

A FRIEND MISTAKEN FOR AN ENEMY

GALATIANS 4:15

15 Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.

GALATIANS 4:16

16 Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?

GALATIANS 4:17

17 They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them.

GALATIANS 4:9

9 But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?

GALATIANS 4:10

10 Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.

GALATIANS 4:11

11 I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.

COLOSSIANS 2:20

20 Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances,

COLOSSIANS 2:21

21 (Touch not; taste not; handle not;

COLOSSIANS 2:22

22 Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?

COLOSSIANS 2:23

23 Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in *WILL worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.

WILL: ethelothreskeia {eth-el-oth-race-ki'-ah}
worship which one prescribes and devises for himself, contrary to the contents and nature of faith which ought to be directed to Christ; said of the misdirected zeal and practices of ascetics

The term "will-worship. " It is from the compound Greek word ethelothreskeia, which has two roots, ethelo, "to will," and threskeia, which has to do with "religious worship. "

The term ethelo, "to will. " It conveys the impression of "to seize with the mind," to have resolve or determination regarding a purpose, with perhaps an impulsive inclination—as opposed to a well-calculated deliberation.

In classical Greek ethelo was used as a prefix in various compounds which suggested the idea of voluntary action, as in a voluntary agent, or running voluntarily into danger. The meaning is "self-chosen worship. "

In arbitrary superstition, or human invention, or selfwilled religion, rather than Divine institutions.

Will-worship, signifies simply a mode of worship which a man chooses for himself, independently of the revelation which God has given. The whole system of Deism is a worship founded in the will or thoughts of man, and not in the wisdom or will of God.

The Geneva translation (1557) renders the word as "voluntarie worshipping," with the text using "voluntarie" in the sense of "arbitrary. "

The same version in the 1560 edition has this marginal note: "Such as men have chosen according to their own fantasy" (Hastings 1902, 923). In other words, it is a self-contrived worship.

It is "worship originating in the human will as opposed to the Divine, arbitrary religious acts, worthless despite the difficulty of performance" (Orr 1939, 3085).

John Calvin called this worship one "which men choose for themselves at their own option, without authority from God".

J. H. Thayer depicted will-worship as: worship which one devises and prescribes for himself, contrary to the contents and nature of the faith which ought to be directed to Christ(168).

It is a form of religion "which fails to maintain the true object of worship and in place of Christ selects its own objects. " He calls it an "uncontrolled worship. " It is a worship of "free choice" rather than that of divine choice.

What is will worship? It is the constant effort of man to accomplish his own will, whether for good or for bad. It is an insidious trick of the enemy to keep God's people under bondage to their own set of do's and don'ts,

to bring to them self pride for successfully performing their will, and self condemnation for failure.

The gratification from success brings pride of accomplishment which can lead to worship of one's own will.

Traits of Will-Worship

Underlying the apostasy of will-worship are several godless dispositions.

Will-worship is arrogant and autocratic. It reflects the self-inflated attitude of Jeroboam the son of Nebat who devised a worship format "of his own heart" through which he "made Israel to sin" (1 Kgs. 14:16).

Will-worship is a form of rebellion. It is reminiscent of those days of Israel's judges when every man did what was right "in his own eyes" (Judg. 17:6).

Will-worship is enslaving; a sense of self-determination is corrupting, intoxicating, and ultimately destructive.

God will be served in his own way; it is right that he should prescribe to man the truths which he is to believe, and the ordinances which he is to use. To refuse to receive his teaching in order to prefer our own fancies, is to light a farthing candle as a substitute for the noonday sun.

MARK 7:6

6 He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.

MARK 7:7

7 Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

MARK 7:8

8 For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.

MARK 7:9

9 And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.

Will-worship - arbitrarily-invented: would-be-worship, devised by self-will, not God.

So jealous is God of this, that He struck Nadab and Abihu dead for burning strange incense (Lev 10:1-3).

So Uzziah was stricken with leprosy for usurping the priest's office (2 Chron 26:16-21).

Compare the will-worship of Saul (1 Sam 13:8-14), for which he lost his throne.

Worship and devotion that often becomes very popular is that which appeals to the flesh. From an emphasis on food (frequent church suppers, coffee and donuts for the Sunday School class) to the intrusion of rock music (some call it CCM—contemporary church music), the flesh is appeased,

and such ingredients in our worship and devotion becomes very appealing to folk. It makes for a popular, though polluted, church. The extreme in sensuousness in worship is the immoral practices that some heathen religions over the years have included in their worship.

The Analytical Bible Expositor

THE GALATIAN CHURCHES WERE MOVING INTO WILL WORSHIP

GALATIANS 4:13

13 Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first.

Paul was a wonderful spiritual father, he knew just how to balance rebuke with love. Now he turns from "spanking" to "embracing" as he reminds the believers of their love for him and his love for them.

At one point they were willing to sacrifice anything for Paul, so great was their love; but now he had become their enemy. The Judaizers had come in and stolen their affection.

The Bible Exposition Commentary

GALATIANS 4:14

14 And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.

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A true servant of God does not "use people" to build himself up or his work, he ministers in love to help people know Christ better and glorify Him.