

Table of Contents for
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“WORKS OF THE FLESH”

(Table of Contents arranged by Bennie Johns)

FORNICATION — A WORK OF THE FLESH

Charles A. Holt

“FACTIONS, DIVISIONS, PARTIES”

Keith T. Thompson

REVEL LINGS

Paul Brock

EDITORIAL — “THE WORKS OF THE FLESH”

Charles A. Holt

IDOLATRY

W. R. Jones

“AND SUCH LIKE”

Charles A. Holt

SORCERY

H. Osby Weaver

DRUNKENNESS

H. O. Hutto

LASCIVIOUSNESS

Bryan Vinson

DISPOSITIONS AND DIVISIONS

Hugh W. Davis

UNCLEANNES

Vaughn D. Shofner

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FORNICATION — A WORK OF THE FLESH

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In Galatians 5:19-21, the Apostle Paul gives a partial list of the works of the flesh. In this study we are using the Revised Version. The first sin listed by the apostle is FORNICATION. Whatever it is and what it may include we know such to be one of the works of the flesh, which will bar those who practice it from the kingdom of God. We should earnestly inquire into the meaning of the term.

In the King James account of this passage it will be noted that the word ADULTERY precedes the word FORNICATION. The word ADULTERY is not in the Revised text because the Greek word from which it is translated is not found in the best Greek manuscripts. However, there seems to be no question but that the one word FORNICATION includes the other.

ADULTERY and FORNICATION are common sins in our day. Indeed these seem to have been among the besetting sins of every generation. A study of the Bible reveals many examples of these sins, and over and over again they are condemned in no uncertain terms. Just a casual look at present-day society will convince one that these great evils are running

rampant, and but little effort is made to restrain such. The radio, the press, the movies, magazines, and many other forces are busily engaged in the task, either by premeditation or by carelessness, of glorifying and making socially respectable these heinous sins. God's people are, therefore, constantly in danger, and these sins have often been found among them.

Definition of The Term

WEBSTER defines the word FORNICATION as follows: "Illicit sexual intercourse on the part of an unmarried person ... Fornication is sometimes, especially in the Bible, used to include all sexual intercourse except between husband and wife or concubine; but it is usually distinguished from adultery, and sometimes from incest."

Thayer, in his great Greek lexicon, defines the Greek term: "Properly illicit sexual intercourse in general." He cites Acts 15:20,29 and 21:25 as examples. Then he adds this note: "That this meaning must be adopted in these passages will surprise no one who has learned from 1 Cor. 6:12 following how leniently

converts from among the heathen regarding this vice and how lightly they indulged in it . . ." He also suggests that the word includes the idea of Prostitution. So prostitution, whether legalized or not, is included in this work of the flesh.

The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia says, that "every form of unchastity is included in the term fornication."

There are four words in the Greek-Pornia; Pornuo; Pornee; Pornos — which are all kin and from the same root idea. The first two are always translated **fornication** or have to do with committing the same. The third word is translated by two English words — **harlot** and **whore**. The fourth is sometimes translated fornication and at other times by the word whoremonger(s). So we can see something of the scope of the word we are studying. It is easily seen that the word does very often have a broad meaning including all kinds of unchastity and illicit sexual relations.

As already mentioned above, the Revised Version uses only the one word — **fornication**, while the King James gives the word **adultery** in addition. In our text it appears that the word **fornication** has its broadest meaning and includes **adultery**. From other passages we know that **adultery** is definitely sinful and it is listed right along with fornication and other sins. (Matt. 15:19, Mark 7:20-22) So whether it should be included in this passage or not really makes but little difference.

Jesus evidently used the word **fornication** in its broadest sense when he used it interchangeably with the term **adultery**. Note it: ". . . But I say unto you, that every one that putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, maketh her an adulteress; and whosoever shall marry her when she is put away committeth adultery." (Matt. 5:32) Also in Matt. 19:9 we have the same thing: ". . . Whosoever

shall put away his wife, except for **fornication**, and shall marry another, committeth **adultery**; and be that marrieth her when she is put away committeth **adultery**." We have a case of the word fornication used to mean adultery (as we ordinarily consider it) in 1 Cor. 5:1: "It is actually reported that there is fornication among you . . . that one of you hath his father's wife,". Here a married person is involved yet it is called **fornication**.

At other times the two words are used as distinct one from the other. In telling of the sins which proceed from the heart and "defile the man." Jesus gives along with others both adulteries and fornications. (Matt. 15:19; Mark 7:20-22) In I Cor. 6:9-10, Paul tells about the sinful life of the Corinthians before they were washed, sanctified and justified. He says that some of them had been fornicators and adulterers. Surely by the use of both terms there is some distinction to be made between them.

It is not my purpose here to enter into the age-old controversy concerning the technical differences in the two terms **adultery** and **fornication**. Such is beyond my ability and it is not pertinent nor necessary to this paper. That there is a difference at times is freely admitted, although it is not always easy to recognize it.

Since the word **fornication** included **adultery**, at least for this present study, let us note the meaning of this latter term. Webster defines it: "Sexual unfaithfulness of a married person; voluntary sexual intercourse by a married man with another than his wife or by a married woman with another than her husband." He also adds that in the Bible the term sometimes means: "Lewdness or unchastity of thought as well as of act. (Matt. 5:28; Ex. 20:17)" **Thayer** says the Greek word translated **adultery** means "to have unlawful intercourse with another's wife, to commit adultery with." All of this means that **adultery** is the unlawful

and illicit practice of sexual intercourse, especially when one party involved is married.

All the above discussion tends to indicate that fornication is a more inclusive term than adultery, including all sins of unchastity and illicit relations. Some think that **adultery** is the unlawful sexual relations of married people or where one party is married, and that **fornication** is the unlawful sexual relations where neither party is married. This the generally accepted meaning of the terms today.

Allowing the term **fornication** its broadest meaning, let us note what all is embraced in it.

1. Adultery — "voluntary sexual intercourse by a married man with another than his wife or by a married woman with another than her husband."

2. Fornication - illicit sexual intercourse on the part Of those who are not married.

3. Prostitution in all its forms, whether legalized or not. Also, those who patronize prostitutes. It includes the harlot, the **whore** and the **whoremonger**.

4. Those who have been married, but have been divorced for any other cause than adultery, and have remarried. In spite of such being legalized by the laws of the land, such a relationship is still adultery. (Matt. 5:32; 19:9)

5. Illicit sexual intercourse in general. (Thayer)

6. Adultery is thought and purpose. "Everyone that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." (Matt. 5:28) The only thing lacking in such thought and purpose is the opportunity. It is already a consummated act in the mind.

Warnings Against This Sin

God's warnings against any sin should be carefully weighted and considered by each Christian; because they portray to us God's attitude toward that particular sin. The warnings in the Bible against this sin are many, in both Old and New Testaments.

Adultery was categorically prohibited in the decalogue—seventh commandment. (Ex. 20:14; Deut. 5:18) In more specific language we read: "And thou shalt not lie carnally wit thy neighbor wife, to defile thyself with her." (Lev. 18:20) The penalty was death for both parties: "And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife even he that committeth adultery with his neighbors wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death." (Lev. 20:10) See also Deut. 22:22-24; Lev. 20:10 and other passages.

In Proverbs 6:24-32, Solomon gives warning against adultery in this language:

"To keep thee from the evil woman, from the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman. Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids. For by means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread: and the adulteress will hunt for the precious life. Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned? So he that goeth in to his neighbor's wife; whosoever toucheth her shall not be innocent But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul."

In Proverbs 7:6-23, Solomon warns against the temptations of harlotry and the cunning of the harlot. He says:

"With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him. He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks; till a dart strike through his liver; as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life."

In 2 Sam. 11:3-27 we have the account of David's sin of adultery, which, in an attempt to conceal it, he had Uriah murdered. What a terrible blot on David's record and how low he fell!

In the New Testament the condemnation of this sin is just as certain. (see passages already cited) Let us take heed.

Avoiding Fornication

One of the reasons for marriage is to avoid fornication. "Nevertheless, to avoid fornication; let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband." (I Cor. 7:2) Then he orders that each one must have due regard for the other. No doubt if the teaching of this passage was heeded by every husband and wife, there would be fewer clandestine affairs, fewer divorces and more happy homes.

It is only within the "holy bonds of marriage" that the sexual desire may be lawfully satisfied. Within that union this relationship between a man and woman is approved and ordered of God, and it is sweet, sacred and innocent. Sexual intercourse outside of lawful (both Divine and human) marriage is sinful and shameful. May God help us all to learn well this truth.

1 Corinthians 6:13-20

This passage shows how horrible and sinful fornication is when practiced by Christians. This

sin seemed to be accepted and practiced by some at Corinth. The false teachers had evidently taught that **fornication** was only "natural" and had presented arguments made by sensualists of all ages to sustain their claim. Paul answers these arguments and shows the heinous nature of this sin.

"The body is not for fornication, but for the Lord." Fornication is not a natural necessity but a consuming evil. The body was created for higher ends - namely, to be the temple of God. Therefore, our bodies ought to be presented as a living, holy, reasonable, acceptable sacrifice to Him. The end of our existence is to serve God here and enjoy him forever hereafter. Our bodies are "members of Christ." Shall we take "the members of Christ, and make them the members of harlot?" Sexual intercourse is the act that the Bible recognizes as making man and woman one. When man, who is a member of the body of Christ, is guilty of fornication he forms this union in an unlawful way and makes the member of Christ one with a harlot - joins Christ to an harlot! What a repulsive thought, yet the thought is not nearly so repulsive as the act! No wonder Paul exclaims: "God forbid!"

"He that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body." This it does by alienating it from the service of him to whom it belongs; by incorporating it with the degradation of another; by taking the body as a whole and making it the instrument of sin. It joins the body in sinful union to a body of death, so that it becomes one flesh with the condemned harlot, thereby, severing itself from the life of Christ, and thus it strikes directly at the body's future state. What an awful sin! How terrible the consequences both here and hereafter! Is it any wonder that the apostle writes with force - "flee fornication."

Here I insert a quotation from Albert Barnes as he comments on the expression "flee fornication." Read it and heed it.

"Flee fornication. A solemn command of God — as explicit as any that thundered from mount Sinai. None can disregard it with impunity — none can violate it without being exposed to the awful vengeance of the Almighty. There is force and emphasis in the word flee. Man can escape from it; he should not stay to reason about it; to debate the matter; or even to contend with his propensities, and to try the strength of his virtue. There are some sins which a man can resist; some about which he can reason without danger of pollution. But this is a sin where a man is safe only when he flees; free from pollution only when he refuses to entertain a thought of it; secure when he seeks a victory by flight, and a conquest by retreat. Let a man turn away from it without reflection on it and he is safe. Let him think, and reason, and he may be ruined. 'The very passage of an impure thought through the mind leaves pollution behind it.' An argument on the subject often leave pollution; a description ruins; and even the presentation of motives against it may often fix the mind with dangerous inclination on the crime. There is no way of avoiding the pollution but in the manner prescribed by Paul; there is no man safe who will not follow his direction. How many a young man would be saved from poverty, want, disease, curses, tears, and hell, could these two words be made to blaze before him like the writing before the astonished eyes of Belshazzar, and could they terrify him from even the momentary contemplation of the crime."

Final Consequences of This Sin

The passage under study (Gal. 5:19-21) tells us positively that "they who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." There is no mistaking the penalty. It means a failure on the part of God's child to enter heaven. It also

means that the guilty shall have their part "in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death."

Can it be possible that anyone could think that the sin is worth the price? Think of the shame, heartache, suffering, disease, poverty, divorces, and death caused by this sin in this life. Then consider the eternal results in the hereafter. To enjoy "the pleasures of sin for a season" is not worthy to be compared to the present and eternal results such "pleasure" may bring.

Flee Fornication

EDITOR'S NOTE

Apology is hereby made for the fact that the editor has three articles in this issue. It was not planned this way. Two able men had been asked to prepare these articles; one on **Fornication** and the other on **And Such Like**. However, they were too busy to prepare them — which I did not know till the last minute. I searched in vain for a suitable article in print on either or both subjects which could be used. There just isn't any material available on these matters. Nothing was left but for me to write the articles or break the continuity of the theme. No time to get anyone else to do it. I am sorry about this. Could the articles have been prepared by the men assigned the task, there is no doubt but that they would have been much better and the whole paper more appealing.

THE STAGES OF A SECTARIANISM

"FACTIONS, DIVISIONS, PARTIES"

Keith T. Thompson, Beamsville, Ontario, Canada

Although they may seem out of place to some, the words "factions, divisions, parties" are found in Paul's list of "the works of the flesh" in Galatians 5:19-21. These three words are not synonymous but they present different aspects of the same sin. Their being grouped here as a triplet gives added emphasis to the heinousness of the sin of religious division. They represent the results of the practices mentioned previous to them. "Enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths" will inevitably lead to "factions, divisions, parties."

Factions

The King James Version renders this term as "strife." Berry gives it as "contentions." Thayer's definition states "in the New Testament a courting distinction, a desire to put one's self forward, a partisan and factions spirit which does not disdain low arts; partisanship, factiousness." Hort interprets it to mean "the vice of a leader of a party created for his own pride; it is partly ambition and partly pride. It may involve the haughty forcing of his own views on others."

"But if ye have bitter jealousy and faction in your heart, glory not and lie not against the truth." (James 3:14) In spite of this verse there are those who appear to glory in leading or aiding a faction in the church. It is also highly possible that there are those who deceive themselves into thinking that they are contending for the faith when they are actually motivated by partisanship and self-seeking. Such individuals are described by Paul as being "puffed up, knowing nothing, but doting about questionings and disputes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, wranglings of

men corrupted in mind and bereft of the truth, supposing that godliness is a -may of gain." (I Timothy 6:4,5) Many of the unnecessary side-issues which are often introduced into discussions between brethren may well be included in the useless "word-battles" which the apostle here condemns. "But foolish and ignorant questionings refuse, knowing that they gender strifes. And the Lord's servant must not strive, but be gentle towards all, apt to teach, forbearing, in meekness correcting them that oppose themselves; if peradventure God may give them repentance unto the knowledge of the truth." (2 Timothy 2:23-25)

The cure for this spiritual disease is found in Paul's admonition: "Make full my joy, that ye be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one **mind; doing nothing through faction** or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself; -not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others." (Philippians 2:2-4) Instead of seeking to exalt ourselves we should seek to humbly and meekly recognize our own insignificance and count our fellow Christians more excellent than ourselves.

Divisions

This term can also be translated "separations" or "schisms." **Thayer** gives "dissension" as well as "division" for the singular. He defines a closely related word "to cut into two parts, cleave asunder, dissever." In still another related form **Thayer** gives a term that was used in ancient tortures wherein human bodies were cut in two. This was no doubt a terrible practice; but how much more terrible is

it for men to divide the body of Christ, the church for which He died.

Just here we might inject the question that some might ask — "How can these things be classified as 'works of the flesh'?" Let us let the scriptures answer. "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned: and turn away from them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Christ, **but their own belly**; and by their smooth and fair speech they beguile the hearts of the innocent." (Romans 16-17,18) **R. L. Whiteside** comments: " 'Contrary to the doctrine which ye learned' covers a wide field, such as mechanical music in the worship, the organization of societies to do the work of the church, and various schemes to raise money. The man who causes divisions in the Lord's church by the introduction of things not taught is an enemy of Christ even though he may not think so. His interest is in self, and not in Christ. 'They that are such serve not our Lord Christ, but their own belly.'" Again, Jude 19 states, "These are they who make separations, sensual, having not the Spirit."

Parties

"Heresies" is the rendering of the King James; "dissensions" and "sects" are given by other translators. Thayer defines it as: "that which is chosen, a chosen course of thought and action; hence one's chosen opinion, tenet, according to the context an opinion varying from the true exposition of the Christian faith." Here we have the final end of factions and divisions - actual separation into distinct parties. The second chapter of 2 Peter deals most severely with the false teachers who would cause such sectarianism. The chapter begins: "But there arose false prophets also among the people, as among you also there shall be false teachers, who shall privily bring in **destructive heresies**,

(sects of perdition — margin) denying even the Master that bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction." These heresies or sects will bring destruction or perdition upon those who so teach as to cause them and upon those who receive them.

"Well, these words really hit the 'denominations'," some will be anxious to say. But the "denominations" were not even in existence when these verses were written. The words we have studied were addressed to "the churches of Galatia." Like all the other verses we use to condemn "denominationalism" they were addressed to Christians, members of the body of Christ. Christ prayed that "those who believe on me" might be one (John 17:20,21); Paul urged "the **church of God** which is at Corinth" (I Cor. 1-1) to "speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment." (I Cor. 1:10) One might conceivably quote these verses to those in "denominations" to show them that their divided system is opposed to true New Testament Christianity. But their primary application must always be to those who compose the church to whom they were first addressed. And when we consider the "factions ' divisions" and "parties" among those who claim identity with that early church we should realize how much we need to apply them! But we can be thankful that no matter how many groups may develop from factions to actual parties that those who will remain loyal to "the faith once for all delivered" can always remain united in the one true body of Christ.

Consequences of Practicing "Such Things"

Verse 21 states "that they who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." The unity of the Lord's church is one of its distinctive marks. When men are responsible for "factions, divisions" and "parties" they are guilty

of a great crime against both the Lord and His church. Those committing such a sin are hated by the Lord and should be marked and turned away from by faithful children of God. (Proverbs 6:19; Rom. 16:17; 2 John 9-11; Titus 3:10,11) Those who are fostering such divisions, no matter how sincere and honest they may be, are placing their souls in jeopardy of being eternally lost.

PRACTICED BY MANY TODAY

REVELLINGS

Paul Brock, Dyersburg, Tennessee

"Annual Reveller's Ball." This was a headline on the society page of a Memphis newspaper late in December. I read the article to find out what the revellers were to do. The major attraction was dining and dancing. Many readers remember Paul's statement that they who practice such shall not inherit the kingdom of God. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: . . . REVELLINGS and such like; of which I forewarn you, that they who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." (Gal. 5:19-21) We sometimes use the word revel in a figurative sense, but in this article it is used in the sense in which the apostle uses it.

Revellings Defined

Webster's Collegiate Dictionary defines the word revel: "To be festive in a riotous or noisy manner."

Webster's New International Dictionary: "A merry or noisy celebration of a feast, wedding, or the like; also **plural**, the entertainment provided, as dances, pageants and MASQUES."

Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon, on Kosmos (the word translated revelry) says: "A jovial festivity with music and DANCING, a revel, carousal, merry making." (As quoted by Cecil Wright in, "Is Dancing Compatible with Christianity?")

Thayer's Greek English Lexicon of The New Testament, on Kosmos: " - 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 FEASTS AND DRINKING-PARTIES THAT ARE PROTRACTED TILL LATE AT NIGHT AND INDULGE IN REVELRY: plur. REVELLINGS Rom. 13:3."

The definition of the term shows the reveller to be characterized by lack of restraint and self control, emotionally excited, loud, boisterous and noisy. These usually possess the captive at night and continue on occasions until early morning hours.

Use In Other Passages

Two other passages are cited in which the same word is found. They are Rom. 13:13 and I Pet. 4:3 "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) Of this the Expositor's Greek Testament says: "The plurals in this case as in the others would indicate the various acts or manifestations of excess, whether in self-indulgence or self-will."

"For the time past may suffice to have wrought the desire of the Gentiles, and to have walked in lasciviousness, lusts, wine-bibbings, revellings, carousings, and abominable idolatries." (I Pet. 4:3) In specifying sins such as works of the flesh, things related are usually grouped together. This being true it is significant to note the catalog of iniquity in which revelling falls.

Who Are Revellers?

When we think of the term revelling the

immediate thought is that of the modern dance, but is there not more in the term than dancing? According to the definition by Thayer, those who keep late hours with feasts and drinking parties are guilty of revelling. Surely no one would say it is sinful to eat the proper amount at any hour to relieve hunger. This however is quite different from a "procession" or "group" meeting to feast and who eat to excess, and who become loud and boisterous, and who are lacking in self-control and restraint. Adam Clarke in commenting on Rom. 13:13 says: "Kosmos, rioting - unclean and dissolute songs, banquets, and such like." On Gal. 5:21, Clarke says of this word, "Lascivious feasting, with obscene songs, music etc." No one can doubt that much of the music of this day is of the above stated nature. When Christians meet together in any kind of social affair they should take care lest they be led to become guilty of this sin. Christians always want to avoid excesses (even in things right and abstain in all wrong), obscenity, and boisterousness.

We must conclude from the definitions that revelling would not of necessity always include dancing, but without exception the modern dance must be classed as revellry. Many have concluded that dancing is not condemned in the Bible because it does not say, "Thou shalt not dance" or "The dancer sins and will be lost." What the dancer overlooks is that dancing is revellry. They which do such "shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Dancing is revelling. Revelling is a work of the flesh. Those who engage in works of the flesh cannot go to heaven.

Many Things Worse

Sometimes people seek to excuse themselves from a particular sin by declaring something else to be worse. It might not be difficult to find something mentioned in Galatians five, worse than some forms of

revelling. But it must be remembered that all works of the flesh are condemned. Some are not condemned as greater than others but all are condemned and "they who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Finding something worse or finding some other Christian guilty of some similar sin does not remove the guilt from anyone.

Walk After The Spirit and Not After The Flesh

Honest Christians have no difficulty in drawing the line. "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 you cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are no under the law." (Gal. 5:16-18); If we are led by the Spirit the works of the flesh will be avoided. If led by the Spirit we bear the fruits of the Spirit. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." (Gal. 5:22-23)

The apostle further adds: "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." (Gal. 5:24-25) Christians who have crucified the lusts of the flesh and who have put to death evil desires have no trouble avoiding the works of the flesh. They will not be guilty of revelling, nor any of the "such like."

EDITORIAL

"THE WORKS OF THE FLESH"

This entire issue is devoted to a study of the above. subject. We are using the listing given by the Apostle Paul in Galatians 5:19-21 (Revised Version). Here I shall transcribe the entire passage. Read it carefully.

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, heresies, envyings, drunkenness, REVELLINGS and such like: of the which I forewarn you that they which practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God"

Here is a catalog of terrible sins. There are fifteen specific "works of the flesh" mention here; and the phrase "and such like" shows that he had not enumerated them all. There are many others and with a close look at the New Testament one can discover those not here listed. It would be of great value if every child of God could be made fully aware of the significance of the apostle's remark that they who do such "**shall not inherit the kingdom of God.**" This is a plain, positive declaration. The letter was written to the churches (Christians) in Galatia and they were being warned AGAIN about the consequences of doing these things. This proves beyond doubt that a child of God may commit any one or all of these sins and IF he does, and dies without being forgiven, be cannot enter the everlasting kingdom — heaven itself. So beyond question a child of God may so In as

to be finally lost in hell. How much plainer would this fact need to be stated? Let it be emphasized that one would not have to be guilty of ALL these sins to be condemned - only one is necessary.

There are two levels of life or two planes upon which children of God may live — a lower and a higher, a carnal and a spiritual. The one who pleases God MUST live upon the higher, the spiritual level. Only by giving in this way can the child of God finally be saved in heaven. This means living "in the spirit," by the direction and leading of God's Spirit, which is accomplished when one lives according to the Word of God.

Those who live upon the lower plane live as the world does. They are those who live after the flesh. For they **that are after the flesh** mind the things of the flesh; but **they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For the mind of the flesh is death; but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace: because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be: and they that are in the flesh cannot please God.**" (Rom. 8:5-8) It is sad to find so many among God's people today who are living upon this low level. Within the church today there can be found many who are guilty of practicing these things. In many places where several congregations are found, it would not be too difficult to find an example of every sin in this catalog in the lives of

various members of the church — all of these in full fellowship! Even among the leaders of the church these sins can be found. What a shameful condition! Such conduct, if allowed to go without correction 'will condemn to eternal torment those who are guilty, and it will destroy the church. Bro. H. Leo Boles wrote: "It is a sad fact that membership in a local church bearing the name of Christ is not what it should be, a guarantee of regeneration 'born of water and the Spirit.' Many who claim membership are still in the world and doing the works of the flesh. Some who have been 'born anew' do not bear the fruit of the Spirit because they live on the lower level of a church member life."

The higher, spiritual level is where every Christian should live, and that is where the fruit of the Spirit is manifested. The lower level of life is the fleshly, the carnal level, the level of the world. A congregation composed of those living upon this level is a blot upon the Cause of Christ and certainly can not be truthfully called "a church of Christ."

Paul says, "the works of the flesh are MANIFEST." This means that they are PLAIN and EASILY RECOGNIZED. But are they? Seemingly not too many in the church. How many members of the church could give a satisfactory definition of each of these fifteen sins? If we do not know what they mean, how can we know that we are not guilty of practicing them? The percentage who could adequately define these sins would likely be very small. One colored man when asked about lasciviousness, said: "I don't know what it means, but I know I ain't guilty cause it

sounds so bad." Likely this represents the real sentiment of most members of the church. Can it be that for the most part we are so ignorant of God's word that, like the Hebrews (Heb. 5:14), we are not able to "discern good and evil?" We should KNOW what this catalog of sins mean. Also, we should have a clear understanding of what would be included in the "such like," and the dire consequences of engaging in such things.

If someone were to offer us \$100,000 if we would not commit any of these "works of the flesh," we would diligently search out what these terms mean and refrain from the doing of such in order to obtain the money. There is something involved in this matter which is of far greater value than \$100,000. It is the destiny of our soul! Should we not be much more concerned about this than about obtaining money? Then let us learn well the meaning of "the works of the flesh" and see that we do not practice such things.

This catalog of shameful sins may be grouped into four classes: First, sins of impurity or immorality — fornication, uncleanness and lasciviousness.

Second, sins of irreligion — idolatry and sorcery.

Third, sins of the disposition — enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties and envyings.

Fourth, sins of intemperance — drunkenness, revellings and such like.

There is an old adage which says, "Birds of a feather flock together." Here is a case of

where "birds of a feather" are put together and all are listed under the heading — THE WORKS OF THE FLESH. This would not be the way that we would do it nor prefer to think of it. Can it be that the sins of the disposition stand on a par with the sins of immorality? In this listing they do. None is said to be either worse or better than the others. EACH ONE IS SIN and ANY ONE will keep us out of heaven! We are prone to make a difference where the Spirit of God made none. Let us be careful about doing this.

Another thing: If we should make up a list of what we consider to be sins, would we name ALL the ones Paul did? Certainly we would put down the wicked things which others may do and which may not be our practice; but would we list those which strike home? Our definition of what is sinful is often decided upon a basis of personal factors - what we like and dislike. With our limitations we should never be willing to try to simply avoid ONLY that which WE have decided within ourselves is wrong. We should let God's word tell us. Truly as McGarvey says, "Verily all professing Christians would do well to take heed to what the Bible designates as sins, and not trust too much their own fallible sentiment and judgment in such matters."

In this issue an attempt is made to give a clear and positive meaning to the sins and to partially apply such to our day. We hope and pray that this effort shall in a measure be successful and will have some influence in helping purge these sins from the lives of all of God's children. If to any degree such is accomplished, then this venture shall be truly worthwhile.

SERVING OTHER GODS

IDLATRY

W. R. Jones, Greggton, Texas

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, 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. 6:19-21). Idolatry is listed with the most heinous atrocities committed against the Heavenly Father. Those who practice it are barred from Heaven. Therefore, the sin of idolatry must not be taken lightly.

What is idolatry? Webster defines it as follows: (1) Worship of a made image as a god, and (2) Excessive love or veneration for anything. Some of the world's largest religious organizations still pay reverence to "made images," but most of the idolaters who will read this article, are such, because of "excessive love and veneration for the things of this life." Adam Clarke's comment on I John 5:21 is worthy of consideration on this subject. He wrote, "That is a man's **idol** or **god** from which he seeks his **happiness**; no matter whether it be Jupiter' Juno, Apollo, Minerva, or Diana; or pleasure, wealth, fame a fine house, superb furniture, splendid equipage, medals: curiosities, books, titles, human friendships, or any earthly or heavenly thing, God, the supreme good, only excepted. That is a man's idol which prevents him from seeking and finding his ALL in God." It seems to me that his last sentence really summarizes the whole matter. "That is a man's idol which

prevents him from seeking and finding his ALL in God."

This sin is so wide spread in nature that time and space will not permit a discussion of each specific idol and every phase of idolatry. So, in a general way, I wish to call your attention to what seems to me as the most far reaching forms of idolatry in our day. They are, MATERIALISM and PLEASURE. Materialism is defined as follows: "The doctrine that consideration of material well-being, especially of the individual himself, should rule in the determination of conduct and the tendency to give undue importance to material interest." Man's mad quest for material goods has molded him after the fashion of this world. In speaking of idols and idol worshippers the Psalmist said, "They that make them are like unto them: so is every one that trusteth in them." (Ps. 135:18) While Christ pleads, "set your affections on things above," presumptuous men are crying, "let us build bigger barns." This same attitude has had it's effect upon the church of our Lord. Brethren by the score are embracing the "Social gospel." The end of which is chiefly to make this world a better place in which to live. Hence, churches feel justified in building places for recreation, fun and personal enjoyment. I am not opposed to making social improvements. I am fully aware that Christian living seasons the earth with goodness. However, it is not the **mission of a child of God to make a heaven out of this earth, but rather prepare for the heaven of eternity.** The god of materialism reigns supreme over the lives of an ignorant majority.

The second form of idolatry to be

discussed is pleasure. Our country is pleasure crazy. We seek to entertain or to be entertained. We are filled with the "athletic spirit" rather than the "Holy Spirit." Without a question, recreation, pleasure and entertainment to a reasonable degree have their rightful place, but that rightful place is not first place in our hearts. In I Tim. 4:8-9 Paul wrote, "For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance." If your interest is in this life only, then the profit of bodily exercise will suffice for a while. If, however, your concern is chiefly in that which is to come, the temporal things amount to very little. Godliness is profitable unto all things both — now and later.

I doubt it the world has ever been more given to idolatry, both by the "worship of images" and "excessive love for material things" than it is in this age. God help us to heed the admonishment of I John 5:12: "Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen."

MORE OF THE SAME

AND SUCH LIKE

Charles A. Holt, Florence, Alabama

In giving the list of "the works of the flesh" (Gal. 5:19-21), we know that the Apostle Paul did not enumerate them all specifically. He named fifteen specific sins and then summed all the rest up under the expression which serves as the caption of this article - "and such like." The works of the flesh are manifest to be sure, but such may appear in many, many forms. Having given the Galatians a sample of such works by his catalog of sins, he leaves it to them, and to us, to recognize other similar works.

What is included in the expression — "and suchlike" — used by Paul? Perhaps it embraces many more things than most of us realize. It would be impossible for me to complete in detail the works of the flesh because sin takes a thousand forms. However, by turning to the Divine Record we can easily discover many other sins which are placed in the company with some of the specific sins listed by Paul in Gal. 5:19-21, and which are likewise condemned. Let us note some of them briefly:

1. Murders. In Gal. 5:21, the King James version gives murders as one of the works of the flesh. The Revised does not carry it because the genuineness of the original word is extremely doubtful. However, we do know that murders might well be included. The word signifies the destruction of human life. It springs from lack of due respect for human life. The word is listed in other passages which prove its rightful place as a -work of the flesh. (Matt.

15:19; Rom. 1:29) Murder has always been wrong and sinful even from the very beginning when we find God condemning the first murderer — Cain. In 1 John 3:15, John tells us "Whoever hateth his brother is a murderer." How many murderers IN HEART there must be in the church today! Rev. 21:8 says that all murderers will have their part in the lake of fire.

2. Evil thoughts. In Matt. 15:19 and Mark 7:21-22. Jesus tells of some sins which proceed from the heart and defile the man. Some of these Paul specifically listed in Gal. 5:19-21. We know that the others mentioned by the Lord are of the same nature as those Paul listed. Surely these can all be included in his "such like." We are responsible for our thoughts. We are endowed with the power to control them. We may not be responsible for an evil thought entering our mind, but we can keep from retaining it there. "Evil thoughts are the preparation of all other sins, and have a pernicious influence on the character. We are very much what we think. That on which our minds are fixed, that which is the chief object presented to our inward sight, shapes our disposition and life." (Pulpit Commentary) Let us beware of this "such like."

3. Thefts. This is another sin condemned by the Lord in Mark 7:21. This would include stealing in all its forms, sorts and degrees.

4. False witness. (Matt. 15:19) This has to do with giving the wrong testimony in court or anywhere else! It would include concealing the truth, or stating what we know to be false. Such proceeds from a desire to injure others, to take away their character or property, or to do them injustice. Can there be any doubt that such is sinful and belongs to the works of the flesh.?

5. Blasphemies — Railings. (Matt. 15:19; Mk. 7:21) The King James uses the first word and the Revised uses the second. One may be guilty of blasphemy or railing against both his fellow man and God. The word revile is a kindred word. When applied to men it means to speak injuriously of their persons and character. Barnes says, "The word blaspheme originally meant to speak evil of anyone; to injure by words; to blame unjustly. When applied to God, it means to speak of him unjustly; to ascribe to him acts and attributes which he does not possess; or to speak impiously or profanely." Surely this is a sin which is wide-spread in our day.

6. An evil eye. (Mark 7:21) This is an eye sour, malignant, proud; or an eye of lust and passion. (Cf. Matt. 5:28; 20:15) In 2 Pet. 2:14, we read of some described as "having eyes full of adultery."

7. Foolishness. (Mk. 7:21) This does not mean the want of intellect — man is not responsible for that. It has to do with "moral folly, consisting in choosing bad ends, and bad means of gaining them; or, in other words, sin and wickedness. All sin is folly." (Barnes) In this same connection, perhaps we should note **filthiness, foolish talking and jesting**, which are condemned by Paul in Eph. 5:4. Filthiness would embrace

anything vile or unclean in words or acts. The other two terms signify "a light, bantering, jesting kind of talk, seasoned with double entendres and obscene allusions, very pernicious in its moral effect. There is no reason to suppose that the apostle meant to condemn all play of humour, which is a Divine gift, and which in moderation has its own useful place as a means of refreshing and invigorating the spirit; it was the jesting associated with ribaldry that drew his reproof." (Pulpit Commentary) Think of all the coarse, low, vulgar, obscene words, jokes and books of our day. Would not all such come within the category?

8. Deceit. (Mk. 7:21) This means fraud — concealed dishonesty, cheating in trade and trying to benefit oneself by doing injustice to others.

9. Wickedness. (Mk. 7:21) The original word means malice, or a desire of injuring others. It has to do with evil dispositions, wicked counsels and acts.

10. Pride. (Mk. 7:21) Arrogance and self exaltation. It is an improper estimate of one's own importance; thinking he is of much more consequence than he really is.

11. Fearfulness. This must be a work of the flesh because of Rev. 21:8 we read: "But the fearful ... their part shall be in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death." This has to do with the fear that makes one a coward in the face of duty and afraid of the **present** consequences of serving God faithfully. It would take in the fear to own the name of Christ, the fear of persecution, fear of want, fear to preach the truth, fear of ridicule and all instances of the

cowardly fear that keeps one from meeting duty's demands. Certainly fear in any of these forms is a work of the flesh. I wonder if many of us have ever really considered fear in this light.

12. Time and space fail us in completing this list. Here are a few others: **Passion, evil desire, covetousness** (Col. 3-5), **maliciousness, malignity, whisperers, backbiters, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil thing* disobedience to parents, covenant breakers and unmerciful.** (Rom. 1:29-31) One might continue the list almost indefinitely. Some of these words may have the same meaning or be degrees of the same evil. Yet we need to learn that any and all of them are works of the flesh and will keep us out of the kingdom of God.

In view of the almost inexhaustible number of the works of the flesh, there is no wonder the apostle said and such like." Let us make sure and certain that none of the "such like," whether listed here or not, keep us out of heaven.

A DECEPTION OF THE DEVIL

SORCERY

H. Osby Weaver, Kilgore, Texas

If Paul had been a "black-board preacher," he perhaps would have presented Gal. 5:19-23 by dividing the board into two equal parts with a vertical line. On one side he would have written "Fruit of the Spirit," while the other side would have been labeled "Works of the Flesh." According to the American Standard Version, one item listed under the "Works of the Flesh," standing in severe contrast to the "Fruit of the Spirit," is called "sorcery," whatever that is.

In this case, as is generally perceived, "birds of a feather have flocked together," hence we know that "sorcery... is bad because of some of its colleagues with which we are already acquainted. The Spirit dumps them all into the same category and under identical condemnation. Upon reading Gal. 5:19-21, we are impressed with the fact that "sorcery" has a pretty tough looking bunch of associates.

We propose to investigate the sin of sorcery after this fashion: (1) What is it? (2) What is God's attitude toward it? (3) Is it practiced today?

Now to the first question: What is it? There are several different English words as well as different Greek words that have been used in the New Testament to describe both the practice and the practitioner. Some of the English words are "enchantment," "exorcist," "soothsaying," "witchcraft," and "sorcery." Some of the Greek words are "mageia,"

magic arts, such as practiced by Simon in Acts 8:11; "magos," one who resorts to the use of magic or sorcery — a false prophet, such as Elymas in Acts 13:8: "pharmakeia," enchantment with drugs - that which one uses who proposes to conjure a magical remedy, "often found in connection with idolatry and fostered by it," such as is mentioned in Gal. 5:20. While there are slightly differences in some of the words, it can readily be seen that they all have to do with the same sin. The word "pharmakeia" is the sin of our subject according to Gal. 5:20 and is so much like a kindred English word "pharmacy" that one would guess that it had to do with the use of drugs, but not in any legitimate sense. In most cases it was a concoction of poison which drove away the "evil spirits" or eliminated the disease by reason of having killed the one upon whom the experiment was performed. Sorcery is therefore deceptive and without benefit to the hopeful participant. It is more than common deception; it is an appeal to the spiritual with accompanying claims of extraordinary powers of discernment and performance in a realm which belongs exclusively to God.

Superstition, skepticism, moral degradation, and eventual infidelity are some of the fruits of sorcery. Such conditions prevailed throughout the Roman Empire in New Testament days. It is interesting to note that nations whose priests were magicians and whose practice was sorcery, where the word of God was unknown, reached the greatest heights in superstition and the lowest depths in moral degeneracy. As the people's knowledge of God increased, sorcery decreased proportionately. It is a trace of decay upon

the civilization of any nation of literate people to be "taken-in" by the witchcraft of those deceivers who claim for themselves unusual powers, to say nothing of it being a naked demonstration of a declining knowledge of God and His word.

Sir Walter Scott in his "Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft" says, "The sorcery or witchcraft of the Old Testament resolves itself into a trafficking with idols and asking counsel of false deities, or, in other words, into idolatry." The same could be said of sorcery in the New Testament. It is, on the one hand, the practice of deception by religious soothsayers employing sleight-of-hand performances, a degree of hypnotism, and a little psychology with the various accompanying magical arts, while on the other hand it is a case of curiosity, a desire to be bewitched, blind faith, and idolatry on the part of the deceived. Such is sorcery and its fruits.

What is God's attitude toward it? Throughout the Old Testament from the time of the diviners of Egypt in Ex. 7 to God's expressed wrath against it in Mal. 3:5, Jehovah has shown his disgust **with such practices which** have always been on the side of evil because they are evil. Sorcery led God's people away from Him according to Isa. 2:6 and 47:9,10. He not only condemned sorcery itself, but also pronounced severe penalties upon those who consulted the sorcerer. (Lev. 20:6) With God's approval, King Saul put away from Israel those that had familiar spirits, then in desperation because of his own unfaithfulness, he was the first to seek consultation with one. (1 Sam. 28:3-9) God supplied His people with superior powers contingent upon their

fidelity (1 Sam. 28:2; 2 Sam. 2:1), but He did not countenance their trafficking in sorcery. In condemning Saul's obstinacy, Samuel said, "Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft." (1 Sam. 15:23) However heinous rebellion is in God's sight, sorcery meets with equal disapproval.

God's attitude toward this sin as revealed in the New Testament has not changed. Gal. 5:21 says, "They who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God," but "their part shall be in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death." (Rev. 21:8)

Is sorcery practiced today? Sorcery has been and is being practiced today both in civilized and savage countries. The soothsayers, dealers in magical books and arts, exorcists, and the conjurers of healing potions in New Testament days find their counterparts today in the 'fortune-tellers,' 'false-teachers,' 'mind-readers,' 'palm-fondlers,' and 'fake healers' with the last group being the greatest offenders.

Millions of dollars yearly are poured into the coffers of these 'palm-readers,' 'tea-leaf detectives,' and other 'fortune tellers,' composed of both sorcerers and sorceresses, by a gullible public among whom are members of the body of Christ. Remember, our Lord is no more pleased with those who consult the soothsayer than with the soothsayer himself. Every dollar that a Christian gives to such a racket is a contribution to a sinful, illegitimate business that shuts the door of God's kingdom in men's faces. One may as well buy the boot-legger's brew as to pay a fee to a fortune-teller whether it be at the county fair or a

regular established business. Some attempt to excuse themselves on the grounds that "I don't believe in them; I just wanted to see what they would say." Of course you believe in them if you consulted them! Just listen to one who offers such excuse describe at a subsequent time how many things came true that he was told by and see if he doesn't believe in them. He is simply deceiving and being deceived. Men can predict fairly accurately some events because of extenuating circumstances past and present. For instance, one might foretell a depression because of certain economic conditions, or even a war. To predict that a single person will at some time get married, is better than even odds. These "fortune tellers" do not hold the future in their hands, and they cannot divine the mind of God. "No man knoweth the things of God, save the Spirit of God." (1 Cor. 2:11), therefore, if we ever know the things of God the Spirit must reveal them. All that the Spirit has revealed or will ever reveal is in the Bible. To consult a modern day sorcerer is an expression of a lack of faith in the things which the Spirit has revealed.

Our vocabulary is entirely too limited to express the disgust and contempt which we feel for the fake-healing sorcerer who is nothing less than a religious racketeer. These religious thugs disguise themselves as gospel preachers, feign great piety, and take captive the unfortunates of the earth while exploiting their miseries for personal gain. With great swelling words of vanity and dramatic demonstrations, these soothsayers make merchandise of the diseased, the maimed, the blind, the ignorant, and superstitious. These practitioners of witchcraft, whose God is the belly, promise the masses a refreshing drink

from the fountain of healing but give them vinegar and gall. Through deceit and trickery, they slither from one place to another duping the people who have fallen prey to their smooth speech while hiding behind cloaks of religion and crying "persecution" when exposed. They never cease to promote their sorcery with their hired press agents who continually magnify their claims of success when none know better than they that they are complete failures except for the monetary compensation which comes from fleecing the people. From the days of Simon the sorcerer (Acts 8) until this present time, these fake# like to be thought of as identified with God and His power. Simon was his own press agent, "giving out that himself was some great one." The people said, "This man is that power of God which is called Great," and Simon wanted them to believe just that. He could have produced as many testimonials in his behalf as any present day sorcerer can produce, and his witnesses would have had as high degree of integrity as any that could be produced by the so called "divine healer" today. The fact that he could astonish and amaze the people was no proof that he was what he claimed for himself, neither is such proof today.

May we all through study grow in the knowledge of the Lord but our faith may be increased and no comfort or aid shall ever be given to sorcery in our time, but on the contrary, we shall be ready to stamp its ugly head wherever it is reared regardless of the form it assures or the disguise it effects.

A NATIONAL MENACE

DRUNKENNESS

H. O. Hutto, Russellville, Alabama

In the beginning when God created the heavens, the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, he created man to have dominion over all he had made. Man was thus the crowning act of God's creation. But when man loses that wherein he was made better than the brute, i.e., his reasoning faculties, his intellect, his ability to think, he can sink as far below the brute as he was lifted above it. There are few, if any, ways better than that of being given to strong drink for a man to lose his faculties, his intelligence, his reasoning powers. It deranges his reason, it destroys his home, it ruins his health, and will send his soul to hell at the judgment. No wonder it is condemned so plainly in the word of God.

Just notice a few of the many passages of scripture which deal with this subject. "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging, and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." (Prov. 20:1) "Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them! (Isa. 5:11) And if you want a Bible picture of the man with the "DT's," notice Proverbs 23:29-35: "Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babblings? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine: they that go to **seek mixed wine**. Look not thou on the wine when it is red. when it giveth its color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. Thine eyes shall behold strange women, shall be as he that

lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of the mast. They have stricken me shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not when shall I awake? **I will seek it yet again.**" **What a picture!** Seeing things, not there; awaking with bruises not knowing from whence they come; yet "when I awake, I will seek it yet again."

Notice the following scriptures in the New Testament: Gal. 5:21 lists it as a work of the flesh and says that those guilty of drunkenness "shall not inherit the kingdom of God." The word "banqueting" in I Peter 4:3 (KJ) means "drinking bouts," and in the same passage "excess of wine" is condemned. These are but a few of the many passages which could be adduced to show plainly that drunkenness is a sin, a work of the flesh, and those who are guilty have Hell as their destiny.

But in spite of the word of God, and reason as well. many who readily admit that drunkenness is wrong will attempt to justify "social drinking" since it is not "drunkenness" but merely "moderate drinking." After all, say they, there is a difference between "drinking" and "drunkenness." Even if we should be willing to admit the difference, "social drinking" cannot be successfully defended nor practiced by those who hope to have heaven as their home, and for the following reasons:

1. Social drinking will put one in the wrong company. Those who attend such gatherings are not the same as those who are interested primarily in promoting the cause of Christ. "Be not deceived," says the apostle," evil companions corrupt good

morals." The company one is forced to mix with is not conducive to Christian living. Quite the contrary!

2. Any man in his right mind must admit that it has the "appearance of evil" concerning which we are told to "avoid." (I Thess. 5:22)

3. There never was an alcoholic or drunkard who did not take the first drink; nor did any man ever set out with the avowed purpose of becoming a sot. He became such by beginning with the "social drink." Drunkenness was not the goal in mind but it was the goal attained. Yes, one social drink led to another, and to another until it had as its fruition the drunkard - deranged in reason, bereft of friends or family, and a soul fitted for destruction. "Legion" is the number of those who began by social drinking in fashionable and "distinctive" cocktail lounges, but eventually culminated in the gutter.

It has been my misfortune to know some of these people who were so afflicted. I once worked for a man who lost a \$20,000 a year job because of his liking for liquor. He could have qualified for a "Man of Distinction" in anybody's liquor business. But finally he lost his job. I once was acquainted with a member of the Lord's church who had sunk so low, and became so addicted to strong drink that he slipped into a meeting house of God's people and stole the wine from the Lord's table to satisfy the craving for alcohol!! I can think of no depth greater than this. What a pitiable wretch! And he realized it but was seemingly powerless to do anything about it. (It would be interesting to hear a discussion between him and another who would

"justify" social drinking.)

"But," it is objected, "did not the Lord turn the water into wine?" Yes, he did. But what does the word "wine" mean in this passage in John 2. Does it necessarily mean wine that will make one drunk? Not necessarily. The Bible refers to "wine" when it is still in the cluster (Is. 6:58); this is before the grape has ever been picked from the vine, and certainly it wouldn't make one drunk. but it is called "wine." Hence every time the Bible uses the word "wine" it does not necessarily refer to that which will make one the drunk. The context will have to tell that.

The comments of Albert Barnes on the passage in John 2 are very appropriate at this point: "6th. Nor can an argument be drawn from this case in favour of drinking wine such as we have. The common wine of Judea was the pure juice of the grape, without any mixture of alcohol, and was harmless. It was the common drink of the people, and did not tend to produce intoxication. Our wines are a **mixture** of the juice of the grape and of brandy. and often infusions of various substances to give it colour and taste, and the appearance of wine."

Still others object that Paul countenanced the use of wine when he told Timothy to "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities." (I Tim. 5:13) This, however, is wine used for medical purposes and has nothing whatever to do with social drinking. As a matter of fact, the very fact that Paul had to tell Timothy to use the wine is rather strong evidence that its use was not

looked at in a very favorable light under ordinary circumstances.

Hence, we can see that the Bible condemns drunkenness but also condemns so-called "social drinking" as well. The person who is interested in being a Christian while he lives so he may go to heaven when he dies will no engage in either. Those who are interested in justifying the "social drink" do not so do because they think they can thereby serve God the better, but because they are interested in gratifying their craving for a "work of the flesh." May God help us to abstain totally from "such like."

While it is true that drunkenness will send one's soul to Hell, it is also true that God will forgive a person of this sin if he will repent of it. "Drunkards," says the apostle, shall not "inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but you are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." (I Cor. 6:9-11) What a merciful God! Drunkenness is not unforgivable if the guilty will but repent of it and turn to God for salvation.

A PREVALENT SIN

LASCIVIOUSNESS

Bryan Vinson, Tulsa, Oklahoma

When we attribute to Jehovah the responsibility of creating all things, and especially regard him as the Creator of man on the one hand, and ascribe to Him the attributes of wisdom, power and goodness in be infinitude of their virtue on the other, then we are led to the inevitable conclusion that all He did was but the fulfillment of His will. That is, guided by infinite wisdom in forming His will, possessed with infinite power in the execution of this will, and motivated by infinite goodness in all His designs and purposes, we must view man as being originally all that God would have him be. Man, then, is so constituted to render him competent and capable of doing what God would have him do, and, therefore, being what God would have him be.

But we see him described, in his subsequent character and behavior, as being and acting contrary to the will of his Creator. The Bible, As Alexander Campbell often said, speaks of man as he was and as he hereafter shall be, but speaks to man as he is. In thus speaking of man as he is, we find many things very disconcerting and exceedingly disparaging in the characterization of man. The popular conception is that man is now possessed of a "fallen nature;" that is, he has a different nature from that with which he originally was endowed. I know of no statement in Holy Writ to sustain such a view. That man's relation to God was altered in consequence of his conduct is granted; that his constitutional nature is changed is not. That

the first man was constituted with the capability of sinning is attested by the fact he did, and thus his nature possessed the quality of choosing between good and evil and that fundamentally. is our nature also. There are, forces and influences, both internal and external, which exert themselves, respectively, toward aiding us in our decisions. The force of such appeals is variable, both as residing within themselves and as touching the attraction they hold for us individually and at given times.

The term lasciviousness, which is our present subject. is one that is found in the scripture,; in relation to the, condition of man described in his sinful state and character. It is found in the following passages: Mk. 7:22; 2 Cor. 12:21; Gal. 5:19; Eph. 4:19; 1 Peter 4:3; and Jude 4. Young's Concordance also lists Rom. 12:13 and 2 Peter 2:18 as verses which have the same original word. 4:19; translated "wantonness" in the Authorized version. Insofar as the limits of this paper permits we shall examine these occurrences.

In Mark 7:22, Jesus lists lasciviousness with several others as instances of those things which proceed out of the heart of man, and as that which defiles him. These contain those things which are essentially thoughts, intents and attitudes, some of which issue into actions such as fornication, adultery and murder. Hence, we would observe, however lasciviousness may express itself in sinful, overt action, it first exists in the heart. The heart desires, and is evil or good as

determined whether the desire in any given instance is evil or good. When Paul said his hearts desire was that Israel might be saved, such was a good desire, and thus reflected a good heart. In this passage here, it is indisputable that those things here listed reflect a condition of heart that is evil.

In 2 Cor. 12:21, the apostle anticipates his humiliation and wailing if, when he comes, he finds those impertinent of their uncleanness, fornication and lasciviousness. In such a connection, again, the thought appears to be that lasciviousness finds expression in the uncleanness and fornication of which they were guilty. The same grouping is found in Gal. 5:19, in the works of the flesh there enumerated.

In Ephesians 4:19, the description there is one of such abandonment, that those thus referred to are said to have given themselves over unto lasciviousness to work all uncleanness and greediness. They were past feeling; that is, they had reached such a state of character that no compunction of conscience existed as a restraining influence on their behavior.

The reference in I Peter 4:3, is an allusion to the character of those to whom he wrote as existing prior to their conversion. Here the term is included in a listing of other sins-lusts, excess of wine, REVELLINGS banqueting and abominable idolatries. Hence, in their unregenerate state they had run to an excess of riot, and their companions of old thought it strange they did not continue to so do after they were Christians. The apostle avers that the time past must suffice for such a life, whereas those who are converted are not to continue

therein. This constitutes no divine approval of sin thus indulged in by those who aren't Christians, but a stringent prohibition against those who are. Unhappily, all *who* profess to be followers of Him who knew no sin are not of the full and proper persuasion as thus voiced by Peter. Therefore, we read in Jude 4 of those who crept in unawares, ungodly men, *who* turned the grace of **God into lasciviousness and thereby deny the Lord Jesus and Almighty God. Many under** a specious and perverted use of the grace of the gospel of God have employed it to justify a lascivious life.

We may note some doctrines which are set forth by their advocates as being embodied in "the grace of God that brings salvation," the gospel, which in their legitimate effect encourages a licentiousness of thought and **life. For instance, the doctrine** of the impossibility of **apostasy is calculated, however undesigned** by its adherents, to encourage an unrestrained indulgence in every lustful desire which besets our race. The fear of hell and the hope of heaven constitute the greatest restraining and impelling influences, respectively, brought to bear on the children of God; restraining the impulse to do evil, and impelling us to do good. Persuade one that irrespective of what he does or doesn't do, his hope of heaven is not to be diminished nor his fear of hell to be increased, then there is nothing to prevent the excessive response to unholy desires. Again, the doctrine of polygamy as brought forth by degenerate, but professing religionists, is an instance of turning the grace of God into lasciviousness.

We observed in the opening of this article that human nature is the same now as

it has always been. Therefore, the tendency and capability of men doing today that which they did in other days is present. We can, and many do, descend to the low plane of bestiality that has been true in other days. That none but the unregenerate portion of our race does so could hardly be affirmed confidently.

The term suggests a licentiousness of behavior, a lewdness of thought, resulting in the character of a libertine. A wanton person is one possessed by and, therefore, the victim of an unrestrained desire for fleshly gratification. This, of course, but indicates the maturity of the case, and thus we must recognize the factor of degree in our study of lasciviousness. There are legitimate desires, and there are illegitimate desires; also, there are desires which are legitimate within given limits of satisfaction, but become illegitimate through excessive gratification. In the first instance, the sexual desire is perfectly legitimate when directed toward a lawful object, but illegitimate when directed toward an unlawful object. For instance, a wife's desire shall be to her husband, and of course, his to her. (Gen. 3:16; 1 Cor. 7:2-5). We are forbidden to covet our neighbor's wife. To covet is to cherish an unlawful desire. As touching the second instance, the keynote of all proper behavior is moderation. We are told to "let your moderation be known to all men." (Phil. 4:5). The spirit of man is to control his flesh, rather than the reverse. The law of God is addressed to the spiritual mind rather than the carnal mind, and thus through the former is the latter to be guided, controlled and subdued by the will of God. Some people become fanatical in their devotion to an extreme asceticism, whereas others go to

the other extreme of various degrees of libertinism. The sane, sensible prescription for the child of God to follow is one of moderation in those things that are proper and legitimate, and abstinence from those which are unlawful, either inherently or circumstantially.

That there is a breakdown in sex morality in America today, no one can question. A looseness prevails to an extent, and is generally winked at, that bids fair to so weaken our moral fibre as to contribute to the ultimate ruin of our country. The church is being influenced by this, rather than exerting a countervailing or at least a counterbalancing influence by the purity and uprightness of the lives of its members. The breakdown of a becoming and an appropriate exercise of disciplinary action against flagrant violations of the moral code has weakened the righteous influence of the church. The ease and frequency of obtaining legal divorcement has invaded the church, and the presence of people in full fellowship with the saints who have contracted plural marriages has **all but nullified the force of scriptural teaching on the subject of marriage and divorce.**

The control that one is to exercise over his thoughts and intents, the keeping of one's heart with all diligence is essential as a safeguard against degenerating into the state of lasciviousness. Our thoughts are to be brought into captivity unto obedience to Christ, and only when his proper and just Sovereignty over us is asserted and employed can we be made secure against those inclinations and desires that so sorely afflict our unfortunate race. Paul wept over those whose God was their belly, whose glory was

their shame, and who minded earthly things. He stated their end was destruction. The works of the flesh result in destruction and therefore those who thus live shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Lust, when it is conceived bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death. Truly, the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through his son, Jesus Christ.

Let us, therefore, cultivate increasingly an interest in and a devotion to the higher and nobler interests of our being, and thereby insure an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of God's dear Son.

SINS OF THE DISPOSITION

DISPOSITIONS AND DIVISIONS

Hugh W. Davis, Birmingham, Alabama

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, envyings, of which I forewarn you, even as I did forewarn you, that they who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." (Gal. 5:19-21). No preacher can speak or write of sin, specifically and repeatedly as did Paul, without incurring the ill will of some brethren. But since Paul was not seeking to please men, he had warned the brethren of Galatia concerning the works of the flesh, specifying the exact kind of sins he had in mind. And now he was warning them again of the same sins and sayings, ". . . that they who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

Among the things we can practice that may bar the gates of heaven against us forever is to harbor in our hearts a fleshly disposition that promotes discord and unhappiness among brethren. In this passage, religious division is certainly condemned as a grievous sin, but Paul looks behind the state of division to the sins of disposition that produce and nourish the condition. Notice how Paul speaks in order of "enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties, envying&" (Nose examination of these terms reveals a direct connection between dispositions and divisions as we intend to show in this article

At a time when the church of our Lord is sore troubled with doctrinal differences, we

would do well to look to our dispositions of heart as well as to doctrinal issues involved. I might be right on "the issues" and go to hell because of my disposition. With these thoughts in mind, let us consider the above terms.

Enmities

According to Webster, the word "enmities" means "ill will on one side or both; esp. mutual antagonism." How often do brethren vilify one another with uncomplimentary terms and evil insinuations which cannot possibly do other than to antagonize and further alienate brethren! Such is open proof of a heart filled with hatred and ill will rather than brotherly love and consideration which is so essential to brethren dwelling together in unity.

Webster further says, "Enmity suggests positive hatred which may be concealed or dormant." Just as man appearing outwardly to be morally pure may be guilty of committing adultery in his heart, so may some sweet talking, "peace loving" brother conceal enmity in his heart ... for a time! But when the opportunity arises he will vent his hatred and have his brother's "scalp."

Enmities are bad enough on one side, but when found on both sides, you have an impossible "dog eat dog" situation. Just a few verses prior to mentioning enmities, Paul exhorted, ". . . through love be servants one to another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another." (Gal. 5:13-15)

Enmities sometimes exist between brethren who hold identical doctrinal views. One of the saddest sights is to behold great men of God, who have stood together as an impregnable fortress against the forces of error, allowing dislikes and differences of a personal nature to breach what error could not. The devil has his devices with which he operates upon the disposition!

Strife

Enmities entertained in the heart will in the course of time result in open strife or contention in the church, for "Hatred stirreth up strifes." (Pr. 10:12). There are many things that cause strife, but the root cause is usually found in the disposition or spirit. Solomon says, "He that is of a greedy spirit stirreth up strife" (Pr. 28:25), and again, "A perverse man scattereth abroad strife." (Pr. 16:28) It is a sad commentary on the human race to observe that some are so perverted in disposition that they actually love sowing strife. "He loveth transgression that loveth strife." (Pr. 17:19)

When I was a boy there always seemed to be a bully in our neighborhood spoiling for a fight and a gang of kids on hand daring and shoving to get a fight started. One way or another, they usually managed to succeed, and then they would stand back and enjoy the scrap. Some church members keep a chip on their shoulders and strife in their hearts. Others enjoy creating the situations and giving the dares that will put brethren at one another's throats. "As coals ewe to hot embers, and wood to a fire; so is a contentious man to inflame strife." (Pr. 26:21) This is the kind of "innocent" brother who "just doesn't like to be involved in strife"

while his whole disposition is saturated with it.

The fact that man is found in a fight does not necessarily mean that he is disposed to strife. There are times when a peace-loving Christian must set himself for the defense of the gospel and fight the good fight of faith against ungodliness and religious error that would be imposed upon the church of the living God. But let every Christian soldier be sure he is fighting because of his love for truth and not because of love for strife.

Jealousies

Jealousy is another sin of the disposition, and goes hand in hand with strife. In condemning the division that was gnawing away at the vitals of the church at Corinth, Paul observed, ". . . for ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you jealousy and strife, are ye not carnal, and do ye not walk after the manner of men?" (I Cor. 3:3) And James says, ". . . if ye have bitter jealousy and faction in your heart, glory not and lie not against the truth. This wisdom is not a wisdom that cometh down from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where jealousy and faction are, there is confusion and every vile deed." (Jas. 3:14-16)

When hearts are filled with the unfounded fears and suspicions of jealousy, how can there possibly be peace and harmony in any relationship of life? Jealousy looks for the worst, even in those we profess to love the most, and can always find grounds for reckless criticisms and ungodly resentments. "Bitter jealousy" is not

of God, but of the devil. It blinds brethren to truth and recognition of good in others. It leads us to seek personal victories over our brethren rather than the triumph of truth.

The "bitter jealousy" condemned by James should be replaced with the "godly jealousy" of Paul. To the Corinthians Paul wrote, ". . . I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy: for I espoused you to one husband, that I might present you as a pure virgin to Christ," (II Cor. 11:2) This kind of jealousy is from above and looks above. It looks away from selfish interest with an ardent concern and intense desire that brethren will be faithful to their First Love, and not turn aside to another.

Wraths

Some brethren are so full of wrath that they are ready to explode at the slightest provocation. I have seen elders of the church turn livid with rage and become almost incoherent in speech when crossed. Some preachers have made themselves reputations for being hot-heads who will erupt like a volcano with angry denunciations and wild charges if things do not go exactly to their liking. Some brethren just can't seem to listen patiently and calmly to the reasoning and pleas of those with whom they happen to differ. A mere mentioning of one of their "idols" is like waving a red flag in front of a heard of Jersey bulls. Such a disposition is the exact opposite of that which is conducive to unity and righteousness among brethren. Solomon says, "A wrathful man stirreth up contention. But he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife." (Pr. 15:18) And James says, "But let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath

of man worketh not the righteousness of God." (Jas. 1:19-20)

Sometimes, after brethren have done irreparable harm to the cause of Christ in their wrath, they have the gigantic gall to excuse themselves by saying that they cannot help being quick-tempered. "I'm just made that way" is the favorite retreat of many. I don't know so much about how I am made, but I do know that as one who has put on Christ, I am told, ". . . but now do ye also put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, railing, shameful speaking out of your mouth." (Col. 3:8) God knows that it is difficult to control ourselves under some circumstances, nevertheless it is required. "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city." (Pr. 16:22)

Envyings

Envy is one of the most despicable traits of human character. It maliciously resents and begrudges the excellences and good fortunes of others. Solomon says, ". . . envy is rottenness of the bones." (Pr. 14:30) Religious envy of the wisdom, power, and success of Jesus was one of the reasons why the Jewish authorities conspired against him and delivered him up to be crucified. This same evil disposition was responsible for much of the terrible persecution that was waged against the early church. We need to guard against this same sin of the disposition lest we destroy one another and thereby crucify the spiritual body of Christ. Preachers can easily become envious of other preachers of superior ability, who may be more liberally supported by appreciative brethren. Elders of the local church are

equals in authority, but they may differ widely in personality and station in life. One may be a banker and another, a day laborer; one may be a college president while another may have little formal education. It would be so very easy for Onesimus, the slave, to be envious of Philemon, the master.

We should rejoice at the good fortune of others and thank God for the abilities of those who mean so much to the cause of Christ. And as for our own supposed inferiorities and deficiencies, isn't it wonderful that the Lord will condescend to use us at all, and that He requires no more of us than we are able, for "It is required according to that a man hath, and not what he hath not."

Conclusion

The one thing we have sought to impress in this article is the need for constantly examining ourselves to make sure that we have the proper attitude toward one another that unity might obtain between brethren for whom Christ died. Unity must rest upon truth, but unity is impossible where dispositions are of the flesh. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control; against such there is no law. And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof. If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us walk. Let us not become vainglorious, provoking one another, envying one another. (Gal. 5:22-26)

EXEMPLIFIED IN THE GENTILES (Rom. 1:24-25)

UNCLEANNES

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In order to obtain accurate information about anything, a person must grasp the significance of the terms used to impart the information. Words are but vehicles of thought, intended only to convey ideas. To inadvertently garble the vehicles of Holy Writ, God's way of revealing himself and his plan for man, could mean hell instead of heaven for the careless souls. Let us therefore heed the counsel of God "study to show thyself approved."

Superficially, "uncleanness" presents information of a general nature, too limited to be accepted by the Christian as being complete. Of course the prefix "un" measures a lacking in whatever the word proper describes. "Cleanness" refers to things secular as well as religious, and is therefore too often given slight consideration when found in God's word. Religiously, Webster's dictionary says "uncleanness" describes those things which are ceremonially and morally impure. Mr. Thayer unequivocally defines the New Testament uses of it as being descriptive of impure motives, and the impurity of lustful, luxurious, profligate living. Thus we see the need for members of the Lord's church to sound the depths of its meaning and heed the intended information.

Man was created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27), able to partake of the tree of life and become an eternal being in that created body. Then came the fall and God's true image was no longer reflected in his

creatures. Fellowship with God was lost. The tree of life was removed from the material realm, and physical man and things attached to the physical were employed on a temporary basis in the long process of preparation and purification essential in restoring and retaining for eternity the spiritual fellowship between God and man. Revealed religion is made up of those plans. Under the old dispensations, man was restored to a state of symbolical holiness, maintained only by ceremonial rites and cleansings. In the New Testament age, that which was symbolized by the Old Testament became effected in the case of those "who put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." (Eph. 4:24)

Thus we see how God made use of things physical to educate man to higher things spiritually. In the Mosaic legislation, God taught abhorrence of spiritual uncleanness by fostering an abhorrence of physical foulness which was taken as the representative of moral evil. In the education, certain meats were declared unclean on a temporary basis, for by creation they were to be received "with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God A good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving." (I Tim. 4:3,4). So, when man had been thoroughly taught to appreciate and choose things good for him; to choose good over evil, then the restraint was removed in the vision of Peter. (Acts

10:9-16). The primary purpose of the vision was to show the acceptance of the Gentiles, but there was also involved the conception that the whole system of clean and unclean meats was abolished, having been used "as a schoolmaster" to bring man to the higher life in Christ and eventually eternal life in heaven.

As God's law made certain meats which could be eaten unclean so his law makes unclean many of the things we are able to do. God's law legislates against impure motives. Simon the sorcerer (Acts 8:9-24) represented such uncleanness which enters the church and hinders God's plan. "He offered them money" hoping to satisfy his selfish ambition and covetous heart. The uncleanness in the form of impure motives had him "in the bond of iniquity the gall of bitterness;" his heart was "not right in the sight of God."

Preachers and teachers shame Simon Magus denouncing the terrible disgrace. But alas! the professionalism and "priestcraft" abroad today presents a picture as shameful as the one of Simon. So involved in uncleanness are many churches that "they offer money" as temptations to ambitious professionals who are ready to peddle their magic, bewitch the people with their professed greatness and justify the desired uncleanness for a price. The barter and exchange usually find money as the medium, not always, but the abhorred uncleanness is still evident. Power and wealth so subtly mingles with all church work that the profuse use of them readily acquires the reputation of sanctity. They produce a poison gall which is being infused into the whole life of God's church. What

uncleanness is in the bodily habit, ambitious motives are to the soul. God help us to preserve the church from every form of simony!

Uncleanness is manifested in the profligate and luxurious lives of the Laodicean churches of our day. These churches are exceedingly well pleased with themselves. They roll in wealth, and are satisfied with their worldly status rather than having concern about spiritual progress. Drunken on the wine of statistics, anesthetized by the opiate of large numbers, addled by the poll of public opinion, they "have arrived," and they aim to stay. Pulpit eloquence is extolled more than the bounds of gospel preaching are appreciated; carnal talent is desired above simple spirituality; worldly wealth and status arrest the attention, and growth in grace is forgotten; respectability is sought more than truth, and Christ is locked out. Spiritual dissipation is a canker on the church, and the ultimate end is the exchange of the bread of life and communion with Christ for a mess of pottage and social fellowship. Let us awake to the unclean condition and apply the balm of the Lord to our world-wizened souls before it is too late!

Nadab and Abihu stand in bold relief against the horizon of history, pleading with mankind to eliminate all impurity of ceremonial uncleanness before the wrath of God is poured upon us. But as they sinned in ceremony, so we become unclean in so many acts of work and worship. Oh, so many acts are entered without direction: "Which God commanded them not!" The uncleanness is not so much in doing what is forbidden, but in doing what is not enjoined.

Thus we set divinely constituted authority aside and despise the authority of God. As did Nadab and Abihu, man today introduces confusion, Gentle readers, I humbly plead that we study the written word to "prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." May we present the entire truth of revelation on any subject, without addition; not just that part which may fall in with our tastes and acquirements, but "the whole counsel of God." The least deviation from the will of Christ is a serious sin, a blight of uncleanness. Please know this: "God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness." (I Ths. 4:3-7), "because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." (I Pet. 1:16).