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A GIVEN UP GENERATION
By Daniel Stafford

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CONTENTS

- 01 -- A Given Up Generation
- 02 -- God's Way Of Doing It
- 03 -- How Cheaply Are We Selling Our Souls?
- 04 -- Telling It Like It Is
- 05 -- A Day For Weeping
- 06 -- Doing Their Own Thing
- 07 -- Is The Society Or The Men Of The Society Sick?
- 08 -- Can You Blush?
- 09 -- Defiled Garments
- 10 -- The Divine Agitator

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INTRODUCTION

As time rolls on and events unfolds, more observations are made. After spending thirty years in the active ministry; watching the drift, deception and absolute apostasy of so many religious groups, I am made to know what a subtle foe that satan actually is.

Even though the leaders of nations, religious groups and individuals are denying they are selling out; time and experience are proving they are doing just that.

The fact that nations, churches and individuals would sell out at all is amazing. However, the ridiculously low price for which they are selling is absolutely amazing.

This rebellious, dope ridden, sex mad, "End Time" generation will not stop until they are completely damned. These sermons are written with the hope that they will check someone that is starting to let this world press him into it's mold. Also they are written with the prayer that they will stir the faithful to not sell out, If they succeed in doing that the time of preparation will have been well spent. For I have the persuasion that our time to warn is very short.

February 1972
Daniel Stafford

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01 -- A GIVEN UP GENERATION -- Romans 1: 21, 32

"Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:" v-24

The apostle Paul gave such a graphic description of the corrupt Roman empire. However, if one should look at the things that are so prevalent today, he could well feel that the apostle was writing about this corrupt generation. If one would read "Gibbon's Decline Of The Roman Empire" and our daily newspapers, he would see that the similarity is absolutely amazing. The Roman empire, by their actions, turned their backs on God. Soon they were denying the very existence of God and turning to the creature. This generation, by their actions, have turned their backs on God. Like the Roman empire they are crying they can't find God.

Adam Clarke said of the Roman empire, and could say the very same thing of this generation today, "In short their foolish, darkened minds sought God no where but in the place in which He is never to be found; viz, the vile, corrupt, and corrupting passions of their own hearts. As they did not discover him there, they scarcely sought him anywhere else." The Roman empire, and this generation, demanded that God would come down to their level and relate to them there. God refused this then, and He is refusing to do it today. God never comes to man's level; but He, by his grace, always tries to elevate man up to God's way and favor.

It would be well if we would see clearly the reasons that God gave up any generation; and realizing that God is no respecter of persons (or generations) He will give up this generation if they persist in doing the things they are doing today, There were three definite things that we should consider about the Roman empire, and see how completely they apply to this generation.

First, **WHAT THEY FAIL TO DO.** The Roman empire had three glaring failures. This generation has identically the same three failures. (1) **THEY FAIL TO GLORIFY GOD.** We read in Verse 21, "--when they knew God, they glorified him not as God." (2) **THEY CHANGED THE TRUTH OF GOD INTO A LIE,** In the place of the true worship of God they established idolatry. In various scriptures idols are termed lies, This is told in verse 25, "Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator." (3) **THEY DID NOT RETAIN GOD IN THEIR KNOWLEDGE.** Adam Clarke said of this, "They did not search to retain God in their knowledge. They did not examine the evidence before them (ver. 19 and 20) of his being and attributes; therefore God gave them over to a reprobate mind. How men of such powers and learning, as many of the Greek and Roman philosophers and poets really were, could reason so inconsecutively concerning things moral and Divine is truly astonishing." How men of our day can be so brilliant as to put men on the moon,, but be so blurred in moral and Divine things is equally astonishing.

It is dangerous to have more knowledge of God than we are putting into actions. The demand to "Walk while you have light" is very definite and emphatic. The dire result of failing to walk in light is made just as clear, "Lest darkness come upon you." How darkness will render one unable to determine the way is stated thus, "For he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth." As one watches this educated, prosperous and enlightened generation stagger on in spiritual darkness, he can know that this generation has failed to glorify God.

It is dangerous to try to tamper with the word of God to make it fit your desires and living. One can deny the authority of God's word; he can substitute the opinions of men so that license will be given for his carnal desires, but he will be walking in darkness. His carnal desires will lead him further and further away from God and the way He has prescribed.

So many churches are spending their time trying to make the word of God come down to the living of their young people. Seemingly, they have no confidence that the grace of God could transform the young person and bring them up to the demands of the word of God.

It is dangerous to let God's word slip and not walk in the light, As we are all creatures of influence we are sure to influence others. Just let one generation let down a small amount, and you can rest assured that the following generation will let down so much more. The following generation will go to a point that their grandparents never dreamed they would go. This is what has happened to this generation today. Their parents and grandparents let them down; now they have gone entirely too far down.

Second, **WHAT THEY DID DO.** The Roman empire had three glaring transgressions. This generation is guilty of the identically same three transgressions. (1) **THEY BECAME VAIN IN THEIR IMAGINATION, AND THEIR FOOLISH HEART WAS DARKENED.** (2) **PROFESSING THEMSELVES TO BE WISE, THEY BECAME FOOLS.** (3) **GOD GAVE THEM OVER TO A REPROBATE MIND, TO DO THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE NOT CONVENIENT** (Not proper and decent but loathsome).

Their every imagination, coming from their darkened hearts, became vain. Who can read of their works without being struck with the vanity of their reasonings, as well as with the stupidity of their nonsense, when speaking about God? Who can fail to be struck with the vanity of the reasoning of this highly educated generation as they try to explain God and His workings in a human way?

When the heart is dark there is no hope for the walk to be anything other than sinful. The sinful act is very sad, but nothing compared with the fact that the one committing the act has such a darkened heart that it will not register guilt. Just as peaches and cream go together, so foolish reasoning and stupid speculation go hand in hand.

They lived by lies, because they had changed the truth into a lie. They refused to let the word of God be absolute authority. They felt they were too wise to accept the word of God, just as it was written, by inspired men. With all of their wisdom and accomplishments, they felt that it was just a little below their dignity to allow anyone or anything to tell them what they must and must not do. They determined to be masters of their own destiny. None can deny that they brought upon themselves the sad destiny that was theirs.

They ceased to acknowledge God in their thinking; therefore, they became reprobate in their thinking. They lost the ability to discern spiritual things. Entirely too many have the conception that a reprobate mind belongs to one that is either ignorant, or near to being a moron; however, nothing could be further from the truth. In the spiritual realm, the reprobate mind will be found among those that are educated, enlightened and refuse to walk in the light they have received. They will retain their brilliancy in the realm of the physical. Their accomplishments and attainments there will many times be so great until many will feel that any decision that they make would have to be correct; however, this is not so. They can accomplish marvelous things in the physical realm, use their academic degrees to great advantages and still be unable to make moral decisions. They are slaves to their own passions and desires. Their eyes are so blind and their hearts so darkened until they can not see and do the will of God.

Third, WHAT THEY WERE GIVEN UP TO. The Roman empire was given up to three wrong things. As I list them it would be well to check these three things with this generation. They were given up to -- (1) WRONG LEARNING. (2) WRONG LIVING. (3) WRONG LOVING. All three of these things would be very good; however, when they are perverted by the devil they become very deadly.

They learned homosexuality and promiscuity. We read this sad situation in verses 26 and 27 -- "For even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the women, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men." Here are intelligent men that have learned the lowest type of sin. If this despicable condition were only among the poor illiterate we could contend that it was due to the fact that they did not have the opportunity of learning. However, when it is so prevalent among those that have education and claim to be very wise, we have to conclude that their hearts have become darkened.

They tell us that it is a conservative estimate that there are better than five thousand men and women that work for our government in Washington who are known homosexuals. There are so many, and in high places, until there has been a steady effort to take away any stigma for this despicable, unnatural sin. The "Women's Lib Movement" have made the statement that they are not interested in ones' bedroom manners; they are only interested in the person. They welcome lesbians into their movement.

The saddest aspect of this deplorable sin is the fact that "unchristian" churches and clergy have begun to sanction the ungodly practice. The great church that did more to mold the moral fiber of the United States than any other source has now stooped to the level of performing marriages between two homosexual men. Others are conducting services for the homosexuals, so as to give them a sense of respectability.

The seats of learning (our universities) are refuting the denunciation that the Bible makes against all that commit this deplorable sin, They have injected their own reasoning as the absolute authority, and are now giving license for the practice. This again proves the words of the apostle Paul, "Professing themselves to be wise, they become fools." v-23

Promiscuity reached the point until the majority thought anyone that did not follow that course, strange. Promiscuity means, "An indiscriminate or confused mixture." This indiscriminate mixture reached the point until you could not make a clear distinction between the sexes. The women became mannish in their attire, actions and speech. The men became feminine in their attire, actions and manners, When they reached this indiscriminate, or confused mixture, the Lord gave them up.

They lived on the brute-beast level. Listen to verse 24, "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts to dishonor their own bodies between themselves." They so dishonored, or dissipated, their bodies until Rome crumbled from within, They were not a fit force to oppose the enemy. With this great epidemic of dope and lustful living that is sweeping our young people, what hope would we have to resist a real enemy? Look into the faces of these long haired boys and see if you can find any resemblance of a fine strong man to defend our country? I have been impressed with how weak, feminine and dissipated they look. Lust makes them live on the brute beast level, and their hearts being darkened, keeps them from seeing they are dishonoring, or destroying their own body.

They loved the creature more than the creator. We read in verse 21, "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful: but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish hearts were darkened." How ironical that this generation is chanting by word and song, "What this world needs is love". Love for God they, seemingly, know nothing about. The love they are talking about is actually lust. If they say they love one another, then they are free to have premarital sex relations. Of course, when they become pregnant and have a child out of wedlock, then they want the establishment to provide the care for the "marked child". Their imagination has become so vain until they expect the decent people to not look with any disrespect on them when they break every law of God, sponge on society and desecrate everything that is sacred.

Their eyes are so blind and their hearts so darkened until they can not see that their kind of love will not bring decency, happiness and happy unions. It will only breed immorality, perversion and a dissipated race, Their kind of love will produce a generation that has removed all reason for allowing it to reproduce itself.

This is the sad pattern of the world today. One would have to be willfully blind to not be able to see this, This is the pattern of the majority of Christendom today. Some of the strongest defenders of the ungodly actions of the young people today are churches and clergy, They are being used of the devil in a very destructive way. This is the pattern of the majority of professed holiness churches today. The devil has certainly pressed them into the mold of the world until one would have to have a very high powered spiritual magnifying glass to tell them apart. Most of them would not think of going to the lowest level of the world, but they are molded into the world's spirit, practice and attire until there is no thought of a clear separation.

The Roman empire became a given up generation. This generation is fast coming to that stage. How is it with you? Have you allowed the world to press you into it's mold? Have you kind of drifted along with it? Will you be given up by the Lord?

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02 -- GOD'S WAY OF DOING IT -- Prov. 16:1, 7

"By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil."
v-6

Little wonder that poor man wears himself out so quickly! It is easy to see how the apostle James could say of the life of man, "It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away". 4:14

He, seemingly, can't follow God's directions but tries to do things his own way. This is not only true in material things, but even in the field of redemption. Even here man wants to do it his way instead of doing it God's way.

This universal refusal of man is due to the carnal mind with which all men are born. Little wonder the apostle Paul said, "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity (deep seated hostility) against God: For it is not subject to the law of God, NEITHER INDEED CAN BE". Rom. 8:6,7 This is why the carnal mind must be purged out, root and branch. If one vestige of it remains, that vestige will be enmity (deep seated hostility) against God.

The reason churches fail, or an individual fails spiritually, is because of his refusal to do it God's way. There are three things that each one needs to consider, carefully, if he intends to submit to God's way of doing it.

First, **ONLY THE FEAR OF THE LORD WILL MAKE MEN DEPART FROM EVIL.**
This is a lesson that, seemingly can't be learned or remembered, by the masses. Never has there

ever been a day when there were so many religious activities, professions, rituals and efforts advocated by so many different religious groups. There is little wonder that so many have thrown their hands up in confusion, when there are so many religious groups with so many different ideas. Sad to say, the majority of these activities, professions, rituals and efforts are the way that men say one should do it. They are a far cry from God's way of doing it. Just one look about you will reveal that all these religious activities, professions, rituals and efforts are certainly not making men depart from evil.

This sickly, unscriptural "believism" will get people into the different religious groups, but it certainly won't get them to turn from evil. One falsehood demands another to cover up for it. After the preacher gets them in by false "believism", then he must spend his time condoning, instead of condemning their evil ways. Most people today go to church on Sunday morning to get another dose of deception from the false preacher.

From Sinai where God gave Moses the Ten Commandments, until today, THE FEAR OF THE LORD has been the only cause of men actually departing from evil. Listen, "And Moses said unto the people, fear not, for God is come to prove you, and that HIS FEAR may be before your face, THAT YE SIN NOT". Ex. 20:20. Though false teachers try to deny it: the fear of the Lord is motivated by love. In fact, one can not really love God unless he does fear Him. Adam Clarke said, "That fear which reverence and filial affection inspire, that ye sin not -- that, through the love and reverence ye feel to your Maker and Sovereign, ye may abstain from every appearance of evil", John made this so plain, "And this is love, that ye walk after His commandments". 2 John 6

Every period of real hypocrisy has been when there was no fear of the Lord before the face of the people. Church history reveals so many of these periods; and the lack of the proper fear of God was so evident in all of them. Even Jesus faced it in his day. He said of the religionist of that day: "Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men". Math 15:7,9 How aptly this would apply to the majority of religious groups today; even to the majority of the holiness groups.

Billy Graham gave a very pertinent description of England and America while on his first campaign of London, over twenty years ago. He said, "The ministers of England are guilty of the same offense of the ministers of America. They have preached only on the love of God, and not the wrath of God until they have reared a generation with no FEAR of God". Since that statement was uttered both England and America have gone deeper and deeper in the gutter, spiritually speaking. And these are the two nations that profited most from the great Wesley revival, However, they ceased to preach on the ten commandments until every sinner realized he was a breaker of God's commandments. They did it their way and began to preach love.

Always, those that contend only for love are the liberal ones, and fail to depart, fully, from evil. I have never met a preacher or layman who had departed, fully, from evil in his speech, actions, dress and associates that did not fear God. However, I have met so many of them in the holiness groups that clamored for love, who were a disgrace to the crowd and cause which they advocated.

Second, ONLY MERCY AND TRUTH WILL PURGE INIQUITY. This is another lesson that seems so hard for the masses to learn. Even good sincere people have a struggle at this point. Satan, being the deceiver, deceives so many into overlooking this. Even people that have a sincere desire to do right will either consciously, or unconsciously, try to have iniquity purged by some other means.

It was MERCY alone that made God provide a remedy for our iniquity. No amount of money could have bought it -- WE CERTAINLY DID NOT DESERVE IT, It was not provided because God was lonesome and redeemed us so He could have us for fellowship, God is complete within Himself and needs nothing. It was MERCY alone that shed the blood on the middle cross. One has said of mercy -- "It is something that I did not deserve; but oh, I needed it so desperately"! This is the plight of every sinner, God, in his MERCY provided the great remedy.

It is TRUTH alone that does the work. Jesus, in His High Priestly Prayer said, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth". John 17:17 How wonderful it would be if each person could only learn that only the word of God is absolute truth.

Let us notice three statements of truth: A. "We are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that OBEY him". Acts 5:32 Great emphasis should be placed on the word OBEY. B. "If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly father give the Holy Spirit to them that ASK Him?" Lu. 11:13 Too much emphasis can not be put on that word ASK. C. "That we might receive the promise of the Spirit through FAITH". Gal. 3:4 A more vital word could not be found than this word FAITH.

The simple A.B.C, of the purging of one's iniquity is found in these three verses. Sad that so very few are willing to accept God's way of doing it; but they either want to add to, or take away from the way of God.

Truth says it is those that OBEY God, ASK God for the Holy Spirit, and accept the Spirit by FAITH that are actually purged. The devil has deceived so many into seeking for a sign, emotional display or some peculiar sensation. So many claim to speak in tongues and put on a great display of emotions. Still, they are carnal because they have not been purged by truth. Others, either consciously or unconsciously, demand a like emotional display of some one they have confidence in. My own precious mother was my greatest hindrance in getting sanctified. She was my spiritual champion, and she was the one that prayed real conviction upon me. She had a little high peal of laughter that she made when she got blessed, which she did quite often. I wanted to be able to laugh like her. If I could have gotten that laugh I would have been deceived by satan into thinking that I was sanctified. I struggled like this for three months, seeking the experience at every service. Then one night, just as I was about. to go to the altar, the Holy Spirit spoke to me so clearly, "You are not seeking me, you are seeking that high peal of laughter that your mother has. It is not feeling that you need, you need the Holy Ghost." I started to the altar talking out loud; "Lord it is not feelings that I need, I need the Holy Ghost". I did not make it to the altar; I was standing straight up when the door of faith opened and the Holy Ghost, Himself, came in his cleansing, baptismal power. Thank God, I did not keep on insisting on doing it my way. I am so glad that I finally submitted to God's way of doing it.

Third, MEN DESIRE MERCY WITHOUT HAVING TO GO BY TRUTH OR HAVING TO DEPART FROM EVIL. "Self-Preservation" is certainly the first law of every sinful man. They want to do it their way and satisfy their desires.

The sinful, and the carnal, man desires a MERCIFUL, but not a HOLY God. He desires that His mercy will go to the point of blinding God's eyes to sin and carnality; and that it will prevent Him from meting out judgment at all. Too many preachers preach a sinning religion. They emphasize the sinfulness of man and the mercy of God. They will, in a shocked manner, ask, "do you think a merciful God would send any man to hell"? They gamble their eternal destiny on the hope that the mercy of God will blind His eyes to sin and carnality. God is merciful, but He is also holy. He cannot look on sin, in any degree, with any tolerance. Every sin that is not confessed and forsaken will be brought into judgment.

The more carnal people that make up the membership of the church, the more preaching on MERCY and LOVE is demanded, When the holiness movement was in it's most spiritual stage there was much preaching on hell, death and the judgment. There was also a crying out against all types of sin and worldliness, This kind of preaching brought real conviction and produced genuine conversions. Today when most of the preaching is on the emotional level, it suggests that God is so merciful until all that one has to do is believe, We are producing unstable, worldly professors of religion. Instead of soldiers in the army of the Lord, they are more like hot house plants. You have to prop them on the leaning side, be very gentle with them, and speak smooth things to them. They won't endure SOUND DOCTRINE. Most of them do not actually know what sound doctrine is. Sound doctrine is the character of right living. Sound doctrine will tell one what he should and should not do. Sound doctrine will touch every ramification of the Christian life. It will touch the initial experience, the need of growing in grace and the practical aspect, or proper conduct and behavior. The proper conduct is what those that want to hear mercy preached on exclusively do not want to hear.

Those that love to hear preaching on mercy are very careful of whom they call for a pastor or an evangelist, They are not about to call someone that will dare to preach sound doctrine if they can help it. If such an evangelist is somehow called, it is amazing how easily they can find it convenient to miss many of the services. Then, when the meeting is over, they are quick to voice their opinion about the advisability of not having that evangelist again.

Most people come to the altar only for an emotional release. They live so far below the demands of the scriptures until they are loaded with guilt. Instead of paying the fee to lie on a Psychiatrist's couch, they go to an altar, There they either shed a few tears or have some "altar nurse" to convince them they are not so bad. They arise from the altar to go out to live, look and act the same way they had been living, looking and acting. They have no thought of really turning from their sin and worldliness.

Are you going by your way of doing it, or God's way of doing it?

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03 -- HOW CHEAPLY ARE WE SELLING OUR SOULS? -- Matt. 16:24, 26

"For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" v-26

"Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people." Prov. 14:34

Unless one desires to be willfully blind or is completely ignorant of the scriptures, he can see that we are selling our soul as a NATION, a CHURCH, and as INDIVIDUALS. The fact that we are selling our soul at all is startling; however, the most startling thing is how cheaply we are selling our souls.

PROSPERITY and POVERTY have been two very effective tools In the hand of satan, With these two he has accomplished his deadly purpose. The wise man, Solomon, realized how deadly these two things were and said, "Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of God in vain". Prov. 30:8,9

The majority of people in our country today are entirely too rich for their spiritual good. Being full, they are denying the Lord: if not by word, then by actions. Those that we call poor, in large numbers have taken to the streets to steal and destroy. Trouble is on every hand and the name of God is being taken in vain.

There are three solemn questions that we need to ask our own hearts. If we will ask these questions prayerfully, I am sure that we will receive some startling information.

First, HOW CHEAPLY ARE WE SELLING OUR SOUL AS A NATION? In spite of all of our national gross product, technical accomplishments, economical gains, and destructive potentials, as a nation we are selling our soul. Instead of being thankful to God for his bountiful blessings and walking in harmony with his word, we have refused the authority of His word and are walking in our own ways. Never has our country been weaker than it is today. There is more confusion, discord, and rebellion among us today than in anytime in the history of our country, It would be mighty hard for us to present a united force against any real enemy.

Sin has become the accepted way of the masses; righteousness has become the way of the steadily smaller minority. The "holy few" become less daily, As I heard one preacher say, "far more people are backsliding than we are getting into a real born again experience". He could have added, far more people are falling from a real heart holiness experience than we are getting into such an experience. "

As a nation we are living by expediency and according to human thinking. If a thing seems expedient the average person feels that it must be correct. Some have taken this line of thinking so far until they are now advocating "situation ethics". They contend that premarital sex relationships are alright under the correct situation. The fact that the Bible makes it plain that all premarital sex relationships are adultery does not change their thinking in any degree.

Human thinking has gone to the point of giving license for about every type of sin. Educators are teaching that the fact that one has a desire to do a thing gives him license to do that thing. (They will not accept the fact that all men are born with a depraved nature, It is this depraved nature that causes their depraved desires.) This has thrown the door open for the use of alcohol, tobacco, dope and promiscuous sex relations.

Every nation that has followed our pattern has fallen into disgrace and destruction. If one would only walk back through the pages of history he would see that no nation has been able to take our pattern of thinking and living, and keep its soul. Of course, those that advocate these things would never profit from history; they feel that they are smarter than those that have gone before.

The only deterrent to this fate are the few righteous descenders; only those that will stand as resolute against this kind of thinking as the Three Hebrew Boys stood against the decree of the king. How heart breaking that this kind of descender is so rare today. There are so very few that will take a definite stand and not give. All too many want to be part REFORMER and part PARTICIPATOR. They don't want to be classified as those that have turned completely to the practice of living according to their base desires. Neither do they want to be looked on as completely out of step with the thinking and actions of those that do. Therefore, they dress enough like them, act enough like them and talk enough like them, so they will not have to suffer any reproach. Neither will they ever have an influence to turn the deluded world from its ungodly practices.

Second, HOW CHEAPLY ARE WE SELLING OUR SOUL AS A CHURCH? In spite of all our lovely buildings, colleges, educated personnel and finances, as a church we are selling our soul. The soul of any church is its spiritual glory and power; never can it be based on its educational standard or its material wealth, This is why we read, "Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knoweth not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked". Rev. 3:17 This was not only true with the church of the Laodiceans, with the old line churches, but also true with the majority of the holiness churches.

Expediency has become the accepted way of the average church; absolute Bible authority is the practiced way of the steadily smaller minority. Steadily we are going away from the prescribed Bible way of dress, behavior, associations and worldly amusements. When any pattern of behavior becomes general enough in the church we just sit in to change the written rules that our founding fathers wrote.

Dr. Daniel Steele, the only holiness theologian from Yale university, said, "A doctrine is lost to any group in one generation. The succeeding generation will vote to change the writings of anything that does not conform with their living". For one to not be able to see this happening in the holiness churches today is willfully blind, We are spending far more time, in the pulpit **CONDONING** than **CONDEMNING**.

We have never had greater ecclesiastical machines, human programs or more devotees. Neither have we known a time when the church has had so little spiritual effect on people. At the end of the Civil War there were only 12% of the population affiliated with the different churches, However, that 12% set the modesty standards for the world. Today, better than 60% of the people

are members of the different churches, However, it is not the church, but the world that sets the standard today. This is why the apostle Paul said, "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. 2 Tim. 3:5 Most people use the church today as a little banner to wave over their head, something that will give them a sense of moral respectability, However, we say to that banner, "make no demands on me: let me go where I want to go, look like I want to look, go with whom I desire to go, and act like I want to act .

Every church that has followed the course of compromise, human wisdom and expediency, has lost their soul and gone down in spiritual disgrace. They might even grow financially and numerically but they lose all that gave them a real reason for coming into existence, I have often wondered how we could face those that suffered and sacrificed to found our church? Of course, by the time a church has sold its soul, the founders have gone on to their reward. Therefore, the liberal leaders of the sold out church go, unhindered, along.

Third, HOW CHEAPLY ARE WE SELLING OUR SOUL AS AN INDIVIDUAL? When God gave each one the power of choice, He allowed him to become SPIRITUALLY INDEPENDENT. Regardless of what others, the majority or anyone does, each individual can do whatever he chooses to do, However, the majority have become the victims of the crowd.

By going with the crowd, either nation or church, each individual is selling his soul. Few people will admit this fact. Most of them, especially if they are going with the sold out crowd, will vigorously deny it.

Compromise and sin have become the accepted way of the masses. Each individual must refuse to walk in the step of the crowd, either nation or church, to keep from selling his soul. Being creatures of influence, it will be very hard for one not to go with the crowd. Each one of us love to be accepted by the crowd, therefore, we do not face up to the danger of the crowd. Religious history has shown that never have the majority been correct on moral decisions. From Noah until today, when there is a moral issue at stake, it has always been the small minority that has been correct. The majority would not accept the fact at the time, but history has proven that it was true.

No group has ever faced more deadly pressures than we face today, We are facing pressures today that our founding fathers knew nothing about. We have EDUCATIONAL, ECONOMICAL and PERMISSIVE pressures.

We have never had as many colleges, college graduates and emphasis on education, As a nation and as a church, we are bowing at the altar of learning. Higher education has never inclined one to deep Spirituality. The trend has always been toward liberal views, human understanding and a refuting of the authority of the word of God, With the nation and the church so filled with college graduates, for one to go contrary to the majority it seems that you are denying wisdom.

There have never been so many economical pressures. Our, standard of living is so high and our tax load so heavy, until the average man can't make enough to stay up with the Joneses. So many wives feel they must leave the home to help out in the economy of the family. Many a pastor and evangelist will not dare preach their honest convictions because they would suffer in the area of finance. They deny that this is the reason but, actually, it is. So many times the children are so

anxious to have what others have they put so much pressure on the parents until they fail to take time to be holy. The family altar is sacrificed for a second car and a boat.

Never has the permissive pressure been so great. This generation is so permissive until anyone that regards modesty, decency and holiness behavior seems completely out of place. One can slip far below their best light and still be far above this permissive generation. This is the sad plight of so many in the average holiness church.

Only a real sanctified person can stand consistently against all the subtle pressures of this day. Many stood for awhile and then slowly began to give in, I can think of so many preachers and laymen that I have known personally, over the past thirty years, that have done exactly this. Jesus warned against this -- "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil will cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulations ten days: BE THOU FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH AND I WILL GIVE THEE A CROWN OF LIFE". Rev. 2:10 How sad for those preachers and laymen that stood true for a period, but not to the end.

Regardless of the material gain, sensual satisfaction or human aggrandizement, in the face of the brevity and uncertainty of life, all will see at the judgment that they sold their soul entirely too cheaply.

The desire for riches is very deadly to spiritual life, When a layman will sell his convictions and his influence to Increase his material gain, he has sold things of lasting value for only temporary trash. When a preacher will sell his convictions and compromise his preaching for financial gain, he has sold the priceless for a pittance.

The price that one would have to pay to go along with the permissive ways of this generation is entirely too costly.

In hell where the blinded eyes will be opened, the silenced conscience will begin to gnaw and memory will review to each one that sold out, just how it happened; Is there any wonder that each one will be gripped with remorse? I can understand now why they will gnash their teeth!

Will you be one of them?

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04 -- TELLING IT LIKE IT IS -- 2 Tim. 3:1, 7

"Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people." Prov. 14:34

Poor deluded man feels that he is so intelligent until he does not need God. He feels that he is too intelligent to let God's word be the absolute authority. He tries to coin the phrase, "TELLING IT LIKE IT IS", However, this is what the word of God has been doing through the years, "TELLING IT LIKE IT IS". This is most certainly true of our text, "Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people".

The same sinful nature that makes men deny the authority of God's word will blind them to the truth of this scripture. What they want most is what they need less, and what they want less is what they need most.

It would prove profitable for each one to give careful attention to our text and see what it really says. We would like to discuss three of the things that it makes plain.

First, RIGHTEOUSNESS EXALTS. There seems to be a definite attempt, today, to deny righteousness and to disclaim its virtues. Instead of speaking out in favor of righteousness so many are, either openly or by innuendo, trying to reflect upon it. The dictionary will tell us that righteousness is, "The quality of character of being righteous". It will tell us that righteous means, "Conforming in disposition and conduct to a standard of right and justice".

Through training one may conform to the standards of right and justice in conduct, This is what the wise man Solomon meant when he said, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it". Prov. 22:6 Adam Clarke tells us that the Hebrew of this verse is very significant. It means, "Initiate the child at the opening (the mouth) of his path, When he comes to the opening of the way of life, being able to walk alone, and to choose; stop at this entrance, and begin a series of instructions, how he is to conduct himself in every step he takes. Show him the duties, the dangers, and the blessings, which all lie before him. Fix these on his mind by daily inculcation, till their impression is become indelible; then lead him by practice by slow and almost imperceptible degrees, till each indelible impression becomes a strongly radicated habit". How sad that so very few children are receiving the correct training today. Most parents have been deceived by the false theory of "self expression" which is being advocated by the educators of today. They contend that the child needs to form his own opinions, find his own values, and express himself individually. This very un-scriptural theory, along with so many working mothers, has produced this generation of rebellious, sarcastic and unrighteous young people.

Through training, one may conform to the standards of right and justice in conduct; however, only divine birth will enable one to conform to them in disposition, From the dictionary we are told that disposition means, "One's usual frame of mind; or normal way of reacting". All men are born with a bent to sinning, This is what the Psalmist meant when he said, "The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies". Ps. 58:3 One must be born again for righteousness to be his usual frame of mind; or normal way of reacting.

Righteousness always exalts. And again, from the dictionary, we learn that exalt means, "To raise in rank, character, honor; elevate". History has proven that righteousness always raises in character a nation, group or individual. Righteousness can change the bar bum into a respectable and useful citizen. Righteousness can change a group of "no-gooders" into a group of "do-gooders". England is a wonderful example of what righteousness can do for a nation. Just before the great Wesleyan revival, England was about to go down in moral disgrace. England was about to go into disgrace with France, following her atheistic teachings and promiscuous practices. Then came the Wesleyan revival! This revival made such a moral change in the nation until it was spared the awful sorrow and disgrace that came to France. How wonderful it would be if, today,

England and the United States could have such a revival. This is all that is going to save both nations from destruction and disgrace.

Never has righteousness degraded, blighted or lowered anyone. There has never been and there will never be one that can say, "righteousness has caused me to turn from the right, enslaved me with filthy and degrading habit, and has lowered me from the place that once I enjoyed". Never have I heard anyone testify that he was sorry he had become a Christian, The only sorrow that I have heard expressed was the fact they had not given their heart to God sooner. This is certainly my feelings on the matter!

Second, SIN REPROACHES. If we will go to the dictionary one more time we will find that sin is, "A transgression, especially when deliberate, of a law having divine authority", The same dictionary will tell us that reproach means, "To bring discredit and disgrace upon; to disgrace.

Sin always brings discredit and disgrace upon an individual, a group or a nation. It never elevates, but always drags down, There has never been an individual that committed sin that did not find that it left an adverse effect. Regardless of one's station in life, whether he is an "up and outer" or a "down and outer", sin will discredit and disgrace. Any group that commits sin will soon be marred. Any nation that is given to sin will soon become morally putrid and will decay from within. There has never been one person that could honestly say that sin elevated him, There has never been any group that could claim that sin had brought them up out of the gutter. There has never been a nation that could accredit their harmony, strength and well being, to sin. Sin never brings these things.

Sin destroys that which is clean and good. It takes away innocence and purity; and if pursued long enough will destroy modesty and decency. It took only one sin to take from Adam and Eve their innocence. Just one sin and they began to feel guilt. Just one sin and they realized that they were no longer pure, so they began to try to cover up.

Because sin has a hardening effect, for one to continue in sin is to grow continually harder. This hardening will steal away all tenderness and respect. Soon modesty is destroyed, and so many times decency will be destroyed also.

This is the sad situation that we are seeing all around us today. The majority are wallowing in their shame, but their eyes are blind to their real condition, They have lost their modesty and decency. They can dress, talk and live in an abominable way, without any sense of disgrace or any desire to do any different, They have made black white and white black. They despise those that are good and praise those that are defiled.

The reproach of our homes, cities, and our nation reek to high heaven, There are very few homes that have any resemblance to the homes that the Bible prescribes, There are so very few that have any resemblance of a family altar. Parental control is so rare; and outright rebellion and disobedience is becoming the normal practice of the average young person. Our cities have become a shame and disgrace. From Washington D.C. and throughout the land our cities have become a cesspool of iniquity. Our streets are not safe to walk upon and the activities that are

allowed within them are a stench in the nostrils of God. Our nation has reached the weakest point in its history. The atheistic, ungodly policies of the liberal leaders have sown discord and division. The liberal laws and spirit of tolerance that is being manifested toward our drug using society is producing a weak and dissipated generation. The fine, manly strength that has characterized the young men of this country has been degraded by sin.

Third, SINNERS ARE ENEMIES TO THEIR NATION. As the majority of men and women are sinners, this statement will be looked on as an insult by many. This would be a great insult to military men, senators and congressmen, and even the president, to tell them they are enemies of the nation.

Those men bear the colors of our country, make our laws and govern our country. They feel that, surely, they are the real patriotic friends of this country. However, facts are proving that just the opposite is true. Instead of building up, they are actually tearing the real foundation from under this nation. The legalizing of strong drink and gambling, allowing vulgar movies and plays, allowing the stores to open for business on Sunday and the removing of prayer from our schools, by our legislators, have opened the door to moral insanity. Those that have cooperated, engaged in or sanctioned these things, are helping to pull our nation down in the gutter.

This would not be believed by this modern generation. They feel that they are going to change the nation for the better, That they are changing it can not be denied; however, only a person with a perverted taste and sense of values could contend that they are changing it for the better, With their disregard for manners, morals and maturity, they are steadily dragging it lower into the sewer. When the nation finally collapses, because of their ungodly practices, they will be first to want to blame the fall on others.

This would not be believed by the great number that pay their taxes and stand when the flag passes. They feel that because they will pay their taxes, comply with the laws of the land and have respect for the flag, they are the real strength of the nation. We would be quick to admit that these things are very commendable, but they are not enough to keep a nation strong. So many of these same people, seemingly, can't see that they are sapping the nation of its moral strength by their sins. History has proven that physical power, alone, will not enable a nation to be strong. A nation must have moral strength, as well as physical strength, if it is to be really strong.

This certainly would not be believed by the great number that have their names on the church rolls. They feel that they are the spiritual strength of the nation, They are blind to the fact that being a member of any church, being baptized in any mode of water baptism, and mentally accepting any doctrine does not make one a Christian. No one is really a Christian until he has been made "Christ like" by the birth of the Spirit. Until he is born again, or anew, by the quickening power of the Holy Spirit, he is still dead in trespasses and sins. The majority, of the few that have had such a divine birth, fail to see that they are not Christian in the full sense until baptism of the Holy Spirit. Until their wills have been surrendered, completely, to the will of God and their hearts are cleansed, they are in a state of rebellion to the full law of God. They refuse to see that they are in the sad state that the apostle Paul said the majority would be in, in the last days, "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof": 2 Tim. 3:5 The Amplified New Testament gives this statement greater clarity. We read, "For (although) they hold a form of piety

(true religion), they deny and reject and are strangers to the power of it -- their conduct belies the genuineness of their profession.

There is such a great difference between the profession and the conduct of the average church member today. This is the reason that the church world is in such a state of division. This is also the reason why this sinful world is in such a state of skepticism and unbelief. Still, the millions of Church members go blindly along thinking they are the real spiritual strength of the nation, when they are actually sapping away it's spiritual strength.

This would never be believed by the majority of preachers today. Each of them feel that he is with the right group, has the right doctrine, and is the leader of spiritual things. Seemingly, they have never faced up to the awesome damage they can do by the influence upon those with whom they have contact. History has shown that every period of apostasy was brought about by false prophets, priests and ministers. What an insult it would be to so many preachers to tell them they actually were an enemy of this country. If they have not been truly born again, the carnal nature been cleansed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and walking in full harmony with the word of God, they are hurting instead of helping the cause of God's word has told it like it is, and conditions prove that our text is so true, "Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people."

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05 -- A DAY FOR WEeping -- 2 Kings 19:1, 4

"This day is a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and blasphemy: for the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth." v-3

The Jewish state here is illustrated as a woman in travail, who had been in labor so long that her strength is now nearly exhausted, and her deliverance is hopeless, without a miracle.

The Jewish state has always been a type of the church. Therefore, this scripture seems to paint a vivid description of the church today: CAN'T GIVE BIRTH! We can still get them to come to an altar place of prayer; but to get them through to a real divine birth is altogether different.

The salvation of the situation in Hezekiah's day was the fact that he was alarmed about it, and rallied those that could pray. So very few are really alarmed enough to know that this should be a day of weeping.

I would like to give three reasons why this should be a day of weeping. I want to follow the very same reasoning that Hezekiah gave. Let's notice three things prayerfully.

First, **THIS IS A DAY OF TROUBLE**. Surely no one would be so blind until he would fail to see this. One, has only to look, listen and read to know that trouble is in every area, There is trouble in the **WORLD**, **HOME** and even in the **CHURCH**.

If there were only one country that was having trouble, the others could try to get them to see the error of their ways, and right their wrongs. However, just the opposite is true. Every country is having trouble, which proves that the satanic forces are working the world over. Due to the great advancement in technology and the awesome destructive weapons available, this troubled world is on the verge of terrible carnage. Never has there been a day when our own country was having so much trouble from without, and also from within.

The home is facing the most severe test that it has ever faced. Never has the average home faced as much trouble as it is facing today. This has reached the point until many in higher education are advocating the abolishing of the conception of the family institution. Never has there been so much rebellion shown to the parents by the young people as today. As I travel from place to place it is rare to find a home where the children are in willing subjection. This is true in both the homes of the laymen and the ministry.

The church has never faced the trouble it is facing today. Most churches have been riddled with the views and actions of the liberals until they have lost all significance of a spiritual force. Even in the holiness ranks, there has been so much compromise and fostering of the liberal views until the cause of holiness has become nearly a mockery. Even, in the conservative section of the holiness movement, there has been so much division until the power of the holy people have been divided.

Because the church could not bring forth children in a real spiritual birth, she had to lower the standards and requirements for membership. I was impressed by an editorial by Dr. J. B. Chapman, in the Herald of Holiness of June 10, 1925. I quote, "What is the state and tendency of your church and community? Do people who wear low necks, short-sleeves, short skirts, flowers, feathers, jewelry and bobbed hair profess holiness and sing in the choir, and belong to the church? IF THEY DO SOMEONE HAS HELD HIS PEACE TOO MUCH AND TOO LONG.

There is a rising tide of interest and power among our young people, but the members and leaders of this work have a tremendous responsibility: FOR WE ALL KNOW THAT THE TENDENCY OF THE SECOND AND SUCCEEDING GENERATIONS OF EVERY REVIVAL IS TO LOSE THE VISION OF THEIR FATHERS AND TO FLOOD THE CHURCH WITH WORLDINESS.

One cannot very well feel that he is in an old-time holiness church when he sees a worldly, gum chewing young woman operating the piano and jewelry bedecked, bobbed haired girls taking a leading part in the singing and other performances in the church building.

Let our pastors preach and our people practice the GENERAL RULES OF THE CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE and may God save us from the fate that has overtaken so many such movements as have gone before us and which wrecked on the reefs of conformity to the world." (Note, Dr. Chapman, who became General Superintendent, thought these things were in the General Rules of the church. How can leaders of today declare they never were?)

With carnal men trying to run spiritual business we are faced with a day of trouble.

Second, THIS IS A DAY OF REBUKE AND BLASPHEMY. With the claims of the gospel and the power at our disposal, and still the sinful conditions all about us, surely this is a day of rebuke. The lack of moral appreciation, the absolute rejection of modesty, and the vulgar attire and actions of the average person today is a rebuke to the church. It says in thunderous tones "Church, you have failed utterly".

Little wonder that the song writer said: "Infidels and skeptics wonder if God answers prayer today". The average person does not believe that God answers prayer today; and some are even entertaining the thought that God is dead, When God dies in the thinking of people, it is because God has not been manifested before them by those that claim to be His children.

We talk about a mighty transforming gospel, but live weak, puny, vacillating lives, We have to let the world dictate to us what we do and what we can't do.

We talk of a God that answereth by fire, yet our altars are cold and without real spiritual heat. We can't even get the majority of those that are members of the church to be concerned enough to stay around our altars and pray with the seekers.

The disrespect of the GOVERNMENT, WORLD and our own CHILDREN, should be enough to rebuke us.

The government has slowly, but steadily, legalized the desecrating of the Christian Sabbath. Stores are allowed to open on Sunday; sporting events are held in public buildings on Sunday night, in direct competition to the few churches that still have Sunday night services. Now, the government is conducting important business many times on Sunday. Yet, why should the government respect the church when so many that are members buy from these stores on Sunday, eat in restaurants, and attend those sporting events?

The world has no respect for the church whatsoever. They do just as they please, and expect the church to fall in line. One would not have to have unusually clear vision to see that the church, as a whole, has done just exactly that. The world sets the standards and the church follows them.

Our own children do not respect the authority of the church. They either want us to lower the demands down to their level of living, or they want to leave the church completely. They will attend the churches that will give them the entertainment of the world. However, when it comes to a real spiritual program, they are conspicuously absent. Those few faithful young people, who are living up to God's demands and refusing to drift with the world, are despised by the majority of young people that attend the worldly churches. Paul told us that in the last days professed Christians will actually be "despisers of those that are good". 2 Tim. 3:3 (Each parent that reads these words should honestly ask his or her own heart this question, "How much appreciation does my child have for modesty, purity and living separate from the world"?)

Third, THIS IS A DAY IN WHICH WE ALL NEED TO BECOME ALARMED. The conditions of Hezekiah's day made him rent his clothes and plead for prayer. He could see clearly

that he was not able to cope with the situation in his own strength or wisdom. He knew that only God could intervene in his behalf.

This is exactly what we need to do today, but anyone can see this is not being done. Most of us that claim to love the Lord have been caught up in this mad materialistic race until it is amazing how little time we actually do spend in prayer. The little prayer that we do is far from the kind of praying that we need to be doing.

Dr. R. T. Williams, one of the greatest preachers that the holiness movement has ever produced, was asked by an individual; "how long in a 24-hour day do you believe that the average professor of holiness spends in prayer"? The wise doctor tried to evade the question of the individual. No doubt he did not desire to be controversial. However, the individual would not be evaded. He pressed his question until the doctor gave his answer. The doctor said, "In my opinion, I believe that the average professor of holiness spends about 8 minutes on his knees in a 24 hour day". (Please remember that this question was asked, and the answer given, thirty years ago. The moral condition of the world was so much better then, than it is today, and the average professor of holiness lived on a much higher plane than the average professor of today.) Unless there is a prayer meeting called or a special service in progress, the average professor of holiness does not spend an average of 8 minutes a day. It is easy to assume that you do, but it would be informative to check with God's watch. If you should happen to be one of the few that do spend more than 8 minutes a day. Just remember there are so many more that do not spend that much time.

We are like the Laodicean church. Jesus said of them "Because thou sayeth, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knoweth not that thou are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked". Rev. 3:17 It is absolutely amazing how much the financial concern determines the actions, choices and decisions of churches and individuals. I can't help but admit that some preachers that cry out for the old-fashioned way, are so covered up in the materialistic pursuit until they are making little, or no, impact on this sinful world,

If God could blind our eyes to the material and let us see only the true spiritual need, surely, it would alarm us. However, the enemy of our soul is going to do all that he can to prevent that. He will keep those that are carnal so intrigued with carnal things until they will never see the need. Those that have been sanctified, he will try to keep them so busy with the legitimate things until they will fail to see, also.

In the average holiness church today there is a sad picture that must make the angels weep. Our altars can be barren; the few that do come fail to find a divine birth; the glory can depart from our services; but if we pay our budgets, a good salary AND, BY ALL MEANS KEEP UP OUR SUNDAY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE we think we are all right. (This is not an evaluation that I am accepting from others. I have traveled from coast to coast, and this is the sad situation that I have had to face over and over. I am not saying this just to be critical; but I am trying to show you why we all need to become alarmed.)

How pitiful to be blind; but how much more pitiful to be blind and not know it. Little wonder that Jesus counseled the Laodiceans, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy

nakedness do not appear; and ANOINT THINE EYES WITH EYE SALVE, THAT THOU MAYEST SEE". Rev. 3:18

Unless our spiritual eyes are opened, and that very soon, the season of rescue will be over. Our friends, neighbors and so many of our children are lost, They are not going to be lost; but they are lost NOW, They will soon be DAMNED. WILL YOU BEGIN TO WEEP AND PRAY?

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06 -- DOING THEIR OWN THING -- Jer 18:1, 16

"We will walk after our own devices, and we will everyone do the imagination of his evil hearts." v-12

The blinding power of sin is shown clearly in the repetitious actions of sinful men. The five great civilizations of history have all gone down for the same basic reasons, The only thing that each civilization learned from history was the fact that they did not learn anything. They each followed in the same repetitious circle. The reason for the downfall of each could be summed Into one basic disaster -- THEY BEGAN TO "DO THEIR OWN THING"!

This sin drunkened generation today feels they are more intelligent and advanced than those that went before them. They feel they are really living, as they proclaim that they are "DOING THEIR OWN THING". Little do they realize that they are away behind time and only cheap imitators of those blind generations that have gone before them. They may be the first to coin the expression of "doing their own thing"; however, they certainly are not the first generation that has engaged in the practice of it. So the words of the wise man is true -- "And there is no new thing under the sun". Ecc. 1:9.

There are three things about this prevalent expression of today that each one needs to give careful attention. If each one would carefully consider these three things, surely much sorrow could be avoided.

First, GOD ALONE CAN "DO HIS OWN THING". Poor blinded, ego inflated man loses sight of the fact that God is the maker of all men. They want to deny that God created the world and all there is within. He formed man from the dust of the ground. God alone can do as He desires! He is omnipotent, unlimited power belongs only to Him.

God had Jeremiah to go down to the potters house to impress this truth upon him, He had Jeremiah to watch the potter spin the clay upon the wheel, He had the potter to make a vessel unto honour and another that was marred, He had the potter to make again the vessel that was marred. Then God told Jeremiah to tell the people, "Behold, as the clay is in the potters hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel. At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, TURN FROM THEIR EVIL, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them". Jer. 18:6,8

The fact that God alone can do "His thing", or as He pleases, should thrill every man, God is the essence of goodness; He desires to do good to all men. His desire to do good to all men is so great until he sends the rain on the unjust as well as the just. His desire to do good to all men is best expressed by the apostle Paul, "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". Rom. 5:7, 8.

God alone has the POWER, AUTHORITY, WISDOM and the Right to do His "own thing". The awesome power of God is beyond the comprehension of even men that could build the hydrogen bomb. He has but to speak and the sun and moon and the rolling waves instantly obey his command. The prophet Isaiah, speaking of God, said, "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?" Is. 40:12

His authority is absolute. He alone has divine authority, For He alone is divine, His will is beyond question and His ways are always best for all men.

His wisdom is far too great for the little finite mind of man to grasp. How can man comprehend wisdom that knows all things? Even the hairs of a man's head are numbered, and his every thought is known to God.

The right of God to "do His own thing" is beyond the slightest doubt, He is the maker of all things. He has a perfect right to do with nations and every individual as He desires.

I am so thankful that I have a God that has such power, authority, wisdom and rights. Such a God is able to lift my loads, tell me the way I need to walk, answer my disturbing questions and give me what He desires for me to have.

Second, ONLY SINFUL MEN TRY OR DESIRE TO "DO THEIR OWN THING". Jesus made it plain that real Christians did not "do their own thing". He said, "If any man will come after me, let him DENY HIMSELF, and take up his cross, and follow me" Math. 15:2 This statement alone would make it clear to any honest person that those that are "doing their thing" are certainly not Christians in any degree. Self will and Christ will not mix any more than oil and water will mix.

Jeremiah was confronted with the awful situation of men determined to "do their own thing". As God had instructed him to say, Jeremiah had told the men of Judah, "return ye now, every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good". v - 11 They were worshipping idols or false gods. They were drinking and using dope. Their immorality had become a stench in the nostrils of God.

God had told the men of Judah to drink no more of their libations, nor use those potions which tend only to Increase their appetite for moral pollution. The potions which they were drinking were those that would remove all inhibitions and intensify the base desires. The drugs of today and the hard rock music do exactly the same thing to this generation as the libations and

potions did to the men of Judah. As long as they continued to use them, just that long they would continue to go lower and lower in the gutter of immorality.

The reply of the men of Judah was, in essence, the same reply of this doomed generation. "And they said, There is no hope: but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart". v-12 It is useless to advise me thus, I am determined; I have loved these strange gods, and to them will I cleave.

The men of Judah desired to be religious, but they demanded that their religious worship would include their ungodly libations and potions. Any suggestion of turning back to the "old paths" was repulsive and ridiculous to them, This is identically the same attitude and demands that are being made by this generation. They are willing to be religious if their religion will not conflict with their base desires. If they can bring their music, dress and program into their religion, they are willing to continue to claim to be religious, However, there seems to be little hope to urge them to turn back to the "old paths".

Because of this strong determination, churches are adjusting their programs to the youth today. They are bringing in music, songs and activities that would have been looked on as abominable not many years ago. Seemingly, church leaders are so determined to hold them, at any cost, and to keep a numerical gain until they steadily give in to their demands. I was shocked to see a large poster that was being sent from the district headquarters of a large holiness group, to be displayed on the bulletin board of each local church of the district. It was more like the pictures you would expect to see at some second rate movie house. It showed boys with their long hair and beards holding their rock guitars. It also showed mini skirted girls ready to sing rock religious songs. This was a district activity for the young people! If you had urged their leaders to refuse to do things like this and urge the young people to turn back to the "old paths", you would have been met with the statement, "there is no hope". They love these things and they are determined to hold to them.

When men refuse to follow God, they try to become gods. They allow their own intellect to become the final decision on moral issues, That is why the men of Judah said, "we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart". One cannot help but be impressed with the honesty of the men of Judah. You could not get this generation to make such a honest statement; but they are saying exactly this, by their actions.

Third, "DOING YOUR OWN THING" WILL BRING DESTRUCTION When men "do their own thing" they are always in rebellion to God, God is long-suffering but He has said, "My spirit shall not always strive with man". Gen. 6:3 God strove long with the antediluvian world, the men of Jeremiah's day and he has striven long with the men of this day, The men of the antediluvian world were destroyed by the great flood; The men of Jeremiah's day were destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, They were destroyed in such numbers until their bodies were piled in piles. The men of this day are going to be destroyed in the great carnage that will soon be coming on the world.

When men "do their own thing" the society becomes immoral and putrid, There has never been a time when men "did their own thing" that PURITY and MODESTY increased. The two

things that are fast becoming nearly extinct are PURITY and MODESTY. Not only are these two virtues becoming nearly extinct, they are not desired by the majority, and honestly despised by many.

When men "do their own thing" they become so debauched until they forfeit all rights to blight offsprings. Personally, I feel sorry for nearly every child that is born today. With the immoral parents they have, the putrid society they are born into and the spirit of permissiveness that is so prevalent, their chance to be pure and holy is just about nil. This dope ridden, sex promiscuous and rebellious young people of today are not fit to be parents.

Many holiness professors sit smugly and fell they would never go to the extremes of this day. Personally, I don't think that many of them will; however, they forget that Paul said, "Abstain from all appearance of evil" I Thes. 5:22 Many have patterned so closely to this debauched world TO SHUN REPROACH AND BECAUSE OF UNCLEAN DESIRES, if they really abstained from all appearances of evil they would be totally different people. If they refused to allow this lustful generation to press them into their mold of dress, behavior and practices, there would be such a great change in them until the old crowd would not recognize them, There is nothing in this generation, of those that are demanding that they "do their own thing", that is good. They are all evil; therefore, we should strive to be totally different from them in LOOKS, ACTIONS, PURPOSES and DESIRES.

Those that "do their thing" will be destroyed. It has always happened and it will happen to this rebellious generation. Those other rebellious generations did not believe that destruction was coming to them, even though they were faithfully warned. When destruction fell it was too late to cry for mercy. This debauched generation will not believe that destruction is coming, but it will come.

Those that fail to abstain from the appearance of evil will go to the same hell with the debauched. There is no respectable hell, That is why the apostle John warned, "But the FEARFUL, and the unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second (never ending) death". Rev. 21:8

Just who do you think the FEARFUL would include? Adam Clarke said of them. "Those who, for fear of losing life or their property, either refused to receive the Christian religion, though convinced of its truth and importance; or, having received it, in times of persecution fell away, not being willing to risk their lives". Could we not safely say that they will also include all those that were afraid to take a stand? They were convinced in their hearts and minds that the things of the world were sinful and evil but they were afraid to take a clear, definite stand against the very appearance of the world. They were so afraid of having to suffer some reproach and maybe ridicule from the world, until they moved as near the world in their dress, activities and spirit as their consciences could be stretched. They prided themselves in the fact that they were not using tobacco, drinking whisky, using dope or committing adultery; they also leaned on the fact that they still claimed religion and attended services often; Still, they dressed after the pattern (maybe not to the same extremes) of the world, attended many of the same activities and played their music.

Hell is going to be too horrible to go to for any cause. Those that insist on "doing their own thing" will surely go there. However, those that are fearful to stand completely separate from those that are "doing their own thing", will go there also. Are you "doing your own thing" or are you patterning after those that are "doing their own thing"?

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07 -- IS THE SOCIETY SICK OR ARE THE MEN OF THE SOCIETY SICK? -- Isaiah 1:1, 7

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves," 2 Tim. 3:1-2

Unless one is willfully blind, or completely withdrawn from the facts, he will agree that things are very sick today. Only a sick person could be satisfied, or at ease, with the present state of things.

We know that things are in a sick state; but we do not know what is sick. Is the society, or are the men of the society sick? So many are condemning the society and demanding that it be changed. However, their efforts are not helping; In fact, their DEMONSTRATIONS, RIOTS and SELF EXPRESSIONS are further demoralizing the society.

We all need to ask God for divine guidance so that we can know where to begin our efforts -- ON THE SOCIETY OR THE MEN OF THE SOCIETY.

There are three basic facts that we need to give careful attention to, If these three facts were observed, prayerfully, by all that claim to be Christians, I am sure that things would be far different.

First, THE LIVING OF MEN HAS MADE EVERY SOCIETY SICK THAT HAS BEEN SICK. The Bible and secular history reveals that societies have run in a repetitious circle, When they were walking in harmony with God's directions they were blessed. When they walked contrary to God's directions the society became sick.

This was true in the day of Noah. Although Noah's day was 2468 years before the birth of Christ, the description of that day sounds exactly like the day in which we are living. Let's read this description, "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually". Gen. 6:5 The living of the men of Noah's day made their society so sick until God repented that He had ever made man. It also made Him send the great flood to destroy that wicked generation. We do not have access to the newspapers (or however they distributed the news) of Noah's days. However, if we did have access to them I am sure there would be many demands of changes that were needed in the society.

This was true in the day of Isaiah. Isaiah lived 760 years before the birth of Christ; but it would be mighty hard for one to not think he was describing this generation, instead of his generation, if he did not know who was writing, This is how he described his generation, "Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they

have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it: but wounds, and bruises and putrefying sore: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment. Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers". Isa. 1:4,7 Judea was ravaged by the joint invasion of the Israelites and Syrians, If we would have lived in the day of Isaiah, no doubt, there would have been many long and loud cries for a change in the society.

This was true in the day of Jeremiah. Jeremiah lived over six hundred years before the birth of Christ, However, if one was not aware of this fact, he would feel that surely he was describing the decision of this generation, He said, "And they said, there is no hope: but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his own evil heart". Jer. 18:12 They were determined that they would do their thing. They wanted no restraint put upon their actions. Former laws, customs or taboos were not going to put any demands on them. They demanded that they be allowed to go in their own way, And they did go in their own way into utter destruction! Their bodies were piled in piles and the fowls of the air fed upon their carcasses.

This is true in our day. The apostle Paul said, "In the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy". 2 Tim. 3:1,2 If one had waited until this day to describe the different aspects of this generation, he could not have improved on the description that the inspired apostle gave better than nineteen hundred years ago. Among the different things he mentions, four stand out like mountain peaks. They are, **BLASPHEMERS, DISOBEDIENT TO PARENTS, UNTHANKFUL and UNHOLY.** The blasphemous plays, songs and speech of this day is abominable. The disobedience to parents is so wide spread until it is accepted as the normal way for young people to live. Regardless of how much you may give people they seem to have no thought of being thankful, They only cry for more, and complain that they are not getting their fair share. The unholy condition of our day is the most distressing thing that we face. Most churches that claim to be holiness churches, seemingly, have a confused conception of what true Bible holiness really means. The average person that claims to be holy, belies his testimony by his actions, interest and attire.

Each group, whether in the day of Noah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, or today turned from God's way because they thought they were too intelligent to follow God's way.

Our greatest peril today is not the destruction that atomic bombs might bring; neither is it the physical damage that pollution might bring. Our greatest peril today is the **LIVING** of men.

Second, **EFFORTS TO CHANGE THE SOCIETY WITHOUT CHANGING THE MEN ARE FUTILE.** Always there are those that love to lean to their own understanding; they are quick to tell you that we need a change in the society. Often times, it is amazing how many things that they feel should be changed. The laws, customs and restraints that decent people have build a respectable society on, are all wrong. They offer many social reforms and programs. But these social reforms and programs deal only with the physical aspect of men. You will hear them say,

"we are not concerned about his individual morals, we are interested in giving him a good education . The most twisted, debauched and unbalanced people that we have today do not come from Appalachia, but from our colleges.

Curing the ills of a society without curing the ills of the men and women that make up that society, is satanic deception and an impossibility, If it were possible to remove all the slums, ghettos and unemployed areas; if all men had nice homes, a good education and unlimited opportunity of advancement, but not a changed heart; this society would still be very sick. Jesus said, "For out of the HEART (not slums, ghettos or Appalachia) proceed evil thought, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies". Math. 15:19 When our government has taxed the decent people who will work until they can not be taxed anymore, trying to cure the physical ills of the "unfortunate", our problem will still be with us. If we could pick our society up and let them all live in mansions, we would still be a sick society.

Societies are made up of people. The living of those people determine what the society will be. The Wise man knew this and said, "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people". Prov. 14:34 So many times the greatest enemies of a society are those that run around claiming to be its champions. These lustful, vulgar, indecently dressed young people that are conducting all these protests feel that they are surely the champions of the people. However, just the opposite is true; they are the real enemies of the people. Their sinful, ungodly actions will demoralize a society far more than any physical improvement could help it. Only those that are living righteous lives are lifting up this society.

Foolish men always try to change the society instead of changing the men of that society. Those foolish men need to be changed by divine grace themselves. Government leaders keep advocating more and more spending programs. (Professed churches and preachers) keep advocating social change. Descenders keep crying, "destroy the establishment." All of these programs, efforts and demands only show the spiritual ignorance of all these groups.

Nothing short of a general revival of true repentance will save our society, This is just exactly what the sinful, wicked and deluded demanders of change refuse to accept.

Third, THE SALVATION OF ANY SOCIETY IS THE VERY THING THEY HAVE REJECTED. This society has rejected the personal God, the authority of the Bible and the path of righteous living.

If this society accepts God at all they want to accept him in the abstract. They do not believe in a personal God because they do not have a personal heart relationship with Him.

The authority of the Bible has been refuted by the majority of this society. They refuse to conform their actions, companions and attire to the direction of the holy Bible.

The path of righteous living is the very path that this society has refused to walk. They not only refuse to walk the path of righteousness, but they have no shame over their refusal.

This society, or any individual is sick (sin sick) as long as he rejects a personal God. Only a personal God can do a personal work in the heart of any individual. As every man has been born wrong, every man needs a divine birth; or as Christ stated it, "Except. a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God". John 3:3 Those that can never see the kingdom of God can never exalt a society.

This society is sick (ego sick) as long as it rejects the authority of the Bible. This rebellious generation resents it's do's and don'ts. They don't want to conform their lives to God's demands. Their sinful hearts cry for a far different path than the Bible prescribes. Their ego is so inflated until they feel they are too intelligent to accept the Bible as absolute authority. Those that are so ego sick can never exalt a society.

This society, or any individual is sick (sin sick) as long as it rejects the path of righteous living. This sinful generation seems to feel that there is a virtue in being frank and open with it's ungodly and immoral way of living. They openly break every resemblance of righteous living, but they loudly cry, "we are being honest about it". Their poor deluded, sin sick minds, seemingly, tell them that they are justified in their actions because they are doing them openly. They base their false assumption on the sham and hypocrisy of many of the older generation.

God is still saying today, as he said in the days of Jeremiah, "return ye now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good". Jer. 18:11 This was the only hope in the day of Jeremiah; and this is the only hope for today. Had the men of Jeremiah's day stopped using their dope, stopped their rebellious, immoral and lewd ways, and come back to the ways of God, God would have had mercy on them. However, they turned a deaf ear to the warnings of the faithful prophet. They listened to their lying prophets and priests until terrible destruction came upon them.

The only hope for this sick society today is for men to make their ways and doings good. The ways and the doings of the average person today, even those that are church members, are far from being good. They have been fed a steady diet of "believism", instead of repent of sin and separate from the world, until their ways and doings are very sad.

Are you in a spiritual position to help this poor sick society? Do you know what it means to have a divine birth? Do you know what it means to have the carnal nature purged out by the baptism of the Holy Ghost? Are you walking different enough from this sick society until they can see by your actions, interest and attire the error of their way?

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08 -- CAN YOU BLUSH? -- Jer. 8:5, 12

"Were they ashamed when they had committed abominations? Nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush therefore shall they fall among them that fall:" v:12

Jeremiah faced a day such as we are facing today. Not only was immorality and abominations the rule, BUT THOSE THAT CLAIMED TO BE VERY RELIGIOUS HAD LOST THE ABILITY TO BE ASHAMED FOR THESE THINGS. They were brazen and promiscuous.

They had heard God's faithful prophet tell them the truth about the background of their lying prophets and priests. Naturally, their depraved hearts made them cling to the false prophets and priests, and reject the warning of the one that truly loved them.

There were three things that we need to give careful attention about those that could commit abominations, without blushing, and refused to heed the warning of one that was trying to help them.

First, THERE WERE DEFINITE REASONS FOR THEIR INABILITY TO BLUSH. Truly, people are the product of what they have been made. There is no tongue so learned as to be able to tell just how sad it will be for unfaithful ministers in the day of judgment. There where all the evidence will be gathered in: the full effect and the long lasting reach of influence will be revealed. Then when it is too late to rectify their deception, multitudes will see that the liberal preacher was not really their friend, but their greatest enemy. They were glad that he did not cry out against their sins in life; but they will find at the time of judgment that those very sins will be separating them from the presence of God for all of eternity.

This is a very dangerous day for preachers, as there is so much compromise and apostasy. If they preach the full truth they will be slandered, rebuked and rejected by the majority of those that claim to be Christian. If they fail to preach the full truth they will have to stand condemned at the judgment for their unfaithfulness. Truly, the ministry should never be just a profession; it should be a divine call from God. Unless one feels that it is "preach or burn", he should never think of taking on the great responsibility. (Personally, if I could have one honest doubt of my call to preach, I would never try it again.)

There were seven definite reasons why they had reached their deplorable condition, These seven things will bring any group or individual to this sad state.

(1) THEY HELD FAST TO DECEIT. Their corrupt hearts responded more to the deceit they were being exposed to than it did to the truth that Jeremiah tried to give them.

(2) THEY REFUSED TO RETURN TO GOD'S WAY, They cried, "away with the old paths". We are determined to have new ways and new standards.

(3) NO MAN REPENTED HIM OF HIS WICKEDNESS, SAYING, "What have I done"? They had not only gone to the place of refusing to turn from their wickedness, but they did not even accept the fact that they had done anything wrong.

(4) EVERY ONE TURNED TO HIS OWN COURSE. They would not accept divine authority. Each person allowed his-own opinion to become the final authority. They loved the course they were taking and refused to turn from it.

(5) THEY CLAIMED TO BE WISE AND TO HAVE THE CORRECT DOCTRINE. They felt there were much wiser than the one that was trying to warn them. They heeded the scribes because they wrote things that were in harmony with their corrupt hearts. How sad to read, "the pen of the scribes is in vain".

(6) THE WISE MEN HAD REJECTED THE WORD (AUTHORITY) OF GOD, The men they accepted as leaders, and who they felt were wise, had rejected the word of the Lord. How sad to read, "The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the word of the Lord; and what wisdom is in them?" Surely, the wisdom that may be in them is not the wisdom of the Lord, it would have been only human wisdom.

(7) THEY WERE HEALED SLIGHTLY. Their real need had not been met. They had been deceived into accepting false promises, They had accepted the ways of their leaders but had not accepted the way of the Lord. They professed but they certainly did not possess.

These seven things will rob any group, or individual, of the ability to blush. One would not have to be unusually wise to see that these seven things are so prevalent today.

Second, WRONG ACTIONS AND THINKING HAD SAPPED THEM OF THE ABILITY TO BE ASHAMED OF THEIR ACTIONS, This is not a situation where they refused to be ashamed of their actions; it was a situation where THEY COULD NOT be ashamed !

Every wrong act steals away tenderness and shame from the heart. When one is young he is usually very tender, The first time he commits some act of wrong he is disturbed and sorry for it. However, let the years mount up, and the act be continued, and the tenderness will depart. How sad when anyone reaches that hard, brazen, untouchable attitude. How very sad when people claim to be Christian, and yet have such an attitude. So many are like this today! And some of the very hardest are to be found around holiness churches.

Wrong thinking will steal away tenderness and shame from the heart. The Psalmist realized that the thinking of a person would affect him greatly. That is why he prayed, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, AND KNOW MY THOUGHTS: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting". Ps. 139:23,24 The Psalmist knew that the thinking of a person would affect his whole being. Entirely too many have lost all shock for many sins because they have had the wrong thinking about those things. They go along in their nonchalant way, growing harder and harder each day. Little wonder that the first aspect of true repentance is a change of thinking. Until we can have a real God-inspired change of thinking in the minds of the majority of professed Christians, there is little hope of a real spiritual awakening.

In my thirty years of preaching I have watched the holiness movement lose its tenderness and become hard, and nearly brazen. In that same period there has been a definite change in the thinking of the holiness movement on things that will rob them of their ability to blush, There are three basic areas in the thinking of the majority, that have gone astray.

(1) REBELLION TO GOD'S ORDER. We read of God's order from the pen of the apostle Paul -- "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the

woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God", I Cor. 11:3 One would not have to look hard to see that very few accept this divine order.

(2) THE REFUSAL TO WEAR THE BADGE OF SUBJECTION. This badge of subjection is long hair for women, and short hair for men, It is informative to read I Cor. 11:14,15 from the Amplified New Testament -- "Does not (experience, common sense, reason and the native sense of propriety itself teach you that for a man to wear long hair is a dishonor (humiliating and degrading) to him, But if a woman has long hair, it is her ornament and glory? For her hair is given to her for a covering". When the holiness movement took the wrong thinking about women cutting their hair, and failed to preach against it, it only followed that their hands would be tied when the hippies began to wear their long hair, As their thinking was wrong on the women, it only followed that it would be wrong on the men. Short hair on a woman, or long hair on a man, is refusing to wear God's badge of subjection. So many will scoff at this, but examine and see just how tender they are toward sin.

(3) THE FORBIDDEN ATTIRE OF THE BODY. God said, "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abominations unto the Lord thy God". Deu. 22:5 The body that is supposed to be the temple of the Holy Ghost is attired by so many in that which God calls an abomination, Is it any wonder that there is so little tenderness toward sin today?

No doubt there are those that read the last paragraph think, "that was the Old Testament". Let us go to the New Testament, "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works". I Tim. 2:9,10

You would think that women who profess to be holiness women would have a continued blush on their faces as they parade around in vulgarly short dresses, short and dyed hair, and their jewelry flashing. Do you see any blush?

Third, THEY WERE SURE TO FALL EVEN THOUGH THEY THOUGHT JEREMIAH A FOOL. They thought that Jeremiah was out of step with the times to say the things he was saying. No doubt they said, "this is a different day". I am sure that many of them sympathized with poor Jeremiah who had failed to get in step with the crowd, This is the very thing that every faithful preacher of this day is facing from his own group. I have had those that claimed to be concerned about me, come and inform me that this is a different day. I believe I know that times are greatly different from the day when I came into the holiness group. However, I know something else. I know that ANY PREACHER THAT IS IN STEP WITH THE TIMES IS OUT OF STEP WITH GOD, I would far rather be out of step with the times than out of step with God.

They thought that Jeremiah was out of step with the prophets and priests that had leadership. They, seemingly, felt that Jeremiah should be smart enough to change his views, if the leaders changed their views. They overlooked the fact that Jeremiah did not get his views from the prophets or priests; He got them from God. Prophets and priests may change, but God changes not. Jeremiah was smarter than all of them. He knew that ANY ONE THAT IS IN STEP WITH

LEADERSHIP IN A DECLINING GROUP IS OUT OF STEP WITH GOD, I would far rather be out of step with leadership than out of step with God.

They thought they were safe and secure because of who they were, and what their leaders were saying. They felt they were the people of God; and their leaders where chanting peace, peace, peace. They thought the dire predictions that Jeremiah was making were the rantings of an extreme radical. They closed their ears to the warnings of the radical, and listened to the soothing remarks of their leaders.

Listen to God tell us about their prophets, or leaders, --- - "I have seen also the prophets of Jerusalem an horrible thing: they commit adultery, and walk in lies: they strengthen also the hands of evildoers, that none doth return from his wickedness: they are all of them unto me as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah." Jer. 23:14 God said the prophets of Jerusalem, while professing a pure faith, have followed the ways and become as corrupt as the prophets of Samaria. He also said that they would surely be destroyed as Sodom and Gomorrah were.

Listening more to the words of their blind leaders, who said what their carnal hearts wanted them to say, instead of God; they reached the place where they could not blush.

Have you reached that point? Are you approaching the point until you can not blush over all the abominations that are so prevalent today? Can you see the immoral dress, actions and speech of this fallen generation without blushing? Have you so adjusted to abominable practices of this day that it does not disturb you anymore?

Have you drifted with a church that is taking the ways, practices and attire of the world until it does not distress you anymore? Have you even engaged in their practices? Has all blush gone from your face?

Lot made a sad choice by choosing the land toward Sodom. He made a mistake when he moved into the city of Sodom. However, his one redeeming quality was the fact that he never adjusted to the abominable practices of Sodom. He lived there for twenty years, but he did not adjust. So we read, "(For that righteous man dwelling among them, in SEEING and HEARING, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;) 2 Pet. 2:8 When he LOOKED on their wicked, immodest and abominable attire and actions, he got sick on his spiritual stomach. He stayed in the place where he could blush. Can you?

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09 -- DEFILED GARMENTS -- Rev. 3:1, 6

"Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy." v-4

How God must have deflated the church at Sardis. They had a name among the people of being ALIVE; but God said they were DEAD. No doubt the religious news had run many an article on their activities and numerical growth. In fact, they were known for their works: but God said, "I

have not found thy works perfect". God told the church at Sardis that they had impressed the community with their works; but those works were not acceptable to Him.

God also informed them that they had a FEW names in their group that were different from the rest, and they were the ones that He was pleased with. Think how deflating such a statement as this must have been to the governing body of the church. They were in control and the public was talking at their labors; but God said their labors were in vain. They had failed; but there were a FEW among them, who dared to be different from the crowd, that pleased Him.

Instead of bragging on their physical accomplishments He urged them to repent for their spiritual needs. God tried to take their eyes off of the physical, and place it on the spiritual, It was not lovely building, trained personnel or workable programs that really mattered, but it was the condition of the heart. He urged them to go back to the beginning, when they had real contact with Him, and build again from there. Go back to the time when their hearts were warm, and their eyes were open, and they were willing to walk in the ways of the Lord. Wouldn't God do the very same thing to the holiness movement today?

There are three things that God made plain to the church at Sardis, that would startle the holiness movement today if they would, prayerfully, consider them.

First, GOD COMMENDED THOSE THAT THE CHURCH OF SARDIS LOOKED DOWN ON. How seldom has God and the majority of any religious group looked on things alike. (To be with the crowd, usually, means to be out of step with God.) One has to but walk through the pages of sacred and secular history to find that this has been true since the fall of man. The rebellious nature that all men are born with will keep them from following the ways of God in simple, child-like faith. They, seemingly, feel that they are so intelligent until they can "help" God's program with some of their additions or subtractions. Soon, they have only their own program, without the presence of God.

There were a few names in Sardis that did not engage in the actions and practices of the crowd. No doubt, they stuck out like "sore-thumbs". They just refused to drift with the crowd, they would not take on the pattern of the world or be pressed into it's mold. They held, tightly, to God's prescribed standard of conduct and attire. The more the crowd turned to human wisdom and plans, the more, firmly, they held to the ways of God. They were not impressed with education, human wisdom and clever plans. They just kept demanding the "old paths". Can't you just hear those that were in leadership at Sardis, calling these FEW, radicals, disgruntles and trouble makers?

There were a few names In Sardis that were, noticeably, different from the crowd. YOU DID NOT HAVE TO STRAIN TO PICK THEM OUT! They were making no effort to go, in any degree, with the crowd; they were not trying to straddle the fence so they could run with any crowd and be spared of any reproach. The more the crowd compromised with the world, and drifted from the prescribed conduct and attire of God, the more conspicuous the faithful FEW became. They stayed right in with the crowd of compromisers and dared to be different.

It was these FEW names that God commanded out of the whole church. Notice, God did not mention the brilliant pastor. We will never know just what school he attended and how much

charm and wit he had. God did not mention the wonderful singers and musicians; We will never know their full talents. God did not compliment them on their clever human programs. None of these people, or things, warranted God's commendation, It was only the FEW that dared to stick out like sore thumbs and be, noticeably, different that received the commendation of God.

Surely, this is a preview of the final commendation. When life's little race is run, and men have come before God for His final commendation, **WHAT A SHOCK THIS WILL BE TO SO MANY!** Many brilliant leaders,, pastors, evangelists and prominent laymen will fail to receive God's commendation. It will be the faithful FEW that will hear His "well done." They did not get any commendation from the majority, but will receive it from the all Important One.

Second, **GOD IS MORE CONCERNED ABOUT OUR SPIRITUAL GARMENTS THAN OUR PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES**, God made it clear that He did take notice of one's labors. God could say to every man, as He said to the church at Sardis, "I know thy works", God made it very clear to the church at Sardis that He was judging their works. Therefore, every man can expect to meet the judgment of God for his works. How sad it will be to hear God say to you what he said to the church at Sardis, "I have not found thy works perfect".

God made it very clear that He was far more concerned about one's spiritual garment than He is of his labors. The Hebrews considered HOLINESS as the garb of the Soul, and evil actions as STAINS and SPOTS on this garb. Satan has one purpose, and that is to stain every garment. This he has been doing from the fall of Adam; and this he will continue to do until he is bound, and cast into the bottomless pit.

All too many religious people, completely, misunderstand the reason for Bible Standards in conduct, associations and dress. Standards are really a means toward an end. We hold to Bible Standards so that we will not nullify our testimony. Standards alone will not save one, or get them to heaven. However, it is most certain that no one will ever go to heaven that does not hold to Bible Standards. They may preach and run, what seems a very successful church, to the world.

Religion can get one to do labors, give gifts, make physical sacrifices, and even physically die. It is absolutely amazing how many, seemingly, good things that religion has succeeded in getting men to do. Paul made a list of them -- "Speak with tongues of men and angels" -- "Bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned", -- "and have not charity (divine love or purity)", still, he said, "it profiteth me nothing", I Cor. 13:1,3

Salvation changes one's nature, cleanses one's moral desires and enables him to live clean as he faithfully, does the will of God. The apostle James said, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, **AND TO KEEP HIMSELF UNSPOTTED FROM THE WORLD**". 1:27 The apostle made it plain that no amount of visiting of the fatherless and widows in their afflictions will cover up the fact, when one has become spotted by the world. God demands a clear line of separation from His children and the world. He wants them to labor in the world, but not to be a part of it. When the mark, or mold, of the world is upon a professed Christian, all of his labors will not suffice. There are, entirely, too many with spotted garments trying to direct spiritual business today.

Third, ONLY UNSPOTTED GARMENTS WILL MAKE ONE WORTHY IN GOD'S SIGHT, AND ALLOW HIM TO WALK WITH GOD IN WHITE. God is very selective in those that He counts WORTHY. It would be wonderful if each person, that claims to be a follower of the Lord, would discover just how selective God, actually is. It would be a very informative study if one would go all through the Bible and see how many times God ever said that any group was WORTHY to walk with Him in white. After a long hard search the searcher would find that only those few names In Sardis, WHO HAD NOT DEFILED THEIR GARMENTS, did God call WORTHY. This is the only time that this expression is made in the entire Bible.

No affiliation, mode of water baptism, decision, service rendered or office held, will make one worthy in God's sight. Surely, satan has won a tremendous victory by getting men to emphasize all of these things, while they fail to emphasize the need of UNDEFILED GARMENTS. I want to be affiliated, and identified, with the children of God. I need the help that I derive from men and women who walk with the Lord. I desire to be, and I have been baptized in water. I did make a definite decision one day, I made the decision to repent of every sin, accept Christ's pardon for my sins, and walk in harmony with the way that the Bible prescribes. I, surely, wish that I had more services rendered to God. I surely, want the ones that I have rendered to be acceptable to God. The office I have held as a minister and evangelist may not seem important to the world; however, it has put a great responsibility on me to live up to the dignity and demands of this office, By God's grace I must keep my garments undefiled, if I hope to be worthy in God's sight, All these other things would only condemn me, if I allowed my garments to become spotted by the world.

Only those with undefiled garments will ever walk with God in white. To walk with God in white is beyond the full comprehension of man. The glories that one will see, and the rewards that one would share is too glorious for mortal tongue to describe, or mortal mind to be able to comprehend. No doubt, this is the reason why the inspired apostle John did not attempt it, This is one of the things that only those with undefiled garments will ever know, they will know it for all of eternity. Adam Clarke, seemingly, realized that he could never fully explain it; so he simply said, "They are raised to a state of eternal glory, and shall be for ever with their Lord".

We know that black denotes sorrow, heartaches and death. White, being the opposite of black would have to represent the opposite things. Therefore, we can safely assume that walking with the Lord in white, will mean walking with Him without sorrow, heartaches or death.

The apostle Paul made it plain that Christ paid a tremendous price to be able to present to Himself a church with UNDEFILED GARMENTS. We read, "Christ also loved the church (called out Ones) and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having SPOT, or wrinkle, or any such thing but that it should be holy and without blemish." Eph. 5:25,27 Personally, I am convinced that He did not pay such a price to allow those that have become spotted by the world, pressed into it's mold, to walk with Him for all of eternity.

Only the names of those with undefiled garments will God allow to remain in His book of Life. This goes cross grain to the teaching of the majority of Christendom. They contend that regardless of what one does after he is converted, he is eternally secure. All with defiled garments, will have their names blotted out of God's book of life, It would be well if they would

forget their false doctrine, stop depending on their false hope, and see what God has to say on the matter. Listen to God speak to the church at Sardis, "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. (Listen!) He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I WILL NOT BLOT OUT HIS NAME OUT OF THE BOOK OF LIFE, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels". Rev. 3:4,5 If God will not blot out the names of those that overcome (do not have defiled garments), then, it only follows that He will blot out of the book of life all those that allow their garments to become spotted by the world.

Let me ask you and my own heart a definite question. Notice, I am not asking you if you profess to be a Christian. I am not asking you if you hold office in some church. I am not asking you if you are working hard to get the job done. I am asking, "ARE YOU LISTED BY GOD AS ONE OF THE FEW NAMES IN YOUR CHURCH THAT HAVE NOT DEFILED THEIR GARMENTS?"

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10 -- THE DIVINE AGITATOR -- Lu. 12:49, 53

"Do you suppose that I am come to give peace on the earth? No, I say to you, but rather division." v-51 A.N.T.

Surely, Jesus is the "unknown Christ" to most professors of grace. His preaching and mission in the world has not been understood by the majority. So many have a theory of Christ, but so very few actually know Christ, This only proves again the deceptive power of the devil.

Too many look on Christ as the "gentle Jesus speaking only of love and peace. However, this was not true with His mission to earth, even in a small degree. HIS PREACHING ALWAYS THINNED THE CROWD! His miracles would draw the crowds; when those crowds were faced with His preaching, only a few of them were willing to follow His directives.

Christ did not intend to make everyone broad-minded, compatible and accepted. He came rather to bring DIVISION and create DIVINE AGITATION.

Who caused more animosity, uprisings and divisions than Christ? It would be well for each one to read the New Testament again and take note of these things. It would be wonderful if each one could drop his preconceived notions about Christ and give careful attention to three things that our text makes very clear.

First, CHRIST CAME TO START A FIRE. We read this from the Amplified New Testament, "I have come to cast fire upon the earth; and how I wish that it were already kindled!" Lu. 12:49 He spoke of the Roman sword that would soon come in judgment. However, His main thought was His own Spirit which would burn out sin.

Fire and God have been connected from the fall of man. When Adam and Eve were banished from the garden we read, "So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the

garden of Eden Cherubims, and a FLAMING SWORD which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life". Gen. 3:24 When God gave the ten commandments to Moses on Mt. Sinai we read, "And the mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in FIRE: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly". Ex. 19:18 When God spoke to Moses on the back side of the desert we read, "The angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of FIRE out of the midst of a bush". Ex. 3:2 When God answered the prayer of Elijah and revealed Himself as the God, we read, "Then the FIRE of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench". I Kings 18:38 When the Holy Ghost fell on those assembled in the upper room, purging out the carnal nature and empowering them for service, we read, "And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of FIRE, and it sat upon each of them". Acts 2:3

In reality, Jesus comes to every heart to start a divine fire. He remains in the heart to keep the fire ever burning. Before Christ comes into a heart, that heart is cold and dead in trespasses and sin. Christ comes to give life and start a divine fire, He sent back the Holy Spirit to cleanse the heart, completely, and to keep the heart ever hot, The Holy Spirit can well be called an "ever burning flame", He will either burn in one's heart or He will depart.

"Jesus Men" are hot-hearted men. A divine fire is burning in their hearts. This fire drives them out to do exploits for their Lord and King. It is certainly a misnomer to speak of a cold Christian, There are no cold Christians, anymore than there are any honest thieves or sober drunks. Christ came to start a fire in the hearts of men. Where Christ, is to be found, a hot heart will also be found. Those that try to run on past experience will find that this will not suffice, This is why the apostle Paul instructed the young preacher Timothy, "I would remind you to stir up -- rekindle the embers, fan the flame and keep burning -- the (gracious gift of God, (the inner fire) that is in you by means of the laying on of my hands". 2 Tim. 1:6 A.N.T.

Second, CHRIST CAME TO BRING DIVISION. In spite of all the reasons that you have heard others give or you have given yourself, listen to our text again and let Christ tell you the real reason that he came. "Do you suppose that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I say to you, but rather division." If anyone should know why He really came it would be Christ himself.

Christ was set against this terrible "togetherness". Instead of peace at any cost, He demanded division at any cost. He demanded a clear line of demarcation between His children and the children of the devil.

Christ not only demands a division from the world; He also demands a division in the home. The separation from the world is a demand on everyone that will be Christian in any degree. Listen to the apostle Paul. "What harmony can there be between Christ and Belial (the devil)? Or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? So. come out from among (unbelievers), and separate (sever) yourselves from them, says the Lord, and touch not (any) unclean thing; then I will receive you kindly and treat you with favor". 2 Cor. 6:15, 17 A.N.T. This idea that one can continue to be "palsy-walsy" with the unsaved, go where they go, do what they do and wear what they wear, is completely foreign to the demands of Christ.

Listen to what Christ said about the home, "For from now on in one house there will be five divided (among themselves), three against two and two against three, They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law". Lu. 12:52,53 A.N.T. Even if their names are the same, those that are Christians are in a separate camp from those that are not. Those that are Christians are in the camp of Christ; those that are not Christians are in the camp of the devil. These two camps are poles apart. Christ demands that it will always be this way. Those two camps are in a war; each is trying to win the other. Christ demands that there shall be no truce in this war; His children must keep faithfully on until victory comes or Christ calls them home.

Christ demands that things be in a continual state of agitation as long as one member of the family is not saved. Those in a family that belong to Christ must continually warn and urge those of the family that do not belong to Christ. Even if the unsaved should get angry and resentful, the child of God must keep faithfully on. Many a person had to get angry and resentful before they were able to see their great need of Christ. Many a person made threats and acted in a horrible way, just before he broke under conviction and prayed through. On the other hand, entirely too many unsaved are living peacefully in the homes with those that claim to be saved. This should not be.

History has shown that only when the church was in a state of "divine agitation" has it ever washed out the "moral filth" of the world. Never has there been a time when the church was prosperous and at peace with the world that it was able to have a redeeming effect on the world, It has always been when the church was on the prowl; stalking it's prey and crying out against all the sins of the world, that it has been owned and blessed of God. This was so true with the church of Acts, They were accredited with turning the world upside down. They did not do this by being broadminded and compatible with the world. Neither did they accomplish it by living and let live. They took the spiritual offensive and would not be satisfied until the wicked capitulated, and the cause of Christ was triumphant. Just one look around will reveal that the church is not doing this today. Instead of being a militant force and charging sin of every description, the church has become broadminded and has accepted the world and it's ways. Is there any wonder why so very few of those that profess to be Christians today will ever hear the "well done" from the Lord?

Third, CHRIST CAME TO PROVE THOSE THAT LOVE HIM SUPREMELY. How wonderful it would be if every professed Christian would realize that Christ will be first of all, or not at all. So many want to claim Christ when He does not go against their desires or the views of loved ones and friends. Christ will have no part of this kind of association. He said, "He who takes more pleasure in father or mother than in Me and (thus) loves them more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take up his cross and follow Me (that is cleave steadfastly to me, conforming wholly to My example in living and if need be in dying also) is not worthy of Me". Math. 10:37 A.N.T. Christ touched the strongest earthly ties, and made it plain that He must be above them. This will thin the rank mighty thin between those that profess to love Christ, and those that love Him supremely.

No one will ever live a consistent Christian life until, first, he puts his loved ones on the altar. This does not mean that we do not love them any longer: in fact, being a real Christian, we will love them better. This does mean that we love Christ more than we love them. And when there

arises a conflict between the desires or views of our loved ones and Christ, our first loyalty will be to Christ. The devil knows how strong the human bond is and he uses our loved ones to defeat us in our Christian endeavor, That is why Christ said, "And a man's foes shall be they of his own household". Math. 10:36.

Christ made it plain that each one HERE, determines where he will spend HEREAFTER, He said, "Whosoever finds his (lower) life will lose (the higher life), and whosoever loses his (lower) life, on my account will find the (higher life). Math. 10:39 A.N.T. Adam Clarke said of this, "He who for the sake of his temporal interest, abandons his Spiritual concerns, shall lose his soul; and he who in order to avoid martyrdom, abjures the pure religion of Christ, shall lose his soul, and perhaps his life too".

What a tragedy that most people struggle only for the lower life. They face all the sorrows, disappointments and pains for the lower life.

When we will compromise His word for children, companions or parents, we are not worthy of Him. How many professed Christians can honestly say that they have not compromised for their loved ones? Parents allow their children to wear things, attend places and associate with crowds, that they shouldn't. Companions give into the demands of their mates, even though they know better.

When we will remain quiet about the wrongs of our children, companions and friends to have peace, we are not worthy of Him. How many have I heard say just about these very words? "I know that he is not living right, but in order to have peace I just keep my mouth shut".

When preachers will fail to preach their God given convictions, in order to keep peace in the church, they are not worthy of Him. So many have admitted that they are guilty of doing just that. I like what I heard one preacher say, "I love peace in the nation; I want it and I desire it. I love peace in the church; I want it and I want to keep it. I love peace in the home; I want it and I cherish it. However, I must not let peace in the nation, church, and home, come at the price of disobeying Christ".

Christ rebuked His own chosen people. He was definite and even blunt, in some of his denouncements. He left absolutely no doubt as to what he meant, and of whom He was speaking. They did not all obey Him; but they were not allowed to just sleep in their disobedience. They were told the truth and forced to sin against light, Though the percentage was small, some of His own heard his rebuke and repented. This is what He expects each of His true followers to do also. Not all of our loved ones will heed our warnings. Many of them will resent them and show an ugly spirit; however, there are some that will hear and repent.

We are not going to use Christ for a "fire escape". He wants to build a fire in our heart and send us out as fire brands. He wants us to love him supremely through life's short day so we can go home with Him, and live with Him for all of eternity.

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THE END