



The Caller

A Weekly Newsletter of the Elizabethtown church of Christ
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Confidence Corner John F. Board

In this week's *Confidence Corner* we want to consider if there is anything wrong with what we commonly call astrology. For those who do not know astrology is where people con-

sult the stars to seek to know what is going to happen in their lives. All of the following are often associated with astrology: daily horoscopes, online tarot readings, psychic readings, Chinese astrology, Vedic Astrology, Mayan Astrology, Numerology, and Feng Shui.

I think it was in the 1980s (or close to that time period) where lawyers in Florida tried to get their client off because they claimed that the stars lined up in such a way that their client was compelled to commit an unspeakable crime against a woman. Fortunately the jury did not buy the defense, which came to be known as the "astrology defense."

So what is wrong with astrology? The answer is that astrology strikes at one of the greatest gifts God has provided to mankind—free will. You see, the stars, some psychic, nor anything else determines our "fate." We have free will and we make our own choices that determine what happens to us. Even God Himself, who would have the power to control us if He so chooses, allows us free will. Of course, Satan will do everything he can to get us to go against God and His will, yet we still are not overwhelmed by Satan (no Geraldine the devil does not make us do it...see I Cor. 10:13). But God does not overwhelm our free will when Satan tempts us to keep us from sinning...He simply provides a means of escape.

In addition astrology strikes at the very heart of what God intends for His children—complete trust in Him. "Trust in the LORD and lean not on thine own understanding. In all of thy ways acknowledge Him and He will direct thy paths" (Proverbs 3:5-6).

jfb

On the inside of this week's *Caller*, I have included a song that has been ever so helpful to me. The song is entitled *Near to Thee*. It was originally a poem written by Effie Bunner Hale. My good friend Andy Robison later composed sister Hale's poem into the current song.

This song is special to me for a number of reasons. First, Effie Bunner Hale wrote it. Though I never knew sister Hale, I have been blessed to be encouraged by a number of members of her family from two different congregations of the Lord's Church that I have served. Second, the man who set the poem to music has blessed my life in many ways as well. But I guess most importantly the song has blessed my life in difficult times because of the words and the way they are set to music.

You see, though the poem had a wonderful message by itself, that message is enhanced by the words having been set to music. I have noted on a number of occasions that our Lord has desired that one of the ways we would worship Him would be through song. I find some of my most emotive responses in worship results from singing one of the many amazing hymns that are available for choice.

I hope you find the words of the song to be a blessing and help. I have included a link to a page where you can listen to the song being sung; I encourage you to sing along. I hope you find this song and its message to be as encouraging to you as it is to me.

jfb

Sunday's Sermons:

A.M. — *What's a R.E.A.L. Christian?*

1 John 3:10

Guest Speaker, Mitchell Lockhart

P.M. — *Faith*

Hebrews 11:6-10

Near to Thee

15

Effie Bunner Hale

Andy Robison

1. Lord, I would be ev - er near Thee, Help me not Thy path to leave;
2. I've no friend on earth just like Thee, Whom to car - ry all my woes.
3. Oh, dear sin - ner, won't you have Him To be yours a - long life's way?

For to wan - der from Thy pres - ence, Would the Ho - ly Spir - it grieve.
May I ev - er walk be - side Thee, Till this earth - ly life shall close.
Just be - lieve, re - pent, con - fess Him, and be born a - new this day.

Near to Thee, Near to Thee, Sav - ior, may I ev - er be.
ev er -

Near to Thee, Near to Thee, Sav - ior, may I ev - er be.

Effie Bunner Hale was the daughter of the gospel preacher, A.A. Bunner. She composed these lyrics in 1962 at age 80.

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