

SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

"Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" — John 5:39.



"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" — Acts 17:11.

"DEVOTED TO THE SEARCH FOR DIVINE TRUTH"

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Special Edition

The War Against the Works of the Flesh

Flesh versus Spirit

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There is within each of us a struggle between right and wrong. Upon the outcome of that conflict depends our eternal destiny. Paul put himself in the place of all mankind when he said "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin" (Rom. 7:22-25). Earlier in this passage he pointed out that whenever the opportunity for good was present, the temptation to do evil was also there. This is man's continual predicament. Some have abandoned themselves completely to the lusts of the flesh and mind while others are striving to bring every thought into captivity to Christ lest the crown of life be denied them.

Terms

By flesh is meant not just the physical body but that capability of wrong which may involve both body and mind. The "works of the flesh" in

Galatians 5:19-21 include both sins in which the human body is active (such as fornication and drunkenness) and also those which involve attitudes of heart (such as hatred, emulations and envy). Paul said "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Gal. 5:17). While flesh has other variations of meanings in Scripture, we are concerned with it as it stands as the great enemy of the soul.

By spirit we mean that part of man which holds communion with God. Sometimes, though not always, soul and spirit are used interchangeably. But spirit is that part of man which elevates him above the beast. It is to this part of man that God directed his revelation of truth. It is by means of the word of God that the Holy Spirit shapes and molds the human spirit to do God's will and glorify his name. It is this spirit which serves as the link between God and man and which makes man peculiarly related to his maker.

The Principals Behind the Struggle

Why are flesh and spirit in such conflict? Flesh is the avenue by which Satan seeks to destroy man's fellowship with God. It is the will of God that "all should come to repentance" and that man should one day be able to stand approved in his presence. It is the will of Satan that man be eternally lost. He is our "adversary" and seeks whom "he may devour" (1 Pet. 5:8). God made us with the power to will whatever we do. We were not made as robots, programmed to always perform without the conscious will being exercised. When man chooses to obey the will of God he rises to his highest potential, realizes his greatest measure of happiness, and glorifies his maker who endowed him with such potentialities.

When he wills to do evil, he dishonors God and brings great rejoicing to Satan. So then, behind the struggle of flesh versus spirit is the conflict between Satan and God. It boils down to whether or not we shall resolve to whip the Devil and conquer the flesh, or give in to the flesh and destroy our bond with God. The stakes are high. The battle is real.

More Than Conquerors

Is the issue already settled? Are we left without defense or hope of winning? By no means. When Paul posed the human dilemma with his heart-rending exclamation "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" he did not leave us without an answer. In the next verse he gave us the solution when he joyfully exclaimed "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Through subduing our will to God's will we gain the victory and are "more than conquerors" through our Lord. The very term "Lord" means ruler and indicates our recognition of and submission to his kingly power. That is the only hope we have, but it is all the hope we need.

Works of the Flesh Are Manifest

In Paul's list, which this special issue seeks to explore in order to warn of the dangers we face, he says the deeds listed are "manifest." That means they are open, clearly demonstrated, and obviously opposed to righteousness. Once the definition of these terms is determined, one should have no difficulty in perceiving the sinfulness of such actions or attitudes of heart. Only to the degree that the world sears its conscience and hardens its heart against godliness does it fail to readily understand the wrong these terms indicate. Surely an understanding of these terms should stir a feeling of abhorrence for what they indicate in the heart of every saint.

Perversions of Potential Good

In William Barclay's excellent book, *FLESH AND SPIRIT*, he makes the following point on page 39: "It may be that here is the best point at which to note a grim fact about the works of the flesh. Without exception, every one of them is a perversion of something which is in itself good. Immorality, impurity, licentiousness are perversions of the sexual instinct which is in itself a lovely thing and part of love. Idolatry is a perversion of worship, and was begun as an aid to worship. Sorcery is a perversion of the use of healing drugs in medicine. Envy, jealousy and strife are perversions of that noble ambition and desire to do well which can be a spur to greatness. Enmity and anger are a perversion of that righteous indignation without which the passion for goodness cannot exist. Dissension and the party spirit are a perversion of the devotion to principle which can produce the martyr. Drunkenness and carousing are the perversion of the happy joy of social fellowship and of the things which men can happily and legitimately enjoy. Nowhere is there better illustrated the power of evil to take beauty and to twist it

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into ugliness, to take the finest things and to make them an avenue for sin. The awfulness of the power of sin lies precisely in its ability to take the raw material of potential goodness and turn it into the material of evil."

The Triumph of the Spirit

Not only can the spirit prevail over the flesh, the evidences of that triumph are also manifested in what Paul calls "the fruit of the Spirit." Through the word of God, the Holy Spirit produces in the human spirit "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (Gal. 5:22-25)

The Urgency of This Study

While we rejoice to report that we see many today who are earnestly warring against the flesh and manifesting the fruit of the Spirit, we are saddened to say that we observe many evidences of all too many who profess to be the children of God who are indulging anywhere from one to several of the works of

the flesh. Congregations are known to tolerate sin of every description among its members without rebuke or corrective measures. Premarital and extramarital sexual relations are known to have occurred without action being taken to bring about repentance. Adulterous marriages are tolerated without censure. The entertainment tastes of many who wear the name of Christ are slanted toward the swinging side of life. I hear young people (and older ones as well) speak of viewing television series and movies which feature profanity, vulgarity and often poke fun at God's moral standard. If you want to have a lively discussion in a class of high school or college aged young people in nearly any congregation, then raise a question about dancing, social drinking, R-rated movies or abortion and watch what happens. Often you will find some who will defend such practices. Preach against dancing (including the Senior Prom) and watch the glances exchanged between some of the young people and some of their parents as well.

The factious spirit which splinters congregations into warring sects is all too well known in our day. We speak not about divisions which must sometimes come over doctrinal and practical error, but about matters of personal opinions and scruples. Paul lists "strife, seditions and heresies" in the same frame of reference as "fornication" and "drunkenness." Anyone who does not know that these works of the flesh flourish among those who claim allegiance to the Lord is not very observant.

Many of our young are exposed to liberal doses of idolatry and sorcery before they receive a four-year college degree. Oriental cults and even Satan worship are common among some university students. Rock groups which appeal to the very young (such as KISS, which stands for "Kings in Satan's Service) help to spread such idolatry. I even see teenagers who claim to be Christians wearing T-shirts advertising this blasphemous group. Drugs to put the mind out of gear and launch one on some imagined trip of ecstasy are commonly used today.

While many may succeed in resisting these works of the flesh, they are in danger of losing their reward over hatred, variance, emulations, wrath or envyings. Some think that some of the works of the flesh are mortal sins while the others are venial. Some are regarded as absolute felonies while others are just naughty misdemeanors; bad, but not too bad.

"They . . . Shall Not Inherit the Kingdom of God"

It is high time that Christians everywhere be made to realize what these sins are, that they really exist and that the practice of any of them can cost us a place in heaven. It is time for elders, preachers and all Christians to awaken to the fact that all around us some are being overcome by one or more of these evil works. Those who have abandoned themselves to these practices or have even become apologists for any of them, need to wise up, wake up, repent of their sins, honor Christ as Lord and arm themselves to prevail in the struggle against the flesh.

Christ suffered in the flesh and was taunted and tempted by appeals to the flesh in the same way we are. Peter said he left an example "that we should follow his steps" (1 Pet. 2:21). Paul had to "keep

under" his body, and "bring it into subjection" lest by any means he "might become a castaway" (1 Cor. 9:27). John said one who sins should confess such to the Lord in order to be cleansed by the blood of Christ (1 Jno. 1:9). "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 Jno. 2:1-2). Unless the Lord's plan is followed we shall be appointed a place among the doomed and damned. That is too high a price to pay for a few fleeting moments of fleshly indulgence of whatever nature.

This Special Issue

We have prepared this special issue to inform, warn and encourage children of God. We have chosen to simply follow Paul's list in Galatians 5:19-21. The writers have done their work with no anticipation of pay except the conviction that where truth is taught, then good is done. To that end and for that reward they have worked. If you find their material especially helpful to you in this tug of war between the flesh and spirit, then why not express your appreciation in a note to the author or authors whose material helped you the most. We ask our readers to tell others of this special issue and help us spread this material as widely as possible that it might do the most good possible.

Flesh and Spirit

by William Barclay

A word by word study of the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit in Gal. 5:19-23. Perhaps each writer of the material in this special issue has consulted Barclay's work for help.

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Fornication

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This present generation is morally and spiritually sick! The horrors and nightmares that plague our attempts to sleep or go about any normal life function flow from the cesspool of the immoral standards set by the national leaders in government, the educational system, the entire entertainment field, the religions of the day, and the decay of the family unit. How long this nation will survive this moral and spiritual rebellion against God and all that is decent, only God knows. The "salt" has lost about all its "savor" and the "light" is just about out. It is time to wake up and seriously review our own personal lives in this jungle of heinous crimes against God and humanity. This is the reason for this special issue of *Searching The Scriptures*.

I have been assigned the subject of FORNICATION for this special issue. I shall do my best within the necessary confines of this article to bring to light the terrible consequences of this sin against God, mankind and one's own body.

I could use a ream of paper copying the many definitions of the term "fornication" from various Greek-English Lexicons, Greek Texts, English Dictionaries and Commentaries. I hardly think that is necessary to a word so generally understood. I do feel that some definition should be given to make it clear what I am speaking of when I use the word "fornication".

What Is Fornication?

There are five words (nouns and verbs) that are translated "fornication" or some form of the word. These words describe the sin. I shall combine the definitions given by a number of standard lexicons and scholars of the original language of the New Testament.

According to *Gall's English-Greek Concordance* *PORNEIA* is used 26 times in the New Testament and each time is translated "fornication." *PORNEUO* is used 7 times; *EKPORNEUO* is used once; *PORNOS* is used 5 times.

FORNICATION: "The practice of sexual immorality and harlotry; hence a symbol for idolatry . . . in the NT the words for 'fornication,' 'to practice fornication,' etc., refer to every kind of sexual intercourse outside marriage." (*The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. 2, p. 321).

PORNEIA — "Fornication; of illicit sexual intercourse; whoredom; concubinage; adultery; incest; lewdness; uncleanness; prostitution; it is used in the plural (1 Cor. 7:2); it stands for, or includes, adultery; unchastity; of every kind of unlawful sexual

intercourse; of the sexual unfaithfulness of a married woman (Matt. 5:32; 19:9).

PORNEUO — "To prostitute one's body to the lust of another; to give one's self to unlawful sexual intercourse; to commit fornication; prostitution or sexual immorality generally.

EKPORNEUO — (related to porneuo) W. E. Vine says of this word used only in Jude 7: "a strengthened form of No. 1 (porneuo) to give oneself up to fornication, implying excessive indulgence, Jude 7." It is translated "fornication."

PORNO — "A woman who sells her body for sexual uses; a prostitute; a harlot. Any woman indulging in unlawful sexual intercourse, a fornicator, whether for gain or for lust; having to do with a prostitute; whore."

PORNOS — "Denotes a man who indulges in fornication; a fornicator; a whoremonger." "A man who prostitutes his body to another's lust for hire, a male prostitute. A man who indulges in unlawful sexual intercourse; generally a fornicator; one who practices sexual immorality."

All these words are also used metaphorically as the worship of idols; given to idolatry to worship idols; to permit one's self to be drawn away by another into idolatry. (Rev. 14:8; 17:2; 18:3,9). To practice idolatry."

What Promotes Fornication?

Those conditions that exist in our society that produce all forms of sexual sin are simply the recycle of history. Fornication has become so common among all classes of people: among all nationalities, on all social and economical levels, including educational, business, political and religious, that it is no more a minor problem among young teenagers that must be handled by parents and school officials. It has become a chief element in organized crime all over the world. It is the single greatest factor in wrecking the family unit, and thereby destroying the nation.

What causes fornication? Why is it growing so rapidly among all classes of people with hardly more than a groan from the "moral" advocates that "Someone should do something about it"? These questions are relatively easy to answer when we have the courage to face up to our own weak and spineless attitude toward the low moral standards; and the sensual emphasis placed upon every phase of our life style.

Space does not allow a full discussion of all situations and factors that contribute to growing acceptance of fornication as a way of life. However, a few may serve to make us think about the real sources of this horrible cancer of the souls of humanity. I shall address myself to five factors that contribute to this sordid way of life.

1. **The False Concept of Marriage.** The general social and religious acceptance of divorce and remarriage is far from what it was just 50 years ago. It certainly is foreign to what the scriptures teach about divorce and remarriage.

Adultery is a specific term which describes illicit intercourse with the spouse of another. Fornication may be used where both married and unmarried people are involved. The "spouse of another" may

commit "fornication" (Matt. 5:32; 19:9). While "fornication" has a broader meaning than "adultery" they are sometimes used interchangeably in scripture. We have shown that "fornication" includes all kinds of unlawful sexual behavior of all people, married or unmarried. The word includes adultery.

That "adultery" is sometimes used to include "fornication" (all forms of sexual sin) is clearly taught in both the Old and New Testaments. The seventh of the ten commandments given by God through Moses said, "Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:14; Deut. 5:18). Now if "adultery" here is limited to married people, where is the law of God that forbids sexual sin among the unmarried in the Old Testament. Does any serious student of the Bible believe that "adultery" in the ten commandments does not include all illicit sexual intercourse among all people?

The sexual crimes and the punishment for them under the law, "Thou shalt not commit adultery", are explained in Leviticus 18:6-23; 19:20,29; 20:10-21 and in Deuteronomy 22:13-30. The sexual abominations forbidden include the married, the betrothed, the unmarried and family relations. The nature of the sexual sins include rape, incest, seduction, sodomy, prostitution, homosexuality, bestiality and self abuse. Most of these sins were punished by death. All these sexual sins are the transgression of the command, "Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:14). If this is not so, what command of God by Moses prohibited sexual sins by those unmarried?

Jesus said, "But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matt. 5:28). There is not one word in this sentence that suggest that the 'whosoever' is limited to married men. Nor is there a slight implication that "a woman" is a married woman. Adultery here has the same sense as fornication, meaning illicit sexual sins in general. The same is true of the wicked "having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin . . ." (2 Peter 2:14).

The present concept of marriage that one can go in and out of the relationship as he pleases and not be guilty of one of the most destructive sins known to man is sure to produce fornication everywhere.

2. Loose Morals Among Youth. Children in junior and senior high school are easy prey for the vultures who look for dope peddlers and prostitutes. The type dress worn by women and men generate "eyes full of adultery" that cannot cease from sin. School teachers tell young teenagers about their freedom to experiment in sex and encourage it by their own lives. Mothers provide contraceptives for their daughters, and even permit them freedom of the bedroom with their dates for an evening or weekend. Fathers tell their sons about their affairs with women, and encourage them to learn about this life while they are young. Parents permit their children to roam the alleys, back streets and cheap hotels like wild animals. This is the condition of our times that produce the most corrupt forms of fornication. Dope, diseases, lawlessness, abortions and early death are

the fruits of this style of life.

3. Religious Approval of Fornication. American life is changing because of the new religious views on homosexuals and other sexual perverts. Churches are now welcoming with open arms known homosexuals and prostitutes.

Closer to the readers of the magazine are the divorced and remarried church members who are living in sin, and many of them will confess it. Some ridicule the idea of "living in adultery", but some "lived in fornication" includes adultery (Col. 3:5-7). Others, including some preachers, will argue that about all the divorced and remarried members of the church are all right. This acceptance of fornication is accomplished by illogical arguments and perversion of scripture to justify any put away fornicator to remarry and have the full fellowship of brethren.

The denominational solution to broken marriages is the growth of "Trial Marriage Programs" wherein the pastor or priest will sanctify a trial marriage for twelve months, after which they will be married "for life" if they approve their trial relationship. There is also a growing acceptance of "live in" situations by many religious bodies which are both large and popular. This religious approval and endorsement of fornication in many forms creates havoc with the moral and spiritual standards of this generation.

4. Government And Legal Immorality. The influence and power of government and civic leaders of the world are putting the stamp of approval on fornication. The local, state and national elected officials are guilty of using call-girls for high officers of other countries. All branches of government in America are guilty of making and enforcing laws that grant "rights" to sexual perverts and fornicators in our society. It is very popular for political leaders to frequently divorce and remarry. I resent my tax dollars being used to finance the sex orgies that go on in high places.

5. The Immoral Emphasis in Entertainment. The whole entertainment world is given to the spread of corrupt sexual practices. Television is in complete control of the minds of the majority of America, and this medium is flooding the country with sexual filth. Just about any program you watch is suggestive or openly displaying some form of fornication. The X rated movies are all over the nation. Pornography is on display everywhere. Night clubs are filled every night with nude dancing and prostitutes advertising themselves around such places. The songs of today have words (to say nothing of the loud beat) that suggest all forms of fornication for the youth of the land. This is what the entertainment segment of our nation is contributing to immoral standards of our times.

Hugh Hefner, Editor of Playboy Magazine, has done more to destroy this nation than one can imagine. His sexual corruption has degraded the minds of millions for 25 years. The first and most vulnerable place to begin is with the sexual corruption of the minds of the people. Fornication is practiced, promoted and justified until it becomes a way of life. Then look around and ask, "Where is God"?

What Fornication is Doing to the Nation

With all that has been said thus far—what is fornication doing to the nation, the family, society, the church and the souls of men? The government has become so corrupt that fornication has become an essential part of the function of some departments. It is a well known fact that prostitutes are used by big business to entertain high officials for government contracts. The "rights" of sex perverts are financed by government funds. This is fornication!

The family is falling apart because of the sexual sins of wife-trading, family prostitution, divorce and remarriage, and the sexual abuse of children. Not only physical abuse, but also abuse by not teaching them the truth of God.

The business world is infested with the corruption of this terrible sin of fornication. Prostitution and all that goes with it has found its way into big business. This means that organized crime is there, because organized crime controls prostitution and drugs. This involves our economic life whether we want to admit it or not.

We have already mentioned the fact that fornication is having a profound impact upon the church. While we spoke of religion in general, I want to impress upon the reader the evil influence fornication is having upon the church of our Lord. Today it is getting more difficult to find qualified elders, deacons, Bible teachers and preachers because of the influence of fornication upon their families. The church is weak because it tolerates fornication among the members and never dares to discipline the guilty parties. This not only weakens the church, it also hinders the effectiveness of the gospel to those who are not Christians. Why should a fornicator want to obey the gospel when he knows of many in the church who are as guilty of fornication as he is?

How Must we Deal with Fornication?

Since the sin of fornication has such a destructive impact upon mankind in all areas of life, what can be done to erase this sin from this generation? At least erase it from our own lives and our families?

The scriptures provide the only source for the answer to the problem of fornication. The word of God says that fornication comes from an evil heart (Matt. 15:19). Get your heart right! We are to abstain from fornication (1 Thess. 4:3). This is God's will. We must flee from fornication (1 Cor. 6:18). It is a sin against one's own body. We are not to let fornication be once named among us (Eph. 5:3). Fornicators will not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9). As a work of the flesh, those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God (Gal. 5:19-21).

We must withdraw ourselves from every one who is guilty of this sin of illicit sexual crimes against the law of the Lord, called fornication, who will not repent of it (1 Cor. 5:9-11). If we strive to follow the word of God and have no company with those who persist in fornication, we can escape the consequences of this horrible sin in the day of accounting of all men to God through Jesus Christ by the standard of his word (Acts 17:30,31; John 12:48; Rev. 20:12). **FLEE FORNICATION!**

"Uncleanness"

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The subject of this article classifies as one of the sins of impurity or immorality to boast companionship with adultery, fornication and lasciviousness in Galatians 5:19. Uncleanness covers a wider range of sensual sin than either of its textual companions. Although companions within the same text there needs to be a recognition of the distinction between "fornication," "lasciviousness," and "uncleanness." The work of the flesh treated in this article is, in view of our definition, connotive of a more general idea than either of the others. While there may be some overlap of uncleanness in the definition and practice of fornication as one understands the latter to mean all kind of sexual impurity, the distinction is there and our study seeks to maintain it. Uncleanness can and very often does become the contributing factor to fornication.

Speaking of the walk of "other Gentiles" in contrast to the church at Ephesus, Paul says they, "have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness" (Eph. 4:19). The "all" would seem to indicate a wide range of conduct identifying as uncleanness. The evidence from New Testament study of the word includes impurity of thought or deed, any unnatural lust particularly within the range of sexual sensuality.

In some ten New Testament passages the noun form of the word "uncleanness" "*AKATHARSIA*", appears. The import of each passage lends to impurity of a moral nature. "For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile" (1 Thess. 2:3), is suggestive of the fact that sensuality and evil doctrine are frequently associated. Refuting any compatibility between uncleanness and holiness in apostolic labor, or godliness generally for that matter, Paul further impresses Thessalonica that "God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness" (1 Thess. 4:7).

Uncleanness in the New Testament, sometimes rendered impurity, refers to unnatural practice: self-abuse, bestiality, and sodomy. Such sins were common among the heathen but were not to be with Christians. "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves" (Rom. 1:24). Repentance was the requisite to forgiveness in saint and sinner alike where this sin was evident. "And lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many that have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and

lasciviousness which they have committed (2 Cor. 12:21).

What is uncleanness? The New Testament plainly associates it with fornication, inordinate desire, and like evils which bear on unlawful sexual activity and thinking. We can define it as "whatever is in opposition to purity." Embraced in the word is all kinds of moral defilement. It includes whatever is contaminating in word or look, in gesture or dress, in thought or sentiment. The heathen of Romans 1:21-27, who "became vain in their imaginations", were given up "to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts to dishonour their own bodies between themselves."

In the Old Testament uncleanness more commonly connoted ceremonial defilement as well as physical impurity. The Law designated certain meats unclean but the restraints of that legislation were temporary. While the primary purpose of the vision to Peter in Acts 10:9-16 was to show acceptance of Gentiles through the gospel, there was also shown the removal of these restraints. The dispensation of the Law was an age of ceremonial rites and cleansings whereby symbolic holiness was attained. God taught abhorrence of physical and ceremonial uncleanness in the Old Testament and such serves to educate to abhorrence of spiritual uncleanness. Leprosy was considered uncleanness and the afflicted were commanded to cry out "Unclean!", "Unclean!", as they passed and/or approached others in the streets. Typical of sin, "Unclean!" becomes the cry of moral and spiritual impurity.

Jesus during his ministry, encountered those possessed of unclean spirits and having power over such, cast them out. His disciples were given such power in the exercise of their commission (Mt. 10:1). Those possessed of unclean spirits were often given to actions and conduct subject to the rebuke of Jesus (Lk. 9:42) as he cast them out. Where the sin of uncleanness exists today it is Jesus who has been cast out and the spirit of evil which has taken up rule within.

When considered as "what ever is in opposition to purity", uncleanness issues a broad indictment. Many of the things which will justifiably classify we may be oblivious to or simply have our sensibilities dulled toward. This whole context presents a warring of flesh and spirit with the flesh exercising all the powers of seduction to draw man downward. Actually there are two sides to the sin of uncleanness. There is the gross and overt side and then there is the subtle and insidious side. As with most things having to do with sin and our susceptibility to it, the subtle poses the greater threat.

Our day and culture is seeing the purity of holiness threatened by the contaminating threat of evil words, seductive looks and gestures. Thought and sentiment conveyed via picture and print, page and stage, book and look,, seem to challenge the vain imaginations that produced the uncleanness of Romans 1. Respect for morality and purity will not allow the child of God to countenance and condone such flagrant disregard for the principles and practices of moral and spiritual cleanness.

While I am not against movies as such, I am opposed to the moving picture industry's practice of displaying lewd, indecent and suggestive scenes. A quick glance at the "bill-of-fare" in the entertainment section of the newspaper will bear out our appraisal. It is obviously becoming increasingly difficult to find a wholesome picture and yet many parents give their children little or no supervision in their movie going and television watching. The result is that young minds are feeding on a lot of moral filth, feasting on the uncleanness which is diametrically opposed to purity. Such callousness is not confined to young people who ought to be under the supervision of their parents, it goes beyond to those who have passed that era of supervision, to those who ought to be carefully setting and regulating their own course in harmony with the purity of the gospel, but who are not.

A constant diet of sex exploitation caters to uncleanness and in my judgment this constitutes the major threat to spirituality today. Everything from hardware to underwear is advertised as having sex appeal. Public places are filled with conversation and language which is unclean. The popular topics of conversation seem to revolve about such themes with activities frequently matching the talk. Under the guise of freedom and in some instances "religion" uncleanness is encouraged by the sponsoring of dances, beer parties, mixed swimming and the like. The liberal minded constantly attack the Biblical standards of purity and morality with the cry of "outmoded" and "puritanical". Premarital sex is upheld on the grounds of psychological and emotional behavior while overlooking the painful results.

It is time, yea past time, that those who profess to believe the Bible and claim to respect morality cry, "Unclean!" "Unclean!" Reins must be tightened on attitudes and practices and in many instances the direction completely reversed. Members of the church need to muster the courage to recognize not only the overt expression of uncleanness but the subtle and insidious working as well and not only this but see it for what it is, sin, and repent and demand repentance of it.

As Christians let us not forget that "God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness" (1 Thess. 4:7). No unclean person "hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God" (Eph. 5:5). "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness" (2 Pet. 2:9-10). "Uncleanness.....they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:19-21).

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Lasciviousness

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The major difference between the conduct of the people of our time and that of those who lived immediately prior to us is seen in the openness and shamelessness with which sin is committed in our day, and the manner in which it is being accepted without social or moral reprisals. Sin has always been around, doing its damage and causing men misery and shame. But today it is being committed with blatant disregard for moral suasion and without any feeling of compunction, as well as without regard for the sensitivity or feelings of others. Sin today is rebellious, uncontrolled and that is what lasciviousness is all about.

Lasciviousness is the attitude which precipitates such unfettered and uninhibited actions. Lasciviousness, in Gal. 5:19, "denotes excesses, licentiousness, absence of restraint, indecency, wantonness . . ." "The prominent idea is shameless conduct" (Vine). *The Pulpit Commentary* says of the word, "Lasciviousness or wantonness is scarcely an adequate rendering of 'aselgia' in this connection: It appears to point to reckless shamelessness in unclean indulgences." The parent word is "selges," which is self-restraint. *Arndt and Gingrich* uses such expressions as "licentiousness," "debauchery," "in-decent conduct" with which to define the uses of the word. The English word, in its present form, is virtually unchanged over the past several centuries. It was a word used by secular writers to convey essentially the same concept as does its present usage. For instance, in Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667), he says, "he on Eve began to cast lascivious eyes." In Puttenham's work, *English Poesie* (1559), he speaks of "carols and rounds and such light or lascivious Poemes". Brooke, in *Le Blanc's Travels* says, "Their garments are something lascivious, for being cut and open their skin is seen." And in 1602, T. Fitzherbert says, "How many are there . . . that . . . make no scruple to keep lascivious pictures to provoke lust." Even Shakespeare says, "he capers nimbly in a Ladies chamber to the lascivious pleading of a Lute" (1594).

The word is not used very extensively in normal conversations today. As a result, it has taken on almost an ecclesiastical flavor. The reason for the lack of its use may be attributed to the difficulty of pronunciation or it may be, and more probably is the case, that people are depressed at the concept portrayed by the word. It is a forgotten sin. And as a result, a most expressive term is excluded from most

vocabularies and especially from the consciences of most people.

Lasciviousness is basically an attitude of mind and it issues in both subjective and objective ends. It is, subjectively, lewd and wanton thinking, the kind that conjures up all manner of involvements, mostly sexual, in which the body becomes the instrument for the gratification of some lustful activity. Objectively, it is seen in wanton and blatant disregard for restraint as well as in the lewd actions which are obviously calculated to cause shock in others.

Lasciviousness is seldom, if ever, a sin of ignorance. Almost without exception it is committed with complete realization of truth and often with full intention of showing an open and unashamed disregard for any sort of control. It results from insensitivity to truth and from self-imposed ignorance (Eph. 4:19). It originates in the heart (Mk. 7:22). And it can be titillated with a view toward enslavement (2 Pet. 2:18). Finally, it is stated as a "work" or an accomplishment of the flesh (Gal. 5:19), so it is hardly surprising that one can actually be said to live a life of lasciviousness, one in which lewd thinkings and their accompanying actions are a matter of course. All such evidence points emphatically toward willful and premeditated sin. That a person can unwittingly and without premeditation be guilty of lasciviousness must be readily admitted, but such a possibility is so remote as to render more than the mere mention of it unnecessary.

Today's affinity to be completely "open" is deplorable. Lasciviousness, the seldom mentioned sin, runs rampant and goes virtually unnoticed. And yet on every billboard we see the sad disregard for natural shame. On almost every television program there is vulgar and lurid filth which if obviously calculated by writer, producer, and director to bring exhilarating shock to the viewer. And one can hardly go to the neighborhood grocery store without being faced with women whose apparel (or the lack of it!) is indelicate, immodest and unblushingly scanty and revealing. In her book, *Let Me Be A Woman*, Elizabeth Elliot describes a trip to Cape Cod and the nudity and near-nudity she saw there. Her reaction is timely. "The, nudity is not supposed to move us. We are asked to behold without shock, without even surprise, the nearly total exposure of every conceivable shape and size of physique. But I don't want to look upon nudity without emotion. I want it reserved to enhance, not exhibited to destroy, the depth of individual experience. Modesty was a system of protection. But the alarms have all been disconnected. The house is wide open to plunder" (pp. 176). And the saddest part of all to me is that Christians, particularly the young ones, are involved in this same disregard for modesty. You can preach on 2 Tim. 2:9-10 and 1 Pet. 3:3-4 and other such passages dealing with immodesty with as much vigor and enthusiasm and conviction as you can muster and still some will leave the auditorium saying, "Well, I just don't see anything wrong with it!" Such an attitude is lasciviousness in its purest sense and will cause its adherents to be lost.

Today's music is filled with phrases and

suggestiveness which has as a design to produce lewd and coarse, foul and dirty thoughts in the minds of the listeners. And the very foundation of much of today's music, the beat, lends itself easily to an illustration of the sex act when dancers fall hypnotically into its mesmerizing pulsations. The modern day "disco" dance is the prelude to sex. And any one who would deny that such is so is seriously deluded. It is intended to promote it by its vulgar and uncontrolled movements, to excite toward it with its tantalizing and sensual attire, and to set the scene and mood for it with the lights, pulsating rhythms, and free-flowing love phrases. And, again, the saddest thing is that some Christians are now being heard trying to justify participation in modern dance. Dancing is lasciviousness, it shows both the lwdity of thinking and the lack of moral restraint inherent in the very idea of lasciviousness.

Lasciviousness as it relates to shocking and uncontrolled conduct is vividly illustrated in modern day speech. Radio, television, movies, newspapers, periodicals, even the heretofore harmless "funny papers" are punctuated with expletives of various sorts which not only serve no useful purpose, but actually detract from the content and value of the communication. There was a time when at least the ears of the women were spared the disgusting filth which proceeded from some men's mouths. But today not only do men show no respect for women, but the women themselves fill the air with coarse, vulgar, and totally unbecoming language. And it seems that such usage by both sexes, and even by the very young in some instances, is expected to produce some shivering dismay to the hearer. And it does! And it is especially disquieting to hear that so many Christians are said to be engaging in such lascivious actions today.

There is among the modern libertine movement, the "do your own thing" crowd, an attitude which is "catching on", too. They actually enjoy recruiting others to their way of life! Time was when a crook would not recommend his crooked way of life. Now, those in sin tempt, both by their actions and their words, the weaker elements to follow them in their blatant disregard for restraint in both thinking and actions. Most sin affects the mind or the actions — one or the other. Lasciviousness affects both, and those engaged in its practice work hard to sell it to others (Rom. 1:32). Lasciviousness, you see, can be both the object of sin and the sin itself and the body is the instrument used for the fulfillment of both (Compare Mk. 7:7 with Gal. 5:19).

Let us beware of lasciviousness, the forgotten sin. Let us revive its usage in our language and speak often of its harmful effects. Let us beware of its effort to cause our spiritual demise. Let us come to realize the importance and value of personal discipline. Let us become aware that our own control relates directly to both our safety and our destiny (Rom. 6:16). Let us remember that those who engage in any of the works of the flesh, "shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:21).

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Idolatry and Witchcraft

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Idolatry and witchcraft are related to each other for both are a rejection of God. While one might think we have no problem with such today, I hope this article will not only show such is a problem, but also will help turn people from a practice of these sins unto God (I Thess. 1:8-9).

Idols In New Testament

In the New Testament much more is said about idolatry than one might at first think. John warned "little children, keep yourselves from idols" (1 John 5:21). Out of the Jerusalem meeting, one of the things written in the epistle was "that they abstain from pollutions of idols" (Acts 15:20). Paul warned the Corinthians "I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother, be . . .an idolater . . .with such a one no not to eat" (I Cor. 5:10), and further warned "neither be ye idolaters" (I Cor. 10:7). "The covetous man, who is an idolater" does not have "any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God" (Eph. 5:5) but rather "shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Rev. 21:8). Paul saw the city of Athens given "wholly to idolatry" (Acts 17:16) and many cities today are almost, if not altogether, given to the sin. Paul said "covetousness" is "idolatry" (Col. 3:5). Why should there be all the warning in the New Testament about idolatry? It was from idolatry that the Thessalonians turned when they turned to God (I Th. 1:9). If God was turned away from, back to idolatry one would turn. God and idols do not go together (2 Cor. 6:16).

Old Testament

There is much to be said about idolatry in the Old Testament. We can learn God's attitude toward such from a study of several Old Testament passages.

The neighbors of God's people all had their idols and such was a problem to Israel. The Philistines had Dagon, the Ekronites had Baalzebub, the Moabites had Chemosh, the Ammonites had Molech or Milcom, the Phoenicians had Astarte and the Canaanites had Baal and Ashtoreth. However "honest" these were in their worship, such did not cause God to accept their worship.

One of the first references in the Old Testament to idols is when Rachel stole Laban's images (Gen. 31:19). However, probably the best known of the early Old Testament references is when Aaron made a golden calf by melting the gold of earrings and then fashioned it with a graving tool. Israel then made sacrifice and worship to the "molten calf" (Ex. 32). "The worship of the golden calf was star worship; it

was the solar bull, the constellation Taurus . . . that was thus represented" (*International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, vol. 1, page 298). Did you ever hear of Taurus, the bull, of the Zodiac? Stephen preached about such in Acts 7:40-43. Abraham was called out from among idol worshippers by God (Gen. 12:1-3; Josh. 24:2).

As Israel prepared to enter the promised land, God through Moses warned them about making "graven images" either "male or female" of beast, fowl, fish and they should not lift up their eyes in worship of the sun, moon or stars (Dt. 4:15-19). Israel was instructed when they came into Caanan they were to destroy the altars of the seven nations that were there, break down their images, cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire (Dt. 7:1-5, 25; 12:3). Those of Israel that sacrificed to "other gods" and worshipped either "the sun, or moon, or any of the host of heaven" were said to have "committed that wicked thing" and were to be stoned "with stones, till they die" (Dt. 17:2-5). God said the idols of wood, stone, silver and gold were an abomination (Dt. 29:16-17).

Solomon's wives turned him to idolatry (I Kings. 11:1-8). Upon his death, Jereboam divided the kingdom and set up "two calves of gold" in Dan and Bethel (I Kgs. 12:28-29). All of the kings of the northern kingdom walked in his sins, as did a good number of the kings in the southern kingdom. Thus one reads that Judah "built them high places, and images, and groves, on every high hill, and under every green tree" (I Kgs. 14:21-23). One further reads of God's people not only worshipping idols, but also of causing their children "to pass through the fire and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger" (2 Kgs. 17:16-17). Israel was at a low ebb when she would depart from God and worship idols by burning her own children in sacrifice to some idol.

One of the good kings of Judah was Hezekiah. He destroyed idols and "broke in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it . . ." (2 Kgs. 18:4). Does this help you understand why we do not have the autographed letters of Paul? Manasseh followed Hezekiah and raised altars for Baal, made a grove, worshipped the host of heaven, built altars for them, sacrificed his children in the fire and set up a graven image in the house of God (2 Kgs. 21:1-13). Manasseh reigned 55 years. Amon reigned 2 years and then the good king Josiah began to reign. Out of the temple he took the vessels of Baal and burned them. He put down idolatrous priest. He took the grove out of the house of God, burned it and stamped it to powder. He destroyed the houses of the sodomites. Josiah did all within his power to completely destroy all idol worship from among God's people (2 Kgs. 22-23).

Israel had gone into Assyrian captivity and Judah would soon go into Babylonian captivity for her sin.

What Is An Idol

Thayer defines the word "idol" as "an image, likeness, . . . the image of a heathen god . . . a false

God" (page 174). Vine says "an idol, an image to represent a false god, . . . the false god worshipped in an image" (page 583). A simple definition of an idol would be anything that comes between man and God. Now, how many of us are idolaters? We may not bow down to Baal, but we bow down over an instrument, a fishing pole or a golf club when we should be eating the Lord's Supper. We spend little or no time in the worship of God for we are following after our idols. Few will bow to Baal, but how many bow to family, strong drink, pleasure, boats, houses, jobs, etc.? Some of these are inherently wrong and sinful, yet these do not pose the great problem the idols that are not inherently evil do. The "tree out of the forest" that Jeremiah spoke of was not inherently sinful, yet men bowed before the works of their hands and it became sinful. Fishing poles, golf clubs, boats, pleasure are not inherently sinful, but when they come between Christians and service to God, they are as sinful as Baal. Pleasure comes between many and God on the Lord's Day. Paul said idolatry was a work of the flesh and the practice of such would keep one out of heaven. Golf clubs, boats and motors and pleasure trips will not be able to deliver one from the wrath of God any more than Baal could.

Witchcraft

Closely kin to idolatry is the sin of witchcraft. Those who practice such shall not inherit the kingdom of God. God said, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live" (Ex. 22:18). He further said to Israel it was an abomination of those nations into whose land they would come. God said "there shall not be found among you . . . a witch . . ." (Dt. 18:9-14).

God said "neither shall ye use enchantment, nor observe times" (Lev. 19:26). "A man also or a woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones; their blood shall be upon them" (Lev. 20:27).

Isaiah said one should go "to the law and the testimony" and not "unto them that have familiar, spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter . . ." (Isa. 8:19-20).

Jeremiah said "your prophets . . . diviners, dreamers, enchanters and sorcerers" "prophesy a lie unto you" (27:9-16). Sorcerers, diviners, and dreamers do not speak the truth; they speak lies.

Ezekiel mentions the king of Babylon using divination by looking "in the liver" (21:21). Some of the ancients thought they could learn the unknown from the gods by looking at the liver of an animal sacrificed unto that idol.

Daniel informs his readers that all the magicians, astrologers, sorcerers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers could not reveal secret matters (Dan. 2:2, 27, 28; 4:7). All these diviners speak lies and offer "comfort in vain" (Zech. 10:2).

What Is Witchcraft

A witch is not some peculiar little old lady wearing a black dress. The word "witchcraft" is from the Greek word "pharmakeia" and means "literally the act of administering drugs and then of giving magical potions" (I.S.B.E., vol. 5, page 3,097). Vine says

"primarily signified the use of medicine, drugs, spells; then, poisoning; then, sorcery" page 1,075). Thayer says "the use or the administering of drugs . . . poisoning . . . sorcery, magical arts" and then adds the comment "often found in connection with idolatry and fostered by it" (page 649). Barclay says of "witchcraft" "this word literally means the use of drugs. It can be used for the beneficent use of drugs as a doctor uses them; but it can also mean poisoning, and it came to be very specially connected with the use of drugs for witchcraft and sorcery of which the ancient world was full (*Letter to Galatians and Ephesians*, page 52). Barclay further points out in his excellent work, *Flesh and Spirit*, there are three stages to the meaning of pharmakeia, witchcraft. (1) It is used as "a medical word for the medical use of drugs. (2) The word then took on the idea of the "misuse of drugs, that is, the use of drug; to poison and not to cure." (3) The third stage usage is that of sorcery and witchcraft. "Sorcery is a perversion of the use of healing drugs in medicine" (pages 36-39). A.T. Robertson says "a drug, the ministering of drugs, but the sorcerers monopolized the word for a while in their magical arts and used it in connection with idolatry" *Word Pictures In The New Testament*, vol. 4, page 312).

Witchcraft is not the use of drugs for healing as prescribed by a physician. Using drugs or abusing drugs, any drug, comes under the heading of witchcraft. Much of the drug abuse today is by people seeking some kind of "religious" experience, but that experience is not seeking to learn of Him who is "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6) but rather is seeking some far out, idol related experience. Those so misusing drugs are seeking the occult, the idolatry of Eastern religions and not the religion of Jesus Christ. Mind expansion is fine, but it comes from meditating upon the word of God (Psalms 1) and not from taking drugs. The religion of Christ calls for a sober mind, not a mind clouded by drugs to the point many times of not knowing where one is or who one is.

When one turns to astrology, crystal ball reading, card laying, casting spells, palmistry and fortune telling, they need to understand such comes under "witchcraft" and they "shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:19-21).



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Hatred and Variance

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In the list of "works of the flesh" in Galatians 5:19 ff, these two words (hatred and variance) appear in the King James Version of the New Testament. Though the words are closely associated, we want to discuss them separately in the article and then draw our conclusion.

Hatred — Echthra

Although there are four different Greek words translated "hatred" in the New Testament, the word "hated" in Galatians five is from the Greek word echthra and is used six times in the New Testament. Five times it is translated "enmity," once "hatred." In various translations of Galatians 5:20 the word is translated "hatred" (King James Version), "enmity" (Revised Standard Version), "quarrels" (New English Bible), and "quarrelling" (Williams' translation).

The word echthros, the adjective form, is translated enemy, adversary, or foe, and is used to describe the Devil (Matthew 13:39); death (I Corinthians 15:26); men who are opposed to Christ (Matthew 13:25); of professed believers who attempt to be friends with the world (James 4:4), just to mention a few. ⁴

Kittel, in his *Theological Dictionary of New Testament Words*, defines echthrai "translated, 'hatred, hostility' as an inner disposition, an objective opposition and as actual conflict between nations, groups and individuals.

"It is not common in the LXX. In the canonical books, it is mostly used for hatred and enmity between individuals; of God's enmity against the sinful people Isaiah 63:10; embroilment in enmity, Proverbs 25:10.

"In the New Testament enmity between men is one of the works of the flesh, Galatians 5:20. Also of Herod and Pilate in Luke 23:12. In particular cf. Ephesians 2:14, 16. The Law means enmity for man i.e. enmity between and enmity against God (not God's enmity against us as in Gal. 3:10, but ours against God as in Romans 8:7)" (Kittel, Volume II, Page 815).

Variance — Eris

The word "eris" translated "variance" in Galatians 5:20 is used nine times in the New Testament and is translated "strife" four times, "debate" twice, "contention" twice, and "variance" once (Smith's *Greek-English Concordance*, Page 150). The Greek word "hatred" (enmity) denotes one's mental attitude toward another, "variance" (strife) is the outward expression of the enmity. (Below is a list of both these words and the passages where they are used).

Hatred (enmity) Luke 23:12—enmity Romans 8:7—enmity Galatians 5:20—hatred Ephesians 2:15, 16—enmity James 4:4—enmity	Variance (Strife) Romans 1:29; 13:13— debate, strife I Cor. 1:11; 3:3— contentions, strife II Cor. 12:20—debates Galatians 5:20—variance Philippians 1:15—strife I Timothy 6:4—strife Titus 3:9—strivings
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Before Christ came into the world, there was such hatred between Jew and Gentile that there seemed to be no way to resolve the differences. However, Paul points out that through the death of Christ and the shedding of His blood, "the middle wall of partition was abolished" (Ephesians 2:15-16). In Christ this hatred can, yea must, be removed.

It appears, however, that these two words (hatred and variance), in their meaning, constitute a vicious circle. A person "hates" another which in turn brings about variance or strife. Yet the strife caused, when the hatred is expressed, brings about more hatred.

In the Scriptures we see a "love for man," a "thinking more highly of men than we ought to think" bringing about contentions (variance) at Corinth. Paul said that the "contentions" among the Corinthians were brought about because some were saying they were of Paul, of Apollos, of Cephas and others of Christ (I Cor. 1:11-12). This amounts, however, to an attempt to place man before God. However, man's allegiance must be to Christ. He is the only one, Paul points out, who was crucified for us and into whose name or by whose authority we are baptized. Thus to try to place our respect and love for man ahead of God and His Chosen One is to show our contempt or enmity toward God by trying to "demote" Him to a mere man.

On the other hand, we see that hatred for a man will also cause enmity. Paul's letter to the Philippians described those who were preaching Christ as being motivated by envy and strife, hoping to add afflictions to Paul's bonds.

The harboring of hatred in our hearts for anyone will finally result in variance or strife. So because we allow these characteristics to become a part of our life, we become friends with Satan — friends with the world, and in turn become spiritual adulterers and adulteresses. And as per our definition of echthra and echthros, we become enemies of God. But let's let James explain it for us. "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is an enemy of God" (James 4:4).

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Emulations



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The term "emulations" is a work of the flesh that is often engaged in but little understood. The word is used twice in the KJV but the ASV renders it "jealousies".

The root work in the Greek is *zelos*, from which the word *zeal* is derived. It may have either a good or a bad connotation, depending on the context. In Gal. 3:20 it is used in the bad sense — that of envious rivalry. Vine says "jealousy desires to have the same or the same sort of thing for itself." Barclay says "zelos could denote a great thing which degenerated into a sin." To observe the achievements of another can stir within one the desire to "emulate" or "imitate" with a view to achieving the same worthwhile thing in oneself. But if the same ambition, good at first, should provoke to a bitter resentment, then *zelos* becomes a work of the flesh. This deterioration of zeal is not the work of the Spirit but of the flesh.

Bible Usage

Greek Old Testament. ". . . envy slays the silly one" (Job 5:2) "Jealousy is the rage of a man. . ." (Prov. 6:34). "Again I considered all travail, and every right work, that for this a man is envied of his neighbor" (Eccles. 4:4). In the Greek Old Testament these passages will serve to demonstrate that *zelos* has its bad usage in the Old Testament. There is, then, an envy or jealousy which destroys personal relationships and individual well-being.

New Testament. Paul uses *zelos* in Rom. 10:2 in speaking of the unenlightened zeal of the Jews. "For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge." Zeal for God is good but without knowledge it is bad — zeal gone astray.

In Phil. 3:6 Paul exercised zeal (*zelos*) in persecuting the church. His zeal was a noble ambition to do God service. It was well-intended and yet it was zeal out of place.

Zelos is again used in the unfavorable sense in Rom. 13:13. Here Paul speaks of how a Christian should walk or conduct himself. "Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in chambering, and wantonness, not in strife and envying." The word "envying" is from *zelos* and is rendered "jealousy" in the R. V. Christians must rid themselves of these things, Paul says. Envy or jealousy is misguided zeal and to allow our ambitions to deteriorate, is to make provisions for the flesh and "they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:21).

Several other N. T. passages employ *zelos* in a bad sense such as I Cor. 3:3 where envying is associated

with other sins of carnality. Paul in II Cor. 12:20 was fearful of returning to Corinth "lest there be debates, envying, wrath, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults." Again envying from *zelos* is found in bad company. In James 3:14, 16 envying is a form of lying against the truth and is from *zelos*. It denotes a sinful condition of the heart and is associated with "confusion and every evil work."

In Acts 5:17, *zelos* is used with reference to the indignation of the high priest and the Sadducees. In verse 18 their envy resulted in the seizure and imprisonment of the apostles. Again we see ambition or zeal vented in an unholy manner.

Present Day Application

Unless we can relate our findings on the subject of "emulations" to our own time and in our own lives, such a study would be a waste of time. Unless we can determine, not only the definition and Biblical usage of the term but just how Christians may avoid such a work of the flesh, the time spent is of no real value. Therefore, let us make some practical application in this regard.

Sometimes Christians are caught up in the vortex of swirling ambition that is common to our times and known as "keeping up with the Joneses". If Mr. Jones has a new car, then I should rejoice with Mr. Jones. Some might go over and try to find some flaws so that his joy might be diminished. It might be that I would so admire the looks and performance of his vehicle that I would decide to buy one almost or just like it. So far, so good. But if I notice his new car and begin to burn with envy and jealousy, though I would do nothing to deprive him of his car, I become guilty of "emulation". This would be true whether or not I buy one like his. But, if I should go so far as to buy one **just to keep abreast of Mr. Jones**, I am guilty of bitter rivalry, emulation, jealousy. It is "emulation" (*zelos*) and constitutes a base erosion of the heart and thus, a work of the flesh. This is a sin!

To bring it even closer home preachers may be guilty of the sin of emulation when they view one another with a spirit of envious rivalry rather than as fellow workers in the kingdom. Elders may be guilty in this respect by trying to outdo one another. An elder who is always fearful that he will be overshadowed or outdone is a dangerous man. He will seek ways to hold his place even to the extent of discrediting those toward whom he feels a sense of inadequacy. Such a one is envious, jealous, thus guilty of the sin of emulation.

Preachers and elders who see noteworthy qualities and abilities in other preachers and elders can "emulate" them in the good sense of *zelos*, that of imitation. This is the proper use of ambition.

Among Bible teachers and song leaders there is sometimes the spirit of envy and rivalry. This certainly ought not to be and is contrary to New Testament teaching. From our study it is evident that such is comprehended by the term "emulations". Such ought to regard one another as "co-workers" rather than as "competition". If a brother is a good Bible teacher, then try to duplicate those good qualities out of admiration, not from envy or jealousy. Likewise, song leaders can learn from other

song leaders. There is nothing wrong with this. But to be envious and jealous of the more capable person is to be guilty of the sin under consideration — emulation.

Brethren, let us not be guilty of "emulations" thus forfeiting our inheritance in the kingdom of God. When we observe that which is good in another person let us strive to imitate it out of a desire to effect the good thing in our own lives rather than with the competitive spirit, that of moving from no higher motive than to equal or exceed the other man so that he will not set ahead of me.

Wrath

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Among the ancients, from Homer down, "wrath" (*thumos* in the Greek) signified the seat of emotion, both the gentler and the more turbulent, such as "temper," "courage" and "anger." In the Septuagint and Apocryphal writings of the Jews, in the majority of the cases, *thumos* meant "anger."

Definition of Wrath

In this study we are considering the word "wrath" in its turbulent sense, which the Bible classifies as a work of the flesh (Gal. 5:20). It denotes an outburst of passion and anger that is hostile and reprehensible in nature.

A related word to *thumos* (wrath) is the word, *orge*, which is sometimes translated "wrath," and sometimes, "anger." W.E. Vine says that "*thumos* indicates a more agitated condition of the feelings, an outburst of wrath from inward indignation, while *orge* suggests a more settled or abiding condition of mind, frequently with a view to taking revenge. *Orge* is less sudden in its rise than *thumos*, but more lasting in its nature."

Barclay states, "*Thumos* is a blaze of sudden anger which is quickly kindled and just as quickly dies. . . . *Orge* is anger which has become inveterate; it is long lasting, slow-burning anger, which refuses to be pacified and nurses its wrath to keep warm. For the Christian the burst of temper and the long-lasting anger are alike forbidden" (*The Letters to the Phil., Col., and Thess.*, p. 153).

Webster defines "wrath" to mean "violent anger; vehement exasperation; indignation; fury." Hence, "wrath" is an emotional violence that is vented through such tumultuous outbursts as blasphemy, cursing and fighting.

(Parenthetically, with reference to the wrath of God, his wrath is an expression of his divine nature that is just, proper and holy. There is nothing capricious or unethical. It is a righteous indignation toward the willful and inexcusable sins of mankind.)

Proper Attitude Toward Wrath

The following things about wrath show how it should be viewed and dealt with by the Christian.

(1) **A Work of the Flesh.** In cataloging several works of the flesh in Gal. 5:19-21, Paul lists "wrath" as one of them. He states that they who practice such shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Hence, wrath is no more respectable in God's sight than any other sin.

(2) **To be put away.** "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice" (Eph. 4:31). "But now ye also put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth" (Col. 3:8). These things are part of the old man of sin. They are to be mortified at conversion.

(3) **Not to be prolonged.** "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath" (Eph. 4:26). This verse recognizes justifiable anger, such as anger toward hypocrisy, injustice of an oppressive, unscrupulous tyrant, profanation of the sacred, etc. But, the text says that we should not harbor these angry thoughts, but banish them before the day's end, lest we be tempted into committing some sin. Righteous anger was seen in Jesus (Mk. 3:5), Moses (Ex. 32:19) and Nehemiah (Neh. 5:1).

(4) **Not to be angry with a brother.** Jesus said "that every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment" (Matt. 5:22). Barclay wrote, "It is not enough not to strike a man; the only thing that is enough is not even to wish to strike him; not even to have a hard feeling against him within the heart" (*The Gospel of Matthew*, Vol. 1, p. 138).

Jesus proceeds in Matt. 5:22 to show how anger turns into insulting words. Hence, anger in man's heart and anger in man's speech are prohibited.

(5) **Worketh not the righteousness of God.** James wrote, "For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God" (Jas. 1:20). One who is violent and mentally agitated is not in a frame of mind to accept or practice the righteousness of God. He will not accept the truth, nor will he do what is right. This is why James says in verse 19 to be "swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath." Anger has caused many people to reject the truth of God when they hear it, both in and out of the church.

(6) **To be avoided in rearing children.** Paul stated, "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath. . ." (Eph. 6:4). In other words, "Do not embitter them or stir them to an angry mood." William Hendriksen points out several ways this can be done: a. Over-protection, b. Favoritism, c. Discouragement, d. Neglect, e. Bitter words and outright physical cruelty, f. Failure to make allowance for the fact that the child is growing up, has a right to have ideas of his own, and need not be an exact copy of his father to be a success (*Com. On Ephesians*, pp. 261-262). Not a few children have been made hostile and rebellious by inconsiderate parents.

Examples of Sinful Wrath

Several examples stand out in the Bible of those who demonstrated wrath in its sinful and

reprehensible nature.

(1) Cain (Gen. 4:5-6). Because Jehovah had respect unto Abel and his offering, Cain was very wroth and his countenance fell. This led to the murder of Abel by his brother, Cain.

(2) Esau (Gen. 27:45). As a result of Isaac blessing Jacob, Esau hated Jacob and his anger was turned against him, purposing in his heart to kill him.

(3) Naaman (2 Kings 5:11-12). When Elisha did not tell Naaman, the leper, what he expected to hear to cure his leprosy, he was wroth, and turned away in a rage.

(4) Saul (1 Sam. 20:30-33). To Saul, David was a threat to his throne, and, thereby, a rebel. Seeing Jonathan, his son, befriend and protect David, Saul considered Jonathan a rebel as well. This so enraged Saul that he cast a javelin at Jonathan to smite him.

(5) Herod the Great (Matt. 2:16). Seeing that his authority was mocked by the wise men when they failed to return, Herod was exceeding wroth and slew all the children in Bethlehem from two years old and under.

Today, we still have the Cains, Esaus, Naamans, Sauls and Herods. Some of them are in the church, even in the Bible classes, at times, and business meetings. Although they may not go as far as to perpetrate murder, they "blow their stack," "fly off the handle," and keep things in constant turmoil. They help to divide churches and retard the Cause of Christ.

Causes of Wrath

In analyzing the causes of wrath, at least three major ones can be given.

(1) **Threat or injury to a personal value.** The Jews had great pride in their fleshly lineage. They thought this merited special favor with God. When Jesus showed them at Nazareth that instead of being in good standing with God, they were like widows for want and lepers for uncleanness, they were filled with wrath, ready to dash him to pieces (Lk. 4:28-29).

We see this feeling manifested by the Jews in stoning Stephen (Acts 7:51-59), and opposing Paul (Acts 13:50), as well as the examples we have already given of sinful wrath.

(2) **Personal Injury.** Almost daily in any of our large cities we read in the paper where someone has been beaten, stabbed or shot in retaliation of some personal wrongdoing.

(3) **Victory Substitute.** Some individuals, if they cannot have their way, will substitute an emotional outburst in its place. Children throw temper tantrums for the same reason. If they cannot have their wishes, they can have their anger.

As Prov. 19:19 indicates, wrath is dispositional in nature and tends to become an emotional habit. Solomon says, "A man of great wrath shall suffer punishment; for if thou deliver him, yet thou must do it again." People with quick and fiery tempers, always getting themselves into trouble, need to break the emotional pattern that they have allowed to develop in their heart.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we again quote from the voluminous pen of William Barclay. He wrote, "Many a person is

well aware that he has a violent temper; and many a person claims that he cannot help it, and expects others to accept and to forgive his bursts of passion. . . . It may well be that such a person is never fully aware of the way in which he wounds othersBecause he blazes and forgets he thinks that others should equally be able to forget the pain he has inflicted. Let such a person remember that such displays of temper are sin, and that the way to overcome them is through the power of the Spirit in his heart" (through the word of God, of course, we) (*Flesh and Spirit*, p. 53).

Strife, Seditions and Heresies

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I appreciate the privilege of making a small contribution to the success of this special issue on the works of the flesh. After all, this will probably condemn more people at the judgment than any other thing. A successful life, and especially that of a Christian, is one of mind over body, knowledge and control over lust and gratification. Paul expressed it this way: "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Rom. 8:12-13).

The Christian is under the guidance of the Spirit, and the Spirit continually prompts him — through the word — to imitate the Father who has adopted him and the Christ who has died for him. Anyone who submits himself to the guidance of the Spirit, will not yield to those lusts of the flesh which he knows are displeasing to God. But he will be tempted to yield to those lusts, for there is an inner conflict forever waged within him in which the flesh contends with the Spirit and the Spirit with the flesh, each desiring to constrain the man to fulfill its will. This is true of the Spirit which guides, and the spirit of the informed person. Thus it is that we may not do things that we would, for there are two wills within us, and one or the other of them must be subdued and disappointed. Again we turn to the apostle who said: "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members" (Rom. 7:22, 23).

We can tell much about a sin or command by the context or company it keeps. The three works of the flesh which I am discussing are not in good company. On this point, J. W. McGarvey said: "It is startling to find 'factions, divisions, parties' in so black a list, and coupled with so clear a declaration that these sins exclude the perpetrator of them from the

kingdom of God. Verily all professing Christians would do well to take heed to what the Bible designates as sins, and not trust too much to their own fallible sentiment and judgment in such matters."

The task before me is relatively simple. We know already what God thinks about the works which we are discussing. We need only to learn the true meaning of each term, what these sins have done to others, how they are manifest in the lives of people now, and the warnings against them. To do this, I have before me the Bible, a dictionary, several lexicons, and at least a dozen translations.

Strife

W. E. Vine defines the term (*Eritheia*): "strife, contention, in the expression of enmity, Rom. 1:29." (Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, Vol IV, p. 82.) Thayer says, "contention, strife, wrangling." The King James Version uses the word strife, while in other translations we find such words as factions, selfishness, selfish ambitions, intrigues and rivalry.

When problems arose between the herdmen of Abram and Lot, the old patriarch said, "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen, for we be brethren" (Gen. 13:8). To avoid the strife, Abram offered Lot his choice of the land, and was willing to sacrifice his own wealth and future. Does this tell us anything? It certainly should!

Solomon tells us much about strife: "A wrathful man stirreth up strife: but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife." "Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than an house full of sacrifices with strife." "The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water: therefore leave off contention before it be meddled with." "He loveth transgression that loveth strife. . ." "It is an honour for a man to cease from strife: but every fool will be meddling." "Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth. As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a contentious man to kindle strife." (Proverbs 15:18; 17:1, 14, 19; 20:3; 26:20, 21.)

There was strife among the disciples over who should be the greatest (Luke 22:24). There was strife in Corinth (I Cor. 3:3). Paul admonished the Romans not to walk "in strife and envying" (Rom. 13:13). To the Philippians he wrote: "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves" (Phil. 2:3). He warned of those who are "proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings" (I Tim. 6:4). James tells us of the fruits of strife when he said: "But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work" (James 3:14-16). Need we say more about the dangers and evils of strife?

Seditions

Seditions (*Dichostasia*) "a standing apart, hence a

dissension, division." (Vine, Vol. 3, p. 336.) The verb form is defined as "to excite, unsettle, 'to stir up to sedition,' is so translated in Acts 21:38." Where the KJV uses sedition, other translations speak of divisions, dissension, party spirit and factions.

In Caesarea, Paul accused a man of sedition (Acts 21:38). In Athens, Paul was accused of the same when they said he had "turned the world upside down" (Acts 17:6). Thayer observes, "to upset, unsettle, minds by disseminating religious error: Gal. 5:12" where the record says of the Judaizers "I would they were even cut off which trouble you."

When the Jews were rebuilding Jerusalem and the temple, false charges were made against them which prompted a letter from Artaxerxes the king to the rulers in Samaria wherein he said, "And I commanded, and search hath been made, it is found that this city of old time hath made insurrection against kings, and that rebellion and sedition have been made therein" (Ezra 4:19).

Barabbas, who was released instead of Jesus, was guilty of sedition and murder (Luke 23:19). In testifying against Paul, Tertullus charged, "For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world" (Acts 24:5). We do not believe that Paul was guilty of sedition, any more than he was a member of a sect. True, he had "unsettled" Judaism and the sects of that day, but he did not do so by "disseminating religious error."

Heresies

Heresies (*Hairesis*) "denotes a choosing, choice: then, that which is chosen, and hence, an opinion, especially a self-willed opinion, which is substituted for submission to the power of truth, and leads to division and the formation of sects, Gal. 5:20; such erroneous opinions are frequently the outcome of personal preference or the prospect of advantage." (Vine, Vol. II, p. 217.) "4. a body of men separating themselves from others and following their own tenets." (Thayer) He gives as examples the Sadducees, Pharisees, and even the Christians "with a suggestion of reproach" when they accused Paul of being "a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes" and he acknowledged walking in "the way which they call heresy" (Acts 24:5, 14).

Other translations use parties, party spirit, party quarrels, and factions.

As we have already learned, they called "the way" of the apostle Paul "heresy." The apostle Peter prophesied: "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction" (II Peter 2:1) Heresy doesn't involve only those who follow "their own tenets." The real tragedy is that "many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of" (II Peter 2:2).

The man who holds to a heresy is a heretic. The Bible says, "A man that is a heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned

of himself (Titus 3:10, 11). Why such drastic action? Because of the dangers involved. Notice how, according to the definitions and scriptures, a heretic develops: (1) he makes a choice; (2) this becomes an opinion; (3) he becomes self-willed; (4) he then becomes opinionated and substitutes his opinion for truth and thus makes it law; (5) this causes division and the formation of sects and parties.

In writing to the church at Corinth, Paul said, "For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you" (I Cor. 11:19). In commenting on this verse, brother David Lipscomb made some observations which I have found meaningful, and I believe I have seen what he described in the church many times during the past twenty-five years. He said:

"It is part of the policy of God in governing the world to test those serving him, and to that end he allows evil men to come into their midst.

"The church of God, like the Jewish nation, will continually fall away from steadfastness in the faith. Those who cannot be faithful to God under temptations to disobey him are not worthy of his Kingdom. So God allows evil men to come among his people who would lead away from God and his order, to try and test who among them are faithful and true to him. Paul said to the elders of the Ephesian church: 'Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood. I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.' (Acts 20:28-30) This was permitted to prove and to show who could stand firm and steadfast under temptations to turn away from God.

"God tests them on the point of fidelity to him in faith and doctrine as well as love of the world, lusts of the flesh, and pleasures of life. One who cannot resist these and give them up for the Lord is rejected by him as unworthy to be his disciple; so every one who cannot stand fast for the truth despite the divisions and the popular currents that sweep through the churches to carry them away from their steadfastness is unworthy of Christ. These are God's tests to purify the churches. He desires only true and tried and faithful subjects in his kingdom. Those who cannot stand the test must be purged out. So divisions come to every church to make manifest those who are approved. It is God bringing the churches to judgment in this world, that those who are approved and true may be made manifest. All we have to do is stand true and firm to God and his word, and leave the results with him." (Commentary on the New Testament Epistles, Vol. II, pp. 170, 171.)

It has been suggested that the works of the flesh listed in Galatians 5:19-21 may be classified as follows: 1. Sins of sensual passion. 2. Sins of superstition. 3. Sins of social disorder. 4. Individual excesses. According to this, strife, seditions and heresies would be classified as sins of social disorder.

But as we have seen in this study, they seem to involve attitudes, motives, doctrines and divisions among the people of God. Why then are they listed as "works of the flesh"? As we observed in the beginning, the answer lies in the fact that the attitudes, motives, opinions and desires of man are too often controlled by the lusts of the flesh. This will lead him to be self-willed, contentious, unsettled and factious, and to deny the truth, work for personal advantage, and even deny the Lord. Why did Judas deny the Lord? Lust for thirty pieces of silver. Why did the witnesses lie about the empty tomb? Lust for money. So these sins are works of the flesh, even though they may be mental and spiritual in nature, because they are results of the weakness and desires of the flesh.

Note that these works are "manifest." They break out into open acts of transgression, which are manifest alike to God and man; manifest by the light of nature and the law of God. We see the history of the flesh in the whole record of man's moral degradation and the resulting misery. These works are all manifest, open, tangible proofs of a life at enmity with God.

By our study of strife, seditions and heresies, we see that the peace and progress of God's people, and even our eternal salvation, depends upon our desire and ability to avoid or overcome these evil works.

May our lives be filled with the fruit of the Spirit, for, "against such there is no law."

Envyings

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Definition

The fourteenth sin which is named in this list (KJV) is "envyings." R. C. Trench (**Synonyms of the New Testament**), points out that there are two Greek words rendered "envy": phthonos always has an evil meaning, while zelos may be good as in "zeal," or "enthusiasm"; or bad as in "jealousy" or "rivalry." The latter word is rendered "emulations" in the KJV of Gal. 5:20. Our word is phthonos.

William Barclay (**The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians**) comments: "The essence of it is that it does not describe the spirit which desires, nobly or ignobly, to have what someone else has; it describes the spirit which grudges the fact that the other person has these things at all. It does not so much want the things for itself; it merely wants to take them from the other person."

"The English word 'envy' comes from the Latin word *invidere* 'in — against'; *videre* — 'to look at', meaning to look askance at, or to have hatred or ill will toward another. It is a feeling of displeasure and ill will because of another's advantages, possessions, etc. . . ." (Zonderman Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible, p. 314.)

Assorted Passages

Envy is a sin we seldom talk about, or think about. Personally, I've never heard of it being confessed publicly. Yet, the word of God is filled with teaching concerning it and warnings against it. In the book of Proverbs, one of the most practical sections of the Bible, we are advised to, "Let not thine heart envy sinners: but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long. . . Be not thou envious against evil men, neither desire to be with them" (Prov. 23:17; 14:1).

This sin is listed in Romans 1:29, Titus 3:3, I Timothy 6:4, and I Peter 2:1, as well as in our text, along with every stripe and color of ungodliness and immorality.

A great prophecy of the peaceable kingdom of Christ includes the words, "The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim" (Isa. 11:13). Obviously, then, Christ will not share the throne of our hearts with envy. If envy reigns there, Christ has been forced out.

Categories of Envy

Envy of the talents and gifts of another: "They envied Moses also in the camp, and Aaron the saint of the Lord" (Psalm 106:16). This statement concerns

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the rebellion of Korah and "two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown" (Numbers 16:2). These mighty men were envious of the leadership God granted to Moses and Aaron and rose up against them. God showed His displeasure at their disposition by causing the earth to "open her mouth and swallow them" and then sending a fire to consume them (Numbers 16:31-35).

Even Aaron himself, and Miriam, had earlier become envious of their brother, Moses (Numbers 12:1, 2) and became objects of God's anger. Indeed, here is a sin that doth easily beset us!

Envy of the Prosperous wicked: "Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity" (Psalm 37:1). In this wonderful passage, God exhorts us to never have the notion that we would trade places with such people.

Reason? They're just a step away from ruin, heartbreak, or death! They may suddenly face the judgment of God for which they have made no preparation: "For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb" (v. 2). No one is so foolish as to envy the fat steer that's being led to the slaughter, so why envy the ungodly their pleasures on this earth?

Envy of the Labor and resulting blessing of another: "And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth and his countenance fell" (Gen. 4:4, 5). Cain was spinning his wheels. The blessing which his brother had received was available to him also: "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?" (v. 7). But a rotten disposition kept him from correcting his error, and drove him to commit the first murder.

Envy of the popularity of another: "And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him" (Acts 7:9). What on earth possessed these men that they would so hate their brother and would lay plans to kill him, then decide to sell him like selling a beast, and break their father's heart? Were they possessed with a devil? In a sense, yes. They were possessed with the devil called envy! The station that Joseph had occupied in the heart of their father had provoked this spirit within them.

Effects of Envy

Envy will cause some to despise faithful preachers: "Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife. . . supposing to add affliction to my bonds" (Phil. 1:15, 16). This ugly spirit sometimes arises when a preacher thinks another preacher is getting too much praise, or holding too many meetings, or does too good a job in the pulpit.

It's easy to let a desire to do better lead to envy. I might wish I had the education of Ed Harrell, or could quote scripture like Leonard Tyler, or had the voice of Roy Cogdill, or could flat shell down the corn like Robert Jackson, or write like Robert Turner. (I'd really be something, wouldn't I?) But I'll not stop thanking God for such men, simply because their talents and abilities surpass mine.

This type of envy is based on pride. It's reported

that one preacher of another generation was asked who the three greatest gospel preachers were, in his judgment. He answered, "Two of them are C. R. Nichol and Joe Warlick. Modesty forbids me to name the third!"

Envy will bring strife and division to the church: "For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying (zelos), and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men" (I Cor. 3:3). Many congregational problems have nothing to do with doctrine. Rather, the cancer of envy is eating away. Perhaps one has been a bit too successful in public life, or is hearkened to a bit too much in the judgment of some. Before you know it, trouble comes.

Envy will arouse hatred of good people: "And Saul was very wroth, and the saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands: and what can he have more but the Kingdom? And Saul eyed David from that day and forward" (I Sam. 18:8, 9).

A deed even more terrible is recorded in Matt. 27:18: "For (Pilate) knew that for envy they had delivered (Jesus)." Here was one whose earthly pilgrimage consisted in doing good. Yet they tortured Him to death, because of envy.

After that, envy continued to be an impetus for the persecution of Christ's followers: "But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy. . ." (Acts 13:45).

Envy will bring physical sickness; "A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones" (Prov. 14:30). Like other ills of the spirit, envy probably often triggers physical symptoms. One little fellow, upon hearing that his mother was suffering from colitis, replied, "Oh? Who's she been colliding with this time?"

Envy will cause one to lose his faith: "But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked" (Psalm 73:2, 3). Fortunately, Asaph got a rein on his thoughts and went into the sanctuary of God (v. 17). There he understood the destiny of the wicked, and the folly of envying them.

Causes of Envy

Envy seems to be provoked by a combination of pride, ambition, and laziness. Pride can endure no rival or superior. Ambition may be worthy or unworthy. Its character is determined by the underlying motive: "Seekest thou great things for thyself. Seek them not," was God's message to Baruch (Jer. 45:5). Laziness causes one to try to achieve equality by pulling the other down, rather than by going up. It's easier to call the religious "hypocrites" than to discipline oneself. It's much easier to refer to the educated as "high-brow" than to advance in learning. It's easier to make a nasty remark about an attractive person than to do the best you can with what you've got.

How To Overcome Envy

Grow Up: "Wherefore laying aside all. . .envies. . .

as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (I Pet. 2:1, 2). Envy is something that should be laid aside as one would dispose of a soiled garment. It cannot long remain in the life of one who is making spiritual progress.

Increase in love: "Love envieth not" (I Co. 13:4 ASV). A mother and father do not become uncomfortable when their child is honored or makes good. Why? Because they love that child. As we increase in brotherly love, we will weep with those that weep, and rejoice with those that rejoice.

Trust in the Lord. This is the solution that David gives us in Psalm 37: "Trust in the Lord, and do good. . . Delight thyself also in the Lord. . . Commit thy way unto the Lord. . . Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him. . ." (verses 3-7).

Pride, unworthy ambition, and laziness cannot survive in the lives of those who follow this divine prescription. There is no soil there in which the cancerous plague of envy can take root and grow.

May we increase in our understanding of this work of the flesh and refuse to give it space in our hearts.

Drunkenness

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Galatians 5:19-21 lists a number of deeds (sins) of the flesh. The list is a long, yet definitive, description of what a Christian is not to do if he or she is to be pleasing to God. In the following verses (22-23) the fruits (works) of the Spirit are listed. Both in the letter to the Romans (Romans 7) and in the letter to the Galatians Paul pictures man as having two faces which are constantly warring to obtain dominance over him and that is the flesh against the spirit. Thus God has not left us in doubt or worry or concern about our direction in life or what we should be doing or not doing. It was specifically Paul's purpose to let these Galatians know what was expected of them.

Those things which would obviously be pleasing to one who is seeking after fleshly desires are denied the Christian. Unfaithfulness, uncleanness, idolatry, strife, jealousies, etc. and the such like are condemned because of the destruction they reek, the harm they do and the trouble they cause. Today in our modern world we cannot ignore God's plan given two thousand years ago. It has not become outmoded. We must constantly guard against the sins of the flesh.

Because of this special edition, I was asked to write on the subject of drunkenness. It is quite possible that from the entire list which Paul gives, the sin which is most blatantly wrong is the sin of drunkenness. There should be no doubt even to the

most casual Bible reader that God abhors the evils of alcohol, the ill effects of this drug (a point to be further clarified later in the article) and the damage both spiritually and physically it can do to mankind. The ultimate effect of alcohol is drunkenness. In Eph. 5:18, Paul states emphatically "Do not get drunk with wine, for this is dissipation." I wonder if the time has been taken by some to determine the meaning of this word. Paul tells Titus in Titus 1:6 in listing the qualifications of an elder not to have children accused of dissipation or rebellion. The term simply means any wasteful use of time and energy. Being filled with alcohol and allowing ourselves this improper effect is dissipation. The scriptures are replete with passages admonishing the Christian not to become drunk. Notice Romans 13:13; "Let us behave properly as in the day, not with carousing and drunkenness." I Cor. 5:11 says we are not to have association with a brother who is a drunkard. We cannot mistake God's displeasure with too much drink, it is too plain and too explicit.

However, human nature being as it is, we sometimes begin to question God's desires on a certain subject. Alcohol is such a case in point. Man's reasoning is this. . . God explicitly states we are not to drink too much wine (drunkenness) but what about just a little less than too much wine or maybe just a little wine or alcohol. "God doesn't say anything about imbibing 'just a little' and in fact tells deacons not to be 'given to much wine' (I Tim. 3:8). Doesn't this allow at least a social drink or a nightcap or possibly one or two drinks periodically?" I usually answer this question by stating what we are really attempting to do is get as close to sin as we possibly can, enjoying the pleasures of sin, but not being held accountable because we have violated no passage or commandments of God. However, there may be one passage these brethren have overlooked. In I Peter 4:3, the Apostle writes "For the time already past is sufficient for you to have carried out the desires of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of lasciviousness, lust, winebibbings, revellings, carousings and abominable idolatries" (A.S.V.) Apparently, I am told by scholars, the term carousing (Banqueting in K.J.V., rendered **surfeiting** in Lk. 21:34 as distinct from drunkenness) not only can mean drunkenness as is commonly translated but can also carry the connotation of just tipping the glass or social drinking and does not necessarily have to mean excessive drinking, since that thought was covered in the preceding two statements (winebibbings and revellings). My dear brethren, suffice it to say the Bible covers any and all misuses or abuses of alcohol from "a little bit" to excessive use.

In describing the effects of alcohol one need not turn any farther than Proverbs 23:29-35. "Who hath woe? Who hath sorrow?" Notice some of the other succinct remarks made by Solomon. . . "Who hath babbling; Who hath redness of eyes." In verse 32 he states "at the last it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder." I particularly like the sentiments in 35 where he writes "They have stricken me, They have beaten me, when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again." Here we have possibly the best commentary anywhere I know in the scriptures or

otherwise on the results of alcoholic intake. The wise man understood its effects. He also comprehended how man would return again and again to the grape even though misadventure usually accompanied its use. Man forgets its bad effect and remembers only what he considers its pleasures. Please read this passage closely and begin to see the wisdom behind Solomon's words.

In considering the spiritual reasoning why one should not drink alcohol, I thought we might consider briefly some of the more prominent medical problems of alcohol. Alcohol is a drug which has both immediate (acute) effects and more longer lasting (chronic) effects. Usually it is the immediate effects that the drinker is seeking. The first organ system that shows a rapid effect from alcohol is the brain. The brain is quite compartmentalized and there are certain areas that perform different functions. The frontal portion of our brain called the frontal lobe (that part of the brain which anatomically and neurologically separates man from other animals) controls our inhibitions among other things. It so happens that this is the portion of the brain quickly affected by alcohol. This is why we see a person becoming "happier", louder and more boisterous. He begins to do things he would not normally do. (By the way, this is not the point at which a person is as yet defined by all criteria as being drunk). This is also why it is so very dangerous for the young and others who otherwise under normal conditions have proper sexual inhibitions, but may lose these inhibitions while drinking, thus engaging in sexual activities they would not normally do. Now we can begin to see why people like alcohol and its immediate effects. Other acute effects are visual disturbances, loss of balance, and loss of motor coordination. If questioned closely law enforcement officials will tell you anywhere from 50 to 90 percent of all automobile accidents are a direct or indirect result of someone being under the influence of alcohol. Not necessarily drunk either, but just drinking and not in total control of all faculties or not totally aware of circumstances.

The ill effects of alcohol also have their longer lasting results. The most common problem is that of cirrhosis or loss of liver function. The liver is the organ in the body that detoxifies alcohol. If taken in abundance and for a long period of time, the liver can and will be destroyed by this drug. This type of individual is not a very pretty sight to see. Usually at this stage he also has chronic brain damage which is the direct result of the alcohol as well. The gastrointestinal tract is the next most common organ that is affected by alcohol. Disasters such as ulcers, stomach inflammation, and severe bleeding from the esophagus or stomach can occur as a result of alcoholic consumption. The heart can most definitely become adversely involved from its chronic use. Secondarily, the pancreas, muscles, skin, and a number of other organs are also involved destructively.

I think we can begin to see that we are not discussing a harmless drug. Yes, alcohol under proper circumstances and used appropriately can have its

benefits. However, this is not the purpose of this article, but it has been an attempt to show how and why God does not want us to be users and abusers of alcohol. Under almost any circumstance there is not going to be any reason why the Christian should be involved with the use of wine, whiskey, beer, et. al. Its influence is wrong, its effects are destructive and the results of its use are going to cause significantly more harm than any momentary pleasure it might bring. Besides brethren, we can argue its use to the bitter end, but God demands temperance, sober-mindedness, and self-control from a Christian and none of these things can accrue from the use of alcohol.

Revellings



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The word which identifies the title of this article appears in the New Testament three times:

"Let us walk becomingly, as in the day; not in **revelling and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and jealousy**" (Rom. 13:13, A. S.V. — Emphasis MEP).

"**Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, un-cleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witch craft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like:** of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:19-21 — Emphasis MEP). For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries" (1 Pet. 4:3 — Emphasis MEP).

The urgent need for the study of this subject is evident from the fact that those guilty "shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Can you define "revellings"? Can you make proper application to such in the world of today? The design of this article is not only to give a clear understanding of what this sin is, but also to help all to identify such in our modern world.

Scholars define "revellings" as follows: "To be festive in a riotous or noisy manner" (Webster's Collegiate Dictionary). The word "riot" means, "Wild and loose festivity; revelry" (Ibid).

The Greek word for revelry is "komos," which is defined by THAYER as follows: ". . . a nocturnal

and riotous procession of half-drunken and frolicsome fellows who after supper parade through the streets with torches and music in honor of Bacchus or some other deity, and sing and play before the houses of their male and female friends; hence used generally, of feast and drinking parties that are protracted till late at night and indulge in revelry; plur. (revellings): Rom. 13:13; Gal. 5:21; 1 Pet. 4:3".

Adam Clarke says of this word in his comments on Gal. 5:21, "Lascivious feasting, with obscene songs, music, etc."

William Barclay says, "A komos was a band of friends who accompanied a victor of the games after his victory. They danced and laughed and sang his praises. It also describes the bands of the devotees of Bacchus the god of wine. It describes what in regency England would have been called a rout. It means unrestrained and uncontrolled revelry, enjoyment that has degenerated into licence" (THE LETTERS TO THE GALATIANS AND EPHESIANS).

Revellings, therefore, involves boisterous merrymaking with others wherein divine limitations are ignored and free, unrestrained and uncontrolled carnal appetites are expressed in song, dance, feasting, drinking parties, and "such like."

The modern dance hall with its loud music, jukebox, live, or otherwise, obscene songs, drinking, and other forms of carnal pleasure is indeed a place of revelry.

The modern Disco Dance, with its noisy, sensual music, obscene songs, indecent bodily movements, which demands abandonment to the pleasures of the senses, is indeed revelry. While not all forms of dancing come under the heading of revelry, some do. The word "lasciviousness" (Gal. 5:21) is more inclusive in its meaning and should be considered carefully when studying the subject of dancing.

Just as surely as the celebration of victory (of whatever nature) by riotous festivity was revelry in New Testament times, so it is now. It is easy to understand the desire to celebrate after our team has won the victory in a ball game. Among the rewards of championship are the feelings of joy, satisfaction, and even exhilaration. There are proper and improper (right and sinful) ways to express these feelings. The Christian must exercise discretion. He should not get "caught up" in some "wild and loose festivity." He should refrain from participation in any "nocturnal and riotous . . . drinking party." He should not use the victory as a "license" to participate in any form of unrestrained, uncontrolled, degenerated enjoyment. All such come under the heading of **revellings**.

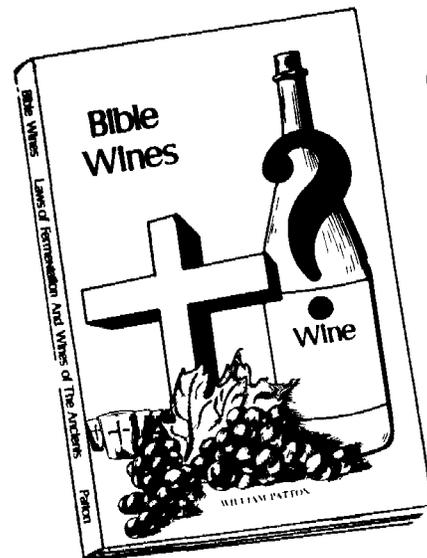
Unfortunately, so much of this modern world's entertainment involves and centers around loud sensual music, suggestive, provocative, and even obscene songs, drinking, and the fulfillment of carnal desires, that far more comes under the heading of this article than many realize.

Before listing the works of the flesh, Paul says, "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that

ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Gal. 5:16,17). When Paul said, "ye cannot do the things that ye would," he meant one cannot do as the once popular song suggested, namely, "that which comes naturally." If so, one would be led and directed by his natural or fleshly desires. God never intended that our bodies with their carnal appetites be our masters, but rather our servants. The following verses make that plain:

"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God" (Rom. 6:12,13).

"Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:12-14).



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The works of the flesh named by Paul in Galatians 5:19-21 are evil deeds that have their origin in lustful desires. Each of these works is indicated by a word that describes a particular type of action that violates the will of God. But the apostle ends the list with a general phrase, "and such like," which does not describe any particular work of the flesh, although it does carry significant implication in regard to these works as a whole.

The word translated "like" means, in the original text, "like, similar . . . i.e., resembling . . . in nature." (*Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon*.) Therefore, "and such like" obviously embraces all works of the flesh that are similar in nature to those listed but that are not mentioned in Galatians five. Paul made no effort here to give a complete catalog of fleshly works, and he added the general phrase so his readers would understand this. The phrase also shows that the rest of these works come under the same condemnation as the ones named. Those who do "such things," both the things mentioned and all other things resembling these, "shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

All the evil deeds that are comprehended in "the works of the flesh" are similar in their essential character. They are sins that arise from the lusts of the flesh and that are committed in response to the will of the flesh apart from and in opposition to the Spirit of God. (Cf. Rom. 8:5-12; Eph. 2:1-3; Gal. 5:16.) But what are the works of the flesh included in the phrase, "and such like," and how are they identified as such?

Sin is defined by John as the act or practice of breaking God's law; it is, in a word, "lawlessness" (1 John 3:4). But where there is no law there is no violation (Rom. 4:15). And it is through law that the knowledge of sin comes (Rom. 3:20). These principles, being true of the law of Christ, make it evident that all works of the flesh must be made known in the New Testament. There is no way, apart from the Scriptures, that the child of God can know what the works of the flesh are, or how they may be avoided or overcome.

Therefore, the idea that Paul meant "and such like" to serve as a sort of verbal blank space to be filled in with anything Christians might later decide to include among the works of the flesh is not so. Yet there are some who hold this to be the apostle's intention. E.M. Zerr expresses this view in his commentary on Galatians. He says: "The phrase is very significant in that Paul knew that as time _passed, men would be originating new forms of sin,

and he thus includes all such in the condemnation, even though a person might deny guilt of the ones specified. Any conduct, therefore, that resembles or may be compared to any of the evils named would be wrong for Christians." (*Bible Commentary*,) Vol. VI, pp. 88-89.)

If Paul knew men would afterward "be originating new forms of sin," he knew more than he told. It is true, of course, that new names are sometimes given to old sins ("gay" for homosexual) and that old sins are often disguised in new garments (men continually strive to make evil appear good and good evil); but every form of sin that can be originated — that is, brought into being or created as something original (*Webster's New World Dictionary*) — has been originated already and is at least as old as the New Testament. Furthermore, every form of present-day sin is identified, described, and condemned in the New Testament. New ways of dancing come into existence from time to time, but the form of sin in the act is lasciviousness, and this is not new. The liquor industry frequently creates new concoctions to lure people to drink more, but drunkenness has been around at least since the days of Noah. Clothing styles change almost as often as the weather, but no new form of nudity can outstrip Bathsheba's bathing suit.

Zerr acknowledges the problem his interpretation poses in application. "The question arises," he notes, "who is to decide in any given case, whether it comes under this classification?" He then offers a solution: "Hebrews 5:14 shows that such ability should come from use or practice in the Christian life. But if a disciple refuses to use his ability thus acquired, 1 Corinthians 11:31,32 shows that some other person must exercise judgment in the case. Hebrews 13:17 says the rulers (elders) watch for the souls of the flock, hence the sheep are commanded to obey them. Elders must be the final judge on the unspecified things, as to whether they are considered 'such like' or compared to the works of the flesh enumerated in the passage." (*Ibid.*, p. 89.)

Hebrews 5:14 teaches that mature Christians are capable of discerning good and evil because they have trained themselves to that end by the word of righteousness, but this power of discernment does not include the ability to discover "new forms of sin" in human behavior. Nor does Hebrews 13:17 confer such power upon the elders. No requirement for the office qualifies elders to be "the final judge on the unspecified things," as to whether they belong to "such like." If elders should decide that it is a work of the flesh for a woman to powder her nose, that wouldn't make it so.

In truth, "the unspecified things" embraced in the phrase, "and such like," are only unspecified in Galatians 5:19-21. They are not unspecified, or at least signified, in other passages in the New Testament. First Corinthians 6:9-10 broadens the list to include the works of the "effeminate," "homosexuals," "thieves," "revilers," and "swindlers." Other works of the flesh may be added from such passages as Ephesians 5:3-4 and Colossians 3:5-9. A discerning Bible student could compile a

complete catalog of such works, one that contains every form of sin it is possible to commit; but the Scriptures would be his only source of authority as to the things that go in it.

McGarvey and Pendleton, in discussing the works of the flesh in Galatians 5:19-21, summarize the whole affair succinctly: "Verily all professing Christians would do well to take what the Bible designates as sins, and not trust too much their own foolish sentiment and judgment in such matters." (*The Standard Bible Commentary*, Vol. III, p. 283.)

Kept Out of Heaven

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To be kept out of Heaven is the greatest tragedy of human existence. When we consider Heaven and being kept out, we need to think of two important factors: (1) the glorious blessings of Heaven, and (2) the possibility of obtaining this bliss. I. First, The Bliss Of Heaven.

It is difficult for uninspired man to speak of Heaven without singing. The thoughts of Heaven seem to come more natural to us when they are expressed in words of praise:

"Sing to me of Heaven, sing that song of peace, from the toils that bind me it will bring release; burdens will be lifted that are pressing so, SHOWERS of Great Blessings o'er my heart will flow."

Paradise, Heaven, is the most glorious garden of provision and beauty man's mind can capture. Every problem will be erased, every pain soothed, every tear dried, and every burden lifted. Picture the eternal God and the Lamb in total righteousness, and if that were not enough, then picture us being made like them. YES, words cannot describe its glory. Therefore, consider the picture of it in Revelation 7:15-17.

They wore white robes. They wore golden crowns. They surrounded the throne, and they sang His praises eternally. Rev. 7:16,17, "they are before the throne of God; and they serve Him day and night in His temple and He who sits on the throne shall spread His tabernacle over them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, nor suffer from heat, for the Lamb in the center of the throne shall be their shepherd, and shall guide them to springs of the water of life, and God shall wipe every tear from their eyes."

This beautiful picture begins with the Lord "spreading his tabernacle over them." This evidently refers to the feast of the tabernacle where provisions were made to spread a feast before friends, visitors

and the poor, homeless and strangers. Here, as we draw from this Old Testament usage, God speaks of the ultimate feast before the poor homeless sinners who have given their lives for Him, and now His tabernacle, or BOOTH, will be their eternal resting place. Strangers and pilgrims they have been, but now an eternal resting place is theirs. The feast says they shall hunger no more. Remember in Chapter 6, the black horse of the third seal was hunger in the midst of plenty. Now the Father that had seen His children starve to death would see His family now seated at an eternal feast.

The blazing sun of persecution and the heat of death would no longer blister the tormented saint. The burning heat of the middle East, along with the driving sand-laden winds were always a threat to life. But now the heat, the sun, the blaze of torment would be taken away. How could this be? Because the Lamb is their shepherd. He will lead them to green pastures, to still waters, to rest, peace and security. This Lamb will be the Davidic shepherd of Ezekiel 37:24 to wipe every tear from their eyes. To summarize this glorious picture in Revelation 7:9-17 we note the condition of the Great Multitude before the throne. Notice their perfect condition as it is described by John:

A. "WASHED IN BLOOD" Perfect in Purity and Holiness.

B. "BEFORE THE THRONE" Perfect communion with Deity.

C. "SERVING" Perfect occupation.

D. "SPREAD HIS TABERNACLE OVER THEM" THEM" Perfect protection.

E. HUNGER AND THIRST NO MORE" Perfect Provision.

F. "NO TEARS" Perfect Joy.

These are the Blessings of Heaven. Yet, we all know and appreciate the greatness of Heaven. However, the next point is the key factor at issue. II. Secondly, The Possibility Of Heaven.

How many of us feel like we are not going to Heaven? One lady, an elder's wife, some time ago blurted out in Bible Class: "Well, I'll never make it! I don't know why I keep on trying." A hush fell over the auditorium, it was deathly still, and every heart beat sounded like a bass drum. The poor sister turned pale and seemed to wish that she could become invisible. Even though everyone sat in shock, many confessed they really felt the same way. Is it possible that many others in the church really feel that way as well?

Our Lord has not given us an impossible task! While we need to be on guard against Satan and the dangers of Hell, there is the possibility of victory. Satan as our enemy is not so great, not so formidable that we are simply as jousting windmills with no hope of triumph. The possibility of Heaven with all its glories is real. The opportunity to go there is not as a carrot dangled in front of a plowing mule which is too dense to know that no matter how far he walks he will never sink his teeth into the dangling carrot. Notice John's tribute to Heaven in the Revelation letter. Nowhere has a clearer picture been drawn of the glories of eternal bliss than in John's vision.

YES, tribulation was coming; tribulation so great that when the warning went out it was approaching, men called for the rock to fall on them, and they hid themselves in caves seeking to avoid the wrath of the Lamb. YET, even in the overflow of this judgment of tribulation, "blessed are those who are faithful unto death." John's vision, while dark and foreboding, carries with it the glorious possibility of Heaven in Rev. 12:10-11: "And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they loved not their life even unto death "

There we find the key word "OVERCAME." We think of Satan as invincible, but Satan is a loser! He has been dethroned and defeated right here in the 12th Chapter of Revelation. His powers were so great that his tail swept away one third of the stars, But he was defeated by Michael and His Angels. As we consider the defeat of Satan, it is good news to me that the carpenter from Nazareth overcame Satan in their struggle because the Devil was not strong enough. Yet, that is not the real good news for us today. The greatest good news is found in one small pronoun, "THEY OVERCAME HIM", — "They," the brethren of Verse 10, "For the accuser of our Brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them before God . . . and they overcame him." The greatest news of all eternity is that the SAINTS overcame Satan! Oh, it is good news that the Son of God overcame him, but I'm not divine. Oh, it is good news that Michael overcame him, but I'm no angel. What is really the good news is that the brethren, saints like you and me, overcame that dragon, the Beast, the liar of all liars; that we can overcome and the portals of Heaven swing open to sinners who were washed in the blood.

How did they overcome? First, by the Blood of the Lamb. They didn't overcome because of their great intellect. If so, Heaven would be lost for most of us. They didn't overcome because of great numbers. If so, the hand full of saints would be doomed. They overcame because of the Blood of the Lamb. Secondly, they overcame because they loved not their lives even unto death! Simply because they were committed to one objective only in life.

Brethren, Heaven is possible for sinners. Heaven is possible because of His Blood and our commitment. Now, what HELL really is, is closing our hearts to something which is so possible to obtain but is wasted and frittered away because of neglect. Now, the agony of Hell would be terrible if we were condemned to go there and knew we never had a chance for anything better. But consider the agony of Hell when we realize the Glorious Bliss which we let slip through our fingers.

Kept out of Heaven? Friend, "if we are kept out of Heaven, it will be because we wanted it that way. It will not be because we were forced out of Heaven or because we had the door closed in our faces, but rather because it was our decision to choose Hell rather than Heaven.

Jesus Was Different

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Jesus was totally different. The attitudes, planning, methods, teachings, and behaviour of Jesus distinguish Him from men. Jesus lived in the flesh but He was divine. He was the Son of God in the flesh (John 1:14). The works that He performed while on earth show clearly that He was different from men. In this article we want to notice a few things about Jesus that prove Him to be in a class by Himself.

Jesus was sent by God to this earth for a definite purpose. He had an end to accomplish. John records the words of Jesus which explain why He came to this sin-filled earth: "For God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through him" (John 3:17). Again in John 10:10 Jesus states, "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly." In John 12:44-46 the record says: "And Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me may not abide in the darkness." Jesus, as we see from the above passages and many more, came to save sinners from eternal torment.

His Attitude Toward Sin

The attitude that Jesus had toward sin distinguishes Him from men. Jesus clearly recognized that SIN is the root of the troubles of mankind. The stain of sin was to be removed from the lives of believers. His mission was one of saving men from evil: "For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). Jesus emphasizes the fact that mankind must be freed from the horrible bondage to sin (John 8:31-36). He stated that everyone who committed sin was the bondservant or slave to sin. Here Jesus was different. Many modern philosophies deny the reality of sin.

His Methods

The methods that Jesus used to free men from sin were entirely different than what men themselves would have done. The Son of God did not seek simply to change circumstances or environment, but the men themselves. He did not concentrate on changing merely the environmental or social conditions, but rather the character, heart, and lives of men and women.

Man needs salvation, not simply a change of climate or social status. Jesus was not an ordinary "social reformer," and He picketed for no economic or political revolutions, but His teachings can and have revolutionized the hearts and lives and subsequently the environment of many men. Jesus joined no political party nor established any social clubs to accomplish His mission. He did say He was going to

build "His church" (Matt. 16:18).

Jesus' concern is for character and not circumstances alone. Our Saviour worked to change the hearts of individuals. He knew the heart was the seat or beginning of all actions, and that if the heart was changed to righteousness — then naturally circumstances and conditions would change to the better. The heart must be cleansed and kept pure. Good social conditions will follow as a natural result of a Christ-like character being instilled in the hearts of men and women.

The mission of the body is the same as the mission of the head. The church is the body, and Christ is the head (Eph. 1:22, 23). Therefore, the body of Christ, the church, is not an organization having no higher aim than mere social reform. The church is not a political organization. It is the purpose of Christians, members of God's community of saved ones, to teach the glad tidings of the risen Saviour trying to save souls of those who are lost. The most precious and priceless thing in the whole world is the soul of man (Mark 8:36).

No Coercion

To attain His mission Jesus used different plans than what mere humans would have used. Jesus completely excludes using physical force in bringing men out of sin and to God. He did not use a spear, sword, or a mighty army to accomplish spiritual ends. We cannot "machine-gun" Christianity into a person, nor bayonet or bomb the gospel into his heart. Jesus rebuked His disciples for suggesting force on one occasion (Luke 9:51-56). It was LOVE that Christ sought and love will die or become hypocritical under force. Physical compulsion had no place in the ministry of our Lord. May it find none in ours.

Attraction of Money

Neither did Jesus use money in order to attract followers. He made no bribes and bought no favors. Jesus denounces anyone who will use such methods. He taught that when wealth was used for selfish purposes, its owner was a "fool" (Luke 12:13-22). Actually, Jesus had very little material goods to call His own (Matt. 8:20) He was not rich in this world's goods. How different from present day political, business, and religious leaders.

No Political Tactics

Neither did Jesus use "diplomacy" or political tactics and maneuvers so common to ambitious men. His conquering power was truth. He did not try to "play politics" with Herod, Pontius Pilate, or the Pharisees. He made no "deals." The Son of God knew that truth motivated by a sincere love was the conquering power, and we should learn the same lesson. Jesus never appealed to the selfish or greedy side of men to accomplish His mission. Quite the contrary; He told His disciples that they would suffer persecutions just as He suffered: "If the world hateth you, ye know that it hath hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: But because ye are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." Then Jesus, instead of promising His followers

a "bed of roses and cushions of ease" said: "Remember the word that I said unto you, A servant is not greater than his Lord. If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also" (John 15:18-20). No, Jesus did not hide the coming perils and afflictions from His disciples. He never tried to "cover-up" or deceive. His followers concerning anything, as a tyrant or dictator would.

Truly, He Was Different

Surely Jesus did not act and think as do the majority of men. He looked for no political power or high place in the affairs of men (John 6:15), and He offered no prestige or popularity or material wealth or sensual pleasure to His follows. He was different, and His disciples must be different from the crooked and perverse generation in which they live.

Jesus taught that the kingdom He would establish would never perish, but He took the way of perishing to establish it. Many times He told His disciples He would die, but He never made provisions for a successor (as men do) because He knew He would rise again (Mark 9:31).

Consider how wonderful a life the blessed Son of God lived among wicked men. Truly, He was different from the rest of humanity. He is our Redeemer, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Has he taken away yours?

The CCR Version

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What is your favorite version of the Bible? Is it the KJV? Is it the RSV? Is it the NASV? Maybe, it is one of the other versions, translations, and paraphrases that are so abundant today.

Have you heard about the newest version of the Bible? This version is called the "Church-of-Christ Revised Version" (CCRV). The CCRV was written especially for the members of the Church of Christ.

I want to study with you some of the important changes, omissions, and additions that have been made in this version. After completing this examination, you will understand why the CCRV has received the approval of so many brethren.

Important Changes

(1) Matthew 28:19, 20 — "Go ye therefore, ye full-time preachers, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

This passage has been changed to reflect the current thoughts of many brethren. It has become "accepted" by most brethren that only the full-time preachers have a responsibility to teach the gospel to others. After all, isn't that what they get paid for?

(2) John 4:24 — "God is a spirit: and they that worship him **may worship him at their own convenience.**"

This change also reflects current attitudes. Some brethren see no "need" to assemble with the rest of the congregation for worship. Others attend faithfully, and even worship "in truth" (right forms), but don't worship God "in spirit" (right attitude).

(3) Matthew 7:21 — "Not everyone that saith unto us, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of the **brethren that run the church.**"

In some churches, Jesus is no longer the Head of the church because certain Christians have tried to take His place. Since these brethren have "taken over", they have substituted and bound their own rules on the congregations. Thus, this situation prompted the more "accurate" translation of this passage in the CCRV.

Important Omissions

(1) 2 Timothy 2:15 — This verse does not appear in the CCRV. Since it is much easier to depend on someone else for our knowledge of the Bible, there is no longer any reason for the "average" member of the church to study it. Besides, it requires too much time, effort, patience, and prayer to really study the Scriptures for ourselves. I doubt that very many brethren will "mourn" the omission of this passage.

(2) James 1:12 — This verse has been left out of the CCRV. Enduring temptation is no longer "important" to some Christians. It is too difficult to live faithfully! It is much easier to "give in" to temptation than to try to overcome it.

(3) Philippians 4:4 — This verse was omitted in the CCRV. Rejoicing in the Lord involves putting our faith into practice. Some Christians spend so much time worrying about material things because they don't want to put complete trust in the Lord.

Important Additions

(1) Opinions 3:12 — "Thus saith the brethren, preach the gospel, o ye preachers; rebuke the brethren of other congregations that sin, but rebuke not the brethren of the church for which thou preachest; yea, lest their anger wax hot against thee."

It is always "popular" to preach about the sins of the denominations and the sins of the brethren in other congregations. It is always "unpopular" to

preach about the sins of the church where the preacher is preaching.

(2) Opinions 4:7, 8 — "Thus saith the brethren, all of the Christians within 100 miles of us shalt come to our gospel meetings, lest we be discouraged by small numbers in attendance. The brethren here shalt not go to any other gospel meetings if it is not in accordance with convenience."

The brethren from all of the surrounding churches must come to our meetings to "make up" for the alien sinners who are not present. Our attendance at their meetings is not really "necessary" since we get more Bible teaching than we "need" on Sunday, anyway.

(3) Opinions 9:14 — "Thus saith the brethren, hear ye our commandment, o ye preachers: thou shalt preach up to 30 minutes, but not a minute longer shalt thou preach; lest thy brethren be late for lunch."

The brethren have "proven" that too much Bible preaching will do severe damage to their sinful lives. Many Christians are thoroughly "convinced" that physical food is much more important than spiritual food.

Conclusion

I hope that I haven't really deceived anyone. You see there is no printed version of the Bible called the CCRV. But, this version of the Scriptures does exist in our own imaginations. In fact, some Christians have been using it for a long time!

The changes, omissions, and additions that were examined are some of the changes and alterations that we have made in our own minds. We have revised the Scriptures to match our attitudes and lives, instead of revising our attitudes and lives to match the Scriptures!

We can revise, change, omit, add to, and otherwise pervert and twist the Scriptures, but that won't really change the facts. We will still be judged by God's Word (John 12:48), not by our own sinful attitudes! Brethren, stop using the CCRV before it is too late!

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