

PORNOGRAPHY AND HOMOSEXUALITY

Is It Sin?

By D. A. Delafield

Not long ago the U. S. Supreme Court passed down a far reaching decision to give local communities more power to define and regulate pornography. The decision recognized the right of citizens to say what kind of literature they wanted in their communities and struck "a strong telling blow for decency."

Ronald Reagan, governor of California (1973), believes that the "long overdue" ruling will help reverse the trend toward permissiveness. He said "the lessons of history clearly show that any free civilized society which doesn't impose some reasonable restraints upon itself will not long endure."

As a result of this court decision some communities in America are cleaning up their newsstands and film racks in X rated theaters. But not all by any means. And some people are happy about the Supreme Court decision. Others are not. Conservative people feel that since pornography exploits women it's good that the exploiters are now going to be punished, but at the same time many think the ruling is unconstitutional. Whatever the legal battles may be there is a biblical side to this question that the Christian should understand.

I am discussing this question not in a hand wringing mood crying out "what is the world coming to?" but to explain "Who is coming to the world". Pornography and homosexuality are now widespread in America and are ugly signs of Christ's speedy return.

Paul said to young Timothy:

But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. For some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion, wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either

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what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions. But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully, realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous man, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnapers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted.
1 Tim. 1:5-11.

There are arguments put forth by immoral men and women justifying every species of immorality from pornography and pre-marital sex to lesbianism and homosexuality. But Paul tells us that the best argument against these speculations by teachers who "do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions" is the moral law of God. No man can argue successfully against the seventh commandment of the Decalogue!

But first of all what is pornography? The word comes from the Greek pornographos which means writing about prostitutes or harlots. The word means then, written, graphic, or other forms of communication intended to excite lascivious, lusty feelings.

The problem about getting laws passed against pornography lies in the fact that different people react in different ways to pornographic pictures or writings. Some seem to be not affected at all insofar as stirring carnal feelings are concerned. Others are obviously stimulated and these doubtless are in the majority. Men more than women are pornographic buffs. The newstands and stores are studded with magazines and newspapers full of so-called art pictures and in the "right" places hard core pornographic stuff is easy to get.

Society has a reason to be concerned about this because of mounting sex crimes, forcible rape, etc. Where does the impulse for sex crimes begin? Answer: with the risqué things people sell. Certainly not by

attending a class in Bible study, by reading Pilgrim's Progress or memorizing the ten commandments. Believe it or not some people see no relationship between pornography, scant women's dress, lusty thoughts, and sex crimes! This kind of blind thinking cannot really be thinking at all.

The total life of man is affected by his environment. Our thoughts and acts are stimulated by the sights and the sounds and smells that surround us. When pornographic or suggestive sights are absent, attention, energy and strength can be given to the practical, to the decent responsibilities of life. Pornography is diversionary. It gets a man's mind off the business of life. He can't afford to do that in an age like this. Worse it glorifies cheap women and denigrates a man's wife, especially if he is a father and desperately needed not only in his business but by his wife and children.

How many men--young and old--let their imaginations run riot day after day as they drive to work, ogle a physically charming woman on the streets dressed suggestively with abbreviated skirt or a curvacious secretary in the office. When a man like that starts reading Playboy and similar magazines, attending burlesque shows, he is going to get into trouble with his body, with his conscience, with his family, with his business, and with his God. And what of men and women who glory in Playgirl magazine--an innovation I knew nothing of until I saw a copy held up in front of an old man's face on the airplane several weeks ago.

In His sermon on the mount, Jesus said "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." This is a positive statement, not negative. Happiness, that is, blessedness, is found in self-control which produces self-respect. (See 1 Cor. 9:22-27)

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All fornicators will be outside the city of God. Already God's angels are at work in judgment, and the Spirit of God is gradually leaving the world. The triumph of the church is very near, the reward to be bestowed is almost within our reach, and yet iniquity is found among those who claim to have the full blaze of heaven's light.--Testimonies to Ministers, p. 431.

In the same sermon Jesus made a negative statement.

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. Matt. 5:27,28.

It is easy to see how by the evil thought or lustful look the law of God is transgressed. Adultery exists in the mind before it gets to the body. But before it gets to the mind it's in the eyes. The senses are the avenues to the soul. Remember--it was the charming sight of Bathsheba bathing herself which excited David to the acts of adultery. And this led to murder.

Ellen White a century ago spoke out on this subject. Her message applies today with even greater force than when it was written.

Many of the young are eager for books. They read everything they can obtain. Exciting love stories and impure pictures have a corrupting influence. Novels are eagerly perused by many, and, as the result, their imagination becomes defiled. In the cars, photographs of females in a state of nudity are frequently circulated for sale. These disgusting pictures are also found in . . . saloons, and are hung upon the walls of those who deal in engravings. This is an age when corruption is teeming everywhere. The lust of the eye and corrupt passions are aroused by beholding and by reading. The heart is corrupted through the imagination. The mind takes pleasure in contemplating scenes which awaken the lower and baser passions. These vile images, seen through defiled imagination, corrupt the morals and prepare the deluded, infatuated beings to give loose rein to lustful passions. Then follow sins and crimes which drag beings formed in the image of God down to a level with the beasts, sinking them at last in perdition. Avoid reading and seeing things which will suggest impure thoughts. Cultivate the moral and intellectual powers. Let not these noble powers become enfeebled and perverted by much reading of even storybooks. I know of strong minds that have been unbalanced and partially benumbed, or paralyzed, by intemperance in reading.--Testimonies, vol. 2, p. 410.

She continued to say:

It is impossible for the youth to possess a healthy tone of mind and correct religious principles unless they enjoy the perusal of the word of God. This book contains the most interesting history, points out the way of salvation through Christ, and is their guide to a higher and better life. They would all pronounce it the most interesting book they ever perused, if their imagination had not become perverted by exciting stories of a fictitious character. You who are looking for your Lord to come the second time to change your mortal bodies, and to fashion them like unto His most glorious body, must come up upon a higher plane of action. You must work from a higher standpoint than you have hitherto done, or you will not be of that number who will receive the finishing touch of immortality.- Ibid., pp. 410,411.

But many today are receiving "the finishing touch" in immorality!

A Christian father was turning a mattress on his son's bed and noticed a "girlie" magazine full of art pictures on top of the bed springs. What should he do? Scold and lecture his teen age boy? He wondered. Then he thought: maybe there's a better way. So he found an excellent Christian youth magazine full of stimulating articles about the really good life and substituted it for the sex journal. This was a wise move--the substitution of the good for the bad. The boy learned a real lesson!

In volume 3 of the Testimonies, page 507, Mrs. White wrote of the eyes and ears as "avenues to the soul."

Every action of their lives is judged, not by the external appearance, but from the motive which dictated the action.

All should guard the senses, lest Satan gain victory over them; for these are the avenues to the soul.

When people loosen the reins on lust, they will be taken for a merry ride. Even Christians "climb aboard" with worldlings. I quote the following from Happiness Homemade by Ellen G. White, pages 125, 126.

Immorality abounds everywhere. Licentiousness is the special sin of this age. Never did vice lift its deformed head with such boldness as now. The people seem to be benumbed, and the lovers

of virtue and true goodness are nearly discouraged by its boldness, strength, and prevalence. The iniquity which abounds is not merely confined to the unbeliever and the scoffer. Would that this were the case, but it is not. Many men and women who profess the religion of Christ are guilty. Even some who profess to be looking for His appearing are no more prepared for that event than Satan himself. They are not cleansing themselves from all pollution.

They have so long served their lust that it is natural for their thoughts to be impure and their imaginations corrupt. It is as impossible to cause their minds to dwell upon pure and holy things as it would be to turn the course of Niagara and send its waters pouring up the falls. Every Christian will have to restrain his passions and be controlled by principle. Unless he does this, he is unworthy of the Christian name.--Happiness Homemade, pp. 125, 126.

There is an ascending scale to the sin of impurity. A better word would be descending scale. Here are the steps. 1. The natural lust of human heart and body, 2. This lust stimulated by pornographic sights, 3. Self-abuse or masturbation, 4. Fornication or illicit sex acts between male and female prior to marriage, 5. **Adultery**, that is unfaithfulness to the marriage partner.

It has been said that an automobile driver's license is not a license to kill. In connection with number 5 above Ellen White made clear that a license to marriage is not a license to commit gross sex acts between partners in marriage. Marriage should increase the spouses' self-respect, not degrade it. A marriage license is not a license to lust in any gross, degrading form in the married life.

But the true Christian will avoid extremes in the marriage relationship. When fanaticism raised its ugly head at a certain time in Ellen White's ministry, she rebuked it. When there were those who taught that husband and wife should live together as brother and sister in a "holy flesh" relationship she deplored this and called for a normal sex life with efforts to avoid excess. See her book the Adventist Home, the chapter titled "Marital Duties and Privileges."

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In the victorian era of the world people seldom talked about sex. Now declared one preacher, they seldom talk about anything else. A French writer said "The French seem to be obsessed with a love for money, the British with a love for social status, the Americans with a love for sex." But with some people, normal, natural physical love in marriage is inadequate. They are constantly uneasy, reaching out, searching for new thrills.

A psychologist told me recently about swing clubs operating in a large American city. Members of these swing clubs--married men and women--attend regular meetings. Each couple produces a house key which is thrown into a pot. One of the spouses is then blindfolded, picks out a key, then after the club meeting is over drives home with another man's wife or husband to spend the night. This is wife swapping on a wholesale basis.

God will judge for these things, my friends. Such people are sowing the wind but they will reap the whirlwind. Broken homes will eventuate, the children will lose their way in life, and both spouses will lose the crown of eternal life. What a price to pay for stolen hours in sin!

Then there is the temptation for men to visit places of ill fame. This is a business as old as man himself since the fall. The Bible throws out warnings after warning against this evil. Let me read it to you, in the New English Bible, the seventh chapter of Proverbs.

My son, keep my words,
store up my commands in your mind.
Keep my commands if you would live,
and treasure my teachings as the apple of your eye.
Wear them like a ring on your finger;
write them on the tablet of your memory.
Call Wisdom your sister,
greet Understanding as a familiar friend;
then they will save you from the adulteress,
from the loose woman with her seductive words.

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I glanced out of the window of my house,
I looked down through the lattice,
and I saw among simple youths,
there amongst the boys I noticed
a lad, a foolish lad,
passing along the street, at the corner,
stepping out in the direction of her house
at twilight, as the day faded,
at dusk as the night grew dark;
suddenly a woman came to meet him,
dressed like a prostitute, full of wiles,
flighty and inconstant,
a woman never content to stay at home,
lying in wait at every corner,
now in the street, now in the public squares.
She caught hold of him and kissed him;
brazenly she accosted him and said,
'I have had a sacrifice, an offering, to make
and I have paid my vows today;
that is why I have come out to meet you,
to watch for you and find you.
I have spread coverings on my bed.
of coloured linen from Egypt.
I have sprinkled my bed with myrrh,
my clothes with aloes and cassia.
Come! Let us drown ourselves in pleasure,
let us spend a whole night of love;
for the man of the house is away,
he has gone on a long journey,
he has taken a bag of silver with him;
until the moon is full he will not be home.'
Persuasively she led him on,
she pressed him with seductive words.
Like a simple fool he followed her,
like an ox on its way to the slaughter-house,
like an antelope bounding into the noose,
like a bird hurrying into the trap;
he did not know that he was risking his life
until the arrow pierced his vitals.

But now, my son, listen to me,
attend to what I say.
Do not let your heart entice you into her ways,
do not stray down her paths;
Many has she pierced and laid low,
and her victims are without number
Her house is the entrance to Sheol,
which leads down to the halls of death--Prov. 7.

Number 6 in the descending scale is desire which leads to unnatural sex life, call it homosexuality, call it lesbianism, call it what you will.

But this degrading practice is unquestionably the greatest moral evil of our time- a crime against society and against human nature. Yet every day hundreds of new Americans join the "gay" movement and leave the ranks of the "squares." The people who are confirmed in this lifestyle openly defend it and heap abuse upon those psychiatrists who declare them to be sick. "We are normal and healthy and we wonder why you can't see it," they declare. They call evil good and good evil as the Bible says.

A psychiatrist told me that according to the best light that he had, homosexuals did not exist in homes where there was a strong father figure. This may not always be true, but it is most often true.

This is significant in the light of Mrs. White's emphasis upon the strong role of the father in the family. See her book Ministry of Healing the chapter titled "The Builders of the Home."

Whatever may be the cause that produces the effect of homosexuality we know that this kind of behavior has been anathema in human society for centuries, not all but the vast bulk of the citizens scorning and condemning it, as a sin against the sexes, a revolt against the natural order, a deviation, a failure even to respect human anatomy.

Certainly the Bible is not complimentary. The apostle Paul mercilessly attacks homosexuality as a great sin. I quote Romans 1 where the apostle Paul speaks of degenerate men and women who "boast of their wisdom, but they have made fools of themselves, changing the splendor of immortal God for an image shaped like carnal man, . . .for this reason God has given them up to the vileness of their own desires, and the consequent degradation of their bodies, because they have bartered away the true God for a false one. . . . In consequence, I say, God has given them up to shameful passions,

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their women have exchanged natural intercourse for unnatural, and their men in turn, giving up natural relations with women, burn with lust for one another; males behave indecently with males, are paid in their own persons the fitting wage of such perversion." Romans 1:22-27 NEB

Only a homosexual knows how in his own body, mind, soul how true this Bible statement is--paying "in their own person the fitting wage of such perversion."

In his first letter to the Corinthians--Corinth was a church raised up from among pagans--Paul wrote as follows:

Surely you know that the unjust will never come into possession of the kingdom of God. Make no mistake: no fornicator or idolater, none who are guilty either of adultery or of homosexual perversion, no thieves or grabbers or drunkards or slanderers or swindlers, will possess the kingdom of God. Such were some of you. But you have been through the purifying waters; you have been dedicated to God and justified through the name of the Lord Jesus and the Spirit of our God. 1 Cor. 6:9-11 NEB

In the same chapter Paul speaks about man's relation with a harlot as follows:

It is not true that the body is for lust; it is for the Lord and the Lord for the body. verse 13.

Continuing the apostle says:

Shun fornication. Every other sin that a man can commit is outside the body, but the fornicator sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a shrine of the indwelling Holy Spirit, and the Spirit is God's gift to you? You do not belong to yourselves; you were brought at a price. Then honour God in your body. verses 18-20

If it is true that a man sins against his body by contact with a prostitute how dreadful in God's sight must be the perversion of the homosexual.

But there is hope for the homosexual in spite of the mental, emotional, physical, spiritual problems that seek to destroy him. He can find deliverance

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in Jesus Christ. The merciful and powerful Saviour can break those unseen bounds that twist and warp a homosexual! He can! And He has done it again and again! He did it in the church at Corinth for says Paul, "such were some of you" The Corinthians---some of them--were converted homosexuals. But they were converted! They had ceased their homosexuality.

Some "gay" people want to stop their homosexual way of life recognizing the unnaturalness of it but they don't know where to find power to overcome their moral problems. Note the following from an Ann Lander's column.

Dear Ann Landers: I'm gay but not happy. I function as a straight in my job and in my social contacts outside of work. I hate the word gay but I finally adopted it because homosexual is too long and other terms--fag, homo, queer, you name it--are too demeaning.

Why am I writing? Because I am fed up with the "Gay is Natural" advocates who write to you as spokesmen for us all. It's not natural as far as I am concerned. But it's the only way I can function.

I've tried repressing my sexual urges but they break out in other perverted ways. So I go along, living a lie, pretending to be straight, until I'm away from people who would be shocked, or hurt, if they knew the truth.

Sure, it's too bad I can't walk down the street with a guy I like and hold hands. So what? At least we aren't kept off the streets.

And I guess that's why I'm writing--to say it would be great if gays could be hired on the basis of their skills instead of being turned down for jobs because their mannerisms are a little suspect.

If gays could really come out of the closet, treatment could be offered without shame and it would be a better world for everybody.

I don't need to dance with my lover in public. All I want is a little understanding and compassion. Sorry to go on so, but I've had it with the "Gay Is Natural" group. It's not natural and I know it. But it's the best I can do.

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P.S. Please edit this letter so it will be printable.

Dear K.: I didn't need to edit your letter. It was fine. I appreciate your honesty and am in complete agreement with everything you said, -Orlando Sentinel Star, Monday, Sept. 24, 1973.

It is unthinkable that there should be churches, Christian churches, with practicing homosexuals whose life style is recognized. But there are such churches in America. The existence of such a church is a denial of the power of Jesus Christ to save the homosexual from his sin. Such a church is a testimony to the gross error that homosexuality is acceptable in our society, that it is not sin and that it should be accepted as normal practice.

I tell you, my friends, in the fear of God that the judgments of the Lord will visit the great cities of our world and evil men and women will see too late that their polluted sins have offended God.

The true historical account of Sodom and Gomorrah is recorded in the Bible for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come. Read the ugly story in the book of Genesis chapter 19. The scene opens with Lot entertaining two angels who, disguised as men, had come to destroy wicked Sodom and to hasten Lot and his family out of the city.

But when the residents saw these two handsome men enter Lot's house they burned with lust after them. Pounding on Lot's door, they demanded that the visitors be released to the crowd of homosexuals to be abused and ravaged. Lot refused, offering his daughters to the lusty crowd. But nothing but the two men would do.

Then the angels took charge of the situation, blinded the mob and demanded that Lot immediately move himself and his family out of the city. Then the fire fell upon that city full of practicing homosexuals and destroyed them all.

In the book of Jude verse 7 we read the following:

Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

Sodom and Gomorrah is set forth as an example, a city given to sex deviation which suffered the vengeance of eternal fire. It's an ugly picture. There is nothing pretty about it, but it's true.

Homosexuality has been called "one of the nation's great plagues." It has long been shrouded in ignorance, prejudice and fear. But at last it has been brought out into the light. Those who know the misery and unhappiness of this practice will studiously avoid it. In Family Life magazine published by the American Institute of Family Relations in Los Angeles appears the following:

Contrary to glamorous pictures presented by some homosexuals themselves, they are a sad, miserable lot. When 300 homosexuals were asked by a leader of the New York Mattachine Society (an organization of such persons) "If you had a son, would you want him to be a homosexual?," only six answered Yes. There is no "typical" homosexual; no two are alike; but there is something seriously the matter with every last one of them. "Why are there no laws to punish parents who have caused this condition?" one of them demanded in a savage letter to the New York Times. "Let all these parents be tried for murder! To take a poor innocent child and make him into an unhappy, wretched, miserable person, to ruin his life- there is no punishment hard enough."--Family Life, Publication No. 247.

Not long ago in Los Angeles the director of a radio station aired an editorial in which he urged the State Legislature to pass a bill that would have permitted "consenting adults" to practice homosexuality privately. Twenty-four hours were set aside by this radio station KABC to discuss this problem in a talk show. Five of the American Institute of Family Relations staff were invited to participate. Both sides of the question were presented.

The director of the radio station in his editorial which took one minute and fifty seconds made a strong appeal for acceptance of the practice. But he was required by law to give equal time for a reply. He offered Dr. Paul Popenoe this privilege. Dr. Popenoe's rebuttal required one minute and 48 seconds. This is what he said:

Homosexuality, said a committee of the New York Academy of Medicine, is "an illness of social proportions, national significance, and serious portent." It is usually found in civilizations that are decaying and approaching disintegration. In no such nation, to my knowledge, has it been promoted so aggressively as in ours at the present time. Viscount Hailsham, in his report to the British government, called it "a proselytizing religion." It can exist only by continually recruiting new victims. Sociologist Judson T. Landis, of the University in Berkeley, questioned 1800 college students; more than 500 said they had been approached by homosexuals, two-thirds of them when they were not more than 16 years old. Dr. Evelyn Hooker of UCLA, after investigations in Los Angeles, spoke of the "frantic promiscuity" of the homosexual community here. Says the distinguished Canadian authority, Dr. Daniel Cappon, "The natural history of the homosexual person seems to be one of frigidity, impotence, broken personal relationships, psychosomatic disorders, alcoholism, paranoid psychosis, and suicide." It is thoroughly demonstrated that any homosexual can be changed if he wants to be. No one has had to become a homosexual. No one has to remain a homosexual. There is no more reason to allow such persons to continue dragging new victims into their miserable existence, than to allow a person sick with any other serious communicable disease to spread his illness to the public. If it spreads, homosexuality must inevitably end in the extermination of the race that practices it. California should work resolutely toward a culture that is life-oriented, not death-oriented.--Ibid.

Christianity is life oriented. It is not death oriented. Since homosexuality is curable, it is possible for homosexuals to enter the kingdom of God. This forbidden "love" can be changed into Christian love that is natural, normal and which is associated with true happiness.

Every Christian must do his best both to prevent homosexuality in his own home and community and where occasion presents itself, to cure those who are afflicted with this moral disease. Isaiah, the gospel prophet offers these words of hope:

Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment. Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah. Wash ye, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well; seek judgment relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. Isa. 1:4-6,10,16-20