sacrifice without obedience is unacceptable to the Lord. Far too many people feel that their “spirituality” is measured by how many notes they have in their note books or Bibles, or how many “Bible facts” they can recall. Biblical knowledge is measured by how much of His Word we have in our lives. There is no knowledge of God apart from obedience, and thus, My people are destroyed for lack of obedience to my word, Ps 37:3;

Today, Bible studies abound. It is popular to “take a scenic tour through the Bible,” but very few want to be bound by consistency to its strict laws, statutes and precepts; very few want to know their responsibility to God. The appealing message for the masses is “this is what God owes you.” This message not only draws people and money, but it draws God’s vengeance, judgment and anger against the society that condones the message, Heb 8:10-13; 10:15-20.

It is important to note that the child of God will not be judged according to how much he knows, but according to how he applies what he knows. Knowledge about a subject will do nothing toward avoiding the consequences of not doing.

VI. What will stop the destruction of society? Knowledge and godliness in every area of life and thought. If just the Christians would be consistent in their stand (e.g. remove their children from pagan, anti-Christian schools &c), paganism would fall. Modern Christianity is quite similar to our government’s action toward Communism. Communism would have collapsed many years ago if the “West” would refuse its continual finance. Paganism would have collapsed many years ago if Christians would not support pagan programs.

God has a controversy with His people because they refuse to acknowledge His total and complete authority and law. His people need to settle the controversy quickly or it will be too late.

There is a Conspiracy

Yes, there is a conspiracy that is killing Christianity; it must be examined, revealed, dealt with and moved upon. It is the conspiracy against the Lord’s words of Matthew 28:19, 28. Only when this conspiracy is conquered by God’s grace will the conspiracies of wicked men in high places be nullified.

Hosea does not leave Christians in a hopeless situation. He points us to the wonderful grace of God: I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely... 14:4. God, in His good time, promised to move and settle the controversy in the hearts of His people and in His favour. What a wonderful day that will be.

EndNotes

1. The “Bible Reading” method of study of God’s word was a new method of study which took a theme and searched for Scriptures to support or teach that theme. “Bible Reading” can be extremely disastrous to Christianity because it permits one to ignore the context of the verses used to support the preconceived idea or thought being pursued. Thus through the “Bible Reading” method of study, the Word of God can be made of none effect and used to support any theory that the teacher wishes to promote.

“The Bible Reading,” though, did not develop and spread unopposed. As it developed in the late 1800s, Francis L. Patton, of Princeton Seminary, said:

... I particularly object to their [the “Bible reading” school of thought of which Mr. Moody was a leader, Ed.] arbitrary and unhistorical system of interpretation... But few, I fear, know the English Bible as they do. I advise you to learn their secret in this regard, but do not adopt their methods; and I warn you against supposing that you have given an adequate substitute for a sermon when, with the help of Cruden’s Concordance, you have chased a word through the Bible, making a comment or two on the passages as you go along. [The Roots of Fundamentalism, Ernest R. Sandeen, 1975, Baker Book House, p. 137.]

Moody was greatly influenced in his style of preaching by the English Plymouth Brethren evangelist Harry Moorhouse, who astounded Moody by preaching for a whole week from the same text. One of Moody’s biographers described the addresses, all based upon John 3:16, as “not a sermon so much as a string of related texts of passages briefly commented upon to form what came to be known, rather oddly, as a ‘Bible Reading.’” About that series of sermons Fleming Revell, Moody’s brother-in-law, wrote, “D.L. Moody has great power before, but nothing like what he had after dear Harry Moorhouse came into our lives and changed the character of the teaching and preaching of the chapel.” That the Bible reading was popularized if not invented by the Plymouth Brethren seems quite clear. Darby, as noted previously, preferred private reading meetings to preaching and carried out his most successful work through this form of teaching, very frequently in homes rather than in churches. Every Brethren teacher and evangelist used this method; its popularity is both contemporaneous with Brethren expansion to North America and coexistent with those millennials which the Brethren were known to have influenced. Furthermore, as in Moody’s case, the American ministers’ adoption of the Bible reading can often be directly traced to an encounter with a Brethren preacher. [Ibid, 138.]

“Bible Reading” greatly corrupted the term, Rightly dividing the word of truth (it is ludicrous to think that Paul intended [2 Tim 2:15] to equip Timothy so Timothy could support any doctrine he desired to teach. “A text without a context is a pretext,” and “Bible Reading” encourages “a pretext”):

The role of the interpreter, according to the same Baconian assumptions, was not to impose hypotheses or theories, but to reach conclusions on the basis of careful classification and generalization alone. [Emp added.] The division to divide and classify everything is one of the most striking and characteristic traits of dispensationalism. C.I. Scofield, the great systematizer of the movement, epitomized this tendency. In “Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth,” an authoritative summary of his views, Scofield interpreted the phrase of his title from the King James Bible to mean that “The Word of Truth, then, has right divisions... so any study of that Word which ignores those divisions must be in large measure profitless and confusing.” [Revell paper edition, Westwood, N.J., n.d. 1896, p. 3.] The work sketched out a series of distinctions: “The Jew, the Gentile, and the Church of God,” “The seven Dispersations,” “The Two Advents,” “The Two Resurrections,” and “Law and Grace.” Regarding the last distinction to take an example that became a source of conflict with other Calvinists who insisted on the primacy of grace in all ages, Scofield said characteristically, “It is... of vital moment to observe that Scripture never, in any dispensation, mingles these two principles.” Distinctions were also made on the basis of seemingly small variations in Biblical language. So, for instance, Scofield placed great weight on the distinction between “the kingdom of God” and “the kingdom of heaven” and on the differences among in, with, and upon as used with reference to the Holy Ghost.

Dispensationalist leaders regarded these methods of dividing and classifying as the only scientific ones. Scofield, for example, contrasted his work to previous “unscientific systems.” Similarly, Reuben Torrey regarded ideas basically as things to be sorted out and cataloged. One of his major works, What the Bible Teaches (1898), is an incredibly dry five-hundred-page compilation of thousands of Biblical “propositions” supported by proof text. The closest analogy would be to an encyclopedia or dictionary. Torrey explicitly defended this utter lack of style or elegance. “Beauty and impressiveness,” he said in the preface, “must always yield to precision and clearness.” As usual, his model was the scientist. Torrey depicted his work as “simply an attempt at a careful unbiased, systematic, thorough-going, inductive study...
statement of Bible truth. The methods of modern science are applied to Bible study — thorough analysis followed by careful synthesis." [Fundamentalism and American Culture. The shaping of twentieth century Evangelicalism, 1870-1925, George M. Marsden, Oxford Press, 1980, pp 59, 60.]

Thus "Scientific Bible study" — "Bible Reading" is a matter of finding proper verses to prove particular theories as a scientist in a laboratory.

5. As the separation of the ten tribes from the house of David was in its deepest ground apostasy from Jehovah, the prophets only recognized the legitimate rulers of the kingdom of Judah as true kings of the people of God, whose throne had the promise of permanent endurance, even though they continued to render civil obedience to the kings of the kingdom of Israel. [Keil, p 12.]

Note that one reason the Lord gave them ungodly kings was His judgment for their hardness against His law-word, Hosea 13:11.

[OTT] Moloch worship was thus a political religion... Moloch worship was thus state worship. The state claimed total jurisdiction over man; it was therefore entitled to total sacrifice... The Moloch state is the product of apostasy. When a people reject God as their King, and make a man or state their king (I Sam 8:7-9), God declares the consequences... The Moloch state simply represents the supreme effort of man to command the future, to predetermine the world, and to be God... Moloch worship seeks a no-theistic, a non-Biblical way to holiness... To surrender children to the state is to turn them over to the enemy. For the surrendered children, as the new Janizaries of the new Turks, to turn on the society which begat them and to destroy it is a judgment on the Moloch worship of their elders. To have other gods and other laws, other schools, and other hopes than the one true God is to invoke the whole weight of the law in judgment. [Emp added. R.J. Rushdoony, Institutes of Biblical Law, pp 30-40.]

Thus when "Christian" parents send their children to statists schools, they are sacrificing their children to Moloch, the state. The Turk Janizaries were children of Christian mothers and Turkish fathers. "Their mothers were often Turkish captives who communicated a superior culture, but not faith, to their sons." [R.J.R., World History Notes, Thornburn Press, Fairfax Christian Bookstore, Fairfax, Va. 22030, p 120.]

This is all too often precisely what happens to Christian children in a statist school.

The judgment of God upon a "Christian" society for sacrificing their children to the state is the children turning against the Christian foundation of their parents. How can one claim to love Christ while sending children given to them by Christ to be trained in anti-Christ doctrine? In Moloch worship, the people of God openly commit adultery and whoredoms. Not only the prophet Hosea, but all the OT prophets soundly condemned spiritual whoredoms and adultery. Hosea reprimands and threatens the people for mixing Godliness and paganism, thus whoredom, chapter 2. Modern whoredom can be practiced by mixing paganism and Christianity in the education of Christian children, Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen... Jer 10:2. Note that God's sinful people hired lovers, eg. they hired people to teach anti-Christ doctrine to their children, 8.9.

Obviously, one of the reasons God's people are destroyed is because they practice adultery against their legitimate

Husband, Jehovah God; they have sacrificed and are sacrificing their children to Moloch, statist education (parents proclaim how much they are against the ungodly state, yet let the state train their children!).

Furthermore, from what I gather (& have personally experienced over the years) concerning "Christian Education," much of what is going under its name is just as statist as the state schools. Unreserved submission to the state is statist, no matter who teaches such service.

Hosea 5:7: The Christian's love affair with the state (Moloch worship, whoredoms) has produced strange children, children who do not know if they are Christian or pagans. They profess Christ with their mouth, but think and act like pagans. From my experience with our "Christian School" here at Linden when I first came (which we no longer have), I must say that a "Christian School" does not solve the problem (which is one reason we no longer have it). The parents expected the school to solve problems they were unwilling to deal with. The problem is in the home. The parent's love affair with the world is passed on to the children regardless of where the children are educated (even home-educated).

8. But here [Mat 6:33] He makes a plain and positive declaration, assuring us that if we truly concern about God's interests He will take care of ours, that if the Divine glory be our principal aim we shall not be the losers temporally. [A.W. Pink, Sermon on the Mount, Baker Book House, 1962, p 257.]

9. Why then are any of God's children reduced to destitution? Sometimes to correct them for their sins; sometimes to exercise their faith in the trial of patience. All promises of temporal blessings must always be understood with this qualification: so far as God sees that such bestowments will be for His glory and our highest good.

But let it not be forgotten that the above guarantee is given only to those who meet its stipulation. Which are we seeking first: earthly or heavenly things, the things of self or of God, making good in this world or making sure of an entrance in to heaven? "It is startling to see the tide of worldliness rising fast among Christians almost everywhere, with a corresponding ebb in the desire for spiritual prosperity. On all hands there are abounding symptoms of spiritual decay, which it is to be feared will be followed by increasing ambition for fleshly advantage. Our Master's question may well ring in our ears and consciences today: 'What do ye more than others?' Not what know ye more than others? We may pride ourselves on knowing the things of God, which the poor worldling cannot possibly perceive, but if we spend all our energies, crowd our minds, engage our affections, and tax our wits for present worldly advantage, do not the men of this world equal us? If we content ourselves with just the Lord's day observances and meetings, do not religious worldlings the same? If we do not bring forth the fruit of the Spirit in a godly walk, in a faithful testimony, and devoted service, what do we more than others? The most convincing book to the worldling is our manner of living, and if, withal, we are as hard in our dealing, as keen for selfish gains, as inconsiderate for others' rights in our bargains, as shrewd and tricky in running our business as the most wide-awake worldling, he will not believe the book, for its author is a living contradiction." [E. Venn, 1901, as quoted by Pink, ibid, p 258.]

It seems that there are a great many people who pride themselves in how much they know about things "hidden" from others. The Lord compliments not what things we know more, but what things we do more according to His word.

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