

THE WORD OF TRUTH

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"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"—Jno. 8:32.

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"Of His own will begat He us with the Word of Truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures" (James 1:18).

SET FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE GOSPEL

WHAT ABOUT THE ALCOHOLIC?

From time to time it becomes necessary to clear away the rubble that the world has foisted off on the church. So positive has been the influence of worldly philosophy upon the professed church, that truth has virtually disappeared from the earth. Scarcely is there a person that does not speak with alarming mitigation what he supposes to be the things of God. It behooves all professed believers to be something more than mere professors; particularly in this day. Let us all seek to "let our light shine" (Mt. 5:16), and to "expose" the "unfruitful works of darkness" (Eph. 5:11).

The matter of alcoholism is a prominent one in our day, chiefly because it has become a mounting social problem. In addressing themselves to this malady of mind and body, however, men have conjured up a strictly unrealistic view of the matter. An alcoholic is referred to as being "ill", and alcoholism is now called a "sickness." We are called upon to sympathize with these people as though they had cancer, or leprosy, or some other infectious malady of the body. But this is not at all the approach of the Scriptures, and we shall not perform any lasting service for God in this area until we see the matter as God sees it. Drunkenness is not called a sickness in the Scriptures; we are not called upon to feel sorry for such people, but rather to view them as sinners that shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone (Rev. 21:8). *Drunkenness is a work "of the flesh" (Gal. 5:21), and, like all other works of the flesh, are deliberate manifestations of a perverted nature - one that is at enmity with God.* We need to be sounding forth the word of the Lord to those that are "given to strong drink": "How long wilt thou be drunken? Put away thy wine from thee" (1 Sam. 1:14).

Concerning the possibility of drunkenness or alcoholism (a term invented by the world to cover up their heinousness of this grievous sin against God) being a mere sickness, we are not to be deceived; "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (Prov. 20:1). *The malady with which drunkards are afflicted is not drunkenness, but foolishness and deception.* He has taken fire into his bosom and been burnt, whosoever it be that becomes a drunkard. Bring up the problems that drove him to drink if you will; God points to the man as a sinner, and you shall never properly deal with his case until it is so seen!

God has spoken explicitly concerning the inadvisability of giving oneself to drink. There is a certain devious temptation there from which we must withdraw. Did not Solomon say; "Be not among winebibbers, look not upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder" (Prov. 23:20). It is not by coincidence that the bite and sting of the fermented wine is likened to the ser-

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The Word of Truth

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WHAT ABOUT THE ALCOHOLIC?

(From page 1)

pent, used of Satan in the beginning for deceptive purposes.

When it came to men with responsible positions before God and men, the words were straightforward and to the point in regards to drinking; "It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; or for princes strong drink" (Prov. 3:14); "For he (John the Baptist) shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb" (Lk. 1:15). "And the Lord spake unto Aaron, saying, Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, LEST YE DIE; it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations; and that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between clean and unclean" (Lev. 10:8-10); "He shall separate himself from strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat moist grapes or dried. All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing that is made of the vine tree, from the kernels even to the husk" (Num. 6:3-4). Whatever you may think of these passages, they do point out positive dangers associated with drinking. Those that ignore these warnings cannot plead "sickness" when they fall into the snare. They rather must plead "Lord be merciful to me, a SINNER."

God's Word To Drunkards

God does not say that such are sick; He declares **not** that they are stricken with some strange illness. Such nonsense displays itself as rebellion against the Almighty. Learn that! Concerning the parents of a drunken son, the Law prescribed that they were to speak to the elders of the city on this fashion; "This our son is **STUBBORN** and **REBELLIOUS**, he will not obey our voice; he is a drunkard and a glutton . . ." (Deut. 21:20). Joel, in speaking against such, cried out; "Awake, ye drunkards, and weep and howl, **all ye**

drinkers of wine . . ." (Joel 1:5). Paul, speaking of our social relationships, declared; "But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be . . . a drunkard" (I Cor. 5:11). Again, he speaks in no uncertain words as he affirms; "Know ye not that the **UNRIGHTEOUS** shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor **DRUNKARDS**, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God" (I Cor. 6:9).

Drunkenness is no more an illness than is adultery, theft, or murder; even though society may so classify all of them. It is, rather, basic and fundamental unrighteousness, and is strong and undeniable evidence of rebellion against God, and stubbornness. If men say that they cannot quit drinking, they only display their unbelief. What if the adulterer was to claim he could not stop committing adultery, or the murdered that he could not stop murdering. Would that be acceptable with you? No!—"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13); and those "all things" are summarized thusly; "I can do everything that God demands of me—everything that is pleasing in His sight, through the Lord Jesus Christ."

Now, let the children of the King address themselves to the highways and hedges wherein lie sinners in need of a Savior; sinners I say; not socially maladjusted, or socially ill, but sinners that shall be condemned to everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His power if they repent not and believe the Gospel.

THE WONDER OF OUR REDEMPTION

The fact that we have been redeemed is far more profound than the finite mind imagines. Here in our redemption the very depth and profundity of the wisdom of God is manifested. The power of God, His wisdom, justice, mercy and majesty combined together in the execution of that grant "eternal purpose" of God—the redemption of man from sin. The purpose of this redemption is the glorification of the grace of God, that great single attribute that was hidden from all created hosts in ages past. For those that have an insatiable appetite for the supernatural, for the transcendency of our God, here is the ground for appeasement; here at the doorstep of our wonderful salvation we have an abundance of Truth that makes for true and legitimate wonderment. In this redemption there is a "free justification"; "Being justified **freely** through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus . . ." (Rom. 3:24). This has to do with the forgiveness and abrogation of our sins; "In Whom we have redemption through His blood, **the forgiveness of sins**, according to the riches of His grace" (Eph. 1:7). So thorough was this great work of grace, that our iniquities were completely expunged from the Mind of Almighty God, so that He "remembers them **no more**" (Heb. 10:17). Further, He "gave

Himself to redeem us from ALL iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Tit. 2:14).

An Eternal Redemption

"Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood, He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained ETERNAL redemption for us" (Heb. 9:12). Here we are brought to see the magnanimity of our redemption; **there is no age, no time, no place where this redemption shall fail to be recognized as effectual and complete.** During the duration of this world there shall never be a time when reproach shall be brought upon the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. It shall always avail for everyone that has "faith in the blood" (Rom. 3:25). When this transitory age had come to end and time shall be no more; when the heavens pass away with a great noise, being rolled up as a scroll, and the earth and the works that are therein are burned up with fervent heat; even then, in ages without end, there shall come no time when we shall not hail our redemption with glad shouts and anthems of praise. There shall we ever rejoice with a joy unspeakable and full of glory that we are "redeemed to God by His blood out of every kindred, tongue, and people, and nation" (Rev. 5:9).

Because this redemption is "eternal" it does not fluctuate; it is not subject to change or alteration. **It is always acknowledged as efficacious by the God of heaven who saw the "travail" of His own Son's soul and "was satisfied"** (Isa. 53:11). I can always rest in this redemption; **always** claim it by faith before the "throne of all grace" (Heb. 4:16). There **never** arises a time when I plead the blood of Christ in vain; **never** an instant when my faith in the blood is ineffectual or unrewarding. No! This redemption stands an eternal reality, praise His Name! I therefore am "more than a conqueror" through Him that loved me (Rom. 8:37) because this wonderful redemption has so thoroughly appeased my God that "nothing shall be able to separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus my Lord" (Rom. 8:39).

When our Lord redeemed us, the scope of that redemption was so vast, so large, that **only faith can begin to comprehend it.** It far exceeds the capacity of man's intellect; it transcends all philosophies of earth! It took man from a place of despicable situation, and lifted him into realms hitherto unlawful for him. It transformed his nature, and effected within him that conformity to Christ which God alone can work. Look for a moment at the effects of this redemption.

Redeemed From the Curse Of The Law

We were redeemed from the "curse of the law"; "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree" (Gal. 3:13). Because "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23), man became the enemy of God "alienated in his mind by wicked works" (Col. 1:21). Cut off from God as he was, he stood "without God" and "having no hope in the world" (Eph. 2:12). The Holy Law of God, which was but the inscription of God's

character and nature upon tablets of Stone, had been broken by men; willingly and eagerly broken. That Law was given that "every mouth might be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God" (Rom. 3:19), and it surely did perform that valuable ministry. It demonstrated graphically and without a doubt that God and man did not belong together; they were the very antithesis of one another, and "two cannot walk together unless they be agreed" (Amos 4:4). The Law, once broken, cursed man with the curse of God; "**The soul that sinneth, it shall die**" (Ezek. 18:4)! That curse could not be lifted by man, by man's works, by man's ambitions, or by his repentance and sorrow over his rebellion. It stood like a mighty wedge between man and his God, and nothing that could be comprehended by the finite mind could move it or change it. Man was cursed, cursed grievously, cursed finally!

There, in that helpless and hopeless situation, a very wonderful work of God was wrought through Christ Jesus the Lord. We were actually "**redeemed from the curse of the Law.**" The debt that the Law demanded—DEATH—was paid; fully and willingly, by a Substitute. So complete was that payment that the Author of the Law stood satisfied. The curse that was due the transgressors was imputed and laid upon the "only begotten Son of God." The righteousness which was inherent in Him, and in which He perfectly walked, was consequently imputed, or charged to, our account. Thus is it written; "He made Him to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (II Cor. 5:21). **Now** the Law cannot condemn those that place their faith and hope in God through Christ; **those that believe on the Lord Jesus are counted free from the curse.** Now they can shout with the vigor of faith; "Who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, Who is even at the right hand of God, Who also maketh intercession for us" (Rom. 8:34). That is somewhat of what it means to be redeemed from the curse of the Law. **Now, because of redemption, my nature has been so completely altered that I agree with the Law, want to perform its righteousness, and grieve when I come short of it—in short, "we have the mind of Christ"** (I Cor. 2:16); the result of being "redeemed from the curse of the Law."

"Redeemed From Our Vain Conversation"

"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, **from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers**" (I Pet. 1:18). Here we touch upon the pointless manner in which we lived prior to being "joined to the Lord" (I Cor. 6:17), for that is what "conversation" means—"manner of living." The course or direction of our lives was toward VANITY. Things were pointless, fruitless, aimless. We were "sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another" (Tit. 3:3). We lived in a condition where our "understanding was darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that was in us, because of the blindness of our hearts"

(Eph. 4:18). We had wrong values, wrong ambitions, wrong goals. Because we had no comprehension of the "end of all things," we blindly stumbled on toward perdition, doing the things that incensed the God that made us; persisting in a love for and involvement in those things which shall ultimately incur the condemnation of the Almighty God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This manner of living was the tradition of the human family; we received it "from our fathers." This does not mean that our parents were never believers, or that they never lived by faith. It rather means that the nature that was begotten of them in us was one of misdirection—one bent away from God. We should have continued in that aimless course were it not for the deliberate intrusion of God Almighty. Had He not undertaken of His own will (Js. 1:18) to bring us to Himself, we should have come to the destruction that is most certainly at the end of "the broad way" (Matt. 7:13). A price had to be paid to retrieve us from that pathway of condemnation—and Christ Jesus paid it with His "precious blood." Let every child of God rejoice in it, and see to it that he renders to the Lord continual praise for that most blessed retrieval. From a pointless life to a meaningful one—one that bears meaning because it is in accord with the "eternal purpose of God"; one that is meaningful because it has a certain harmony with the mind of the Lord. That is, after all, what gives life its true meaning.

Redeemed Unto God

"And they sang a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast **redeemed us unto God . . .**" (Rev. 5:9). You see, there is not only a negative side to our redemption, there is a positive side; i.e., we were not only redeemed FROM something, we were redeemed TO someone. **Life in Christ does not merely consist of dropping off external habits, or revising our lives so that certain things are no longer included in them.** That is most assuredly a part of our redemption, but it is certainly not the whole of it. God has actually purchased us for Himself! We are His, not our own. He did not procure us through the blood of His Son merely to eliminate things from our lives. **He intends to use us for the execution of His purposes.** He has brought us into Himself, made us a part of Himself and the Son in order to the fulfillment of His own will. All of this to the glory of His Grace. Every believer is to aspire to be a "vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work" (II Tim. 2:21). There is no higher aim than this; no great fulfillment! **To be used of God for His glory—that is our purpose!** A vessel to be filled and used to the glory and manifestation of the "God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ"! In this holy usage, the "world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. 2:20); i.e., I lose my affectionate union with the world order. My aspirations are now higher, my ambitions nobler, my affections deeper. **Because of the great work of redemption, my primary**

servitude is toward the God that redeemed me, the Savior that saved me, the Lord that wrested me from the tenacious grip of Satan! "The love of Christ" now "constrains" me so that I no longer live unto myself, but unto Him Who "loved me and gave Himself for me" (II Cor. 5:14, 15; Gal. 2:20). This is the effect of being redeemed "**unto God**"! It is here, in the **experience** of this redemption, that I reach my highest potential; it is here that I find the grandest fulfillment, the most noble expressions! Being made for God, I can realize no true fruitage, no lasting worth, apart from an actual union and participation in Him. This was accomplished, praise the Lord, through the "offering" of the body of Christ "once for all" (Heb. 10:10).

Redeemed From All Iniquity

"... the Great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; Who gave Himself for us, **that He might redeem us from all iniquity**" (Tit. 2:14). Hallelujah for that redemption. Long we were enslaved to our lower natures, "hateful and hating one another," living in "malice and envy," being "foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures" (Titus 3:3). There, in that dreadful state of bondage we were "without God and without hope in the world" (Eph 2:12). We did not "understand" nor "seek" after God; we had "gone out of the way," and had become altogether "unprofitable." We did no "good" because of our depraved and corrupted affections and conceptions. Our throats were even as "open sepulchres" from which arose the stench of filthy communication, morbid philosophies, and uncomely analyses. Our tongues, rather than being employed for the praise of Him that made us, were used for "deceit" whereby our own persons were exalted in the eyes of mere mortals. As for our lips, the "poison of asps" was "under" them; they were ready to strike as an adder in the defense of our own bigoted interests. With them we cursed man who is made in the image of God, and even railed upon our Maker as though He was altogether one like ourselves. Yea, our mouths were "full of bitterness and cursing." As for our feet, they were "swift to shed blood." Rather than bringing the "Gospel of peace," they were used to carry us forward in the destruction of men's souls and the perversion of their interests. "Destruction and misery" stood in the wake of all of our ways, and the waves of that destruction dashed upon anything and everyone that stood in the path of our selfish interest. Truly "the way of peace" was unknown to us, prior to our enlightenment, and "no fear of God" was "before our eyes." (Rom. 3:10-18). From this despicable condition of heart and life there arose all manner of iniquity; sinful expressions of rebellion against the Most High—some known, some unknown. Oh, what a wretched condition was that in which we were found!

It was from this condition that our Lord Jesus redeemed us! He verily did "redeem us from all iniquity"! We are no longer "debtors to the flesh to live after the flesh" (Rom. 8:12). Where once were we the "servants of sin," now, having "obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine delivered us" (Rom. 6:17), we have been made "free"

from the "dominion" of sin and constituted "servants of righteousness" (Rom. 6:18). **The lower nature no longer holds power over us; we have been liberated from its dominion—praise the Lord!** We are to "reckon" ourselves to be "dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God" (Rom. 6:11), because that is precisely what we are in Christ Jesus. When we were the "servants of sin, we were free from righteousness" (Rom. 6:20), having "no fruit" in "those things whereof we are now ashamed." (Rom. 6:21). "But now being made free from sin, and become servants unto God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life" (Rom. 6:22).

Now there is no sin that the child of God is obligated to commit; no transgression from which he may not experientially be free. He is in debt to no sin; obligated to obey absolutely no part of the fleshly dictates of the Adamic nature! Christ has "redeemed" him from "all iniquity"; i.e., he has removed from his person the guilt of all transgressions; He has purged and made him separate from every vestige of contamination before the eyes of God Almighty. In that removal there has been granted (1.) a gracious inclination to do righteousness; (2.) a disinclination from doing unrighteousness; (3.) and the very power of the Spirit of God to fulfill both the inclination and the disinclination. This is something of what it means to be "redeemed from all iniquity." May all professed believers prove their discipleship by building upon this foundational truth, thereby not receiving the grace of God in vain (II Cor. 6: 1).

Redemption Is Now Possessed

In Christ Jesus this wonderful redemption of which I have spoken is possessed — actually experientially within the heart and mind. Thus it is written; "In Whom (Jesus Christ) we HAVE redemption . . ." (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14). **As I live by faith, I may expect the glory of this redemption to register more fully upon my spirit.** I may expect that being so registered, it will have a holy effect upon my life. I am to understand that being redeemed is not merely a historical proclamation—although it is that! It is not merely an historical accomplishment either—although it is equally that. **But redemption is something wrought in the past by the Lord Jesus Christ, applied by the Holy Spirit in the interval of time, effectualized by the interceding Savior at the right hand of God, and demonstrated in the crucible of life by those that have "tasted of the Lord, that He is gracious."** Redemption in it very essence is "eternal" (Heb. 9:12), and therefore those that truly possess it are transported into a realm beyond the comprehension of the senses; beyond the grasp of the mere intellect; beyond the reach of the adversary, Satan; beyond the scope of time and vision.

It is the objective of the honest and contrite heart to live in the sphere of redemption; to gird up the loins of his mind and hope to the end when this glorious redemption will be unfolded in its magnitude and brightness. Here, where the redemption is seen, sensed by faith, experienced by grace—here is where the victory is, the fellowship is sustained, and the presence of God is realized. It is to this great redemption that we summon you!

LEVITICAL HOLINESS

In the book of Leviticus we find some grand principles of holiness pictured for us. These principles are beneath the surface of the text and will only make sense to the person living in the bosom of the Lord. Nevertheless, I desire to write in hopes of benefiting those few.

Let us begin with Leviticus chapter eleven. Here we find Moses expounding the ceremonial law to the Israelites of old. Certain animals are pronounced to be "clean" and others "unclean."

In Leviticus 11:2 we read "Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, These are the beasts which ye shall eat among all the beasts that are on the earth. Whatsoever parteth the hoof, and is clovenfooted, and cheweth the cud, among the beasts, that shall ye eat."

Here we see that clean animals were marked by two characteristics. First, they parted the hoof. Secondly, they chewed the cud.

Chewing the cud is a picture of meditation. The true child of God has a love for the Word of God and has an inclination to meditate on it day and night. He feeds on the Word. He delights in it, because his heart is in harmony with the God who inspired it. Here is a test-point for every professing Christian. Do you love God's Word? How much time did you spend in the Scriptures today? Or did you prefer to watch television? This tells where your heart is! You are only as close to God as you are close to God's Word. Can you say that you love God and yet never read the love-letters that he wrote to your soul? If you never bothered to read the letters that your fiance wrote you, would you be able to say you loved him or her? If your relationship were that cold then probably the wedding should be canceled. Are you ready for the marriage-supper of the Lamb? Do you have an appetite for His Word? Do you enjoy musing on the Scriptures? Do you like to chew the cud?

The other mark of a clean animal is to part the hoof. This symbolizes a clean walk. Those animals that do not have a parted hoof (take the horse for an example) have very dirty feet. Their hoof is like a suction-cup and mud gets packed up underneath as they walk through this world. If their hoof were parted, or split like a cloven foot, then mud could ooze up and out. They would have a cleaner walk. Now a true Christian is very careful to have a clean walk. He is strict in his practical obedience. He lives a clean, wholesome, pure life; he is a "clean beast."

Now we have a concise description of a clean beast. He is pure both inwardly and outwardly. He loves to meditate on God's Word inwardly. He also walks in obedience outwardly.

But notice verse four: "Nevertheless these shall ye not eat of them that chew the cud, or of them that divide the hoof: as the camel, because he cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof; he is unclean unto you . . . And the swine, though he divide the hoof, and be clovenfooted, yet he cheweth not the cud; he is unclean unto you."

Here the Holy Spirit specifies that both of these must be present before the animal is considered to be clean. Let us look at the camel first.

He chews the cud but doesn't divide the hoof. Therefore he is unclean. An example of this would be the Pharisees. They knew the Scripture. They chewed the cud. But they didn't live their religion from the heart. Jesus said "they say, and do not." They had head-religion, not heart-religion. Their outward works were largely scanty, religious, and formalistic, empty of life. They prided themselves on chewing the cud. They knew the Scriptures. But they rejected Christ. These are religious hypocrites.

But what of those that do not chew the cud, but part the hoof? These are they who are moral, but not religious. You can find an example of this in the Book of Genesis. Pharaoh, the heathen king, rebuked Abraham for lying about Sarah, his wife. He was moral. He parted the hoof. But there is no evidence that he was devout.

Other principles of holiness can be gleaned as you read through the rest of this chapter. In verses 9-12 we read that only those fish that have fins and scales are considered clean. Now fins are for propulsion, and scales are for protection against the watery environment. So those professing Christians that protect themselves from the evil world that surrounds them and propel themselves swiftly through it are holy unto the Lord.

In verses 13-15 there are several birds of prey mentioned, such as the eagle and the vulture. This teaches us how God looks upon those who possess the trait of viciousness. They are unclean.

The owl is unclean because of its melancholy lonely habits. Do you find yourself in this category? Morbid? Depressed? Do you love to dwell in darkness regarding spiritual things? This is a mark of uncleanness.

I will not have time in this one article to deal with every point in this chapter, but I hope that some profitable meditations will be provoked by these comments. Next month, Lord willing, I will continue this same line of study.

—Richard Ebler

ACCELERATED SATANIC ACTIVITY

It is axiomatic that as we draw closer to the end of time, our "adversary, the Devil" (I Pet. 5: 8), will increase his activity and his subtle delusions in the world. As I am given to understand these things, we may **not** expect this increased activity to break forth among those that already dwell in "thick darkness." **Rather, it is among the cultured among those that have been brought into some degree of familiarity with the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ that Satan's work may be found to be accelerated.** This increase is in many areas: basic morality, religious perversion, and intruding into unlawful areas of supra-knowledge. While we are extremely exercised in our spirits because of the widespread acceptance of abominable moral practices, we are equally concerned about the rapid rise in spiritism; in things that transcend the intellectual capacity of men. It cannot be denied that this form of curious probing is not altogether uncommon; it existed centuries ago among the nations that were dispossessed by Israel of old. It

appears that Satan has found a very vulnerable part of man in doting upon the supernatural, and thus it is plain that he is working feverishly, if I may use that term, in our very age and among our very people.

God, The Principal Informer

People that seek information outside the pale of experience at any source other than God Almighty—Jehovah God—have stumbled into a Satanic snare that scarce can find an equal. Here is a point that so incenses God that human language breaks down in an effort to communicate His displeasure with such activities. The word of the Lord on this is plain, and it is spoken to every person that desires to know more than human resources alone can grasp; "And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep and mutter: **should not a people seek unto their God?** for the living to the dead"? (Isa. 8:19). The point of this pronouncement is simply this; There are those that attempted to snare the ancient people of God by enticing them to seek supra-human knowledge through the medium of familiar spirits and wizards. The people of God, however, were not to engage in this evil activity, it being a form of idolatry. **A people should inquire of their God for information, not from those that have usurped, so to speak, His prerogatives.** The "bounds" of man's "habitation" have been established; i.e., a boundary has been set about the lawful activity of man; his preoccupation has been ordained and decreed by God. It is this; "That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us" (Acts 17:27). **Man is not to seek false gods, contacts with the unseen world through the medium of men or spirits or transcendent human knowledge from any source other than God!** It is unlawful; i.e., it is outside of the boundary that has been set by the Creator!

When it comes to the matter of the **mystery** of mortal's experience, they are, again, to make inquiry of their God; "Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. If any of you lack wisdom (in this matter of patience having her perfect work), let him ask of God, who giveth to all men **liberally, and unbraideth not, and it shall be given him**" (Js. 1:3-5). We learn from this text that: (1.) There are mysteries of life that cannot be explained naturally. (2.) That there is a deep seated desire in men to understand the workings in their lives. (3.) That all inquiries concerning these mysteries of life are to be directed to God the Father. (4.) That God is favorably disposed to liberally and abundantly pour wisdom upon us feeble mortals. (5.) That God upbraids none that make inquiry of Him, providing they do so in faith, nothing doubting (Js. 1:6). Now, with such truth as this before us, we are able to see the "exceeding sinfulness" (Rom. 7:13) of seeking revelation from any but God. It is an abomination that is scarcely paralleled in the Scriptures.

The Curse Pronounced

The Lord God spoke to Israel concerning these things, reminding them of the fact that they were invading and conquering other nations (larger than themselves)—and doing it successfully—only because of the fierce abominations that were present in them. Israel was cautioned to see to it that they did not learn the way of the heathen, lest these same curses be brought upon them: "When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found in thee anyone that maketh his son or daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. **For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord: and because of these abominations, the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee**" (Deut. 18:9-12); "And the soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, to go a whoring after them, **I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among the people**" (Lev. 20:6). (Also see Lev. 19:26-28, 31; Mal. 3:5; II Kgs. 9:22; Micag. 3:6-7.) Lest anyone construe that these matters are irrelevant under the reign and rule of Christ, the Apostle declares forthrightly that they are "works of the flesh," and under the curse of the Almighty; "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these . . . witchcraft . . . I tell you before, as I have told you also in time past, **that they which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God**" (Gal. 5:19:21); "But . . . sorcerers . . . shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death" (Rev. 21:8).

Let us make clear that sorcery and witchcraft are general words that apply to the appropriation of supernatural wisdom, knowledge, or power, through a person or persons (spiritual beings) other than God and His Son Jesus Christ. It is a form of idolatry, and as such knows no sin of equality. It is pictured as "whoring" which refers to the departure of the created from the Creator, wherein the created seeks wisdom, knowledge, power, information, insight, etc., from another created being—though it be more powerful than himself. Those that practice these things shall surely be cursed; they CANNOT inherit the Kingdom of God; there is no possible way for such as dwell in this sin to be "forever with the Lord." The very fact that they resort to such activity demonstrates their actual alienation from their God, and hence their unfitness for His presence and glory.

Reality of Supernatural Works Not The Issue

In the texts that have been cited thusfar, a variety of arts have been specified which are unlawful for men. The terms describing these arts are meant to convey to our hearts very real means of procuring knowledge and power. **But the reality of these means is not the real issue, but rather the unlawfulness of them.** For instance, it is a very real and existent thing that goods may be obtained by means of theft. Thievery is not unreal, it is not fictitious, or a fable; it is a reality. Notwithstanding its reality, however, it is un-

lawful, a sin, and under the curse of the Almighty. Too, an individual may bear a child through means of adultery. The child is real, the act is real, the physical union was real, but it was unlawful. No one questions the reality or presence of the child that sprang from the unholy union; it is the union itself that is under the curse of God; the offspring have no bearing upon its lawfulness or lawlessness.

Now, the same is true with respect to the evil arts which we are to here mention. That very supernatural things occur under the auspices of these practitioners is not the issue. Knowledge is often obtained; very real predictions are made; awesome works are the products very frequently. Mind reading, prognostications, the affectation of phenomenal occurrences—all of these can and are produced **apart** from the blessing and approval of the Almighty at times. The magicians in Egypt affected such things as turning wooden rods into serpents, turning water into blood, and bringing frogs upon the land. **All of these things transcended the natural, and yet they were evil because they were not wrought in conjunction with the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ** (Exodus 7:11-12; 8:7, 18). It is also interesting to observe that there came a point where they could not perform the wonders wrought by the hand of Moses (Ex. 8:18); as it is written; "The magicians did so with their enchantments to bring forth lice, **BUT THEY COULD NOT.**" It is enough to say here that we are not miracle-mongers. We are not unduly impressed by the working of supernatural phenomenon. Such things have been wrought by the heathen since the world has been here, as well as by others that were in direct league with Satan. **It is the source of the wonders that concerns us, not the reality of them!** This principle applies to the acquisition of supernatural knowledge also. That mysterious things may be known apart from God we do not deny; but that they are lawful and proper we do deny and repudiate. **Any non-experiential knowledge that is obtained apart from the revelation of the God of heaven is unlawful and under the curse of the Almighty, regardless of its accuracy!**

The Arts Condemned

Believers ought to become familiar with these terms and their meaning, especially in view of the accelerated activity of the Evil One in these areas in our day. Some of the terms bear a very close similarity in meaning, as will be seen. I do not know that I am able to give a most precise definition for each word, and thus shall limit myself to **foundational** meanings, rather than explicit detail.

1. "Charmers"—The individuals that cast a spell upon one through means of magical powers. A "spell" is a condition of mind produced whereby one is brought away from a state of lawful natural response and forced to react in a way contrary to his own nature and inclination, thereby reducing one to a servant of another created being's desires.
2. "Wizard"—One possessing extraordinary powers from the Evil One.
3. "Consulter with familiar spirits"—One that receives information from certain evil

are very prominent in some circles. Prognosticators such as Jean Dickson have been received as respectable and lawful informers. ESP is growing in prominence every day, and has become the theme of weekly programs on the entertainment media. In short, people are very conscious of mysterious workings, and of information that is not altogether common. The supernatural arts are being practiced more, and educational centers (even on the elementary and high school levels) are accepting into their curriculum such things as witchcraft, spirit travel, etc.

Not to be overlooked is the great rise in hard rock music, which is nothing more than enchantment. Casting myriads of youth into frenzied states of mind, this type of music has been met with world-wide approval. However, the Scriptures teach us that enchantment (the casting of a spell through means of incantations) is not merely one man employing music for the influencing of another. Rather, **it is Satan and his evil hosts working through this medium to control and affect the minds of men for his purposes.** Once this is seen, there should be an instant withdrawal from subjection to such things. Listening to this form of music is not as innocent as it may appear. It is a form of subjugation to the Tempter himself, who works through this means to propel men into unlawful thoughts, imaginations, and actions. Where this type of music is dominant, nudity, fornication, dope addiction, slothfulness, and other forms of immorality, are very dominate. These effects are directly traceable to evil influence brought to bear upon the mind through means of musical "enchantment."

Application To Dope Addiction

Only a few years ago, there was no question in the common man's mind concerning the impropriety of dope addiction, or the more infrequent usage of drugs that adversely affected the mind. However, we are now faced with an entirely new and different generation in which the very concepts of right and wrong which once were common are almost altogether unknown. It therefore behooves us to say this; **any form of mental relaxation, diversion, expansion, or exhilaration that is not natural is valid only when coming from the Lord.** At this point I am not speaking so much of physical relaxation, etc., necessitated for medical reasons, but of those periods of escape which are sought because of an inability to face reality. Thinking they are escaping to the world of reality, drug users really retreat into a fabled world where reality is distorted and twisted out of shape. False and insecure joy and relief is thus experienced. The word of the Lord sounds the principle on such matters when it says; "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18). The idea here is that men are not to seek artificial exhilaration, etc., but are to find their highest expressions and exhilarations from God Himself. There is no higher form of expression, no greater state of exhilaration, no more transcendent peace and tranquility, than that which is found in God our Savior. In short, man finds the apex of his existence in His Maker. Anything and everything that deviates from this truth is unlawful and improper in the fullest sense of the word.

spirits that are specifically identified with that consulter. In this case, a person on earth has, through evil influence, contact with a specific spirit from the unseen world. This spirit conveys unlawful information to the consulter, thus giving him the ability to pass on information not accessible to mere mortals.

4. **"Enchanter"**—One that charms by means of spells or incantations (singing). Here music may be employed to bring one to a certain state of mind which is ordinarily not the inclination of the victim.
5. **"Diviner"**—One that practices divination, forseeing events through supernatural, albeit unlawful, power.
6. **"Observer of times"**—One that practices astrology, which is the belief that the stars and their positions are the things that predestinate men and the affairs of men. The current-day use of this evil science is seen in the horoscope readings that have gained such wide daily prominence.
7. **"Necromancer"**—One that predicts the future by communication with the dead. In this case, the seances that are about us prove to be the present manifestations of the cursed art. The late Bishop Pike was a user of this unlawful means of knowledge-procurement.
8. **"Sorcerers"**—This is divination (forseeing events) by the aid of evil spirits.
9. **"Magicians"**—Supernatural working by the power of supernatural beings through human instrumentality.
10. **"Witch"**—One that practices witchcraft, which is the art of working super-humanly in pact with evil powers.
11. **"Astrologer"**—One that is an observer of the times, receiving information and knowledge that transcends human experience through means of the heavenly bodies and their position. (see Jer. 10:2; Isa. 47:13)

The Current Rise In These Things

Throughout this country, and the cultured world, for that matter, there is an alarming increase in these unlawful things. Witchcraft is flourishing. "The Church of Satan" only recently gained notoriety in public media. Horoscope readings are popularized in the home, and printed daily in the newspaper. Many people take great stock in these things, even planning their marriages and social communications around the "signs." There is a tremendous flood of writings and activity relative to demons and demonical activity that is also all about us. Ouija boards