

A Factious Man

by Cled E. Wallace

"A factious man after a first and second admonition refuse; knowing that such a one is perverted, and sinneth, being self-condemned." (Tit. 3:10, 11). The factious man is a promoter of strife, a sower of discord among brethren. The symptoms are uniform. He is purblind to his own faults, but meticulous in his demands on others. He will lead his ass to water on the Sabbath and be "filled with madness" at Jesus for restoring a withered hand on the same day. He is usually energetic with tongue and pen, in the interest of his factious plans. Laziness is not one of his sins. Berkeley says: "The factious man is apt to mistake himself for a patriot." In religion he is apt to mistake himself for a martyr when he encounters opposition.

"Such a one is perverted." A state of unsoundness exists in him. If he is not exactly rotten, he has deteriorated until he doesn't smell good. He is to be avoided. It is useless to argue with him. The spirit of faction has upset his reason. It is perverted also. He is apt to answer argument with insult. One or two admonitions is as much as you can risk on him. A bird hunter often sees his fine pointer dog wallow in the putrid remains of some carcass. It seems to be natural with the brute. He is soon thereafter slapped away when he jumps up on his master. Should a man act as does the dog, it would indicate a perverted or depraved taste. A factious man is perverted. He is forever messing with things he ought not to. You need not be his enemy, but it is a splendid idea to avoid him for reasons that are spiritually sanitary.

"Such a one sinneth." It is good and pleasant for brethren to dwell together in unity. God says so, and it is his will that they do so. "There are six things which Jehovah hateth; yea, seven which are an abomination unto him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood; a heart that deviseth wicked purposes, feet that are swift in running to mischief, a false witness that uttereth lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren." (Prov. 6:16-19). "He that soweth discord among brethren" is in dangerous company. He is an abomination to God along with murderers and fellows. How hideous is sin! Paul numbers "enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions," among "the works of the flesh," and says "that they who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." (Gal. 5:19-21.) The church is the body of Christ. It is a precious thing. "The body is one," and "there should be no schism in the body." God will not deal gently with the man who rends ugly and painful wounds in the body of Christ. Such a one sinneth."

"Such a one is self-condemned." His own conduct condemns him, and his guilt is apparent to all observers except himself and those blinded by his influence. He and they mistake his party zeal for holiness unto the Lord. They are self-deceived as well as self-condemned. Give a factionist enough rope and he will hang himself, which would be all right, if he didn't manage to hang others with him who were not wise enough to avoid

him. His own bitterness and rancor condemn him. A factious man is often a mean man. He will do anything or tell anything to accomplish his unholy purposes. "But 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." (James 3:14-16.)

Christ promises blessings upon the peacemakers, not the troublemakers. Christians must seek peace and pursue it. It is worth hunting for and running after. "So then let us follow after the things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another." (Rom. 14: 19.) "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without variance, without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for them that make peace." (James 3:17,18.) "Follow after peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord: looking carefully lest there be any man that falleth short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby the many be defiled." (Heb. 12:14, 15.)

A root of bitterness is a poison plant. Should one come up in my yard and my child should eat of it and become poisoned, I would dig up the poison thing and cast it away. And I would look carefully for signs of more like it. Factious and profane men are troublesome and poisonous in a church. They should be dug up before they go to seed.

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