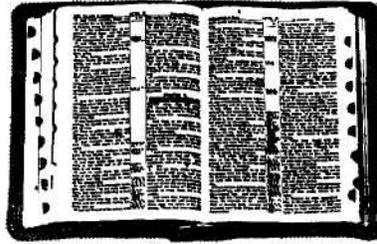


SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

"Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me" — John 5:39.



"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" — Acts 17:11

"DEVOTED TO THE SEARCH FOR DIVINE TRUTH"

VOLUME XXVIII

OCTOBER, 1987

10

THINK ON THESE THINGS

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WHAT IS HADES?

The word "hades" means "unseen" and refers to the abode of the dead. It means "the realm of disembodied spirits," or the "unseen world." There is no inherent idea of punishment in this term itself, even though the wicked are tormented in hades (Luke 16:22-24). It describes the realm where all the spirits abide between death and the resurrection. The word is translated in the King James Version by the word "hell" (Luke 16:23; Acts 2:27), which may not be clear in our present day use of the word. As we use the word it usually connotes the eternal abode of the wicked after the judgment.

To properly understand the term "hades," it must be observed that there are three entirely different states of the human spirit distinct from each other:

The first is union with a physical body. This state is life on earth which terminates in physical death.

The second state is that in which the human spirit is separated from its physical body. This begins at death and ends with the resurrection of the body. Hades is emptied of all its inhabitants at the resurrection (Revelation 20:13).

The third state commences with the reunion of the spirit and the resurrected spiritual body, and continues for ever (1 Corinthians 15:44). Hades will be destroyed when the third state begins (Revelation 20:14). Christ now has power over death and hades and will abolish them at his second coming (Revelation 1:18).

The Spirit Of Christ Went To Hades

When Jesus died he went to hell (hades) (Acts 2:27,

31). Are we to suppose that Jesus was tormented in hades? Certainly not! He told the thief, with whom he was crucified, that he was going to "paradise," which is a transliterated word meaning "a garden," or "a place of pleasure or comfort" (Luke 23:43).

When Christ went to *hades* (Acts 2:27), he also went into the hands of God, who is in heaven. Just after telling the thief that he would be with him in paradise that day, he said to his Father, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," and he died (Luke 23:46). His spirit went to paradise in hades (Luke 23:43), but he did not go to heaven that day (John 20:14).

Jesus said, "... upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18). This is hades, the unseen realm. Peter quotes the prophecy of David concerning the resurrection of Christ that his soul was not left in *hell* (*hades*), nor was his body left in the grave (Acts 2:27 KJV).

"Gehenna"

The Greek word "gehenna" is translated "hell" in the KJV and refers to the place of eternal punishment. It is described as the "lake that burns with fire and brimstone" and "the second death" (Matthew 10:28; 25:41; Mark 9:43,48; Revelation 20:10, 14, 15). This word always refers to eternal punishment. It is not the place where Jesus went at his death (Acts 2:27). The KJV uses the English "hell" to translate both "gehenna" and "hades." The ASV makes a difference in translating the two words, as "hell" and "hades."

"Tartarus"

The Greek word "tartarus" is also translated "hell" in the KJV. It means a place of punishment (II Peter 2:4), and refers to that part of hades where the wicked are held in the intermediate state.

Two Places in Hades

Jesus revealed some facts about the unseen abode of the spirits of the dead in Luke 16:19-31. To call this a parable does not destroy the truth Jesus taught. It teaches that the spirit survives the body and is conscious in hades. He describes two men who died. One was named Lazarus and the other was simply called a rich man. Jesus said Lazarus died and was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom. Nothing is said about his body,

but it is certain that somewhere it was buried and began to return to the dust from which it came. His spirit went to *hades*. The rich man also died. His body is said to have been buried; it went to the grave. His spirit also went to *hades*, and he found himself in torments. Both of these men were in *hades*, but they were in different states, described by different terms; there was a "great gulf fixed" so that one could not go from one place to the other. The place in *hades* where Lazarus was is called "Abraham's bosom," a place of comfort. The place in *hades* where the rich man was is called "tartarus," a place of torments (2Peter 2:4). The rich man was not in the place of eternal punishment because the word used to describe that place is "gehenna," the final abode of the unrighteous and workers of iniquity.

The righteous who die in the Lord are at rest (Revelation 14:13), and the wicked who die enter torments to await the resurrection from the dead and the judgment (Luke 16:19-31). When Christ comes again all the dead will be raised, some to the resurrection of damnation and some to the resurrection of life (John 5:28,29). After the judgment, which immediately follows the resurrection at the last day, the wicked will be cast into "gehenna," which is the final punishment. This punishment is outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matthew 25:30), the everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord (2 Thessalonians 1:9), hell fire which is never quenched (Mark 9:44, 45), and the place of torment with fire and brimstone (Revelation 14:10, 11).

Guy N. Woods said in his booklet, "Where Are The Dead?" (pages 14,15), that an ingenious theory was developed by brother F. G. Allen in "Old Paths Guide," and later in his sermon on "The State Of The Dead," in the "Old Paths Pulpit" in which he advanced the idea that at the cross Christ abolished the compartment in *hades* designated "Abraham's bosom," and moved it to heaven. From that time all the faithful pass immediately into heaven at death. Others have argued that the intermediate state was abolished and the righteous go directly to heaven and the wicked go to the final and eternal "gehenna." But this theory is proved wrong by Peter's statement on the day of Pentecost, just ten days after the ascension of Christ to heaven. In showing the fulfillment of David's prophecy of the resurrection of Christ, he said: "For David is not ascended into the heavens" (Acts 2:34). Neither the body nor spirit of David had ascended into the heavens at the time Peter spoke by the Holy Spirit, and that was AFTER the cross and the ascension of Christ into heaven.

This theory reduces the judgment to a needless event. If all now go to their eternal abode at death, why would they have to be brought out of heaven and *gehenna* in the resurrection to be judged and then returned back to the place from which they were taken? The day of judgment is a day when the dead must give an account of their lives, and it is a day when the Lord sentences all to their eternal destiny in their resurrected bodies (Matthew 25:31-46).

Searching The Scriptures

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Editorial

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NOT SLOTHFUL IN BUSINESS

Romans 12 begins the practical section of the great epistle on justification by faith. Here the outworkings of a justified life are clearly set forth. In our bodies we offer a living sacrifice both actual and spiritual. We are not now to be conformed to the mold of this world, but, rather, transformed by the renewing of the mind which longs to please God in all things. The religion of Christ changes us from the inside.

But this inner renewing of the mind manifests itself by outward function as we each make use of the differing gifts for service. All of us do not have the same office in the kingdom. We cannot all do the same things and that is a blessing. The "gifts" differing one from another in this passage cover both miraculous and non-miraculous functions. Some have to do with public activity while others concern personal character reflected in relations between Christians (such as "in honor preferring one another"). All of these elements of service are to be rendered with "diligence" (vv. 8,11).

"Not slothful in business" (KJV) is rendered "not lagging in diligence" (NKJV) in verse 11. "Slothful" suggests indolence, laziness or a lack of care. Solomon wrote "I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man of void of understanding; and, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man" (Prov. 24:30-34). What an apt description of the slothful farmer.

The Hebrew writer contrasts diligence with slothfulness. "And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises" (Heb. 6:11-12).

The opposite of slothfulness, or lack of diligence, is "fervent in spirit." The word "fervent" suggests intensity of feeling, passion, that which boils with heat. It is to our "spirit" that God directed his revelation. It is in this "spirit" that we hold communion with God. The renewed mind takes delight in the things of God. His spirit is stirred and his service is rendered with great feeling. His service is to the Lord. It must not be apathetically

performed; but with zeal. The key to acceptable service is a proper respect for the Almighty. This is true whether we are speaking of public devotion expressed in corporate worship, or in the everyday use of our abilities in the varied relations of life. We are the Lord's. What we do is seen by him. This principle has many applications. Consider the following three areas.

Daily Work

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might" (Eccle. 9:10). The servant in New Testament times was to perform "not with eye-service, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men" (Eph. 6:5-7). Laziness in the work place is a scourge to society. Do it right, the first time. Whether you work in a factory and manufacture a product, or in an office where you program computers or clear important papers through proper channels, please do it right. Practice the golden rule. Don't be "lagging in diligence."

Family Life

Husbands are to "love their wives" "as Christ also loved the church" and wives are to see that they "revere their husbands" (Eph. 5:22-33). A man is to "provide for his own" (1 Tim. 5:8) and a woman is to "guide the house" (1 Tim. 5:14). Laziness on either part places undue strain upon a family. The renewed mind attuned to divine wisdom has a passion for rendering the best service possible, first of all, because that is well pleasing to God. But that impacts upon human relationships. When God is pleased, all of life is better for us. The husband who shows no fervency of spirit in dealing with his wife, or the unconcerned wife toward her husband are both endangering the happiness and stability of their marriage. God is not served, nor our own best interests, when such slothfulness appears.

In the Congregation

I have been to places for meetings where the grass was knee deep around the meetinghouse, paint was peeling off the doors, window frames and the overhang. The tract rack was either bare or cluttered with items yellow with age. The building needed cleaning. No advertisement of the meeting had been done. People would come at the last five minutes and people waited in the parking lot for someone with a key to open the door. I have seen the service started late while the song leader (who did not know he was to lead until he arrived) sat on the front row and thumbed through the book to select his songs. I have seen ill-prepared announcements, scriptures read indistinctly (or incorrectly), and heard sermons which were poorly prepared or else presented with no apparent zeal. I have seen song leaders which never thought of checking to see if there were songs which might enhance the subject matter. I have announced at places all week that I would speak on "Heaven" the last night of a meeting and had no songs at all sung on that subject unless I made it a point to specifically request certain songs. I have seen the Lord's Supper administered so haphazardly that it required supreme effort to concentrate on the meaning of this observance.

At times I have tried to point out a few things to help.

Sometimes it has been received with appreciation and other times with resentment. That may well be my own fault because of the manner in which it was done. I have been lectured on the evils of trying to artificially induce a spiritual atmosphere, a thing which I despise and oppose as firmly as any man could. Worship is not to be induced by turning down lights, holding hands, clapping hands, stained glass windows and elaborately designed pageantry (or for that matter, pageantry of any sort). Scriptural worship is "in spirit and in truth" (Jno. 4:23-24). But if it is scriptural to have a meeting place, it is right to make it presentable. If it is scriptural to have Bible classes, it is right for teachers to be as well prepared as possible and for students to come prepared and it is right to provide a decent environment in which to learn. If it is right to make announcements, it is right to make them as interesting as possible and to do the best we can with them. If it is right to sing, it is right to learn how to do the best we can, whether we lead or sit in the pew and follow. If it is right to pray, it is right to learn how best to do it. If it is right to preach, it is right to learn the basics of language communication, how to organize and most effectively present what we have to say. All of this must be done with fervency of spirit and not with a sluggish, unconcerned, muddle-through-it, get-it-over-with attitude. Do I dare mention the application of this principle to so-called "business meetings"?

Some ordinary training classes could correct much of this, provided those who need the instruction will take advantage of the opportunity to grow. If brethren decide they already know everything and have no room for improvement, then such an effort is wasted on them. These stand in need of the instruction of Romans 12:3 "not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly . . ."

Brethren, don't lag in diligence. Turn up the burner and serve the Lord.

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ABUSED PARENTS

Abused children.

Like the idolatrous nations of old, we are continually becoming a society "without natural affection."

Police were summoned to a sleazy street in one large southern city. The report was that a mother was trying to sell her little girl. I mean she was selling her daughter's body to the perverted men who would desire that kind of shameful encounter.

When the police arrived and arrested the mother, they found the little girl, about six years old, crouched and crying in an alley.

I wonder if anything worse could have possibly occurred in Sodom and Gomorrah?

On the other side of the coin, there are abused parents too. They are grown, and have enough meanness themselves that we generally feel, subconsciously at least, that they may deserve a little abuse.

But I'm not thinking of the kind of abuse that leaves black eyes, broken noses, and visible scars.

And I am not speaking of parents who may "have it coming." I'm thinking of good parents who have loved their children and laid themselves out for them, only to be walked on. Its the good parents who get abused. The bad ones don't care anyway.

The little kids who pout, and scream, and run wild at church and the grocery store, are one thing. Some of that is usually part of being little kids. Discipline, patience, and love are required, and good parents try to give all of it in correct proportions.

Then a certain amount of friction and tension can generally be expected as the children reach adolescence. I read somewhere that God in His grace gives us our children for twelve years to learn to love them before He turns them into teenagers.

It's in those years that good parents try to keep kids from sampling liquor, dope, and sex because they know these things are wrong, and they only lead to trouble.

And its during these years that many good parents take it on the chin.

The old tired cliches are trotted out for some fresh exercise: "Everyone's doing it;" "You're too hard and old fashioned;" "You won't let me do anything;" "You don't understand."

Abused parents lie awake at night listening for that boy or girl who's late getting in. They get calls from well-intentioned folks who inform them that their child was drinking last night, or smoking dope, or sleeping with

somebody.

They will usually try to handle the situation, and as likely as not, will handle it poorly. After all they feel that they've already been whipped. They really don't know how to approach their sons and daughters about these matters. They are shocked and hurt.

Abused parents can't win. If they try to show trust in their children, they are a laughingstock and don't know what's going on. If they do not trust them, they are verbally horsewhipped for that.

Both parents and children need to understand that trust must be earned. And when a trust is violated, it takes some time for it to be earned back.

Teenagers, even those in the upper teen-aged years, are still children in many ways. They may think they are grown, but they are not. They should not be treated like babies. But then they mustn't treat their parents like children.

The parents are not there for the sole purpose of seeing to it that teens get what they want.

All my children are not grown, so I don't have all the answers yet. One thing that has become more evident, however, as I've tried to hold on to the reins of childrearing over terrain that has sometimes become very rough:

Start early.

"He that spareth the rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes" (Prov. 13:24). The Hebrew word translated in the KJV, "betimes" originally meant "dawn," "early morning." It evolved into the meaning of pursuing something at an early age. Corrective, loving discipline must begin early. Instruction must begin early.

Rebellion may still develop, but chances are greatly improved that the child will one day return to the righteous principles that were taught him.

"Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him" (Prov. 22:15). "Foolishness" in the Proverbs is not light-hearted fun, but rebellion, immorality, and hatred of wise instruction.

Start early to administer fair and loving discipline and instruction.

One man told of a sign that he saw in an office: **"What will you wish you had done ten years from now? Do it now?"**

Yes, parental abuse should be added to the list.

But God's word has a simple answer to a complex problem for those who will give heed. It's not only a simple answer, it's a correct answer:

"Children, obey you parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged" (Col. 3:20, 21).

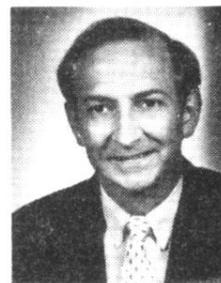
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SINCERE WORDS

The preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and that which was written was upright, even words of truth (Ecc. 12:10)."

Dick Blackford

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"AMEN"

The Greek word translated Amen (Ameen) appears 188 times in the New Testament and Septuagint. It is translated "verily" 120 times. A word that was found on the lips of our Lord and which appears 188 times in His inspired word is worthy of our study. Especially is this so when the meaning of the word is being perverted and men are substituting hand-clapping for it. Definition

Vine's Expository Dictionary points out that when it is used as a reference to God it means that "God is faithful." When used in reference to his precepts, promises, and warnings it means "sure." When the word is uttered by God it means "it is and shall be so." And when used by men it means "so let it be" (Vine, p. 53).

When a man says Amen he is adopting as his own that which has been said. The word is never used in a light or frivolous manner and always carries a solemnity with it. It is limited to the religious atmosphere. It is an expression of faith that God holds the thing true, or will or can make it true (Hastings Bible Dictionary, Vol. 1, p. 80-81).

As with many Bible words and concepts, liberal trends are having their effect upon this word. The usage and definition of Amen are in a state of evolution and are not being used entirely as they were in the New Testament. This usually happens to Bible words and concepts when men do not have the proper respect for the original. Look at the "evolution" of such words as baptism, Christian, fellowship, saint, etc.

Some Instances Where Amen Is Used

1. When a curse was pronounced by the priest upon a women guilty of adultery under the law of jealousies she was to respond by saying "Amen, Amen" (Num. 5:11-31).
2. Moses pronounced twelve curses upon the tribes of Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali. After each curse Israel was commanded by God to respond "Amen" (Deut. 27:15-26).
3. When Ezra read and explained the law and blessed the Lord, all the people answered "Amen, Amen" (Neh. 8:1-6).
4. Nehemiah rebuked the ones who imposed usury on the people and made them restore what they had taken. All the congregation said "Amen" (Neh. 5).
5. "Amen" was used when a profound spiritual statement was uttered (Mt. 28:20; Rom. 1:25).
6. It was common for others to say Amen at the close of a prayer to express "let it be so" (1 Cor. 14:16).
7. Amen was expressed by one to confirm his own prayers and thanksgiving (Mt. 6:13; 1 Kgs. 1:36).
8. It was frequently used by New Testament writers at the

conclusion of the books and letters they wrote.

There is no indication that Amen was used as a filler or to punctuate one's sermon. Nor was a sentence interrupted in order to say Amen. (This writer heard a Pentecostal preacher say Amen 23 times within one minute on his radio program. For the whole broadcast it numbered in the hundreds). Such usage does not edify and is not doing things decently and in order.

There is no record where Amen was used in a secular (non-religious) way. It is a word which belongs to the spiritual realm. Nor is there any record where a preacher's sermon was interrupted with frequent Amens from the audience.

Is Clapping The Hands The Same As Saying Amen?

A practice which has been prevalent in denominations has found its way into religious services of brethren. This is the practice of applauding after a sermon or lecture on a religious topic. This writer first heard it at the Freed-Hardeman College lectures in 1977. He heard it most recently at the 1987 Florida College lectures. A small group of people (this writer does not know who they were or whether they were brethren) applauded on two different occasions following lessons in which the Bible was taught.

To most Christians, clapping belongs in the secular realm and is associated with sports and entertainment. There is good reason for this since clapping (applause) is never mentioned in the New Testament. Young's Analytical Concordance records seven references in the Old Testament of people clapping. One time it was commanded (Ps. 47:1).

If clapping is another way of saying Amen it is difficult to imagine the woman applauding when a curse was pronounced upon her for committing adultery. She was commanded to say "Amen, Amen" (Num. 5). Could Israel have acceptably applauded when the 12 curses were pronounced on the six tribes? Since God commanded them to say Amen, would he have been just as pleased if they had clapped their hands? (Deut. 27). Would it be acceptable for us to close our prayers with a round of applause (1 Cor. 14:16)? Would it have been appropriate for the New Testament writers to have clapped their hands at the conclusion of their books and epistles instead of saying Amen?

Booing And Hissing?

If one may applaud a sermon to show approval (as one may show approval in this manner at a ball-game), then why could not one equally boo or hiss to show disapproval if he disagrees? One seems just as appropriate as the other. In a matter of time our services would be filled with applause, wolf whistles, cat calls, boos, and hisses. The right for one is the right for the others. If the silence of the New Testament authorizes applause then it also authorizes the boos, hisses, and jeers. Is this really what we want? Has worship become so casual to us that there is no difference in our behavior (and degree of solemnity) at worship or at a sports event?

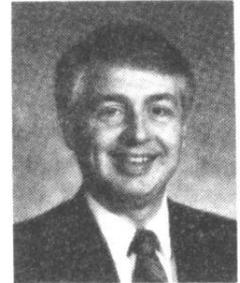
Since the New Testament is silent about applauding and nothing is said to indicate that clapping is an acceptable substitute for saying Amen, and since it is

also silent about booing and hissing (etc.), we believe we have concluded rightly that God does not approve of either practice in worship or in a religious context.

DIVINE COMMUNIQUES

C. G. "Cally" Caldwell

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DEPENDING ON OTHERS?

The message of the King: "But let each man prove his own work, and then shall he have his glorying in regard of himself alone, and not of his neighbor. For each man shall bear his own burden" (Galatians 6: 4-5).

No doubt most of you have observed with interest the development of what is now being called the "Boston/Crossroads" movement. I must confess to mixed "emotions." I am grateful that many are being baptized into Christ (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). I also appreciate the enthusiastic effort expended to help babes in Christ to grow and maintain spiritual zeal (Eph. 4:11-16). Believing, however, that "the end does not justify the means" (Rom. 6:1), I see some basic errors in the activities of these churches:

1) Many personal decisions regarding manner of life, spiritual activity, and use of time are restricted or denied. Nonconformity in matters of individual choice is met with strong displeasure and/or congregational discipline. (Study carefully principles set forth in Romans 14; 1 Cor. 8; and 1 Cor. 10:23-33 in this regard applying them to matters of judgment and avoiding common misapplications in matters of Divine Truth).

2) A pyramid-type organizational structure is conceptualized and activated in which each member (particularly the new convert) is supervised by a "discipler," who reports to a "group leader," who reports to the two or three elders over all Christians in a city.

3) Spiritual leaders other than elders are appointed to watch for the souls of entire groups of Christians in "house churches" (or other definable collections of persons within the total congregation). It is not claimed that these "leaders" have the characteristics required of elders (see 1 Tim. 3:1-7; Tit. 1:5-9). If the collectivities are "house churches" (plural), this organizational form is unscriptural because it employs "one-man" oversight by an unqualified shepherd (see Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:1-4; Titus 1:5).

4) The "house church" concept is in fact a sponsoring-church arrangement with the "city" elders supervising all aspects of the work and worship of many congregations. Pay close attention: either these are "house churches" (plural) or one "city church" (singular). **They cannot be both.**

5) An atmosphere is created (intentionally or unintentionally) in which other churches of Christ are judged by comparing their outward activity, physical evidence of enthusiasm, number of converts, etc., etc., with that of a "Boston/Crossroads" congregation.

There is something else which I believe to be terribly wrong about the movement. It is difficult to articulate. It will certainly be denied. It is, nonetheless, substantive and it is as true as death or taxes:

6) There is a false dependency developed which deters many converts from a truly spiritual relationship with God and promotes a need for social relationship and human management of personal religious activity.

I realize that the **motives** of those involved is a full 180 degrees from what actually occurs. The Leaders and zealous members preach that all should be "totally committed to Christ." The encouragement to consult with a preacher, group leader, or elder on every kind of personal decision and problem, produces a very different result, however. Please let me illustrate how good goals often get turned around:

A woman marries, bears children, and "totally commits" herself to her family. She joins the PTA and becomes president. She takes the children to Little League or softball and volunteers to organize the mothers. None of this is wrong by itself. Soon because of financial needs, she takes a part-time job. she joins a women's club, a volunteer community drive, and a health club, all because she wants to be as good a wife and mother as she can be. She drives the children to music lessons and takes lessons herself. Her life has become "exciting" and meaningful, but she has reached a point at which the house is not cleaned, the meals are not cooked, the clothes are constantly "piled up," and she has begun to neglect the real needs of her husband and children. **She has distorted her real "mission" even though she consciously rationalizes her activity in terms of "commitment" to the family.**

Now look at another case in which lofty ambitions get lost. A church wants desperately to fulfill its responsibility in the saving of souls. It decides that conversion and "discipling" is best accomplished by appealing to the human needs of lost sinners. When one is converted, he is assigned a partner (other than Christ) to supervise his study and prayer. The church plans activities almost every night and diligently encourages the babe in Christ to attend them all. He is monitored constantly with regard to study sessions, divisional group meetings, prayer sessions, new convert classes, personal work group meetings, social get-togethers, and worship services. He is also made to feel guilty (consciously or unconsciously on the part of the elders, partner, or fellow-Christian) if he for whatever reason does not attend any of these without "good reason," fails to bring others on a regular basis, or is not directly responsible for the conversion of another in what others consider to be reasonable time. The Christian's personal activity is brought under the direction of the church or the assigned partner.

Many of these activities can be justified singly as

efforts to assist a new convert, but collectively they sometimes have the disciple following human beings rather than Christ and forsaking other God-given responsibilities. The Lord taught us to "bear one another's burdens" but he also insisted that "every man must bear his own burden." Calling attention to this should not be construed as suggesting that we care less about new Christians. Nor does it mean that most of us encourage spiritual newborns as fully as we should. The issue involves, however, zealous church organizers who naively fail to understand that the religion of Christ is intensely personal and is regulated by Christ's spiritual and moral influence in the everyday choices of his children (see Luke 9:23; 17:20-21). The misdirection of which I speak usually results, in my view, from a "social gospel" approach in which worldly human measurements of "Christianity" are substituted for Biblical spirituality (see John 18:36).

The thinking of brethren regarding the church's collective role in people's individual lives is terribly significant. It is also easy for an enthusiastic group, moved by an enthusiastic preacher, to decide that it needs a new image, a "relevant" message to reach the lost, specially designed programs for today's psychological and social needs, and/or an exciting, emotional atmosphere in which to work and worship. I would not like to see energetic, sincere gospel preachers, elders, and brethren among us duped into allowing that to happen. Such would not be healthy and it would not be Scriptural. It would forget the power of the gospel in the personal life of the Christian. Although some aspects of this problem are different and motives in many are not the same, it would do us all good to study again Jesus' judgment of Jewish zealots who did not understand the true nature of spiritual service to God (Matt. 23:1-15).

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THE CALL TO HOLINESS

The Charismatic movement developed from the early Methodist emphasis on holiness or sanctification. John Wesley connected holiness with perfection and taught that it comes by a "second work of grace" that follows justification. The Holiness movement in particular associated this work of grace with a miraculous indwelling of the Holy Spirit. But while the Holiness stress this gift as the means to perfection, Charismatics tend to stress it as an end within itself, expressed in continual miracles and emotional displays as evidence of holiness.

Holiness, the Proper Goal. The key idea of "holiness" in the Scriptures is separation from sin. "Holy" designates the uniqueness of God as absolute in purity, majesty, and glory. In reference to people, it describes the holy state to which they are called by the gospel (1 Thes. 4:7). One who answers the call commits himself to a holy life. He seeks to cleanse himself from "all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 7:1). This is required of God's children because of the nature of God. "But as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy" (1 Pet. 1:15,16).

Christians have separated themselves from the world in order to consecrate themselves to God. They are "a holy temple" (1 Cor. 3:17), "a holy priesthood" (1 Pet. 2:5), and "holy brethren" (Heb. 3:1). Yet they do not become holy apart from the grace of God (Eph. 2:8). But when one plants his feet on the solid rock of God's word and turns his face toward heaven, repenting and confessing his sins, the blood of Christ makes him whole through divine forgiveness (1 John 1:5-10). Therefore, the Christian is one whose life is ordered by God. He walks with Him now by faith and purifies himself in hope of being like Him when he sees Him as He is (1 John 3:1,2).

Christianity without holiness has no eternal purpose. Christ gave Himself to sanctify and cleanse the church that "it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:25-27). We are made free of past sin in obeying the gospel (Rom. 6: 15-18 and we live holy lives by remaining faithful to the Lord (Rev. 2:10). Paul summarizes the Christian's life in saying, "But now having been made free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end everlasting life" (Rom. 6:22). Without holiness "no one will see God" (Heb. 12:14).

Miraculous Indwelling Not the Means. All

"Christian" denominations, sects, and groups emphasize holiness. This is proper, but the question is: How are people made holy? Catholics make no sharp division between justification and sanctification but claim the power to both rests with the church and is channeled through the sacraments it administers. Nor did the Protestant Reformers make such a distinction, tending to interpret the holy life as an aspect of justification. But Wesley developed the doctrine that holiness comes by "a second blessing" through an intimate union with the Holy Spirit and a life filled with a horror of sin and love for others. The Pentecostals stress the idea that holiness is derived from the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Charismatics hold the same view, but are divided on what constitutes holiness. Some hold the old Holiness view of strict morality, others reduce holiness to a showy but shallow exhibition, and still others see it as "the liberating sense of ecumenism" (meaning anything goes).

The basic flaw in all claims of miraculous indwelling of the Spirit is a misunderstanding of the Spirit's role in salvation. The apostles were not filled with the Spirit on Pentecost to make them holy. They received the Spirit to teach and confirm the word by which they and others might be holy (see John 14:26; 16:13; Mark 16:20). Once the word was firmly established, the attending miracles ceased (1 Cor. 13:8-10), but holiness continues: "And now abide faith, hope, and love" (v. 13). The misunderstanding is evident for the kinds of "miracles" claimed today are selective and contrived. Ecstatic jabbering may be passed off as "speaking in tongues" and theme parks may be attributed to "prophetic revelations." But where are the lethal serpents and deadly poison? Where are the dead raised to life or the lame man who never walked instantly healed?

Belief in latter-day miracles is also based on the wrong view of miracles. Any unusual event or coincidence is chalked up by Charismatics as a miracle. If one finds a parking spot on a busy street, it is viewed as a miracle. No distinction is made between miracles and other means of providence. The thought is advanced that the only way God can work is by miracles. This limits God's power and denies His word. It limits His power in saying He cannot work through natural law; and it denies His word that shows He does work in human affairs without performing miracles.

How the Spirit Leads. The Spirit does not operate directly to make people holy, but He operates to that end through the word of God. Whatever He does in sanctifying God's children, He does by the word. Paul said, "Walk in the Spirit and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh" (Gal. 5:17). But David said, "Your word have I hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You" (Psa. 119:11). Peter spoke of the "sanctification of the Spirit" (1 Pet. 1:2), but Christ prayed for God to sanctify His disciples "by Your truth," adding, "Your word is Truth" (John 17:17; see Heb. 10:10). The fruit of the Spirit includes love (Gal. 5:22), but John says, "But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him" (1 John 2:5). We are led by the Spirit (Rom. 8:14), but God's word is a lamp to our feet (Psa. 119:105). The Spirit

gives life (2 Cor. 3:6), but Christ said the words He spoke "they are spirit and they are life" (John 6:63; see Jas. 1:21; Matt. 4:4).

The foregoing are plain statements. They show that sanctification, love, salvation, guidance, and eternal life come from the Holy Spirit through the word of God, not by a direct indwelling apart from the word. Everything we need for holiness is supplied by His word.

Paul told the Ephesians to "be filled with the Spirit, speaking to yourselves in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs" (Eph. 5:18,19); but in a similar passage to the Colossians, he said, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" (Col. 3:16). The Spirit is not the word, but the word was given by Him (1 Cor. 2:12,13) and is His instrument in effecting holiness (Eph. 6:17). He is called "the Spirit of truth" and the truth He gave is "quick and powerful" (John 14:17; Heb. 4:12). It is by God's word that we will be judged in the last day (John 12:48; Jas 2:12). Since this is true, our responsibility is to obey the word and that is the limit of our responsibility. But if there is a supernatural leading of the Spirit apart from the word, then the word is not the limit of our responsibility. And if the Spirit guides us separate from the word, the word is not the whole standard of judgment, nor is it complete, as Paul affirms (2 Tim. 3:16,17).

Perhaps all agree that Christians are called to holiness. But some claim to be made holy by the Spirit dwelling in them apart from the word. This is not the teaching of the Scriptures. Belief in a charismatic indwelling of the Spirit grew out of a recognition of the need for holiness that failed to see the sufficiency of God's word to accomplish it. But the word is sufficient: "Sanctify them through Thy truth. Your word is truth" (John 17:17).

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STUDIES IN 1ST AND 2ND TIMOTHY

I TIMOTHY, CHAPTER 2

These two letters contain instruction for the evangelist; instruction that, if followed, would result in the saving of "thyself and them that hear thee." The salvation of the preacher and his hearers, or being lost, is tied to the duties, responsibilities, and warnings of these letters. Every preacher and every Christian must, therefore, give heed to what is said.

In this second chapter, two important things are discussed: the necessity of prayer and the place and dress of women. Remember, these things are involved in being saved or lost.

Pray, And Teach Others To Pray

A preacher who is successful in saving himself and others will be often in prayer, and constantly teach others to pray. Prayer is to be made for all men because God desires the salvation of all and Christ died for all. Our prayers contribute to realizing this desire. Any one who has made preaching to save men his life's work would naturally make this objective chief in his prayers.

Prayer usually consists of three things. (1) Supplications — involve a sense of need because of one's own insufficiency, leading one to ask God to supply the need. (2) Intercession — suggests approaching the Father with child-like trust on behalf of others. (3) The giving of thanks should be a part of every prayer because it is by God's grace that we have every good and perfect gift, including the privilege of prayer and our hope for eternity.

Prayer is to be made for all men, yet some are mentioned in particular — kings, and all that are in authority. These are sometimes antagonists of Christians and evangelism. Even so, praying for these will contribute to our "leading a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."

Following this instruction pleases God because it contributes to His will for the salvation of all men through the sacrifice of Christ and the preaching of the gospel (truth). Paul was a God-ordained apostle and preacher of this gospel that saves, and coveted the prayers of all faithful saints for himself and all others to the end that men might be saved.

Notice that God's desire for the salvation of all men is realized as men come to a knowledge of the truth. Human theories claim that man's salvation is miracu-

lously accomplished, apart from evangelism, hearing and learning. The inspired apostle Paul knew that man's salvation depends on hearing the gospel, the source of faith, and humbly submitting to its commands. It was so in his own case, and he was willing to persevere, in the face of great persecution and difficulty, soliciting the prayers of others, that others might be saved. This is why he urged Timothy to manifest the same dedication and diligence; to pray and teach others to pray, that the word of God might have free course.

The Dress Of Women

The proponents of Woman's Lib. and modern society deny that a place of subjection for women and how she adorns herself have anything to do with her salvation. However, these are things Timothy was to teach whereby he could save himself and them that hear. In fact, verse 15 plainly connects woman's salvation to her submitting to her God-assigned role.

The dress (adorning) of a woman is not described in terms of style and fashions, but adorning that reflects "modesty, shamefacedness, and sobriety" (KJV): "modest, propriety, moderation" (NKJV): "proper clothing, modestly and discreetly" (NASV).

In our day, style and fashions are often sex motivated. This is freely admitted by many fashion designers. This motive has introduced the mini-skirts, bikinis, and numerous other types of apparel. Seemingly, many women are more interested in apparel that has sex-appeal than in that which reflects a profession of godliness. Lasciviousness is listed as a work of the flesh that forbids one inheriting the kingdom of God (Gal. 5:19-21). Another word for this is "lewdness" and Webster said "tendency to excite lust." Thayer says "wanton (acts or) manners as filthy words, indecent bodily movements, unchaste handlings of males and females." Truly, dress based on sex-appeal, designed to produce lewd emotions or excite lust, would be "lasciviousness". Women profession godliness will refuse to parade in public wearing such apparel. Truly, this is something Timothy would need to observe and teach in order to save himself and others.

There is also a prohibition of decorative dress, such as would attract attention to the physical. Some have thought the expression "not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array" absolutely forbids a "hair-do", rings, necklace, or any kind of dress except what is very plain and inexpensive. The passage is a contrast passage — not this but the other, rather than explicitly forbidding things named. Peter put it this way, "whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel, But let it be... hidden man of the heart" (1 Pet. 3:3-4). It is like the statement of our Lord when he said "labor not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life" (Jno. 6:27). The Lord did not forbid laboring for material things at all, but rather pointed to what should have priority. The Submission Of Woman

The fact that God has given women a place of submission to man cannot be denied by believers of the Bible.

After the fall in Eden, God said to Eve "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" (Gen. 3:16). Nothing is said here to indicate that woman is inferior to man, or that man's role of leadership is higher and more noble than the submissive, domestic role given to women. The order of authority is plainly said to be "the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God" (1 Cor. 11:3). The fact that women are assigned a position of subjection to man is why she is not to teach "over the man" for thus she would be out of her place, usurping authority over the man. The silence, in this matter, required of her is a silence with reference to her speaking "over" and acting "above" the man. See 1 Cor. 14:34-35.

In our text, two reasons are stated for women being given a place of subjection. (1) Adam had priority for ruling or leading because he was first formed. (2) Eve was the one deceived in the transgression.

Salvation would come to man by faithfully doing the will of God for him—fulfilling the role God has assigned to him. The woman would likewise be saved by fulfilling the role of submission assigned to her, involving bearing children, coupled with faith, love, holiness and sobriety. The passage does not make actually giving birth to a child a condition of her salvation, but "child-bearing" is put for the submissive role assigned to women.

To Be Continued

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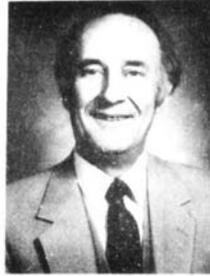
WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

(Rom. 4:3)

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WHY THE JUDGMENT?

QUESTION: *If one is eternally saved the moment he dies (in paradise), and is conscious of his destiny, what is the purpose of the judgment? Wouldn't it be useless?*

ANSWER: Paul stated there was laid up for him a crown of righteousness after his earthly departure (2 Tim. 4:6-8). Yet, this same apostle wrote, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ" (2 Cor. 5:10). Paul knew heaven was his home, but he also recognized that he must appear in judgment.

The judgment of Christ is not a meeting to determine innocence or guilt. It is not a trial to argue our case in a heavenly court. Mankind will not be brought before Jesus, the righteous Judge, to present evidence to enable Jesus to evaluate what man's eternal reward ought to be. All of that is decided before or prior to the judgment. Yea, it is determined by our obedience or disobedience to God in this life.

All accountable people in this world are either lost or saved at this very moment. Those who die in the Lord will rest from their labors forever more (Rev. 14:13). But those who live and die in sin will be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His power (2 Thess. 1:7-9). We do not faithfully live for Christ in this life and then have to wait till the judgment to learn whether we are going to heaven or hell. Lazarus knew he was safe and secure in the bosom of Abraham. Stephen knew he was going where Jesus is. On the other hand, the rich man was conscious of his eternal state and that nothing could be done to alter it (Lk. 16:19-31).

Jesus said, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (Jn. 5:28-29). As a man lives, so shall he be raised, and so shall he appear before the judgment bar of God. Even as we are gathered before the judgment throne, separation takes place of the righteous and the wicked (Matt. 25:31-33). Those on the right will go away into life eternal, and those on the left into everlasting punishment (Matt. 25:46).

Although the judgment is not a fact-finding event in order for Jesus to decide whether to save us or condemn us, it does have a purpose.

(1) **It will be a day of reckoning.** All Christians, as stewards, must give account (Matt. 25:19). Preachers

must give account of their preaching (Jas. 3:1), and elders will give account of their oversight (Heb. 13:17). We will give account of our deeds (2 Cor. 5:10), our words (Matt. 12:36f) and our thoughts (Eccl. 12:14). We will give account of our use or misuse of opportunities (Matt. 25:14-30) and our attitude toward duty (Eccl. 12:13); Lk. 17:10).

(2) **It will be a day of rectifying.** The day of judgment will be a day when all things will be made right. God's justice is often difficult to see in this life, but we will see it then. All inequities will be adjusted by Jehovah.

(3) **It will be a day of recompense.** The wicked will be awarded according to their works (Rom. 2:5,8; 6:23), and the righteous will be given the crown of life (2 Tim. 4:6-8; Matt. 25:34) with glory and honor and a redeemed, immortal body (Rom. 2:7; 8:23).

Yes, it is appointed unto man once to die and after that, the judgment (Heb. 9:27).

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“CONTENTMENT”

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With regard to material goods, there are four kinds of people: (1) those who "have" but are not content, (2) those who "have" and are content, (3) those who "have not" and are not content, and (4) those who "have not" and are content. Only those in category #2 or #4 are pleasing to God.

The whole idea of "having" is relative. Anyone can say "I can't afford it" but that does not make him a "have not." Do we have food and clothing? Paul says, "And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content" (1 Tim. 6:8). I don't know about you, but to me, that statement is one of the most challenging in the New Testament. I mean, what if that were really all I had?? Would I be content? Hmm. After all, many of us own our homes (or are in the process); we drive new cars; we own household conveniences beyond number. The biggest decision many families have to make in a day is what form of entertainment they're going to use — TV, movies, stereo, VCR. Or, what method they are going to use to cook the dinner meal (bar-b-que, oven, slow-cook or microwave?) Hardly a matter of "where is my next meal coming from"! Yet, would we say the average Christian household is "content" (defined as "not wanting more or less")?

Needless to say, contentment is lacking in most lives. Why? One problem is that we measure our "having" by what someone else has. Therefore, I'm a "have-not" if I don't have as nice a car as brother Johns; or as nice a house; if I can't go away as often; if I can't do something he can do, etc. What a miserable life! Paul said "I have learned in whatever state I am to be content" (Phil. 4:11). There is no doubt that we need to learn what Paul learned!

John the Baptist had some interesting things to say along these lines. In Lk. 3:7-9, John uses some very strong language with regard to those who came to be baptized by him. There are a number of interesting questions that come to mind as we consider this passage. One such question is why did the Pharisees, proud of their law-keeping attainments, seek to be baptized by John in the first place? At least one possible reason is that they were not *fulfilled* or satisfied in their law-keeping; i.e., they were not content with their heart-of-stone approach to righteousness and were seeking some deeper experience. Needless to say, John pointed out to them that they were on the wrong track. His was a baptism of *repentance* not a bath of satisfaction.

An exchange follows between John and the people, who ask "What shall we do then?" (v. 10). This question is repeated two more times by two other classes of people. His admonitions are interesting and provide a much-needed lesson on contentment.

John first addresses the people. We'll call them the "middle class," not particularly well-off nor below the poverty level. Just "middle-class," like most of us. John simply says, in v. 11, that they ought to be ready to share what they have. "He who has two tunics, let him give to him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise." One who is willing to do this recognizes, most clearly, that what he has is from God. He does not hoard his goods for some mystical "rainy day" but, instead, allows his abundance to supply a brother's need. If you want to be content, help someone else in his distress (Jas. 1:27, etc).

We might call the next group the "upper-class" — the tax collectors who often built their wealth on dishonest practices. They too asked "what shall we do?" John told them that before his baptism would do them any good (remember it was a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins [v. 31]) they must learn to be content. He tells them in v. 13 to be honest — "collect no more than what is appointed for you." This was a difficult command since it was so easy to defraud and "scrape off the top" (compare Zacchaeus, Lk. 19:5-10). Contentment issuing from a sincere heart will help prevent a lack of integrity or attempts to justify a "means-to-end" philosophy in business dealings. John says, "Be honest, be content." Even the "haves" must be concerned with contentment. Remember Paul said he knew how to abound as well as suffer need (Phil. 4:12).

Finally, the lower-class soldiers ask "what shall we do?" Now keep in mind that these people were the "have-nots" of the first century. Pay was low, working conditions were often lousy and the development of a "macho" image was, at least in their minds, a necessity for survival. So, while they had little money, they had a great deal of power and authority as well as ample opportunity to bear false witnesses for bribe. John tells them, however, not to do it. "Do not intimidate anyone or accuse falsely..." (v. 14). Be content with soldiering and no longer fall prey to such wicked practices as these, John tells them. And, furthermore, he says, "be content with your wages." Oh what a message! "Be content with your wages!" Quit griping and complaining about how little you are paid and get on with living the godly life! In other words, "bear fruit worthy of repentance" (v. 8).

Whether rich or poor or somewhere in the middle in this world's goods, we are commanded to be content with what we have — even if it is "only" food and clothing. Brethren, is it God-honoring to complain about what you do not have? Have you embraced a philosophy which says that life really *does* consist of your possessions, if just a little bit? Isn't such an attitude sinful? Let's repent of our past discontentment and learn to be "poor in spirit" (Mt. 5:8).

"AND THE LORD LOOKED UPON PETER"

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The rather unusual title of this brief study is taken from a statement found in Luke chapter 22. Jesus had earlier foretold the denial of Peter and beginning in verse 54 we see Peter following after Jesus as He is taken to the house of Caiaphas to be questioned. Peter did indeed deny Jesus three times just as He had predicted. Immediately following the third denial we read this, "And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly" (Lk. 22:61-62). I know I must have read those verses many times, but some time back when I read them that one statement just sort of jumped out at me, "And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter." Imagine if you can the scene there that night as Jesus is questioned by the Jews. Imagine Peter there among the enemies of Jesus, and for fear that they may count him with Jesus he denies three times, even cursing and swearing according to Matthew's account (26:74). And then imagine Jesus turning and looking at Peter who has just denied his Lord. What would Jesus see if He turned and looked at me, or at you? This is what I want us to think about for a little while.

WOULD HE SEE SIN IN YOUR LIFE? All of us, even we who are Christians, sin. It's not that we want to, we just do. John wrote that "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" and "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (1 John 1:8,10). Jesus wouldn't have to look very hard to see sin, transgression of the will of God. But would He see us living in that sin, and walking in darkness, or would He see us grieved by our sins, and turning away from them? When Jesus looked on Peter the text says that Peter went out and "wept bitterly". How do your sins affect you? David seems to have had that sorrow for his sins for in the 51st Psalms we read, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me"; and "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" (Psa. 51:10,17). Does Jesus see this kind of sorrow for sins in you, or does He see pride and arrogance and unwillingness to change?

Would Jesus see you trying to be and do better than before? Part of being a Christian is growing. We all start out as new born babes in God's family, and we are to grow up from there to the point that we can and do teach other people what we know of the gospel. But growth takes

effort and changing the way you live takes effort. Are you willing to "put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of you mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. 4:22-24)?

Let's all be sure of one thing, GOD CAN SEE us wherever we go, whatever we do. I love to read the 139th Psalm because it tells us that God is always there wherever we may be. But that promise also means that He knows where we are, and what we are doing, and saying. He knows when I dress immodestly; when I think evil thoughts, or do things that I may think are hidden from everyone. Solomon summed up the whole duty of man in chapter 12 of Ecclesiastes by saying "Fear God and keep his Commandments", and then added, "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil" (Eccl. 12:13-14). There is simply no hiding from the God of heaven, and Jesus His Son.

And there is no getting around the judgment. It is one of the appointments that we will keep whether we want to or not. One of the errors of humanism which is being taught to our children in school is that man is supreme, therefore he is not accountable to anybody higher than him. But Paul said that God has "now commanded all men every where to repent: because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained; in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:30-31). And we will all be there to "give account" of ourselves to God (Rom. 14:12).

Just put yourself in the picture for a moment; imagine that it is you standing there in the courtyard and Jesus is looking at you. What does He see in you? Imagine yourself standing there at the day of judgment. What does Jesus say to you? Will it be "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25:34), or will it be "depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Mat. 25:41). Are you ready for that day?

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DIGRESSION BY DEFAULT

Default conveys the idea of a failure to do what is required. The principle applies in the realm of legal procedure, sporting contests, and also in religion.

If we fail to pay a loan, appear in court, or comply with the rules of a race, we lose by default. In religion, we must not only run in the race, but we must "strive lawfully" (2 Tim. 2:5; 4:7). Otherwise, we lose by default. Jesus said that some would be lost because they "did it not" (Mt. 25:45).

That is why I say that many individuals and congregations are going into digression by default. They are failing to teach and to heed the precepts and principles which identified digression and apostasy in past generations. We are especially concerned with that particular apostasy which divided the churches of Christ a little over a century ago, and resulted in that memorial to digression known as the Christian Church.

Some have forgotten about that sad chapter in the history of the Lord's church, and the events which made that era one of infamy. Some now involved in a similar apostasy would like not only to forget those events themselves, but they would like for the rest of us to forget them, too. Many of the younger generation have never even heard about those dark days of digression, and they never will if we depend on some brethren to tell them.

We stand on solid ground when we remind brethren of past apostasies. Jesus said, "Remember Lot's wife" (Lk. 17:32). The Holy Spirit, through Paul, reminds us that many of God's people fell in past generations (1 Cor. 10:1-12). The Hebrew writer devotes nearly two chapters (3-4), to past departures, and warns us not to follow others "in departing from the living God" (3:12).

Some of us have never ceased to remind brethren of those precepts and principles which were either followed or violated in the division over human missionary societies and instrumental music in church worship. Some still live who left the digressive ways of the Christian Church. But, there are more and more who have either taken up "dialogue" and lodging with their digressive brethren, or else are adopting the same practices and philosophies which contributed to that movement.

Digression by default has been working for several years, right alongside of digression by determination. Their "Mason-Dixon Line" between the adversaries engaged in spiritual warfare became clogged with self-avowed "middle-of-the-roaders." (And that is as far as I

intend to carry that Civil War parallel.)

And, while trying to balance themselves on that line (or crossing back and forth as popularity dictated), these proponents of neutrality gave more aid and comfort to the enemy than they gave to the cause of truth. Those determined to lead the church into digression knew that they could safely turn their backs on the middle-of-the-roaders, while those trying to slow the tide of apostasy had to fight with one hand, build with the other, and listen to the murmuring to those who wouldn't fight.

All during this most recent apostasy, concentrated in the 1950's to the 1980's, some preachers wouldn't touch that old sermon outline "The Differences Between the Christian Church and the Church of Christ" with the proverbial ten-foot pole. One preacher, when specifically requested by a congregation to preach on that subject, declined "because he didn't have a chart" on the subject. Maybe not, but one thing he did have was sense enough to know that some of his brethren were doing some of the same things which we used to condemn in the Christian Church. He later declared himself a citizen of the middle-of-the-road country, too.

Another popular (and influential preacher, refused the request of a congregation to state his position on the issues then troubling the church, and even canceled his own meeting to keep from doing so. Yet another canceled his agreement to work with the church at Paden City, West Virginia, because he was afraid of having some meetings canceled. Those who did attempt to defend the innovations of the day were forced to use the same arguments propounded by the champions of missionary societies and instrumental music. They had no alternative in their efforts to justify those things for which they had no scriptural authority.

In one meeting, a preacher announced that he was going to preach a sermon one night "with no scripture." Some of the brethren thought it was wonderful. Both the preacher and that congregation detoured into digression, and small wonder. Sermons with no scripture will bring digression by default wherever they are preached.

Elders in one congregation requested that I not mention Orphan Homes or the Herald of Truth during my meeting with them. They said that "they were not bothered" with such things, and had made the same request of their local preacher as well as preachers in other meetings. The others had agreed. I didn't. Neither was I invited back for another meeting. That congregation and its preachers later endorsed the very things with which "They were not bothered." They digressed by default.

In the early 1960's, at the old North Street building in New Martinsville, West Virginia, brother Frank Puckett preached a masterpiece of a sermon on issues then troubling and dividing the brotherhood. He wasn't invited back, and because I "amened" his sermon, I had my meeting canceled there. I never have decided if those brethren went into digression by default or by determination, but they made it anyway.

Brethren, these incidents could be multiplied, and there is "famine in the land" today for lack of plain Bible preaching (Amos 8:11). When brethren decide that they

prefer digression and bondage to standing fast in the liberty of Christ, it makes little difference if the preacher's name is Amos or Puckett, they will have their own way.

Some of those going into digression, whether by design or default, condemn themselves. They write some good articles in the bulletins and papers, and preach some good sermons on the radio about the need for religious authority, and the sin of religious division. But, they have one rule for the Methodists and Baptists, and another rule for themselves (Phil. 3:16). They are guilty of the same things which they condemn in others (Rom. 2:1).

One such preacher wrote a good article in his bulletin condemning those in the Crossroads movement of causing division in the church. He even made the division parallel to that caused by the introduction of missionary societies and instruments of music. When I asked him to make the same application of those innovations introduced during the period of 1950-80, he adamantly refused to do so.

The battles fought around the turn of the century are ancient history to some, but those events are still on record, both in heaven and on earth. And, 1960 doesn't sound like too long ago, but when you do a little subtracting, another generation has come and gone, and some don't know the first thing about the digressions of the Christian Church, or the controversies of more recent years.

Preachers, both young and old, need to go back and read some of the debates held during those periods of controversy, starting with the Otey-Briney discussion and working their way down to the present time. Such phrases as "the Bible doesn't say not to" in tandem with "where there is no law there is no transgression" may have a familiar ring.

Whether we go into digression with our eyes open or closed, forward or backward, by determination or default, the end result is the same. "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong" (1 Cor. 16:13).

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EUGENE BRITNELL, P.O. Box 969, Russellville, AL 35653—After living in Arkansas for 37 years, the last 26 years with the Arch Street church in Little Rock, we have returned to our native state of Alabama. I am preaching for the East side church in Russellville. We anticipate a pleasant and profitable work in Franklin County where we were born and reared. We just closed a successful series of gospel lessons by Paul Earnhart. If you are in Northwest Alabama, come by and visit with us. Our telephone number is (205) 332-5451.

WAYNE S. WALKER, 310 Haynes St., Dayton, OH 45410 — We arrived in Dayton on July 3 to begin work with the good Haynes St. church. The members greeted us warmly and have made us feel welcome. All is at peace here. The brethren have a strong desire to work and grow. Our fall meeting will be with Royce Chandler of Mason, Ohio (Oct. 18-23). My next meetings will be with the Eastside church in Canal Winchester, Ohio (Sept. 25-27), the South Macomb

church in Roseville, Michigan (Oct. 26-Nov. 1), and the W. Main St. church in Bartow, Florida (Jan. 17-22).

RUSSELL E. SMITH, 9503 Slayton Court, Louisville, Kentucky 40229 — In August the Oak Grove church in Louisville conducted a week-long meeting with Cecil Willis who currently preaches in Fairbanks, Alaska. At the outset, brother Willis stated that nothing "new" would be preached; only those things found in God's word. A knowledge of the word combined with brother Willis' speaking ability caused simple lessons and passages to become clearer in the minds of all who heard him. The spiritual "meat" that was presented will cause growth for all of those who love the truth and will exercise their senses to digest it. If you have not heard brother Willis, or have not heard him for several years, it would be beneficial for all to hear this faithful soldier of the Lord explain the gospel of Christ in its purity and simplicity. He may be contacted as follows: Cecil Willis, 3010 Davis Road Apt. B-37, Fairbanks, Alaska 99701

KEITH SHARP, 2510 Lakeland Hills Blvd., Lakeland, FL 33805 — The debate with brother Thomas West at Saratoga, Arkansas was conducted successfully July 20-24. Harold Turner was very helpful as my moderator and I appreciate his excellent assistance. The follow-up debate with J. Noel Meredith will be held in the building of the Stamps church of Christ, Stamps, Arkansas, Sept. 28-29, Oct. 1-2 1987. The first two nights will be on the sponsoring church issue, and the last two nights will be on church support of the orphanage and limited benevolence. Propositions and arrangements have now been finalized with Lewis G. Hale for a debate in Russellville, Arkansas, Nov. 16-17, 19-20, 1987. The issues will be the same as those in the debate with brother Meredith.

My family and I are now settled into our new home in Lakeland, Florida. I am working with the Lakeland Hills Blvd. church at the above address. The office number is (813) 688-4336 and the home number is 859-5228. Jady Copeland labored with the congregation here for the 8 years previous to my coming.

The Mena church of Christ in Mena, Arkansas is looking for a good man who will fearlessly proclaim all the truth to work with them. The brethren are at peace and they have a mind to work. Mena is a lovely town of 5,000 in the Ouachita hills of west Arkansas. The congregation had grown slowly since it began about eight years ago. Jim Everett worked with them for three years, and I preached there three years. Their address is: P.O. Box 3, Mena, Arkansas 71953.

DOUG SEATON, 1723 Tennyson Dr., Jeffersonville, IN 47130 — The door of opportunity is now open in many places with Roman Catholics. At the writing of this note, we have five that turned from

Catholicism to Christ in our work in Clarksville, Indiana. Two recently were baptized after seeing the changed life of another family member that had obeyed the gospel about a year ago. All five of these are faithful members thrilled to be studying the Bible and eager to teach others. Many Catholics are dissatisfied and open to study from the word of God. A great deal of teaching is needed before and after conversion due to the many changes necessary. Another former Catholic and his family have begun attending having become unhappy with the liberal practices where they worshiped. Recently we have had seven confess unfaithfulness that had been away from the Lord for up to 20 years. The longer they were away the harder it was to come back without the encouragement of those who are strong. Our attendance has been increased by about 20 people at all services due to these efforts. It is also much easier to work with the children's classes with the increase in attendance. The additional family members of these new members provides ample opportunities for home studies as well. As we "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature . . ." we must find time to go into our communities and seek those that are lost. This work can't be done for the church, it must be done by the church. Thanks be to God for the increase.

FERNANDO VENEGAS, Casilla #122 C. C, 5500 Mendoza, Argentina, South America—There are now two churches meeting in the city of Mendoza (population 1,200,000). I preach for the one located in the east area of the city and Jorge Trola preaches for the new work in the north end of the city. They have converted a garage into a meeting room. One young man was baptized there recently. Carlos Capelli, from Buenos-Aires, was with us for a gospel meeting July 2-5. The meeting was well attended and Carlos did outstanding work in presenting the truth. Several visitors came, some of whom are still attending and studying.

PREACHERS NEEDED

CRESTWOOD, ILLINOIS — The church here is looking for a man to start work with them in October, 1987. Crestwood is a south suburb of Chicago. The church here has a meeting house and a preacher's residence, both paid for. The building is situated on a major road, and the area is economically strong and growing. Attendance is around 60. We can provide \$350 per week toward support, but we are willing to consider some alternatives available to us for obtaining more for the preacher's salary. We need a man with some experience, but not necessarily an older man. Those interested may contact Lawrence Whited at (312) 389-5008.