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Thirty-Three Words for Sin in the New Testament: Part 3

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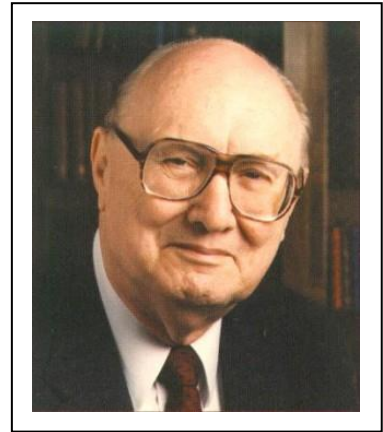
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VI. Ἀσέβεια

(ἀσέβεια, ἀσεβής, ἀσεβέω)

The three words to be considered in this section are the second group of words for sin beginning with the alpha privative, ἀδικέω having been discussed at the close of the previous article. The three words here examined are derived from σέβω, meaning to *reverence* or to *worship*, and with the alpha privative come to mean, *not to reverence, not to worship*. The words in whatever form they are found, noun, verb, or adjective, indicate an active and positive withholding from God of the worship due Him. It is a matter of choice and does not refer to one's state, disposition, imputed sin, or condemnation. Trench in comment upon the noun ἀσέβεια writes: "Ἀσέβεια ... is positive and active irreligion, and this contemplated as a deliberate withholding from God of his dues of prayer and of service, a standing, so to speak, in battle array against Him."¹ A study of the three forms in which the words occur reveals that to all practical purposes their definition is the same.



1. Ἀσέβεια

The noun form is found six times in the New Testament (Rom. 1:18; 11:26; 2 Tim. 2:16; Tit. 2:12; Jude 1:5, 18), and is translated four times as *ungodliness* and twice as *ungodly*, i.e., ungodly deeds. In every instance except 2 Timothy 2:16, it is used regarding unsaved men, and in the one exception it is a doubtful reference to Christian conduct. It is characteristically used of the attitude of the unbelieving world which rejects God.

¹ *Synonymms of the New Testament*, pp. 242, 243.

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2. Ἄσεβης

The adjective is translated *ungodly* in eight out of its nine instances in the New Testament, and once as *ungodly man*. While an adjective in form, it is often used as a noun, or with the noun understood. In Romans 4:5 and 5:6, the ungodly are said to be the objects of justification by faith. Twice it is paired with ἀμαρτωλός, a sinner, a word already discussed (1 Tim. 1:9; 1 Pet. 4:18). Like the noun, the adjective is used to describe a positive and deliberate disregard of God. For instance, in 2 Peter 2:5, the adjective is used to describe the world destroyed by the flood; in 2 Peter 3:7, it is used in reference to the world which will be destroyed by fire. In Jude 4, men are described as “ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.”

An interesting instance is found in Jude 15 where all three words for ungodliness are found, the adjective twice, “To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly [adjective] among them of all their ungodly [noun] deeds which they have ungodly committed [verb], and of all their hard speeches which ungodly [adjective] sinners have spoken against him.” The verse and the context describes the world to be judged at the second coming of Christ—a condition of active rebellion against God.

3. Ἄσεβέω

The verb is found only twice in the New Testament (2 Pet. 2:6; Jude 1:15). Both references are to the cities of Sodom and Gomorrhah and those who live like their inhabitants. Again, the same positive quality of ungodliness is found in its use as in the other forms.

A survey of the seventeen times these three words occur in the New Testament illustrates the fact that they are used consistently to describe unsaved men. While ungodly men are those for whom Christ died (Rom. 5:6), and they can be justified by faith (Rom. 4:5; 5:9), they apparently are no longer to be considered ungodly after salvation. Those who remain ungodly face the certain judgment of God for their persistence in rebellion against Him. They are not only unlike God in moral quality, but they do not want His righteousness through Christ.

VII. Ἄνομία

(ἀνομία, ἄνομος, ἀνόμως)

All three words considered here are derived from the common word νόμος, usually translated *law*, with the prefix of the alpha privative. The resultant meaning is *without law*, or *lawless*. One can be without law or be lawless in three senses: without law in that

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no law is imposed; without law in the sense that the knowledge of it is withheld; or a violator of law, that is, one who lives as if there were no law. There may be varied significance to the reference to law itself. The reference may be specific, referring to some law such as the law of Moses, or it may be general as a reference to any moral law.

1. Ἄνομία

The noun form is found fourteen times in the New Testament, twelve times translated *iniquity*, once *transgression of the law*, and once *unrighteousness*. The noun form is never used in the sense of a lack of knowledge of the law, but always refers to a positive transgression of the law. Of the Pharisees, Christ said, “Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity” (Mt. 23:28). The Pharisees, who boasted in the law of Moses, were breakers of the law. Lawlessness is predicted as a characteristic of the close of the present age (Mt. 24:12). The coming Man of Sin is designated as one who is a violator of law—a lawless one (2 Thes. 2:3). Again, Christ is revealed to have redeemed us from all iniquity or lawlessness (Tit. 2:14).

An interesting instance is found in 1 John 3:4, where ἁμαρτία is defined as ἄνομία. In this verse it is stated, “Every one that doeth sin doeth also lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness” (Revised Version). The passage consists in a description of the character of ἁμαρτία specifying that it is a violation of law. This is seen in the nature of the case as behind all moral law is the perfectly holy character of God, and any *missing the mark* is a failure to attain this standard. It is clear from the passage that all ἁμαρτία is lawlessness, the description being of the whole, not of a particular kind of *missing the mark*. For this reason it is stated in 1 John 3:6, “Whosoever abideth in him does not keep sinning; whosoever keeps sinning hath not seen him, neither known him” (literal translation). The fact that all sin is a breaking of law gives to sin such a character that one who abides in Christ cannot keep sinning.

Trench, in commenting on Romans 5:13, contends that there may be ἁμαρτία and ἀδικία without law, but not ἄνομία.² An inquiry into the subject will lead to the conclusion, however, that all sin is based on the concept of breaking of law. It is true that Paul indicated there was no law in the period from Adam to Moses (Rom. 5:13, 14), but the reference is to the law of Moses for Israel, not law in general. In fact, it is clear from the Bible that sin reigned from Adam to Moses as proved by the universality of death. Peter concludes, for instance, that the flood came as a result of sin (2 Pet 2:5; 3:6, 7). The phrase “sin is not imputed where there is no law” is simply a reference to the fact that the law of Moses was not retroactive—did not apply before it was given.

² *Synonymns of the New Testament*, p. 244.

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The use of the plural of ἀνομία differs from the singular only as the collective and abstract differs from the particular. The plural emphasizes the acts of iniquity or lawlessness in their several violations. In Romans 4:7, an illustration is afforded, “Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.” We find ἁμαρτία and ἀνομία paired, both in the plural, speaking of specific acts of sin.

2. ἄνομος

The adjective generally has a similar meaning to the noun, but it is sometimes used in the sense of being without law, a sense in which the noun is never used. The usual translation is *without law*, found four times, with the translation *lawless* being found once, *unlawful*, once, *wicked*, twice, and *transgressor*, twice. A good illustration of the use of *being without law* is found in 1 Corinthians 9:21, where Paul plays all the strings of the harp in one verse, “To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law.” Paul is talking about Gentiles as being *without law*, i.e., not under Mosaic law. He hastens to point out, however, is clearly used in its primary sense of being bereft he does not cut himself off from God as he is *inlawed* (literal rendering) to Christ. It is clear that the Gentiles are not without law in the absolute sense, as Paul shows in Romans that the Gentiles are condemned by the light which they have, even though they do not have the law of Moses. The word, however is clearly used in its primary sense of being bereft of law, and as such is used in the New Testament in the form of an adjective though the noun is never so used.

Of its use in the sense of violation of law, Acts 2:23 is a good illustration. Peter describes the hands that crucified Christ as *wicked* and the word used is ἄνομος. The meaning is not that the hands are under no law, but that they violated law. In this sense the adjective is used in a similar meaning to the noun.

3. ἄνόμως

The adverb is found only twice in the New Testament, both instances occurring in Romans 2:12, “For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law.” In the latter part of the verse he contrasts the Gentile to the Jew. *Without law* means here *without the law of Moses*, or, *without a law such as the law of Moses*. This use of the verb is similar to the use of the adjective in 1 Corinthians 9:21. The adverb, then, so far as it is used in the New Testament, is used only to represent the idea of being destitute of the law, not in the sense of violating the law.

Ἄνομία and its two kindred words have the meaning of being without law in that the law in question is not imposed, without law in the sense of having no knowledge of it, or

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without law in the sense of refusing it and violating its precepts. The condition of violating law has significance according to the meaning and extent of the law involved. In some cases, this is specifically the law of Moses, in others, all moral law, as in 1 John 3:4. When used in the sense of violation of any moral law, it may be said to characterize all sin, calling attention to the fact that sin in every dispensation is a violation of law—if no other, the underlying moral law of the known will of God.

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ἄνομία is always used of one in the condition or of a deed that is contrary to law. The adjective is used usually in the sense of being without the law of Moses or a law such as the law of Moses. The adverb is used exclusively for the idea of being without the law of Moses. The chief contribution which a study of these words affords is the concept that sin is a violation of the moral government of God, that law for different peoples and times is not the same—all peoples having not the same obligations. The concept of sin is removed from a relative human standard to the touchstone of the moral law of God as it extends to all peoples.

VIII. ἄγνοέω

(ἄγνοέω, ἄγνοια, ἀγνόημα, ἀγνωσία)

The four words which constitute the group now to be examined are derived from the common verb γινώσκω, which is defined by Thayer, “a discriminating apprehension of external impressions, a knowledge grounded in personal experience.”³ The emphasis is not on knowledge learned through others, but on knowledge which has become real in experience, i.e., knowledge which is not intuitive on the one hand, nor theoretical on the other, as other Greek words are used to express these ideas.

The words under consideration have the alpha privative and therefore connote *ignorance* or *lack of knowledge*. There is a *lack of understanding* or ignorance of the significance of the facts. Resulting from this ignorance or lack of understanding, comes the error or sin resulting from it. All of these ideas appear in different force in the instances where these words are used.

1. ἄγνοέω

The verb, found twenty-two times in the New Testament, is used usually in the sense of *ignorance*. In 1 Timothy 1:13, for instance, Paul, speaking of himself, writes, “Who was before a blasphemer and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I *did it ignorantly* in unbelief” (italics supplied). The point at issue is not that Paul had never

³ *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, s.v.*

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heard of Christ or His claims, but that he was ignorant of the truth and significance of Christian faith. He points out that one reason for mercy being extended to him was the fact that his sin was not in flagrant and willful disobedience of God, even though it was “injurious” and he was a “blasphemer.” A similar reference is found in Acts 13:27 where it is written that the rulers of Jerusalem “knew him not.” Paul often uses the phrase, “I do not wish you to be ignorant,” referring to truth he is about to present to them. All of these references point to the fact that the essential meaning of the word is ignorance of facts or ignorance of the truth of facts.

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Another meaning of the verb is found in Mark 9:32, where it is said of the disciples that “They understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him.” What they did not understand is explained by the context to be the reference by Christ to His death and resurrection. They knew that Christ had spoken the words, but they were ignorant of their significance. Later, when the prophecy was fulfilled, they no longer misunderstood or failed to understand. The same incident with the same use of the verb is found in Luke 9:45.

The resultant idea is found in the meaning, *to err*, or *sin through mistake*.⁴ There is no clear example of this in the New Testament, but Hebrews 5:2 may be taken in this light. The context refers to sins such as would need sacrifices in the Jewish order, and the verse itself refers to the high priests as those “who can have compassion on the *ignorant*, and on them that are out of the way” (italics supplied). Westcott points out, “The compound description may either indicate the source (ignorance) and the issue (going astray) of sin; or it may describe sinners, so far as they come into consideration here, under two main aspects.”⁵

If the meaning of the verb here is ignorance as the source of sin, it cannot be called specifically sin. However, if it is taken as describing sinners, it indicates sins committed in ignorance. The general meaning of the verb is clearly that of ignorance, the question in every instance being the extent of the ignorance or its issue into sin.

2. ἄγνοια

The noun is found four times in the New Testament (Acts 3:17; 17:30; Eph. 4:18; 1 Pet. 1:14), always translated *ignorance*. The noun does not differ to any extent from the meaning of the verb. In Ephesians 4:18, however, it should be noted that ignorance is sin in itself, apart from its issue into further sin, as it has the element of choice in it. Ignorance of God’s will is always a result as well as a cause of sin. As John 7:17 reveals, “If any man

⁴ Thayer, *loc. cit.*

⁵ *Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 121.

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will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.” In Acts 3:17 it is used in reference to the ignorance of the rulers of Jerusalem in crucifying Christ. The ignorance was real in the sense that they actually thought Christ was an imposter. On the other hand, they were blinded to the proofs of His Messiahship by their own sin. A similar reference is found in Acts 17:30, where the times in which idolatry was practiced by Gentiles is called, “the times of this ignorance.” While idolatry is based on ignorance, nevertheless, Paul goes on to say that they are to repent. While ignorance, therefore, is specified as sin, it is clearly sin in a mild light as contrasted to willful and God-defying sin.

3. Ἀγνόημα

Found only once in the New Testament (Heb. 9:7) this noun, in contrast to the one just discussed, indicates a concept which is more concrete, as would be expected from the μα ending. In its use in the New Testament, it refers to the sins of the people (“errors of the people”) for which the priest made sacrifice. While the use of the verb in Hebrews 5:2 may not necessarily refer to acts of sin proceeding from ignorance, it is clear that in Hebrews 9:7 the noun definitely refers to the act and not simply to a lack of knowledge. This noun may be taken as a reference to an act of sin.

4. Ἀγνοσία

This noun is found only in 1 Corinthians 15:34 and 1 Peter 2:15 where it is used in contrast to the idea in the Greek word γνῶσις, hence, has the meaning *lack of knowledge* or *ignorance*. The word is used in both instances where Christians are exhorted to bear in mind the ignorance of the world and to act and speak accordingly. The facts of which the world is ignorant are shown by the context to be either the reality of the truth in Christ, or the general view of the world as a Christian sees it. As pointed out in 1 Peter 2:15, we are to take into consideration in our action not only the Christian view, but we must also consider how the world views the act. The issue in point is subjection and obedience to civil authority (cf. Rom. 13).

The reference in 1 Corinthians 15:34 would seem to indicate a willful attitude of ignorance. In the context there is discussion of the unbelief of some in the doctrine of resurrection, and refutation of the skepticism is advanced. It would seem that in 1 Corinthians 15:34, where Paul writes, “For some have not the knowledge of God,” that he is not merely stating the fact of ignorance, but revealing their attitude of skepticism. It may be noted that the English word *agnosticism* is derived directly from ἀγνοσία. They not only did not know, but they did not want to know. As A. R. Fausset writes in this regard commenting on the word, “Stronger than ‘are ignorant of God.’ An habitual

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*ignorance: wilful, in that they prefer to keep their sins, rather than part with them in order to know God (cf. John 7:17; 1 Peter 2:15)."*⁶

In contrast to ἄγνοια, ἀγνωσία seems to be a state of ignorance based on unbelief, the unbelief being willful, and the ignorance at least in part a matter of choice. This ignorance has an element of skepticism which is at once a cause and a result of ignorance of God. While ἄγνοια is used of unbelief of the Jewish rulers, blinded by prejudice and preconceived ideas, ἀγνωσία is something else, and an unbelief based on skepticism and coming nearer being an attitude of mind and a philosophy of life. Hence, while a Sadducee could be accused of both forms of unbelief, a Pharisee could be accused only of ἄγνοια.

In reviewing the four words discussed in this section, while there is underlying unity in their meaning of ignorance as manifested in lack of knowledge and comprehension of the truth, there are some distinctions which may be observed. The verb is used in the most general sense, including all the other ideas, however. ἄγνοια is the abstract conception of ignorance, being less concrete than ἀγνόημα and less willful than either ἀγνόημα or ἀγνωσία. Ἀγνόημα places emphasis on the result of ignorance rather than the cause or the fact of ignorance. It is used only as ignorance manifested in deed in the New Testament. Ἀγνωσία has been shown to embrace the idea of skepticism and to be the description of a philosophy of life or attitude of mind toward facts which discredits the facts as being irrational or as not subject to knowledge or proof. The aspect of unbelief is prominent in ἄγνοια and ἀγνωσία in contrast to ἀγνόημα in which unbelief is not necessarily postulated. In general, all four words picture sin in the mild light of ignorance, mistake, or misconception, and the words are used where a mild picture of sin is intended.

IX. Ἡττάω

(ἡττάω, ἡττημα, ἡττων)

The key idea to the three words treated in this section is found in the concept of *inferiority*. Ἡττων, or as some spell it, ἡσσων, is used from Homer down to mean *inferior*, being used adverbially, *less*. The verb form accordingly means *to make less*, or *to be overcome*. The noun form is defined by Thayer, "*a diminution, decrease: i.e., defeat ... loss.*"⁷ The meaning of the three forms found in the New Testament is much the same.

⁶ *Critical and Explanatory Commentary on the Bible*, 1 Cor. 15:34.

⁷ *Op. cit.*, s.v.

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1. Ἡττάω

In the three instances in which the verb is found in the New Testament (2 Cor. 12:13; 2 Pet. 2:19, 20) it is used in the passive voice, being translated once *to be inferior*, and twice, *to be overcome*. In 2 Corinthians 12:13, Paul asks, “For what is it wherein *ye were inferior* to other churches, except it be that I myself was not burdensome to you? forgive me this wrong” (italics supplied). The context contains Paul’s defense of his apostolic office. He insists that he has not slighted the Corinthian church, and that it had not *been made inferior* by his paying his own way.

The reference in 2 Peter 2:19, 20, uses the verb twice in the sense of being *overcome* by the pollutions of the world and its corruption. The way of the false teachers, overcome by the world, is contrasted to the Christian’s victory over the world. In these instances as well as in 2 Corinthians, it is clear that the concept is that of defeat, a view of sin which is not as severe as some others we have considered. The moral or ethical significance is not in the foreground. The issue is rather one of victory over the corruptions of the world.

2. Ἡττημα

The noun form is peculiar to the New Testament, and it is found only twice there (Rom. 11:12; 1 Cor. 6:7). In its character as a noun, it is defined most accurately as *defeat* or *loss*. It is made positive and definite by the *μα* ending, which points to the idea as having been made concrete or real. In Romans 11:12, the word is used to describe the “diminishing” of the Jews in their present dispersion. Nationally they had rejected Christ and had fallen from their place of privilege. Gentiles now have their opportunity. As in the verb, we have here the idea of defeat or loss. In 1 Corinthians 6:7, the only other reference, we find it translated *fault*, referring to saints going to law with each other. While undoubtedly it was sinful for saints to go to law with each other, the point is rather that this state of affairs is going to result in spiritual loss to both parties and to the church in general. It is going to constitute a blot on their testimony. The noun form, like the verb, is used as a mild word for sin, in which the sin specified is shown to be less than the best way of doing things, an error in judgment or use of wrong tactics rather than flagrant sin.

3. Ἡττων

The adjective, found twice in the New Testament (1 Cor. 11:17; 2 Cor. 12:15) is given the translation *worse*. The first instance is in relation to their abuse of the Lord’s Supper, in which Paul tells them that they “come together not for better, but for the *worse*” (italics supplied). The moral idea is more remote than any of the instances previously considered. In the second instance (2 Cor. 12:15), there is apparently no moral idea at all,

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as Paul writes, “Though the more abundantly I love you, the *less* I be loved (italics supplied). The word is used simply to describe degrees of affection.

A consideration of all the uses of these three words leads one to the conclusion that they refer to a concept of sin in which sin is described as the inferior path, the lesser of the two possibilities. While in most instances the reality of the sin is not questioned, the emphasis is rather upon defeat and inferiority than on sin as a violation of righteousness. At question is strength and victory, rather than righteousness.

Χ. Πονηρός

(πονηρός, πονηρία)

Both words to be discussed in this section come from the verb *πονέω*, meaning *to toil*, or *to carry on unremitting labor*. In the classic Greek, *πονηρός* is used in a non-ethical sense in keeping with the meaning of the verb. In the New Testament, however, the idea of labor or toil without recompense or relief is turned to represent the concept of evil, peril, or disaster. Both the noun and adjective forms used in the New Testament are uniformly used to represent something evil or wicked, though in the case of the adjective the evil may not be ethical in nature.

An examination of the translations of the adjective *πονηρός* bears this out as it is translated *evil* thirty-eight times, *bad* once, *grievous* once, *lewd*, once, *malicious* once, *which is evil* twice, *wicked* eleven times. When used as a noun, the adjective is translated *evil* ten times, *evil things* twice, *harm* once, *wicked* once, and as *evil* with *ῥῆμα* once.

The noun *πονηρία* presents a similar picture, being translated *wickedness* six times, *iniquity* once, and *wicked* once. The idea back of both noun and adjective is that of sin as hopeless, profitless, and inherently evil.

1. Πονηρός

The adjective is occasionally used in the New Testament without an ethical significance as for instance in Matthew 6:23 and Luke 11:34 where it is used in reference to a diseased or blind eye. Usually, however, it bears a moral or ethical meaning. In 2 Timothy 3:13, for instance, we find a reference to “evil men.” It is obviously referring to sinful men. In Matthew 12:34, the “generation of vipers” is called *evil*. In Matthew 12:39, the adjective is used with “generation” where Christ said, “An *evil* and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign” (italics supplied). The adjective is also used in Matthew 12:45 of wicked spirits, and often of Satan himself (Mt. 5:37; 6:13; etc.).

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The adjective is frequently used as a substantive. As Thayer points out,⁸ πονηρός is contrasted to δίκαιος (*just* or *righteous*) (Mt. 13:49), contrasted to ἀγαθός (*good*), is paired with ἀχάριστος (*unthankful*), and is used alone as a substantive meaning an *evil-doer* or *one who injures*. In these instances, the adjective is used as a noun or with the noun understood, which is a regular Greek idiom.

In contrast to other words for sin, πονηρός points to sin as evil, essentially bad, and unprofitable, differing from other words for sin in that it connotes specifically that the act or person is thoroughly permeated with evil. Hence in Matthew 7:17, where *evil* fruit is contrasted to good, it is not speaking of a part, but of the whole, not of an attribute but of the very nature. The trouble is deep seated, not superficial. The word as used for sin, therefore, refers to sin which is completely bad. It is not a mild word for sin, but pictures its utter corruption and unmitigated peccancy, dealing not so much with the cause of sin as with its nature and its result.

2. Πονηρία

The noun is found eight times in Scripture, usually translated *wickedness*, and it is always found in an ethical sense. Of the Herodians, who tried to trip Christ on the question of the tribute money, it is said that “Jesus perceived their wickedness” (Mt. 22:18). Of the Pharisees, Christ said, “Your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness” (Lk. 11:39). In the list of Gentile sins in Romans 1:29–31, *wickedness* is included. The word is used in contrast to truth in 1 Corinthians 5:8, “Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” As *malice* is in contrast to *sincerity*, so *wickedness* is in contrast to *truth*. In Mark 7:22, the plural is used, referring to the separate acts which are so characterized. In all these passages, the sin is viewed as flagrant, utterly bad, and fit only for judgment.

From this brief examination of these two words, it has been shown that acts so described are completely wicked. While the element of choice is postulated, the emphasis is on the essential nature of the act as being wicked. The words, therefore, describe sin from the standpoint of value and quality. The point at issue is not so much that this wickedness proceeds from choice or an act of the will, but rather that the act whatever its cause is essentially bad in its nature. No attempt is made to condone sin when these words are used. It is a picture of sin as God sees it, in its utter worthlessness, depravity, and evil character, fit for nothing except judgment. From its derivation comes the idea of unrecompensed toil, so well illustrated in the activity of Satan, whose activity is patent

⁸ *Ibid.*, s.v.

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in its utter wickedness, and its issue will be judgment when his wickedness will come to naught.

Conclusion

The rapid sketch afforded the doctrine of sin by a study of the words relating to the doctrine in the New Testament is revealing not only in its detail but also in its more general features. Sin is viewed from every angle. In ἁμαρτάνω and its other forms sin is viewed as *missing the mark*, “coming short of the glory of God.” As *transgression* and a *violation of moral law* sin is revealed in the instances where παραβαίνω is used. A lesser word for sin, summed in the concept of the word *fall*, is found in παράπτωμα. The need for hearing the voice of God, and the danger of failing to listen are embodied in the word παρακούω. The unrighteous and unjust character of sin is revealed in ἀδικέω. Defiance of God and His judgment and open rebellion against God are described by ἀσεβέω. The lawless character of sin is defined in ἀνομία. Sin springing from ignorance as well as the concept of the resulting blindness to spiritual truth is expressed by the word ἀγνοέω. Sin as a defeat and inferior choice is represented by ἡττάω. Finally, sin in its utter corruption, wickedness, and evil character is portrayed in the word πονηρός.

No one who has examined the many words for sin in the New Testament can fail to arrive at the conclusion that sin is a great reality, that it is utterly wicked, that it is worthy of righteous judgment, and that only through a salvation from sin provided through the sacrifice of Christ can anyone hope to know true righteousness. What significance it gives the words of Romans 5:7, 8, “For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

—Dallas, Texas.

∅ “... Another advantage of the Biblical morality arises from the fact that it lays its prohibition on the first tendency to evil in the heart. It does not wait for the overt act, nor for the half-formed desire. It denounces the slightest parleying with temptation, the entertaining for the briefest moment of a corrupt wish. In its view, the apostasy did not consist in plucking the fruit. The race was ruined, when the first suggestion of the tempter was not instantly repelled. Death eternal hung on a moment’s weakness in the will. All hope was gone when the moral principle wavered. In the estimate of God’s law, the highway robbery is comparatively innocent. The crime was in the covetous glance of the eye—in not instantaneously crushing the avaricious desire. What is called a fraudulent bankruptcy may be venial. The guilt was in the

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assumption of obligations which there was no reasonable prospect of discharging, or rather it was in the state of mind which first began to elevate riches into a god. The degenerating process began in the idolatry of gold, in the first turning of the feeblest current of the affections in the wrong direction. Men charge the deviation of the youth from the paths of virtue to some overmastering temptation, to some public and astounding offence. But the divine precept laid its finger on the desire, years before, to read a certain book, against which, at the time, conscience remonstrated. Thus the Word of God becomes the discerners of the thoughts and intents of the heart. No latent desire can evade its searching glance; no recess of the soul is so barred as to exclude it." — *Bibliotheca Sacra*, February, 1846.⁹

⁹ Walvoord, J. F. (1943). "Thirty-Three Words for Sin in the New Testament." *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 100, 374–389.