

“AN ABOMINATION TO GOD”

On one occasion when Jesus was warning His disciples about the perils of riches and materialism, the money-loving Pharisees heard His teaching and ridiculed Him. “And he said unto them, Ye are they that justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God” (Luke 16:15). It is obvious that the Lord referred to their love of money when he spoke of that which was “highly esteemed among men.” Perhaps more souls (both worldlings and God’s people) will be sentenced to Hell because of love of money than any other sin. No wonder the Bible warns of dishonesty, materialism, and greed, and exalts benevolence, generosity, and honesty on almost every page. No wonder Paul wrote, “For the love of money is the root of all evil” (1 Tim. 6:10). We are not to understand that materialism is an abomination to God merely on the ground that men highly esteem it (some things highly esteemed of men are pleasing to God, cf. Gal 5:22–23). Materialism is an abomination because it damns the soul. We must ever guard against the abomination of “covetousness, which is idolatry” (Col. 3:5).

Notice now the broader principle of the Lord’s statement: Just because a thing is highly esteemed by men does not mean God favors it. In fact, throughout history, it is almost axiomatic that if most men esteem something highly, God does not. (At present we should not be surprised at this, since the vast majority of men are atheists and/or pagans, and even among professed believers most give only lip service to His law.) Let us make some applications.

1. The Muslim religion is highly esteemed by teeming millions, but it is an abomination unto Jehovah because it represents error, sin, and blasphemy. The

Christ (not Christ **and** Mohammed) is the **only** way to God and salvation (John 14:6).

2. The doctrine of salvation by faith alone is “highly esteemed” by the millions in the Protestant denominations, but it is an abomination to God. Men are saved by faith and cannot be saved without it (Rom. 10:9–10), but not by faith only. Sins are not forgiven and one is not saved before baptism (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21; et al.).

A list of highly esteemed items would include fornication, drinking, abortion, using instruments of music in worship, homosexual practices, elevating a man to be a “pope,” and such like. Will men never learn that the only way to please God is to do what He authorizes in His Word, rather than doing something because they like it?

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