

THE INSTRUCTOR



"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." 2 Timothy 3:16

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DIGGING DEEP

Before building a house, the sand and top soil must be pushed aside in order for the building to be established upon a firm foundation. Jesus said the man who heard His word and would do it is "like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon rock." (Luke 6:48).

In this article let us notice two things: (1) The sand that must be dug up and cast aside; and (2) the rock foundation on which we are to build.

The sand, or top soil, could well represent the false ideas and misconceptions that must be discarded before we can really build for Christ. Consider the following:

(1) **APPROVAL OF MEN.** It is a pitfall and a sandtrap for many who would do right, but who have not the strength to lay aside such undesirable top soil. We must not be overly concerned about what others think or say

about us. The Christian is not out to win a popularity contest. His main purpose in life is to fear God and keep His commandments. (Eccl. 12:13). Forget about pleasing men, toss aside such worthless sand and dig deep to build on the solid rock. We really need to heed the statement of Paul: "For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." (Gal. 1:10).

(2) **LOVE OF MONEY.** This is another bit of top soil that must be discharged before we can dig down to the solid rock. Money, as a medium of exchange, serves a sensible and useful purpose. Money as a god, an idol, or a goal in life can become the master of man. The love of, the unnatural craving after, the lust for, money, is sin. The money itself is not to blame. It is only a lifeless object, an inanimate piece of material. But notice, "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which

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Editorial

TRANSGRESSION IS SIN

There is much said in the Bible about sin. Paul tells us that "by one man sin entered into the world" (Rom. 5:12) and that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." (Rom. 3:23). Many people fail to realize that a person sins when he transgresses the law of Christ. Since the "wages of sin" is death, we should be vitally concerned about learning what is involved in a transgression of God's law.

The apostle John says: "whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." (I John 3:4). The word **transgress** means "to go aside" or "to go beyond." When a person goes aside or beyond the law of Christ he has committed sin. That is why 2 John 9 says: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." One who goes aside or beyond the doctrine of Christ is not abiding in it. He does not have God. We cannot justify our actions on the basis of God's silence but we must act only according to what God has spoken.

The Bible teaches that we are saved by faith (Rom. 5:1; John 3:16; Acts

16:31), but one goes aside or beyond the word of God when he adds "only." This is a transgression of God's law because it does not teach that we are saved by faith only.

The Scripture teaches us that disciples should wear the name **Christian**. (See Acts 11:26; 26:28; I Pet. 4:16). If a disciple goes aside or beyond the doctrine of Christ and wears the name Catholic, Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Mormon, he is guilty of sin because he has transgressed the law.

Since God's law says to "sing," if a man goes aside or beyond the law and "plays," he has committed sin because he has transgressed the law of Christ. (See Col. 3:16). One cannot justify "playing" by saying that the Bible does not say "not to play." since "playing" is no part of the "perfect law of liberty" one has no right to claim justification for such.

God's law says that "the church" is to "relieve" them that are widows indeed. (I Tim. 5:16). When one goes aside or beyond the doctrine of Christ and says that the church (a divine institution) may contribute to another institution (a human one) and let it in turn do what God commanded the church to do or let it do what it decides to do, he has committed sin. The law of Christ has been transgressed.

When we (if we do) go aside or beyond the Word of Christ and encourage the church to engage in social, recreational, or entertainment projects, we are guilty of transgressing the doctrine of Christ and it is sinful. We thus do not have God! Many brethren are in error because they are guilty of this very thing! Some who would not actually engage in it will encourage such by their silence.

Are you guilty of transgressing the law of Christ? If so, you are guilty of sin!

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while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." (I Tim. 6:10).

(3) **SOCIAL SINS.** In reality, sin is sin. But there is a particular class of sins that are sometimes referred to as the "social" sins. They represent practices that are generally accepted and even condoned within certain religious circles. Some of these are the "social" drink, the "social" dance, "social" gambling, etc. To some people such practices are not actually sinful since the majority and the crowd do them openly. But the Christian cannot engage in any questionable activity. Because we are called upon to be separate from the world of sin, some of our old "friends" will make fun and will speak evil of us. But we must dig deep and discard all sin. "For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revelings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you." (I Pet. 4:3-4).

(4) **DENOMINATIONALISM.** This is part of the sand that must be shoveled aside in order to dig down to the rock foundation. Denominationalism spells division, discord, sectarianism, and strife. Such in the church or out of the church is an abomination unto God. In listing the works of the flesh in Galatians 5, Paul mentioned "hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings" as among the deeds that will bar the kingdom of God against even the Christian. We are admonished to speak the same thing, to be of the same mind and judgment, and to allow no division among us. (I Cor. 1:10).

(5) **LIBERALISM.** This item will keep some from finding the solid rock. It, too, must be laid aside. The Sadducees of the first century were liberals.

They denied the resurrection, they denied the existence of the spirit or of angels. (Acts 23:8). Some in the church at Corinth were given over to a similar persuasion. See I Corinthians 15. We must be as "fundamental" as Christ was, and as "orthodox" as the word of God is. We must continue to be satisfied to speak where the Bible speaks, to be silent where the Bible is silent; to call Bible things by Bible names, and to do Bible things in Bible ways. In short, we must continue to "speak as the oracles of God." (I Pet. 4:11).

(EDITOR'S NOTE: A liberal attitude toward the Scriptures has manifested itself in various ways. Some would contend that there are Christians in all churches. Some would contend that it is Scriptural for churches to build and maintain human organizations such as Childhaven, Boles Orphan Home and Home For The Aged although they cannot produce one passage of Scripture that authorize such. Others would encourage churches to make contributions to colleges and missionary organizations although they cannot show that such is authorized in the Scriptures. Some would urge churches to engage in activities such as secular business, entertainment and recreational projects although they cannot prove by the Scriptures that churches should engage in such. Obviously some think that since they like these things, God must also approve of them. Consider Col. 3:17.)

(6) **TRADITIONS OF MAN.** This can cover up the rock for all of us if we are not careful. It is hard for some to distinguish between the traditions of men and the teachings of the Bible. The Pharisees of Christ's time on earth were like that. They made the word of God void by their traditions. (Mk. 7:7-8; Matt. 15). We must do nothing in religion simply on the premise that "our fathers did it that way." If the Bible says it, that is sufficient reason to do it whether our forefathers did it or not. On the other hand, if the Bible does not say it, we must not do it if we find that all our ancestors did it. We must

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not become guilty of ancestor worship. Traditions must not violate the Scriptures and neither should customs be bound as law." Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." (Col. 2:8).

(7) **INDIFFERENCE.** Indifference and unconcern must be dug up before we can build on the solid rock. Ours should be more than lip service. We must go, visit, teach, work, fight, pray, give, live, run, grow, and serve. Christianity is an active religion. (Matt. 25:42-43; Rev. 3:15-16; James 1:27).

Now, notice the rock upon which we are to build. After we have dug deep and have reached the rock, we are to build. This rock is the sure foundation. (Isa. 28:16). It is the only foundation, (I Cor. 3:11). "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." (I Cor. 10:4): "For they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ."

To build upon Christ is to build upon His teachings, and is to be upon the sure foundation. Though the storms may come, though the winds may blow, and though the floods may rise, on this Rock we take our stand and build. Only here is there safety and refuge.

—Guthrie Dean in GOSPEL LIGHT,
February, 1960

Listen, or thy tongue will keep thee deaf.

Church members are either pillars or caterpillars. The pillars hold up the church but the caterpillars just crawl in and out.

Glands have a lot to do with success—particularly sweat glands.

One should never use his tongue unless he first engages his brain.

Be sure you say what you mean and you mean what you say.

CHURCH OF CHRIST

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