

April 17, 2000

SUBJECT: SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Greetings, Brothers and Sisters, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ,

I cease not praying for those of the body of Christ who have ears to hear that they may hear the word of the Lord in all ways. My heart is strongly in favor of the children of God who strive to enter at the straight gate.

THE GOLDEN CALF

The following is excerpted from the book of Exodus, Chapter 32:1-6:

And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.

And Aaron said unto them, Break off the earrings, which in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them to me.

And all the people broke off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them to Aaron.

And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf.; and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought you up out of the land of Egypt. And when Aaron saw it, built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation and said, Tomorrow a feast to the Lord.

And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.

Verses 25 - 29

And when Moses saw that the people were naked.

Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the Lord's side? Let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together to him.

And he said to them, Thus saith the Lord god of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor.

And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men.
For Moses had said, consecrate yourselves today to the Lord, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother; that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day.

Not a shred of faith was exercised by the Israelites. They knew full well why Moses had ascended the mountain. Yet, they elected to throw that knowledge away. They opted in favor of rebellion. The Word records that God told Moses of the activities at the foot of the mountain. God was not pleased.

The following briefly describes the calves the church today has corporately forged. We have contrived programs we thought would be good to get people to church so they could be involved. Then we could lead them to the Lord. Programs border on entertainment; they must be continually updated. Is that what the Lord had in mind when we prayed for lost souls? What happened to the sobering gospel as the way to the hearts of mankind?

We have compromised ourselves with acceptance of abortion, homosexuality, and those who do not believe Jesus is God because we know the Lord loves all people and, therefore, their sin has crept into our churches; rather, seducing spirits have entered in. Yes, God loves the sinner, not sin. We didn't wait for the revelation of God in our hearts that would tell us the difference between right and wrong. Moreover, we couldn't tell the ripe from the rotten.

We have prayed to God about finances in the church. Then we sought our own solutions. Doesn't Father own the cattle on a thousand hills? Isn't the earth and fullness thereof the Lords? If the Lord is blessing His work does He not provide the means?

We have prayed for broken homes, broken marriages, and abused children and, ironically, appealed to secular education to aid in spiritual counseling, as if we could effectively meld carnality with spiritual. We don't rely on the Word of God which is sharper than a two-edged sword in the dividing in two the soul and spirit and sharply discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart. No matter how cunningly crafted the rationale Freudian psychology will never replace the living Word of God. Resorting to Freudian psychology announces to the world the church does not study to show itself approved, a workman that needs not be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth.

We have allowed ministerial empires to be built. Being drunk with the hard earned monetary contribution from the listening or attending audiences. Massive edifices have been built to the specifications of the heart of man. These reflect his failure to stay out of debt and inability to understand our Lord was humble. The futures of all who attend are put on consignment; some for the rest of their lives.

We have contrived new ways to worship. Worship schools flourish, teaching the best ways to generate the attitude and atmosphere of worship. Didn't Jesus say that we must worship Him, Father, in spirit and in truth, and that Father seeks such to worship Him? We light up the names of those individuals who are famous worship leaders. For what? True worship comes from the Spirit of God and springs up from within. It is the result of continual revival.

We copy the world in following hard after secular oriented music for kids. Rather than raising the standard, the church copies. We run forward trying to recapture those who have been tantalized into following the world.

We have relied on the federal government of the United States rather than our sovereign creator to provide for us. We entice people to contribute to our ministries with the promise of a tax deduction, rather than relying on our heavenly Father to move the hearts of men in response to godly concern. We have taken the stance of a Pharisee; that is, we wave our envelopes filled with cash or checks in the air and go forward to place them in the offering plate for everyone to see. We judge the quality of people on the basis of whether there is any record of their tithes and offerings and how much was given, rather than observe the words of Jesus, who said, "Let not your left hand know what your right does."

We have taken up New Age philosophies to explain the gospel; how we can feel good about ourselves. We speak from our pulpits a watered-down gospel, and it is apart from the Word of God. We speak a different gospel to the indigent people of Africa, for example, than in the United States. Hirelings have entered the halls of our churches. We have struck hands with the world because we do not know our Lord.

The foregoing are but a few samples of the number of golden calves forged by the church because it lost heart looking for the return of our Lord Jesus, rebelled and looked to themselves. We have said within our hearts, "We know Jesus said He would return, but when?"

We have allowed apathy to enter our hearts. We aren't seriously looking for His return. We are in danger of judgement. We have neglected the great salvation of our Lord Jesus. Unless we judge ourselves, we will be obliged to meet the judgement of the Lord Jesus when He returns. To judge ourselves is to recognize, according to the standard of God, we are wrong and so falling on our faces seek peace and forgiveness from God. There fell that fateful day in the camp of the Israelites some three thousand men. Since we have raised up graven golden calves, what remains for us? The Israelites quit looking for

Moses. We have quit looking for the return of our Lord and Master, Jesus the Christ of God.

One may say in their heart after reading this they and the church they attend are not guilty of the things mentioned here. They might say they have earnestly sought God's leadership in everything they have done, and all that has been done has been done to the glory of God. They would say no golden calf has been raised in their section of the camp. We must remember: we are all part of the body of Christ. Nothing affects any part of the body without affecting us. For example, if our finger has a sliver of wood in it and we leave it alone fairly soon infection will result. If left unattended, all attention of the body will be called to that finger until something is done to remove the sliver. Why? Because the finger is part of the body.

Our prayers should include the confession of the sin of rebellion and fornication of the church, Christ's body, because to do otherwise is to ignore the body and fail to fulfill the royal law of love. We fail to fulfill the Lord's commandment found in I John 3:23, "And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment." Whether we have raised golden calves or not, we are responsible, each of us, to the body. We should exhort our brethren in love to return to the hope of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Moses was bringing down from the mountain, the law of God, God's blessing to the people. What is Jesus, the power of God, bringing when He returns after having prepared a place for us with Him in the heavenly realm, and for whom? We find the explicit answer in Hebrews 9:28, ". . . Unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." He is coming from on high with salvation! He is coming to take us to our new home with Him! Golden calves are raised when we forget God and His answer for us from on high and proceed on our own. When He returns will He find us with a host of golden calves?

May God bless you richly and all that read this. As always, I am open to conversation regarding clarification.

Pastor, please advise if you wish the name of the church you pastor to be deleted from any future mailings.

David J. Roll