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A FARMER LOOKS AT THE PARABLES

John F. Dorsey

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated
To my faithful wife,
Hildred

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INTRODUCTION

Our Lord was ever a master at illustration. He Who made both heaven and earth knew exactly where to point out the resemblance or the differences between heavenly and earthly things. From the common objects of nature, from the familiar activities of everyday life, from the simple things that everyone knew so well they scarcely gave them a thought, Jesus would pluck a telling illustration or an apt comparison.

This book examines those illustrations and singles out the points that are often overlooked, thereby giving a new depth and a deeper application to many of the teachings of the Lord.

Brother Dorsey has combined in these chapters, an insight and an understanding of the Word that will be of great benefit to the reader. The author combines a gift for careful exposition with a close knowledge of agriculture and farm life that will make these passages live anew for the student of God's Word.

Leslie D. Wilcox
Academic Dean of God's
Bible School and College

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Recently I was privileged to serve as a co-worker in a camp meeting with Rev. John Dorsey. His splendid Bible expositions, Christ-like spirit and unusual insights into the Word of God made this a rich experience indeed.

During this time, Rev. Dorsey gave me the privilege of reading the manuscript of a new book being prepared for publication. The accumulated benefits of his keen mind, holy life, and more than forty years of disciplined study, especially of the Word of God, are amply reflected in this new book.

My own heart was stirred and my mind challenged by Brother Dorsey's profound analysis of these scriptural portions while maintaining a simplicity that adds to the readability of the book. I heartily recommend it to anyone with a love of Biblical exposition.

Thomas E. Reed, Moderator
Wesleyan Tabernacle Association

The parables are sadly neglected and often misunderstood and misinterpreted. Brother Dorsey's years on the farm have prepared him under God to enrich and instruct the saints. This is a fine work and should enjoy a wide circulation. Some of his treatments are tantalizingly short but this serves to make the thirsty seeker press on to the fountain of truth.

Rev. H. E. Schmul
Executive Director of Inter-Church
Holiness Convention

The parables of our Lord and Brother Dorsey's interpretations upon them are placing before us a spiritual gold mine. From his wealth of experiences and observations and studies as pastor, evangelist, Bible Lands Pilgrim and farmer, he enables us to climb the mountain and sit at the feet of Jesus and grasp His truth.

My personal library consists of many cherished volumes. 1. Because I know the author. 2. Because of outstanding scholarship, 3. Because of deep spiritual content I cherish some more than others. Combining these three reasons into one volume, A Farmer Looks at the Parables will be one of my most cherished volumes. The classroom teacher, Sunday School teacher and preacher will find enriching source material in these pages. I sincerely pray that this book will find its way into the hands of many Christian leaders.

Rev. Wm. D. Gale, Gen. Pres. and Missionary
Sec. of the Bible Methodist Connection of Churches.

There are hidden truths in the parables that are not always comprehended. These truths are revealed to those who are spiritual, and also diligent searchers of the Word. Brother Dorsey under God is such a man and has been enabled to write another book that is destined for widespread distribution.

Pastors, evangelists, missionaries, Bible school teachers, Sunday School teachers, students and the religious world in general will be blessed with the wealth of material that has been spiritually discerned and compacted into such a small package. This book should be read and studied by all.

Earl Newton, Pastor, Evangelist,
School Administrator and Conf. Vice-Pres.

"I know of no one better qualified to do it." This thought ran through my mind when I heard that Brother Dorsey was writing this book. With a background in farming, and many years of intense Bible study, plus years of actual experience in applying these truths in both pastoral and evangelistic ministry, he has been given the genius of extracting the deeper truths of the Word and presenting it in a fashion that literally "hits the mark." It has been my privilege to work with Brother Dorsey in some camp meetings and to sit under his ministry as he unfolded some of this intensely interesting and helpful material. I have been both blessed and blistered by some of the plain lessons that God enabled him to bring out of the commonly-known parables.

We will never be able to plumb all the depths of the Word, but here is a book that will take us deeper into the lessons of the parables. We would prophesy that here is a book that you will want to read, and read and read again, and then perhaps, go back to it again in the years to come for a refresher course in the truths of the Word.

David P. Denton
Pastor, Evangelist, Publisher and
Conference President

"Of making many books there is no end --" said the wise man. Some are misnomers. Some are mediocre. Some are meaningful and mighty -- a blessing to the reading multitudes as the book, *A Farmer Looks at the Parables*, will surely be. Having been privileged to read the manuscript, I must unhesitatingly describe it as interesting, instructive, and inspirational. If a careful reading of this new book doesn't produce enlightenment, exhilaration, enthusiasm and at least a modicum of laughter for the reader then that reader must be irreparably impassive. Of course a book of this quality will also just naturally have practical value for pastors, preachers, and pedagogues. May it be widely read.

George W. Stepp, Prof. of Greek, Union Bible Seminary.

To have your life touched by a friend whose ministry in preaching and praying and whose example in kindness and concern left its indelible marks on you for good is as a kindly balm to the soul.

Brother John Dorsey was such a friend to my family as we attended his church for several years. He not only built the church and parsonage in Mt. Carmel, Cincinnati, but he built character in the lives of both children and young people there.

He not only pastored nearly twenty years but was, during this time, a shepherd -- leading and feeding, correcting and comforting, explaining and encouraging. He did not just evangelize for twenty-five years, but God helped him to see converts find forgiveness, believers find purity of heart, but also saw converts stay true to the Lord across the years. Yet he found time to be friendly to children, to listen to questions of youth, and to give a concerned pastor's advice to any who sought his help. Being not only a concerned pastor but a discerning one as well, God helped him many times to see clearly a problem or need, so it could be resolved before it reached serious proportions.

Among other things, his busy ministry included five volumes of poems which have blessed and encouraged, helped and humored many who have read them. Now another book! May God, Who has assisted Brother Dorsey through the years, help him once again as this volume is spread among the holiness people.

Kenneth Stetler

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PREFACE

One writer claims that parables have at least ten purposes in the Bible. But to put it briefly, "A parable is a well-understood truth in the natural realm used as a parallel to teach a not-so-well-understood truth in the spiritual realm. The Scriptures record Jesus using similes, metaphors and allegories as parables.

Having spent forty-five years of my life on the farm and in rural areas and having studied husbandry both there and in available literature, I find the Spirit unfolding the things of nature to my understanding which are parallel to things in the spiritual world. Jesus, of course, did not have to study to do this. For the Jesus of the New Testament was Jehovah of the Old Testament Who had created all things and would be of far superior understanding to His peers even in the days of His childhood as evidenced by His confounding the doctors in the temple with His questions and answers at age twelve. This matter of His superior understanding was prophesied, (See Isaiah 11:2-3.) in spite of the limitations imposed by the incarnation.

A person who is not familiar with either plant or animal husbandry may still have difficulty understanding, so I have gone into some detail in this book to explain how things are in nature to facilitate understanding of the spiritual.

Some interpretations of parables are extreme and seek to make them teach something beyond which good Scriptural exegesis will support. Some do not go far enough to teach all they should. And some twist them to seek to prove preconceived ideas that are both unnatural and unscriptural.

For instance, I once heard this comment on John 15. "When those branches were broken off the vine, it does not mean they were lost, it just means they were grafted into another vine somewhere else in the vineyard to see if they would bear fruit there." This is a very grievous

abuse. To someone who has done budding and grafting it is pure nonsense. Such is never done. To those who know the Scriptures this is a flat contradiction of the statement of our Lord Who said, "Men gather them and cast them into the fire and they are burned. "

Another serious mistake is mixing and transposing symbols to teach one thing one time and something else another time, without express authority from the Scriptures to do so. *Leaven is a case in point. Everywhere it is found in the New Testament it indicates evil, often the sin inherited from Adam. More about that when we come to Matthew, chapter 13. *When a symbol has a different meaning, the context should agree.

We do not profess to be a master of Greek or Hebrew. Just a student. We have no quarrel with those who wish to disagree with us. We do not profess infallibility. But we do believe that if a sincere Christian will read this book carefully and with an open mind, the Lord will bless something vital to the heart and may give valuable insights to some of the truth it was "the glory of God to conceal but the honor of kings to search out."

It must always be remembered when studying symbols from the plant and animal kingdoms that they are different from people in many ways. They do not make moral choices. It is not perfectly proper to say that there are no choices made by plants. For there are marvelous sensors in apple trees for instance that decide which apples will be rejected in the June drop and leave only those that it is possible to bring to maturity with the available nutrients. The same is true of melon vines. I have seen my melon vines set on ten times as many melons as there were nutrients to support. Some sensor somewhere in the plant made a choice to bring one or two melons to huge size, the others turned yellow and fell off the vine. But these are not moral choices.

Animals have a will also. Anyone who does not think so should try to make a mule go when he wills to stand still! But the animal will differs from the human will in many ways. First, it does not make moral choices. Although some of the things animals do may be classified as evil by men, yet there is no guilt on the animals, and the things they do which men may call good, do not bring a sense of elation to them, except in relation to their masters as dogs which love to please their human masters. And speaking of dogs, an egg-sucking dog which has been caught and punished by its master, then repeats his act will suffer no guilty feelings toward God. But if caught by his master, may hang his head and tail and grovel on the ground. Neither do animals have multitudinous options as we do.

Someone (possibly Clarke) says in substance that a parable protects the speaker from the ire of the hearers who might be enraged if confronted in public by the blunt truth. It protects the ego of the hearer by letting him think through and arrive at the interpretation so that he is complimented into feeling that he originated it, and it protects the pearls of truth from the casual and indifferent who would trample them under foot and turn again and rend you.

By using parables Jesus was able to continue His ministry until time for Him to be betrayed and crucified when He stopped using parables and scorched the Pharisees with His scathing denunciation recorded in the twenty-third chapter of Matthew.

* * * * *

HELPS AND CREDITS

It would not be possible to list them all. (I do not remember the names of all my sheep!) Nor do I remember the names of thousands after whom I have read in the forty years of my ministry. I have occasionally consulted Vincent's Word Studies, Whedon's and Clarke's commentaries, Strong's Exhaustive and Smith's Tabular English to Greek Concordances, Berry's Interlinear, 26 Translations and of course Smith's and Peloubet's Bible Dictionary. One familiar with G. Campbell Morgan may think that my interpretation of Matthew 13 was from him but it was not. But I was not downcast when I found that his agreed with mine.

-- John F. Dorsey

* * * * *

PART 1

Matthew 3:7 -- Generation of Vipers

(Gr. Echidna; an adder or other poisonous snake)

Why would both John the Baptist and Jesus call zealous church people serpents and vipers? They were the strictest sect of the day, careful about keeping the rules of their society, careful in their cleanliness. They made long prayers, gave alms, and tithed.

1. As unregenerate they were of their father the devil, who is that old serpent. For the whole world lieth in the wicked one.

2. Their doctrine was like the poison of poison serpents. How was this?

Researchers declare that the poison of vipers is composed of concentrated vitamins and enzymes. That which was divinely designed to enhance human health, is isolated and concentrated, and with other nutrients excluded becomes a deadly poison. So, the Pharisees had neglected judgment, mercy and faith, and over-emphasized other things to such a degree that when that made a proselyte he was two-fold more a child of hell than themselves.

Think how many groups have gone to extremes on one doctrine or another. One says, "Let every man have full freedom to have his own opinions." But if this is overemphasized it will carry over into fundamental doctrines and will result in confusion and death.

Another group makes a certain mode of water baptism their essential ordinance. This over-emphasized and repentance and holy living neglected can result in a dead faith in a human activity with no divine blessing attending.

Another group puts all their faith in the Lord's supper, going so far as to say that the fermented wine and bread actually become the broken body and shed blood of the Lord Jesus. This is utterly false and trusting in it will not produce salvation. (More about this on John 6)

Others go to a similar extreme about tongues. Does the New Testament teach that there is a supernatural gift of speaking in another language? It surely does! But when people can get drunk, refuse to pay their debts, trade wives and live in open adultery and speak in tongues it is evident to anyone with an open mind that this is not of God, and regardless of how much their tongues flutter, they do not have the Holy Ghost for He is the Spirit of holiness.

Others put too much emphasis on externals. So that if you dress to please them they will put their stamp of approval upon you no matter how bitter, censorious and critical you may be, or how lacking in graciousness, courtesy and love.

So the serpent takes that which was designed for our health and turns it into a deadly potion of death, as the Pharisee or other lop-sided teacher takes the good Word of God, the ordinances of the Lord's Supper and Baptism, the gifts of the Spirit, the standards of holiness, and overemphasizing some and neglecting others as important or perchance even more important, make them instruments of spiritual death.

This is paralleled by Paul's statement in Romans 7. "Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid! But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good, that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful." This certainly allies the carnal mind with its father, the devil. Why are some serpents more deadly than others? The cobra and coral snakes for instance inject a venom that paralyzes the nerves so that the victim is no longer able to expand the chest and suffocates. Whatever doctrine discourages prayer has the same effect on the Christian for prayer is the Christian's breath. Does not the doctrine of absolute predestination, or "What's to be will be" do this very thing? People sicken and die who could have been healed if someone had prayed the prayer of faith. And people are lost who could have been saved.

I am a firm believer in supplementing the American diet of de-vitalized foods with vitamins and minerals. But a person had better know what he is doing. For instance taking sizable amounts of one B vitamin without the proper proportions of the others for no longer than thirty days can wreck a person's health.

In the pit vipers such as copperheads, rattlesnakes, and water moccasins, the deadliness of the snake is directly proportional to its size. *The Florida Diamond-back Rattler is declared by herpetologists to be the deadliest, not because its venom is any more concentrated but because it grows to such enormous size. Two of them dispatched by this scribe in North Walton County were just medium size, but were five feet in length and as large as my wrist. Their huge fangs made me shudder to look at. I didn't sleep well after killing the first one for I had picked both blackberries and blue berries on both sides of where he came out of the swamp.

*Herpetologists tell us that another thing which makes the Florida Diamond-back Rattler so deadly is that he combines both kinds of venom. While a western Diamond-back might inject 1 to 6 milligrams of venom, and never more than 300 the Florida Diamond-back usually injects 500 to 1,000 mgs.

But false prophets are also proportionately dangerous according to their size and influence. The one who has a world-wide radio program, with millions of dollars coming in and millions of people in his listening audience and highly educated will dispense a larger dose of poison at one time than the local false prophet with none of the other's assets.

The advice of authorities on snake bite is first of all, don't let them bite you. Stay away from them. It is good advice for the Christian. If we do not know for sure what a person's doctrines, standards and background are we would do well not to listen nor to support them with our finances.

* * * * *

PART 2

Matthew -- Children From Stones

The Pharisees were depending on their relationship to Abraham to obtain favor with God and first place in His kingdom. John the Baptist is saying to them "Do you think God is hard up for material for citizens for His kingdom? Do you think He would take you simply because you are related to Abraham? He is not limited to you with your fleshly claims of relationship; have the faith of Abraham, do the works of Abraham; if you don't God can raise up children from these stones who will. "

This comes up again in John, chapter 7 and Jesus shows them in no uncertain terms that they are not children of Abraham, for they have neither his faith nor his works but they are of their father the devil and his deeds they will do.

I am afraid that the doctrine that teaches that there are ten lost tribes, two of which Ephraim and Manasseh became England and United States respectively, causes people to do the same thing -- trust in a fleshly relationship instead of exercising faith in the sacrifice of Calvary and proving their faith by their works.

After reading the Scriptures through forty times and many of them more than that and preaching from them thousands of times, I have not only not found ten lost tribes but I have found many indications that there are not ten lost tribes. Here are some of my reasons.

1. The Bible nowhere says that there are ten lost tribes.
2. When Rehoboam and Jeroboam split the kingdom and Jeroboam set up the golden calves, Simeon and Reuben were both closer to Jerusalem than to Dan and Bethel.
3. Because of Jeroboam's idolatry the whole tribe of Levi forsook their inheritances and came and dwelt at Jerusalem.
4. And then there fell to Rehoboam the godly out of all the tribes. So even in the days of Rehoboam there were members of all twelve tribes plus all the tribe of Levi living at Jerusalem.

5. This gathering of all the tribes to Jerusalem happened many times after this when godly kings like Josiah and Hezekiah would proclaim a passover and invite all the tribes to come to Jerusalem and observe it.

6. The word Israel is used many more times in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah concerning the return from captivity than the word Jew, although in the book of Esther all the Israelites are called Jews. The Assyrian kingdom into which Israel went captive and the Babylonian kingdom which took Judah captive are one in the days of Ahasuerus or Xerxes. But it is like the word Yankee. Anyone from the United States abroad is a Yankee. But not here. So when Israel came back from Babylon, those around Jerusalem are called Jews, and those who went out to the cities of their ancestors are called Israelites. "And so all Israel dwelt in their cities." Neh. 7:73. This fulfills Jer. 30:2-3.

7. Returning from Babylon Israel offered twelve sacrifices, one for each tribe.

8. When Jesus came the tribes of Zebulon and Naphtali are spoken of as sitting in darkness and receiving great light. Anna was of the tribe of Asher.

9. The ministry of Jesus was about ninety per cent to the tribes of Israel living in the north around the sea of Galilee. He said "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." He commissioned the seventy to go "only to the cities of Israel."

10. Paul says, "Our twelve tribes instantly serving God day and night hope to come." He could not have said this if he had not known where they were.

11. James addresses his epistle to the twelve tribes.

12. John the Revelator sees 12,000 from each of twelve tribes sealed.

13. The names over the twelve gates of the new Jerusalem are the names of the twelve tribes.

14. One of the circumstantial and incidental evidences that is used to try to prove that England is Ephraim is that at the fords of Jordan in the days of Gideon the Ephraimites could not frame their H's and called Shibboleth sibboleth. Britishers (some of them) drop their h's, ergo, Britishers are Ephraimites! Surely they would not be willing to admit that all the millions of Jews who have gone back to the land of Israel since 1870 are Ephraimites! This dropping of the h's is very pronounced in modern Israel today.

A fine teenage Christian Arab lad called my attention to it first. Then I began to notice -- Gath is Gat, Bethlehem is Betlehem, Bethshean is Betshean, and Ashkelon is Askelon. That doctrine claims that England becoming a great commonwealth of nations was God's fulfillment of the promise to Abraham that he would be a father* of many nations. But Paul makes it very clear that this would be not through seeds plural, but through seed -- which was Christ. And if it were fulfilled in the British Empire what do they do now that the empire has largely disappeared?

*Britain was a conqueror of many nations, not a father.

Jesus said, "The flesh profiteth nothing, it is the spirit that quickeneth." The children of Abraham that God will recognize whether Jew or Gentile, are those who have the faith of Abraham.

* * * * *

PART 3

The Saga of the Stones

Luke 14:40 -- The stones would cry out.

I Cor. 3:12 -- Gold, silver and precious stones.

I Pet. 2:5 -- Ye also as lively stones.

Rev. 21:19 -- With all manner of precious stones.

Matt. 7:24 -- Built his house upon a rock.

Matt. 16:18 -- Upon this rock I will build.

Rom. 9:33 -- Rock of offense.

I Cor. 10:4 -- They drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them and that Rock was Christ.

Rocks and stones have been symbolic of enduring witnesses in all ages. Eskimos use them. Jacob and Laban used them. Joshua used them. Gibraltar is a symbol of endurance. Rock thus becomes a sure foundation and stones building blocks. Upon the rock the wise man builds his house. And the Rock is a type of Christ our foundation, and not just the name of Christ, nor the person of Christ nor even the sacrifice of Christ as essential as that is, but especially upon His word. This includes historical facts, moral commandments and exceeding great and precious promises. Our intellectual faith accepts the historical facts, our obedience submits to the commandments, and our appropriating saving faith, the promises.

As Cephas means little stone or small rock in comparison with Christ the foundation Rock, so the people of God are often designated as stones especially as living stones of which His church is built.

The heads of twelve tribes are closely associated with the twelve gates of pearl of the New Jerusalem -- the twelve apostles with twelve varieties of precious stones in the foundation of that city.

The story geologists tell us of how common limestone and sandstone become semi-precious and precious stones is a fascinating and thrilling story. Dropped from the valleys where they have been deposited as silt by water, wind and other forces of nature, these deposits of limestone or sandstone, are lowered during upheavals of earthquakes and other forces to a depth where they are subjected to intense heat and enormous pressure. Through a process called metamorphosis they become more crystalline in appearance, and are turned into igneous rock. If enough heat and pressure are applied they become semi-precious and precious stones. While marble is not a precious stone, yet it is common limestone metamorphosed by heat and pressure.

Aluminum oxide, a very common inexpensive white powder which could be used as a base for white paint, when subjected to heat and pressure in a modern factory becomes carborundum, the second hardest substance known to man.

When subjected to greater pressures and more intense heat as in the heart of the earth it is metamorphosed into a more crystalline form yet. If found as blue it is sapphire. Such is the Star of India. If red it is a ruby. If yellow it is a topaz. If mixed with beryllium it becomes a beryl, an emerald or an aquamarine.

Carbon is one of our most common and plentiful substances. We know it as lampblack soot, sugar, charcoal, and coal. When pressed into rods it becomes the brushes in many generators and motors or the points in arc lamps. It is very useful in gas masks and water filters. When subjected to terrific heat and pressure in the earth it becomes a sparkling diamond, the hardest substance known to man, and one of the most useful and valuable. The Greek word is adamus from which we get our English adamant.

Magnesium oxide (MgO), nine times lighter than lead is also useful as a pigment in white paint. When subjected to sufficient heat and pressure it becomes a translucent green, and if transparent the precious stone chrysolite.

Sandstone metamorphosed becomes quartzite (SiO_2) the most common of our hard minerals. When subjected to sufficient heat and pressure it becomes according to color chalcedony, agate, carnelian or chrysoprasus. If dark green or opalescent it is jasper.

A silicate of zirconium (ZrSiO_4) if transparent is jacinth.

And this process of the metamorphosis of the stones is paralleled in the history of the church.

Out of the most common human clay God forms a compound of the earthly and heavenly as we have noted in our discussion of salt. And as these people humble themselves and go down before God they are subjected to the fires of Pentecost, and enormous pressures from their contemporaries in the false church, to be metamorphosed into semi-precious and precious stones fit for the building of the church of the Living God. Peter calls us lively stones. And it is striking that this word metamorphosed is the Greek word used by the inspired apostle in Romans 12:2. "And be not conformed to this world but be ye transformed [metamorphosed] by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." And he is writing this to brethren, Christians, not to unregenerate or unbelievers.

And as the upheavals of the earth will exalt those metamorphosed stones that have been down to the fire and tremendous pressure, up to great heights to be powdered by the erosive forces of all the elements, so the true church that has been through the fires of Pentecost and tremendous pressures from her enemies will grow and become prosperous and then honored and exalted, and especially if she becomes the state church will become subject to all the erosive and corrosive elements that go with honor and power and gradually become common sedimentary rock again.

Isn't it striking that the precious stones that are formed from common sedimentary compounds are the same ones that are identified in the twelve foundations of the Holy City?

Diamonds!! Are They in the Foundations of the Holy City?

Diamonds are the most sought-after gem in the world today. In the big Kimberly Diamond Mine in Africa twenty-three tons of clay must be sifted to find one small diamond. Millions of prospective brides in Europe and America each year have a sparkle in the eye to compete with the sparkle in the diamond they hope to wear for an engagement or wedding ring. And the sky is the limit on price. A movie actress recently offered one of her diamonds for sale for \$4,000,000.00. It was a 69.42 carat gem.

The Hope Diamond, one of the most famous, is a 44.5 carat jewel. It is now on display in the Smithsonian Institute where it was placed in 1958.

The largest diamond on record, the Cullinan weighed 3,106 carats. If valued proportionately to the one mentioned above, it is worth 180 million.

Many people in the past put their money into diamonds rather than banks and securities. In normal times this was not a money-making practice for they bought retail and must sell wholesale, but recently due to some diamond mines closing in Africa and world-wide inflation and diamond hoarding the price has doubled in a short time, so that it became possible for hoarders to turn a profit.

With world-wide popularity surely they would be included in the precious stones adorning the twelve foundations of the Holy City! But they are conspicuous by their absence. It is another case of those things highly esteemed among men, not being so in the eyes of God. Luke 16:15

I Would Suggest Three Reasons Why Diamonds Could Not Qualify

1. They cannot abide the fire. (I Cor. 3:13) If diamonds are exposed to high temperature in the presence of oxygen they simply burn. If exposed to great heat without oxygen they turn to graphite, a substance so soft and slick it is used in lubricating oils and greases.

2. Diamonds are sensitive to sharp blows. While they are hard they are not tough. A sharp blow will split or splinter them.

3. They are not compounds like the stones listed in Revelation 21:19-20. All these are formed from compounds. (Even pearls though not fire-formed are formed under pressure from compounds.)

While diamonds are formed under tremendous heat and pressure they are only one earthly element. Very much earthly! A study of organic science is largely a study of carbon and its various compounds. And this suggests some of the sparkling, scintillating leaders earth has produced down the centuries -- men who were formed under intense heat and pressure and polished by criticism

and adversity 'til they shone with inspiring splendor. Winston Churchill for instance. But if he or any other are merely human and do not have the compounding with the heavenly nature through Jesus Christ, they will miss the New Jerusalem.

Also in this study we ought to mention that the transparent forms are more valuable than the ones that are not. This suggests to me a word from Paul, (Phil. 1:10), that ye may be "sincere." Or so transparent that you can be tried by sunlight. The Latin word from which we get sincere means without wax, referring to honey held up to the light which shows no wax particles floating in it. There is no guile, no camouflage, no pretense, no play-acting, no hypocrisy, no impurities, but pure through and through.

It is sad how few people realize that the Christian's greatest danger is not when he is being persecuted, oppressed, tried, opposed, slandered, cast down, or excommunicated but when he is being praised, honored and exalted.

I am wondering if the reason Christians are forbidden to adorn themselves with gold and pearls (precious stones) and other ornaments of outward adornment is that they are grasping for the beauty of the New Jerusalem too soon. God has a right to forbid us to use outward adornment even as He had a right to forbid the duplication of the holy anointing oil in the Old Testament.

I will not be surprised if in that great day we discover that some of the choicest saints, the most sparkling jewels fit to adorn the New Jerusalem will have come from the torture chambers, the dungeons, the cruel breaking sessions, where they have been subjected to the most excruciating torture physically, mentally, and emotionally that the demon-influenced and atheistic mind of hateful men could conceive. And many who have gone through this and lived have demonstrated a scintillating saintliness that is rare in this world.

I am afraid that the United States of America with its liberty which too often degenerates into license, and its affluence which all too often encourages gluttony, laziness, self-indulgence, ease and indolence is not the most conducive atmosphere in which to produce the best quality saints.

While we deplore the fallacies, and cruelty and atheism of world communism and the wrath they display against the Christians, yet, it is true that "He maketh the wrath of man to praise Him, and the remainder of wrath He will restrain." Ps. 76:10

And it greatly behooves us who enjoy religious freedom and affluence, to practice rigid self discipline and daily self-denial, lest the martyrs from the torture chambers rise up in the judgment and condemn us.

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PART 4
Matthew 3:16 -- The Holy Spirit as a Dove

God does not pick symbols at random. I do not doubt that He created certain things in the natural realm to symbolize certain things in the spiritual realm to better help us to understand.

If the choice had been left to man, (unregenerate and unsanctified) does anyone imagine a dove would have been chosen to represent the Holy Spirit? Has anyone ever written a world-famous poem about a dove? I know of none. But a famous poet has written quite a lengthy poem, which has achieved world-wide prominence about a gloomy raven who said only "Nevermore."

It is very fitting that the raven (an unclean bird, a symbol for the devil) Noah sent out didn't bring any information back to him. The dove he sent out came back and thus let him know there was no dry land exposed yet. The next time she was sent out she could have roosted in the olive tree but Noah needed information so she plucked off a branch (twig) and returned with it to him. And this dove with the olive branch has become the world-wide symbol of peace. Her mission accomplished, when sent out the third time she did not return.

No, I'm sure if many people had been choosing, they would have picked the ostrich for his impressive plumage, or the cardinal for his gaudy color, or the peacock for his strut and display, but God did not.

He chose the Dove.

1. Modestly attired. Just a modest white or gray with slight variations wherever the dove is found all over the world.

2. Not a predator, does not have the hooked beak of the flesh-eaters.

3. Is not a famous fighter. I have observed purple martins in my martin houses fighting over the choice of apartments by the hour but not doves.

4. Doves are not on the pest list. They will not plague barns, houses or chicken houses like starlings, and English sparrows do.

5. They do not make a pest of themselves by feeding on the farmer's standing grain like the Boat-tailed Grackle, the Brewer's Blackbird, the Cowbird, the Red-winged Blackbird, and the English Sparrows do. Being a ground feeder he feeds on what shells out and falls to the ground.

6. The dove is a sweet bird. Biologists tell us it has no gall. There is no bitterness about a dove.

7. The dove does not incubate on glaciers like the Penguin. It will not dive into a snowdrift to spend the night like the ruffed grouse. It prefers warm weather and warm climates.

8. It has a very soft, sweet call. It is not raucous like the crow or raven. It does not imitate other birds like the mockingbird. Its call is its very own.

So people in whom the Spirit dwells will seek to be modestly attired, to develop that meek and quiet spirit which is in the sight of God of great price. They will not glory in loud and gaudy colored clothing, nor seek to borrow their beauty from the minerals, plants, birds and beasts.

As the dove is not a predator so Spirit-filled people will not, (like the Pharisee) devour widows' houses and for a pretence make long prayers.

Nor will the Holy Spirit ever make a pest of Himself. He will not stay around where He is not wanted and appreciated. As Jesus left the country of the Gadarenes at their request and did not return, so when people resist, quench, tempt and despise and insult the Holy Spirit He may very well leave and never return.

The Holy Spirit is a sweet Spirit. The holy anointing oil compounded by Moses, which was a type of the Holy Spirit, had five ingredients, three of which were sweet.

As the dove has a low sweet call, so has the Holy Spirit. He does not speak in tones of thunder, like an earthquake, or a raging lion or searing fire, but in a still small voice.

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PART 5

The Hawk and the Dove -- A Contrast

(A True Account by Doris Dorsey, my sister-in-law)

The Hawk

"He looked helplessly out of place on the heap of decaying boards. One wing dragged in the litter as he moved. Startled at my approach, he crept into the heap, struggling awkwardly with the injured wing.

"I pulled away broken boards as he kept hiding beneath them, until, cornered he turned defiantly and I curled a hand about him. His reflex was instantaneous. Talons plunged through my finger and the edge of my palm. "

My sister-in-law describes in considerable detail how she tried to nurse this sparrowhawk back to health, but he fought her at every offer of help, and finally he began tearing at his wing so she removed the bandage and released him where she had found him, and never saw him again.

The Dove

"Flat on its back the dove lay in the middle of the narrow roadway, a disheveled, but living crumpled bit of feathers and pink feet and frightened dark eyes. I gently lifted it, a broken wing carefully supported in my hand. Its throat swelled as it cooed in fear."

She fed and watered it for five weeks before its wing healed sufficiently to sustain rising flight. The dove never fought or pecked at her. The hawk fought every time she tried to feed it.

This gives added meaning to the words of Jesus, "Be ye harmless as doves." We have no record that Jesus or the apostles, mistreated as they were by their enemies ever inflicted or attempted to inflict any hurt on them.

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PART 6

Matthew 5:13 -- The Salt of the Earth (A Metaphor)

Salt is a compound, not a mixture. Those who claim that a Christian is merely a sinner covered with Christ's robe or righteousness like a layer of snow covers a dungheap are trying to make man's sin and Christ's righteousness a mixture, and are missing the truth by far.

Even a few eagle saints of the Old Testament had better theology than that; i.e. "As far as the east is removed from the west so far hath He removed our transgressions from us. "

Salt is a combination of an earthly element sodium, and a heavenly or gaseous element, chlorine. Sodium is very volatile (has a bad temper), is very unstable. It will burn even when floating on water. Chlorine is so deadly it cannot be taken into the body, breathed or rubbed on the skin. But combine the two. The temper of the sodium is quelled, the deadliness of the chlorine is removed, and we have another substance different from either of them. When Jesus said to the disciples, "Ye are the salt of the earth," this compounding of the two natures is included. So that it is not accurate to call salt sodium. It is not chlorine. It is salt. And a true Christian is neither God, nor a sinner. He is a Christian.

Here are some spiritually suggestive characteristics of salt.

1. It is eminently useful. More than 2,000 uses have been found. A Christian who is good but not useful is good for nothing and qualifies for Jesus' statement, "But if the salt have lost its savor it is good for nothing. . . ."

2. It is found in crystal white purity many places in the world. It is not actually white in itself, but what its crystals do to light makes it white. Contaminated with soot or dirt the impurities are easily visible.

3. It attracts moisture. True Christians in an otherwise dry service will bring some heavenly dew.

4. It has the power to melt ice without changing its basic nature. Let true Christians come into a cold spiritual situation and they can melt things up without changing their own natures. And instead of making things colder as natural salt does, they will get warmer.

5. Salt is antiseptic. The eyes are bathed in a saline solution to prevent infection.

6. It is a preservative. The salt of the earth, Christians tend to preserve a peaceful and orderly society. Where I am typing this, on the Summerfield, Fla. campground, scores of people live. No policemen are needed. No one drinks or steals or tries to seduce anyone else's loved ones. Everyone drives slowly and carefully to safeguard lives.

7. Salt induces thirst. Innumerable testimonies confirm that sinners have become thirsty for the living water by being around Christians.

8. It irritates open wounds and sores. The Bible describes sinners as "full of wounds and bruises, and putrefying sores." No wonder then that he is irritated when he gets so close to a true Christian that he gets salt in his wounds.

9. Salt has in it the secret of lifting something from a lower to a higher kingdom. Sheep for instance make hydrochloric acid from salt that changes plant fibers into what can become sheep flesh. And the Christian has the secret of helping people from the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of God's dear Son.

10. Salt added to water will greatly increase its weight without increasing the volume. So when a Christian has become the salt of the earth there may be a considerable increase in the weight, for instance of his conversation, without an increase in volume.

Some who believe that a Christian is "locked into an irreversible relationship" and is "eternally and unconditionally secure" may well say one of two things about salt losing its savor:

1. It is impossible for salt to lose its savor.
2. Jesus was not talking about a possibility; it was just a figure of speech.

Vincent quotes Schoettgen and Thompson roughly as follows "The salt which was commonly used in Jesus' day especially for sacrifice was a mixture of many things. Being gathered from the Dead Sea there was much bitumin and asphalt and other impurities in it. It was used to sprinkle on the burnt sacrifices to cover up the odor of burning flesh, etc. When exposed to sun and rain, the true salt rapidly disappeared. What remained was not fit as Jesus said for the land as fertilizer, nor for the dungheap as compost but only fit to pave their streets and lanes. It was cast out and trodden under foot of men. It was good for nothing else. This is a terrible chilling truth.

Trace the course of the gospel from Jerusalem through Asia Minor, up into Europe and Russia. What was the great burden on the heart of Jesus when He spoke to John on the Isle of Patmos? The seven churches of Asia Minor! Five were told to repent. And the church at Ephesus which was perhaps the most spiritual church to whom Paul addressed an epistle was warned that if they did not repent, Jesus would remove the candlestick out of his place. Did they repent? Do they stand today? They are located in what is known today as Turkey, the hardest country in the world in which to do missionary work outside of communism. That salt lost its savor in Italy, Russia, Poland, Germany and is doing so in England and America. What happened in those first mentioned countries? They were trodden under foot by Nazism, Communism and Facism. And it looks like the woman clothed in scarlet (the false church) will be hated by the scarlet beast (Communitic

nations) and they will devour her flesh with fire wherever they take over all over the world as they have already done.

Don't say "It can't happen here." It can and will if the salt loses its savor. The candlestick is removed. God the Holy Ghost is gone. The building still stands. The name is still there. People still come. Congregations still sing. Preachers still talk. But sinners are not born again and filled with the Holy Ghost. The church is "good for nothing."

Even worse, it is a positive force for evil. It discourages people from going where they can hear saving truth. It deceives them and lulls them into a false sense of security.

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PART 7

Matthew 5:14 -- The Light of the World

1. God did not create the sun for us to look at. It will destroy our vision if we do.
2. The Scripture says "Whatsoever does make manifest is light. " When Jesus calls us the light of the world this is included. We are to manifest to men what is necessary for their salvation.
3. Light reveals direction. People in darkness can travel up or down, back and forth, south or north, east or west and try their best, they will not know without light. People can be headed for Hell and will not know without spiritual light.
4. Light reveals color. People in darkness cannot tell the difference between black and white. And in dim light everything looks gray. So people in dim spiritual light will have difficulty discerning right and wrong. They are not easily convinced of black and white when everything looks gray to them.
5. Light reveals size. In dim light perspective is not clear. It is easy to mistake the relative size of things. And trivialities may be confused with essentials and vice versa.
6. Light reveals distance. Peter speaks of those who cannot see afar off. But Abraham saw Christ's day, rejoiced to see it and was glad. The saints of the Old Testament had such far (tele) vision that they saw a city which had foundations whose Builder and Maker was God. But people in dim light are very near-sighted.
7. Light promotes life. In the creation light preceded life. A forest floor may be void of vegetation, but remove the trees and let sunlight in. In one year there will be a rank growth of many species of flora. Why? Light promotes life. And innumerable are the cases where the entrance of God's Word has resulted in people being born again to life.
8. As all power, ancient and modern, directly or indirectly is thought to come from the sun so all divine power spiritually comes through the channel of God's Word. Even the dynamic power of the Holy Ghost is "through the Word."

9. Light attracts. Fishermen use light at night to attract fish. Many insects have marvelous sensors in their wings which turn them automatically to the source of the light that strikes them. Does not the human soul have something equivalent which turns it Godward when His light comes?

10. Unbalanced light produces abnormal growth and sometimes death. Researchers have found that man is not able to produce light to duplicate the sun. And anything plant or animal grown in this unbalanced light will not be perfectly normal. Ultra-violet rays in abnormal amounts can produce dangerous and even fatal sunburn, and cancer. X-rays can produce serious and fatal internal burns, and laser beams (Light Amplification through Stimulated Emission of Radiation) are more deadly yet.

So the preacher who does not preach a balanced gospel, who strongly concentrates on one portion of truth and neglects other equally important areas of truth may produce tragic results in his hearers of abnormal growth or even spiritual death.

Researchers have found that animals raised under one type of artificial light will have a very high incidence of cancer, under another kind will have other abnormalities, and fruits produced under unbalanced light will not ripen properly and will be lacking in color, flavor, texture, and keeping ability.

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PART 8

Forgive Us Our Debts -- Matthew 6:12

Sin is represented as coming short of the glory of God. So the type of it in the natural world is an unpaid debt. And a sinner is represented as a debtor with debtors' obligations far too heavy to pay. He can only throw himself on the mercy of high heaven's court and beg for mercy.

But there is nothing in the theology of the New Testament to give comfort to the person who refuses to pay his debts. But if someone owes us a debt they cannot pay, we must be willing to forgive, even as God has forgiven us.

A friend of mine, a minister, was a stick-up man during the great depression. When he met Christ, he had about \$5,000.00 in restitutions to make. He started as God directed him and God helped him. Some people would accept carpenter work in lieu of the debt. Others would be so moved by his testimony that they would forgive him the debt. He kept at it until it was all made right.

One report that came to me was of a man who took his song book the morning after he professed salvation and went to the grocery where he owed a large bill. "Look here Mr. Grocer," he said, and showed him the song "Jesus Paid it All." The grocer said, "Well that is great, but He hasn't been in here to pay your grocery bill yet."

A lawyer's son whom I knew started making restitution shortly after his conversion. When someone stole some things out of his house he had padded the insurance claim by the amount of \$2,500.00. When he went to make it right they offered to settle for one third. He paid them \$833.00. He filed an amended income tax return and arranged to pay tax on some income he had not reported. He made restitution to many others amounting to thousands of dollars. There is no more powerful way to testify than this. He is today a bright and shining witness, finishing Bible School, preparing for a ministry which I predict will be powerful and fruitful.

Much reproach has been brought upon the cause of Christ in general and the cause of holiness in particular by professors who do not pay their debts promptly. It was sad and startling when a minister's wife started working in the office of a department store years ago that sold on time without interest, at the holiness professors who started paying up their back debts to the store, because they knew she would find out about them.

It is always considered a scandal when a minister does not pay his debts. I agree. But I cannot help wondering if the church board that oppresses him in his wages and espouses the terrible theory "We are praying for God to keep him humble and we are going to keep him poor" are not equally guilty.

We are aware that there is great controversy over the doctrine of whether or not we can live above sin. Those who say it can't be done accuse those who do of professing sinlessness. There could well be those who do so profess. Part of the difficulty is in the wide divergence of definitions of what sin is. If as one school says "sin is any deviation from absolute perfection" then of course perfect knowledge, perfect desire and perfect power would be required to do that, and that would leave us all out. But if as Wesley says and the Scriptures agree, that "Sin is the willful transgression of a known law" then there is hope. For there are multiplied thousands of sincere intelligent and honest witnesses who testify that they do so live.

It is certainly proper for anyone to pray for forgiveness of sins of ignorance which everyone has, but "where there is no law there is no sin" and "sin is not imputed where there is no law" and "by the law is the knowledge of sin."

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PART 9

The Strait Gate and the Narrow Way -- Matthew 7:13; Luke 13:24

Strait is the gate and narrow the way that leads unto life and few there be that find it.

"Strive (as in agony) to enter in at the strait gate." Great numbers of people have quoted and misquoted this scripture. The misquotation goes "Straight and narrow is the way that leads to heaven." But Jesus did not say straight but "strait." And He did not say heaven but life. There is an enormous difference. We enter life in this world when we are born again meeting Jesus Christ. "He that hath the Son of God hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." "Ye would not come to me that ye might have life." "He that believeth on me hath everlasting life." "This is life eternal that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

While the Christian life is a straight walk it is not a strait one. There is a vast difference. The life of the legalist is a strait one. He is in a strait jacket par excellence.

The strait gate is not the gate of heaven. It is the gate of repentance. We do strive as in agony to enter the gate of repentance. It has a parallel in the natural birth. We certainly enter this world by a strait gate. The Greek word is *stenos*, defined as narrow (from obstacles standing close about). And these are the only two times that Greek word is used in the New Testament.

I am of the firm opinion that the misinterpretation, that the Christian life is a strait way comes from the awareness of unsanctified people that while they wish to live a pure, holy and upright life of perfect love to God and man they have a powerful set of urges within that is constantly prompting them to hate and hold grudges instead of loving and forgiving, to meditate on impure instead of pure things, to live other than by the golden rule, and they must constantly resolve, grit their teeth, furrow their brows, renew their purposes, reconsecrate themselves, review their vows, flagellate themselves both physically and spiritually to have even a semblance of a Christian walk fulfilled in their lives.

It is also very likely that the unscriptural doctrine of the necessity of sinning every day, and the idea that we are pre-destined to sin comes from a similar source. That is from a life dominated by the "old man."

While we admit that the human will is involved in a continued walk with God and there must be a fixed purpose of heart like Daniel had not to defile oneself, yet our service is not will service, and our worship is not will worship. For the rest that remains for the people of God in Hebrews four is not heaven but holiness. And one phase of the manifestation of the indwelling Holy Spirit is a perfect rest within. As Fanny Crosby sang, "Perfect submission, all is at rest," and Charles Wesley, "Now rest, my long divided heart, fixed on this blissful center, rest." And "Let us labor to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief" -- proving conclusively that it is to happen in this world.

And this experience and relationship of being filled with the Spirit is not a static experience. It is not a place of independence where we now do as we please, and use God to further our selfish ends. It is not a place of unconditional security. It is obtained by obedience and faith, and it is maintained and retained by continuing obedience and faith. Acts 5:32 says, "The Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to those that obey him." And this giving is not a once for all time proposition, i.e., as a circle within the circle of our personality, for even though the Holy Spirit is a person even as the Father and Son are persons, yet He comes to us as a stream through a channel.

He does not come merely to satisfy us, though He does -- not merely to multiply our joy, though He does -- not simply to give us perfect peace, which He does -- not just to perfect our faith, which He does -- not just to solve our inward turmoil, which He does -- but He streams through us to bless others, by our shining faces, by our anointed testimonies, by our holy living, by our ethical business methods, by our sacrificial giving and loving service to others.

And this stream of the Spirit can be stopped. If we fall into unbelief, disobedience or stubbornness, or if we shut up or block the channel outwards to others, by stinginess, or quenching the Spirit from expressing the love of God in rejoicing, testifying, praying, etc., as well as failing to live a pure, holy and blameless life, abstaining from all appearance of evil, the stream stops.

It is worth repeating that the strait gate is the eye of the needle through which the camel must go. The gate of true repentance is so narrow that no sin can go through. And it is so painful and may take so long to press through that it becomes ridiculous to think of sinning every day and repenting every night. For repentance means far more than simply confessing sin, but also means to quite the practice and make wrongs right.

All manifestations of the carnal nature, denominated "flesh" by Paul in Galatians five, are forbidden by God's holy law. If a person has not had his heart purified as the disciples did at Pentecost, and Cornelius and his household at Caesarea under Peter's ministry, he must be constantly running up against God's "Thou shalt nots" as he feels the urges of the carnal heart. But if his heart has been purified until the urges of his heart are to bear the fruit of the Spirit, then he knows what the Psalmist meant when he said, "He hath brought me into a large place," (Psa. 118:5) and a wealthy place. (Psa. 66:12) For there are no "Thou shalt nots" against the fruit of the Spirit. "Against such there is no law." And right here one must be very careful of the idea, that since God in purifying the heart takes out the "want to" to sin, then anything a person wants to do is all right! We must not forget that human nature must be controlled.

The stomach does not have a conscience of its own. It is controlled by automatic motor impulses. If we were hungry and stood in the presence of good food which was not ours, our stomach would not say, "Now that food does not belong to my owner, so I will not prepare to digest it." No, indeed! As soon as the sight and smell of that good food reaches our optic and olfactory nerves the stomach would start pouring gastric juice to digest what the eyes had seen and the nose had smelled. So the moral and intellectual man must make a decision -- either turn away and think about something else, or pay for some food and eat it.

The same is true of all our other normal human, God created drives pronounced good by a holy Creator. This includes our sex drive, desire to own and defend a certain portion of the earth as ours, and so forth.

Because of these normal human drives such as the sex drive which must be controlled, and because many people think that sex desire is inherently evil in itself, they then think no one could have a pure heart without being dehumanized. I sympathize with these people but I certainly do not agree with their doctrine.

And when people say, "Now I can do anything I want to," I would remind them of the Scripture, "Only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh" such as turning God's house of prayer, into a house of palaver, such as I have heard some congregations do before service starts.

Perhaps this would be a good place to comment on Sigmund Freud's assertion that the primal and fundamental drive of all drives is the sex drive.

He may very well be giving an honest testimony, for this may have been true of him and all other perverts who are obsessed with the subject of sex as he was. But it is not universal truth. All people are not like that and neither are all animals.

It is glaringly apparent that the reason he thought sex perversion was normal was because he did not know any normal people. But sex perversion is abnormal and subnormal. God's norm is holiness and purity. The reason Freud's philosophical system is so shot through with error and goes around in circles and never gets anywhere is because it is based on this false foundational fallacy that a sinner is a normal man. But it takes regeneration, sanctification and years of maturing in the things of God before a person can begin to approach God's norm.

During the second world war, experiments were conducted in a scientific manner, to check accurately the effects on young men of military service age, of undernourishment for an extended period of time. One of the first drives to subside was his sex drive.

There has been discovered an earthworm, that in times of food scarcity begins to digest itself. The first to go are the sex organs and it will continue to digest itself right up to the brain. When food is restored it grows back its body, and the last thing replaced is its sex organs.

Nature teaches us (I Cor. 11:14) that hunger, thirst and the desire to live are the most basic and fundamental drives there are in either men or animals.

It was quite forcefully indicated to me while observing my last flock of sheep over a seven-year period. My Southdown ram was a virile breeder. There was nothing wrong with his sex drive. Everyone of my ewes had lambs or there was some other reason why. But when I put feed in the trough he forgot all about sex and became just another hungry sheep. When there was no feed in the trough he was ready to mate with any ewe that would let him, or that could not prevent it. One of the ewes put her head through the lamb creep one day and hung there. He saw it and mated with her instantly. But when feed was in the trough he might as well have been sterile. Being six inches shorter than my western ewes they would shove him away from the trough. But he was smart. He knew they would not stand for him to mate with them when they were not in heat. So he would mount one acting like he would mate with no intention of doing so. She would jump up and down, back out and he would move up in her place and feed. But I had one ewe, Dupont (my best moneymaker), who was smarter than he was. He mounted her one day and she simply ignored him. He stood in mating position with no attempt to mate with her until his legs got tired, slid down and walked away with the most dejected air.

How I wish Sigmund Freud could have seen that! His whole philosophical system would have collapsed, and deservedly so much sooner than it has.

When taking flying lessons after World War II a good illustration was impressed upon me of the truth "Against such there is no law."

We had driven during the war years '41-45 through many states by auto in evangelistic work. Roads were narrow and there were many restrictions. There were SPEED LIMITS, STOP

SIGNS, RED LIGHTS, ONE WAY, DEAD END, NO TURN, NO U TURN, NO PARKING, NO TRESPASSING, PRIVATE DRIVEWAY and PRIVATE PROVERTY.

But when I was flying there were no such restrictions. There were just two. Keep your elevation at least 1,000 feet over populated villages, and do not fly over military installations. That was all. So it is that those who live on the low level where the carnal nature reigns will be running up against God's "Thou Shalt Nots." But if we are cleansed and controlled by the Holy Spirit so that our desires, meditations, plans, ambitions and activities are in harmony with Him, and channeled in the fruit of the Spirit love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness and temperance, and faith --"Against such there is no law." But we have to live "high" in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

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PART 10
Ravening Wolves -- Matthew 7:15

Some might say, "Well, the wolf eats mutton, so does the shepherd, what's the difference?" Much every way. The shepherd loves the sheep, the wolf does not. The shepherd gets no pleasure from the sheep he kills, the wolf kills for pleasure, and will annihilate the flock in one night if not interrupted. The wolf wastes the wool, the shepherd preserves it. The wolf causes terror when he kills, the shepherd does not. The wolf will kill the most prolific mothers, the most helpless lambs, the shepherd will not. When the shepherd needs mutton to eat, he will take a dry ewe that will not breed and produce lambs, or excess males that are not needed for breeding, so that the health and size and quality of the flock are maintained or increased, and of course the wolf comes only to steal, kill and destroy.

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PART 11
Matthew 7:16, 17, 18, 19, 20

Fruit trees have an unfailing way of bringing forth fruit according to their nature. So that the fruit is a reliable indicator of the nature. "Ye shall know them by their fruits." More about this when we get to budding and grafting.

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PART 12
Rock and Sand Foundation -- Matthew 7:24-27

After spending time in Israel four years and seeing the ubiquitous rock and the scarcity of sand, it was apparent that the man building on sand was many times more foolish than we had ever imagined.

Someone has suggested that sand may just be rock ground fine. So it is that the truth of Jesus which is an integrated whole, may be so broken up and mis-interpreted that it does not fit together and becomes just a sand foundation.

That His truth is our foundation is reiterated in the epistle to the Ephesians 2:20, "Build upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone."

In Matthew, chapter sixteen where Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build my church," He certainly was not talking about building it upon Peter. And Peter was not infallible. He did not have perfect spiritual understanding even after Pentecost. Note Acts 10:14, Gal. 2:11 and II Peter 3:16. And after the apostolic council debated the problem of the Judaizers who were trying to bring the Gentile converts into bondage it was not Peter but James who handed down the decision.

But the "rock" is mutual revelation, mutual recognition, and mutual confession. As long as the Christian and Christ are supernaturally revealed to each other, Supernaturally recognized and mutually confessed, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against the church."

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PART 13

Matthew 4:16 -- The New Cloth in an Old Garment, and New Wine in Old Bottles

Here Jesus speaks of two kinds of damage we may expect if we do not do things His way.
1. Damage by contraction. 2. Damage by expansion.

New cloth in an old garment refers to an unregenerate person trying to patch up his old life with Christ merely added to what he already has.

But the garment of righteousness which Christ gives to a penitent sinner is made to fit a babe. And Jesus says, "Except ye repent and become as a little child ye shall in no case enter in to the Kingdom of God." Take this garment which was designed to fit a babe in Christ and try to patch up an old sinner's life with it; it would be merely a patch. And it would in seeking to contract his life to fit, tear it on all sides.

Take the average sinner or unregenerate church member and try to shrink his pride into the dimensions of humility. Try to shrink the enormous multiplicity of his works of self-righteousness into the mold of ceasing from his own works that he might do the works of God. It simply cannot be done.

Try to shrink the complex life of the average church member with all his possessions, interests and loves, all his amusements and all his diversions into a size that will pass through the eye of a needle. It cannot be done. He must be a new creature. There must be a whole new garment.

Many a missionary when telling the worshippers of many gods about Jesus have had them respond, "Oh yes, we will worship Him, too." When told that it is not Jesus and, but Jesus or, they quickly lose interest.

But the resurrection life of Jesus is not a bright new patch to put on an old garment. Many of our youth movements today have attempted to add Jesus to their hard rock noise which is falsely called music, to their free love, and indolent lives but it cannot be done.

I saw also what happens when an old patch is added to an old garment, while watching the Yaqui Indians on the edge of Tucson Arizona celebrate Easter.

They had fourteen crosses stuck in the sand around an open space representing the fourteen stations of the cross. A group of men with an image of Christ on the cross went around this circle chanting doleful music, and crossing themselves. A group of women carrying an image of Mary, making music that sounded like a lost soul also made the circuit. On Saturday other members of the tribe came in their pony wagons, dressed in their rainbow colored finery, and spent the day in their heathen dances, drinking and coming over to the pavilion where the image of Mary rested to pay her idolatrous homage. On Good Friday they acted out the betrayal and crucifixion of Jesus with their pagan witch doctors for Pharisees, and burned Judas in effigy. Saturday night they had a drunken orgy. No observation of the resurrection at all.

Some would interpret the old garment as meaning the Old Testament. If by that they mean the covenant of circumcision and the Mosaic covenant of ceremonial law I would admit a possibility, but if they mean all the Old Testament I must vehemently disagree. We are saved by the faith of Abraham. He is called the father of the Faithful. Jesus did not fulfill the moral law for us -- sacrificial law, yes -- the law of atonement, yes. But the moral law is fulfilled in us who have been delivered from the law of sin and death by the "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" who walk not after the "flesh" (carnal nature) but after the Spirit (Holy). (Rom. 8:4) Much of the preaching of Jesus and the Apostles was from the Old Testament. And the church is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets.

The Wine in Old Bottles -- Damage by Expansion

One of the many symbols of the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures is wine. And the expansive power of wine is suggestive of what the Holy Spirit does to a soul when He fills it. Since the bottles were leather they had limits of expansion. After being used once for wine they were thereafter used only for water.

So God does not put His Holy Spirit, the new wine into old bottles. Jesus said, "The world cannot receive Him."

I do not know what would happen if a sinner would be filled with the Holy Spirit but I would guess, it would be instant death. We do not know, because God just does not do that. Only new vessels unto honor, sanctified and meet for the Master's use does He fill with His Spirit. Many powerfully born-again Christians have testified how that later when they received the baptism with the Holy Ghost the glory was so great they felt they must ask God to stop or they

would die. I can testify that the Spirit has prayed so hard through my heart and mind when I was asleep, that I would wake up utterly exhausted and felt that I would have died had I not awakened. Such ecstatic agony as the unsanctified will not even imagine.

This expansion of the soul when God comes in may explain why when the unclean spirit had gone out of a man and returned, he took seven other more wicked than himself with him, and the last state of that man was worse than the first.

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PART 14

Matthew, Chapter 13 -- The Nature of Wheat

A self-appointed nutritionist carried on for many years a vendetta by the printed page against wheat products. Some researchers declare that if the world were limited to only one food, wheat would probably come as near as any other one food to maintaining life and health for the human race.

The bread made from wheat that Jesus talked about many times was not what you see coming from the average oven today. The American miller takes out about thirty vitamins and minerals, puts back three required by law and calls it enriched flour. If a man robs me of thirty dollars and gives me back three I would hardly be willing to admit he had enriched me!

When Jesus gave thanks for the bread before feeding the hungry multitude, He literally told God how good it was (eulogized it). I seriously doubt He could have done so if He had been using the average loaf today.

Wheat is a Bible standard of excellence.

Wheat is a type of the Christian.

It is true some people are allergic to wheat products.

It is also true that many people are quite allergic to true Christians even as the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and as a person covered from head to foot with wounds, bruises and putrefying sores is allergic to salt!

In the first parable, the seed (wheat) is the Word of God, in the second the seed are the children of God. What a challenge to true Christians. What a rebuke to shallow professors. "Ye are our epistle." "Now are ye light in the Lord." "Ye are the light of the world." There have been people who have walked so closely to God and obeyed His Word, that even unsaved people have called them "walking Bibles." Jesus Christ was truth personified. So are His Spirit-filled people.

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PART 15

Matthew 13:3 -- Parables of the Kingdom -- The Parable of the Sower and the Seed

The Sower is the Son of Man and His ministers.

The seed is the Word of God.

The four types of seedbed are four types of hearts that hear the Word.

There are seven parables in this chapter. The first stands alone. The last six are three companion parables. Each set of two corroborate each other.

Let's look first at the parable of the sower and the four types of hearts.

1. The Wayside Heart.

On the farm where I was reared there was a path diagonally across the field we called the Twelve Acres that led to the creek where the stock watered. They used this path two or three years in a row until it was almost as hard as brick. The next year when this field was plowed for corn, the plow would jump out of the ground when it came to this hard path. When the corn planter came to it the shoes would also come out of the ground and leave the seed lying exposed. In a few days it was all picked up by blackbirds and crows. I see this hard path every time I read the statement of Jesus "Some fell by the wayside." A heart hardened by too much worldly traffic. It may be hard through bitterness, hatred or unforgiveness. A person who harbors unforgiveness in the heart is not only not at peace with God but cannot be. God forgives us only if and as long as we forgive everyone else. Some hearts are hard through bitter envy over those who have places of power who wield the scepter and they must obey; some are bitter at the wealthy, when they are poor and some are hard through hatred for other people because of real or imagined wrongs.

There are even those who hold a grudge against God because a loved one died. And they blame God for something which may have been caused by the sin of Adam, or their own sin, or ignorance. For instance: many children are congenitally deformed because their parents were heavy users of nicotine, alcohol or other drugs such as thalidomide when babies were born with no arms or legs, etc.

All such hearts are not receptive to the good seed of God's word.

2. The Shallow, Stony Heart.

Even yet I can see that disc on the wheat drill jumping over a big stone with a half inch or so of soil on it. The grain of wheat is covered. The birds do not get it. The soil is moist. A new birth takes place. The sun comes out. The very thing the wheat must have to grow. The wheat dies. Was it the fault of the seed? No! Of the sower? No! The fault of the sun? No! It was the stony soil.

Why are some hearts so shallow? That is a good question. We might be able to suggest some reasons. Children from broken homes, or from homes where parents hate one another, quarrel, accuse and fight, or are hypocritical professors, and the children having little or no love

shown them, do not mature emotionally as normal children would. They grasp at pleasure and fun wherever it is offered. Such people may grow up in body, may have keen minds, but are emotionally immature. Such may receive the Word joyfully, as a possibility of a new thrill or fun occupation but when the sun comes out (trials, persecutions, afflictions, tribulation) they have no root in themselves, are offended and wither away.

3. The Brambled Heart.

When I read about this one I see a yellow clay hillside in that same twelve-acre field, that was adjacent to a locust grove. When we would plow in the spring we would cut some locust roots with the plow. When we would cultivate the corn we would keep down the sprouts, but when we drilled it in wheat and did not cultivate, the sprouts which came from long established roots would outgrow the wheat, and the wheat would be small, the heads short and the grains shriveled. So it is with grain that falls among thorns and briars and brambles. They all spring from roots. The wheat comes from seed. The brambles have the advantage of already having an extensive root system, and the wheat is shaded from the sun and robbed of moisture and plant food. But what is Jesus saying to us about this heart? Whence thorns and brambles? Did God create them and call them good? No, this was the curse that came on the earth, so that it would not yield its best increase, because of Adam's sin. What is God saying to us?

There is something in the heart of man that resulted from Adam's sin that prevents a heart, even though it has enjoyed the new birth from bringing forth fruit to perfection (Luke 8:14) and causing it to become unfruitful.

And how does this indwelling something, this root inherited from Adam manifest itself in the born-again one? By outbroken wickedness? By adultery, blasphemy, murder and lying? Never! The carnal mind is too clever and deceitful for that. No, he sidetracks the born-again believer into being too engrossed with temporal things -- the cares of life, making a living, providing for our old age security, etc., etc. Also, the pleasures of life -- the pleasures of eating good food, of visiting with loved ones, of driving sleek, new powerful automobiles, etc. The deceitfulness of riches that is, that money is the answer for all things. If I were just rich I would be happy. "And they that would be rich fall into a snare and temptation and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition." The fourth thorn -- the lust of other things. Other than what? Other than bringing forth the fruit of a Christian! The fruit of a Christian is not worldly wealth, jewelry, stocks and bonds, fame and fortune. The fruit of a Christian is twofold. See the parable of the Vine and branches.

4. The Good Ground

Good ground must be deep soil. It must be fertile; it must be sweet; it must be unshaded; it must be clean; it must be watered but not too much, and it must be not too cold. It may be hot on top but it must keep its cool underneath.

On our poor clay farm there were some spots that produced fantastic amounts of crops. These were spots where buildings had one time stood. Built on limestone foundations, a central point for the gathering of humus, elevated slightly above their surroundings; producing bumper

crops of dark green color and huge full ears of grain when a short distance away the stalks would be a sallow green, and little or no ears on the stalks. There were good reasons.

1. Deep Soil

A stone or rock must not prevent the roots from going down when the sun shines. It could well be, when we get to heaven that we'll find that our enemies helped us spiritually more than our friends. Our friends praised us and lifted us and encouraged us, but our enemies made us search ourselves and dig deep to get more grace.

I knew a lady who lived a deep, spiritual, consistent, prayerful, Christian life while her husband lived. He opposed her, fought her, criticized her, ridiculed her and tried his utmost to make her quit and give up. But the more he fought, the more she prayed, and God's grace was sufficient. But shortly after he died she found herself fallen from grace, out of victory, backslidden in heart, for she had neglected her prayer life after his opposition ceased.

2. Clean Soil

No crowding competition from thorns, briars and brambles. The pure heart that has been cleansed from the fallen nature inherited from the first Adam has victory over the cares of life, the pleasures of life, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lust of other things. He loves not the world, neither the things that are in the world, but loves the will of God; seeks it, finds it and does it.

3. Sweet Soil*

*Some obnoxious weeds such as sourdock grow only on sour soil. Which is easier -- fight them with a hoe or sweeten the soil?

The reason those spots on the old poor clay soil produced many times more than the surrounding soil was that the limestone hauled in for foundations had weathered and powdered and neutralized the acid in the soil. And volunteer clover mostly White Dutch and Alsike had come in, and being legumes had pulled down from the air the riches of nitrogen and stored it in the soil.

There was one field on the old place we called the back eighteen. It was sad, sallow, sour, wet clay. It produced bromsedge and crayfish better than anything else. One fall after this field was in corn the limetrucks were called in to spread two tons per acre of powdered limestone on this sour field. Then rye and timothy were sown. The next spring when the ground was honeycombed with frost, giant crimson clover was broadcast and a good stand was obtained.

One year later this field was waving in the breeze with crimson clover up to my waist. During the years that it had been sour the fences had rusted and the posts had rotted between us and the neighbors. But it had been no problem. Their livestock did not care to feed on bromsedge and crayfish. But when the second growth came up the next year and he turned his livestock out in the neighboring fields they started coming over into the clover. One morning Mother looked out and saw nineteen head of the neighbor's livestock in our field. My brother put up a new strand of barbwire on top and they crawled under. He put one on the bottom and they crawled through. He

patched the holes but couldn't keep them out. He loaded the shotgun with salt and fired that at them. It ruined the shotgun but that was all it accomplished. Mother didn't have to canvass the neighborhood to get new members for her church. She furnished them the stuff of life and they came.

My youngest brother went to Bible School, and my brother-in-law, a city-bred boy, came to the farm. He turned the clover stubble under and planted corn. It was by far the best crop of corn ever raised on the old home place. The neighbors who helped him shred were overheard to say, "We don't understand this; this is the first year for him on the farm, and he raises better corn, then we can and we have lived on the farm all our lives." The reason: The clover had worked for two years reaching up into the heavenlies, pulling down the free and bountiful supplies of the riches of nitrogen and storing it in the soil. And thus "to him that hath shall more be given, and from him that hath not shall be taken away." Before, the field had become poorer and poorer, but now it started getting richer and richer.

And so with the Christian who will let the Holy Spirit come and sweeten his nature so the gifts and graces of true godliness can thrive in his heart will find his heart and life getting richer and richer with the things of God, as his path shines more and more unto the perfect day.

3. Good Ground

What is fertile soil? Well for one thing it must be rich in humus or plant food. Humus comes from things that were once living and have died. The reason some professors are so poor and produce little or nothing for Christ is that nothing has died in their lives. To be crucified with Christ is a real death. To give up all sin for the good, to give up the good for the better, and to die to the good and the better to have God's best will produce some real deaths, and some real fertile soul food on which the washed and purified soul can grow and flourish.

Jesus refers to the death of the good, when He says, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abides alone, but if it die it brings forth much fruit." Clarke reports that a man named Miller planted some red wheat near Cambridge, England. Eight weeks later he separated the stooled stalks and set them out. Again eight weeks later and again in March. The resulting harvest of wheat produced over 576,000 grains from one grain of wheat in a year. An ear of corn hangs here as I type. There are fifty grains in each row and twenty-four rows of grains. So there are over a thousand grains of corn on this one ear which came from a single seed in four months. If that grain of corn had not died it would have remained one grain only. Good! But good for what? By dying it reproduced itself a thousand fold, and the wheat 500,000.

Here is where a great host of Christians are stymied. They have given up the evil for the good, but they have never put the good on the altar to have God's best.

4. It Must Be Unshaded.

The most beautiful wheat, or trees, must be far enough from any other to get light from all sides. Many a Christian is dwarfed and stunted because he has made some great Christian his idol and tries to live closer to him than he does to Christ. Someone has said, "The mortar that holds the

brick wall together is like the divine love that holds the Christians together." I reply, "Yes, that is true but don't forget, the same mortar that holds them together also holds them apart." It is just as important not to get too close as it is not to get too far apart. More about this when we come to the trees.

5. It Must Be Warm on Top But Cool Underneath.

In any given agricultural area of the earth, in the north temperate zone there is a certain angle of the sun that is necessary to heat the soil enough to produce growth. This will vary of course for different crops. And it will vary with the slope color and humidity of the land. But the crops which do best in hot weather are those that either send their roots down so deep that the heat cannot reach them or their own foliage shades the ground and keeps the temperature down. I like to think of this as a Christian who is hot and enthusiastic for God, with a real zeal to do His will, with an outgoing, infectious eagerness to see God's work prosper, a real sanctified enthusiasm that is catching like the measles, but underneath in his spirit and judgment is able to keep cool enough to make objective, sound, and mature decisions based on all the facts relevant to the case and is not swayed by the tides of emotion that may swirl around him.

6. Well Watered But Not Too Much

The occasional showers that fall to water the crops are a type of the showers of the Holy Spirit that keep the Christian growing.

But as in natural crops, too much rain can drown the crops by shutting off air, so the Christian who thinks he will grow rich spiritually by listening to good religious records all day long, or his Christian radio station constantly, will find himself suffocating as he neglects his own prayer life, for prayer is truly the Christian's breath. And we are commanded to "Rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks" and not just listen to someone else do it.

Now someone might say, "Well, I recognize myself as the wayside heart, or the shallow heart or the brambled heart. Is there any hope for me? Am I predestined to be this way and can I never be a fruitful Christian?" A resounding "No!" and "You can be."

If you are the hardened, wayside heart, get under that type of ministry which is truly with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. God's Word is a plow that will break up the fallow ground.

If you are the shallow-hearted, keep under good spiritual preaching of the Word; His Word is a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces. There will be a seed-bed by and by where His Word can grow and thrive.

If you are the brambled heart, seek the baptism with the Holy Ghost and fire as God's Word has promised us, that will purge out the roots of indwelling sin from the heart and purify and make you every whit whole. Do not seek to speak in unknown tongues. This is a sovereign gift. It is given to both carnal and spiritual Christians and can never be the evidence of the indwelling Holy

Spirit. Even if a person had the real gift of language, which very few people receive, it would not be sure evidence of the Spirit's indwelling, for God's own law requires two or three witnesses and that would only be one. We can know that He abides by a three-fold witness. 1. His Own Presence. 2. The fruit of the Spirit. 3. The works of the Spirit.

I saw a young man come seeking God once and showed evidence that he had not sought in vain. But he was quite unstable. He would backslide and repent, over and over. Finally he came to the altar one night and quit before the next night. He came to me and asked, "Rev. Dorsey, is it any use for me to come to church. I know my trouble. I came from a broken home, I was never disciplined. I can give up and confess my sins and get saved, but when I come to a crossroads and God says, "Go this way," and I want to go some other way, I go my way instead of His. Is there any use to come to church?"

I replied, "Yes, D___ keep coming to church, stay under the ministry of the Word, keep doing everything you think a Christian should and don't go back to anything you know a Christian shouldn't do. He did keep coming to church at least and in three years he matured enough that he sought again and was reclaimed and sought and found holiness and purity of heart and became established therein.

The critical difference between the wayside heart and the fruitful heart, the most important basic difference was in the matter of understanding. Trace the word understanding through this 13th chapter. The first group "understood it not." The fourth group understood the word. If you are short here pray as Solomon did, "Lord, give Thy servant an understanding heart." And as James instructs, "If any man lack wisdom let him ask of God who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not."

Another important relationship is goodness and honesty. Honesty is something for which we are responsible. It is an attitude toward truth. God will never make us good if we will not be honest. If we will be honest with the truth with God, and ourselves then God will supply the grace to make us good. Barnabas was a good man. (Acts 11:22-24)

What does the sun represent in this parable of the sower and the seed? The question was asked me, "Is that song true 'Is not this the Land of Beulah, blessed, blessed land of light, where the flowers bloom forever and the sun is always bright?'" I answered, "It all depends on what you think the sun is." If by the sun is meant, that people will smile and approve all we do, then of course it is not true. But if the sun is what Jesus said it was in Matthew, chapter thirteen, i.e., afflictions, persecutions, trials and temptations, then it is true.

Paul says in Romans 5, "We glory in tribulation," and in Galatians, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross."

Some years ago I tossed a stubborn setting hen into a pond of water to cool her setting fever. The third treatment helped her, but she told me in no uncertain terms what she thought of both me and my treatment. But suppose I had tossed a dry, dusty, thirsty duck into the middle of that pond. He wouldn't have stormed out complaining at every breath; but rather started diving,

throwing water over his feathers, calling me sweet names and having a wonderful time. He would have been in his God-ordained element.

Does the eagle glory in the air?

Does the trout glory in the ice-cold water of his mountain stream?

Does the wheat glory in the sunshine?

Yes, yes, of course!

So the sanctified Christians who have come "into this grace wherein we stand" (Rom. 5:2) glory also in tribulation. What the sun is to the wheat, the tribulation, temptations, persecutions and afflictions are to the Christian. The person who whines, murmurs, grumbles, complains, and chafes and rebels at crosses needs to go deeper. His heart is not the good soil yet, where the bright sunshine can drive his roots deeper to produce a harvest thirty, sixty or a hundred fold.

The very thing that enabled the good soil to produce such an abundant harvest killed the wheat on the stony ground.

One of the saddest misrepresentations of the Christian life is that it will be a bed of roses. No more thorns, no more tears, no more burdens, the popular song writers chant but this is unscriptural, untrue and unrealistic. There will be crosses. "Must Jesus bear the cross alone and all the world go free, no there's a cross for everyone and there's a cross for me." But with the Holy Spirit abiding and giving comfort, His yoke is easy and His burden is light.

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PART 16

The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares. Matthew 13:24

No doubt most of us have heard the interpretation of this parable thus: The field is the church, the wheat is the Christian, and the tares are the sinners in the church. And of course you would not dare put sinners out of membership of the church because you would offend some of the Christians and lose them also.

This interpretation is not acceptable to me nor is the argument that follows. For Jesus said, "The field is the world," not the church. So the wheat is the church in the world. The tares are the sinners in the world. Jesus is not teaching us that we cannot exercise discipline in the church to deal with fornicators and adulterers but is teaching us that we cannot have a Christian earth order by killing the sinners out of it.

And there is no contradiction whatever with the instructions of Paul to the Corinthian church to "put away from among yourselves that wicked person." They were not instructed to kill him and put him out of the world, but to separate from his company, and have no fellowship with

him, and perhaps induce him to repent, and not only fornicators but railers, extortioners, covetous, drunkards and idolaters. (I Cor. 5:11)

But there is another setting for this parable that lets it stand on all its bases. If we set it down in the time when Christ shall reign here in person then everything fits. Try it. The servants came to Him personally asking Him. Christ must reign until all enemies are put under His feet. (I Cor. 15:25) Matthew 13:41 says, "The Son of man shall send forth his angels and they shall gather out of HIS kingdom all things that offend. " But I Corinthians 15:24 says "When he shall have delivered up the kingdom to the Father," and Matthew 13:43, "Then shall the righteous shine forth in the kingdom of their Father."

Also it appears that this present age will not end with the wicked being severed from among the just but the just from among the wicked by the rapture and the first resurrection while the wicked pass on into the rest of the great tribulation and are punished.

I have seen a neighbor walking through his wheat field breaking off the heads of rye and dropping them where the reaper would not catch them because he was going to use the wheat for seed. I saw darnel by the sea of Galilee which was the tares of Matthew 13. While the heads slightly resemble wheat anyone with fair eyesight could tell the difference. The same could be done with them without destroying the wheat. And any church leader with such poor eyesight that he cannot discern the difference should not be in a position of oversight in the work of God. One of the secrets of the fruitfulness and spiritual power of early Methodism was the courage of Wesley and his helpers in exercising discipline.

He reports in his Journal of expelling sixty-four members of one society at one time for infractions of the rules when they refused to repent and amend their ways.

The parable of the fish net is a companion to the wheat and the tares.

The mustard seed and the leaven are companion parables. But though they teach one major truth they teach other truths separately.

The doctrine of post-millennialism uses this for its basis that the world is going to become more and more Christian until it becomes totally Christian, then Christ will return.

Rather, since leaven is a type of sin, these parables teach how sin produces unnatural and superficial growth in the visible kingdom. And great numbers of people are joined to the visible church who have not been truly born again.

1. The mustard seed-naturally a small herb. Greek here is lachanon or vegetable. Webster defines herb as: A seed plant which does not develop woody persistent tissue as a tree does but is soft and succulent. So a vegetable becomes a tree. This is unnatural growth. We were shown the mustard herb in Israel near Aslikelon. It is a shrub. But this unnatural growth produced a tree that the birds of the air (demons) lodged in. The Greek word for lodge is kataskenoo and is defined by Strong as meaning to camp down, haunt, remain, rest or roost. A green tree attracts song birds, but a dead tree attracts the unclean such as eagles, vultures, grackles, and other blackbirds and crows.

And so the false church of Revelation seventeen and eighteen is described as becoming the hold of "every unclean and hateful bird.

The herb being a vegetable is an annual. It must be grown from seed each generation. And the history of the true salvation churches agrees with this. Very few maintain their spiritual life and glow longer than forty years: one generation. Then they must be replanted. Someone may ask, "How can a church look so alive if it is dead?" The same way a dead tree looks alive, by being a trellis for poison ivy, Virginia Creeper, wild grapes or the Strangler Fig. As herbs the true Christians are expendable and are willing to spend and be spent for Christ. But when that which was created to be an herb, fragile, soft succulent, with nutritious and medicinal value, hardens and the heart gets hard like a tree it may continue to increase in size for hundreds or even thousands of years, it will attract unclean birds as all dead trees do, also.

No herb would tempt a bird to lodge in it for the night. It would be too close to the ground and too much in danger of predators. This trouble of unnatural growth developed in the churches before John the Revelator died. Jesus speaks through John to the church at Pergamos and says, 2:13, "I know -- where thou dwellest and where Satan's seat is" and to the church at Thyatira and says, verse 20, "I have a few things against you because you allow that woman Jezebel to teach and seduce my servants, etc."

This could explain where the birds come from so quickly that devoured the seed that fell by the wayside. If Satan's children are allowed into the church membership, and on church boards and committees and the true gospel should happen to be preached there they will immediately seek to nullify it by contradicting and criticizing the preaching and the preacher and do all in their power to get rid of him.

I have yet to hear an attempt by one who espouses the idea that the leaven is the gospel which will purify the whole earth, to harmonize it with the statement of Jesus that "strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leads unto life and few there be that find it."

The leaven is an instrument of unnatural, artificial and superficial growth. If leaven were a type of righteousness, why would it have to be killed before the product could be used as with bread. And the gas produced by leaven is CO₂, a deadly poison. And the growth which leaven produces in the dough is only superficial, not real. There is actually no more bread and it does not weigh any more. No! Leaven is a type of indwelling sin inherited from the first Adam which will swell up the newly born-again soul with unjustified over-estimations of his courage and strength. Listen, "I am ready to go with Thee to prison and to death. Though all men deny Thee yet will not I."

How well do I remember the large container in which Mother put her dough when baking bread for her large family. When it was well-kneaded and leavened, the container was placed on the warming closet to rise. Her admonition to us, "Do not stomp through the house, you will make the bread fall. " And the stove must not grow cold, the bread would fall. It was quite sensitive to shocks and temperature changes. Warm it, it would rise, cool it and it would fall. But there was a way to stabilize it. Put it close enough to the fire until enough of the fire penetrated it to kill the leaven and the instability was gone.

So it is with the Christian who has not gone through the purifying baptism with the Holy Spirit and fire. Put him in a warm spiritual environment and how his spirits will rise. Put him in a cold one and how his morale will drop. Treat him nice and he will expand; shock him and he will rapidly deflate, but God can purge out the old leaven and stop the superficial growth as well as the deflation in uncongenial surroundings. James speaks to this point when he says "a double-minded man is unstable --" "Cleanse your hands ye sinners, and purify your hearts ye double-minded."

Jesus commanded His disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, but to tarry first in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high. At which time Peter says their "hearts were purified."

And Paul says to the Corinthian church, "Know ye not that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven that ye may be a new lump as ye are unleavened, for even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

It is easy to understand how great men like John Wesley and Adam Clarke could have thought that Christianity would take the world, living as they did in the greatest revival and harvest since the days of the Apostles. But if they could have seen what would happen in the next 200 years they would no doubt have had some pretty serious second thoughts.

Leaven was considered so contaminating and defiling by the devout Jews that if one so much as entered a house from which all leaven had not been removed he would be disqualified from eating the Passover. Vincent, vol. 2, p. 273.

The two-fold parable of the treasure in the field and the pearl of great price-The popular interpretation of this two-fold parable says that the merchantman is the sinner and the treasure hid in the field and the pearl of great price is Christ. But nothing fits the Bible facts with this interpretation. The Bible portrays the sinner as a prodigal son who has spent all his substance with riotous living. He has nothing to sell and nothing with which to buy. He is the debtor with debts too heavy to pay. The Bible nowhere portrays a sinner as buying his way into the favor of God, but just the opposite. "Come ye without money and without price." When Jesus says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit," the Greek word indicates crouching beggars and cringing paupers. What could such have to sell?

But with Christ the Merchantman, everything falls into place. The field is the world. Christ was not hid in the world but the church was. Sinners are lost in the world and the only raw material from which saints are made is sinners. And Christ is definitely and clearly set forth as the One who ransomed, redeemed and purchased the church with His Own blood.

Being the Creator He gave up the natural attributes of Deity in order to purchase the treasure hid in the field. He sold all He had. He laid all His creation on the line. If He had failed it would have meant the dissolution of all creation. He certainly gave up all He had. Being in the form of God He thought it not something to be grasped at, to retain His equality with God but made Himself of no reputation and took upon Himself the form of a servant and being found in fashion as

a man became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. And His blood bought the whole world, the earth and all its citizens.

There is nothing about the formation of a pearl that parallels the incarnation of Christ. But there is certainly something that is suggestive of the formation of Christian character. In the book of Job it is asked, "Can a clean thing come out of an unclean?" It is supposed to be a rhetorical question that needs no answer since everyone knows the answer is no. But with God all things are possible. And God can take an old sinner, as unclean as an oyster, and implant in him the seed of God, with the ability to turn all irritations into something to facilitate his growth. And as the beautiful layers of pearl cover the grain of sand which irritates the oyster, to prevent further irritation, so the graces of the Spirit shape beautiful Christian character over our human nature, after the heart is purified, so that we can become a part of His true church, the pearl of great price. The twelve patriarchs whose names are over the twelve gates of the New Jerusalem are so represented as pearls. Each gate is one pearl.

It could be that the woman who hid the leaven in three measures of meal was Eve who passed on from Adam the leaven to her three sons Cain, Abel and Seth. Or it could have been Mrs. Noah who passed it on to Shem, Ham and Japheth.

Notice the contrast between the leaven and the mustard seed. The leaven makes something softer than it needed to be. Unleavened bread is not so hard it cannot be eaten. But the leaven puffs it up with artificial and unnatural and deceptive growth.

The unnatural growth of the mustard plant, which produces something huge out of something that was designed to be small does just the opposite. It makes something harder than it was supposed to be. The herbs and vegetables are mostly tougher on the outside and tender on the inside. They are expendable. They must be renewed every generation. But the trees are softer on the outside and get harder as you go in, with the hearts being hardest of all, and many of them even when broken over by a high wind will sprout up and keep on growing. But every generation of true Christians must be born again from seed, the incorruptible Word of God. God has no grandchildren. Every generation must be born again or they are unregenerate and will certainly lapse back to paganism.

So Jesus is showing us the two extremes that leaven will produce, that is the carnal nature, will produce in the church. The two extremes of hardness and softness. Isn't this a picture that church history has painted over and over. One group goes into soft permissiveness, over emphasizing the love of God. Another group goes to the other extreme with rigid discipline, hatred for sin, and over-emphasizing the justice of God. Either extreme emphasis will produce unnatural growth in the visible church organization, but not normal and healthy growth.

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PART 17

Matthew 15:21 -- Image on the Money

This parable teaches many things.

1. It is right to pay taxes to the governments who issued the money in the first place. They sent it out; they have a right to call it back. It is undeniably the government's for it has that seal that identifies it as such.

2. But some things Caesar has no right to claim as his. That which has God's image and superscription -- our souls, our spirits, our hearts, our minds, our lives and our children. Even the most depraved will show certain characteristics that reveal they came, not up from frogs, fish or monkeys, but down from God.

There are coin collectors who when they find a coin that has been buried for many years and is badly oxidized and eroded, have the skill to restore it into almost like new condition, showing the image and superscription again, if it is not so badly worn that they are completely gone. And so God can take some of the most debauched and vile, and restore His image and superscription on them so that instead of living for the flesh, the world, the devil and self, they can start showing forth the praises of Him who has called them out of darkness into His marvelous light. But there are people who have gone too far, so that God gives them up, and gives them over to a reprobate mind, or mind void of judgment who are past redemption, even while they live in this world. (Rom 1:28.)

More on this image and superscription when we comment on Luke 15.

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PART 18

Matthew 18:23 -- The Unforgiving Debtor

This parable teaches two great fundamental truths rejected by a great percentage of modern Christendom.

1. Our forgiveness from God is conditional and continuously so.
2. Eternal torment.

This parable of our Lord was given in response to the question of Peter, "Lord how oft shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? 'Til seven times?" But Jesus said unto him, "I say not until seven times but until seventy times seven. " Seven is the perfect number, and ten signifies completeness. So our forgiveness must be the equivalent of perfection times completeness times perfection again. In other words, no end to it. No man can become a Christian and find forgiveness if he refuses to forgive everyone else. Likewise, anyone who starts holding a grudge in his heart against someone after he obtains forgiveness, forfeits his own from God. He does not need to commit murder, blasphemy or adultery. Just refuse to forgive. While it is true in a judicial sense that forgiveness cannot be complete until the offending party repents and asks for it, yet Jesus says, "When you stand praying, if you have ought against any, forgive."

The word servants in this parable comes from the Greek word doulos which means literally a slave, or possibly a bondservant.

His debt of 10,000 talents, if of gold would be about \$67,000,000.00 If of silver \$4,422,000.00. There was just no way a slave or bondservant completely dependent upon his master could ever pay such a sum, excluding forever the possibility that the merchantman of Matthew 13 were sinners and that the pearl they bought was Christ.

His earthly lord knew that he could not pay, and that even if his wife and children were sold into bondage it would not begin to pay the debt. So moved with compassion he forgave him the whole debt. It appears that the very next thing he did was take his fellow servant by the throat who owed him seventeen dollars and demand payment. When he begged for mercy, instead of having compassion, he cast him into prison.

Read it carefully. His pardon was rescinded. The old debt was brought back against him again, and he was delivered to the tormentors 'til he should pay all. When could this be? Never! If he could not pay sixty or seventy million dollars when free, he could certainly pay nothing when bound. End of parable.

Then Jesus turns to His own disciples and speaks literal truth to them and to us still answering Peter's question of verse 21. "And thus shall your Heavenly Father do to every one of you that forgiveth not his brother their trespasses."

If some will twist the scriptures to seek to make them harmonize with their own preconceived notions, to make them support the unscriptural idea that our standing with God is unconditional, I dare not.

Our forgiveness of others is so important and basic, that it is included in the model prayer. "Father forgive us as we forgive," and "for we forgive everyone that is indebted to us. "

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PART 19

Matthew 24:28 -- The Carcass and the Eagles

Get the picture in your mind of a broken body lying on the ground and eagles or vultures descending out of every part of the heavens attracted to it. Now reverse the picture. When Christ (with His broken body) appears in the air His eagle saints will rise to meet Him from all points of the compass. This verse must be interpreted in the light of the three preceding verses. He is telling how He is not coming. He is not coming to teach a select people secretly (secret chamber). He is not coming to teach a multitude publicly (in the desert), but as lightning, at a time unpredictable and swift as light, and as selectively as a carcass attracts only one family of birds, so only one type of person will rise to meet Him when He appears for His saints.

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PART 20

Matthew 24:32 -- The Parable of the Fig Tree

The fig tree is one of the plants God uses to symbolize Israel. When He sent out the seventy to evangelize He told them to go to the "cities of Israel" only and told the Syrophoenician woman, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." "These three years," the owner said, "I have come seeking fruit from this fig tree, cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?" So Jesus came seeking the fruits of righteousness from Israel for three years, and when they failed to produce, He said, "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. "

And that generation did not pass, until this happened. For Titus came and took the city, the fig tree was cut down, the remnant was dispersed into all the kingdoms of the world and the kingdom, which was "righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost" passed to the Gentiles.

But Jesus said, "Behold the fig tree." Is the fig tree putting forth leaves? Was it ever heard that a nation was destroyed, its people dispersed and 1878 years later, they would come back, become a nation again and revive their ancient language? Never in all the history of mankind except Israel. And in 1967 when Israel took the Old City away from Jordan, it was the first time in 1897 years that an Israelite could come to pray at the western wall without asking anyone's permission. To stand there at sundown on Friday evening and see them streaming from the narrow streets of the old city like waters of a flood, to come to the wall and pray for the coming of their Messiah, has been one of the most moving experiences of my life.

42,360 Israelites came back from Babylon in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, but millions have come back in the last hundred years from all over the world. Do you not see the fig tree putting forth leaves? And yet scoffers derisively ask, "Where is the promise of His coming?"

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PART 21

Matthew 19:23-24 -- Camel Through the Eye of a Needle

The most common interpretation of this parable is that which says that the eye of the needle meant a low gate in the wall of Jerusalem, where a loaded camel coming up after the large gates were closed would have to be unloaded and made to kneel down to go through on his knees, then he reloaded and continued his journey. Here are eight objections to this interpretation.

1. A needle's-eye gate in the wall of Jerusalem is not scriptural.
2. The Greek word used by Matthew and Mark indicates to sew or puncture, and by Luke a surgeon's needle. (Vincent)
3. If there had been such a gate and such a practice the disciples would not have been amazed at Jesus saying what He did.

4. They would not have asked in astonishment, "Who then can be saved?"
5. It would have been possible for man to do this.
6. It would not have required a miracle.
7. There would have been no change in the nature of the camel going through.
8. There would have been no change in his load.

But if Jesus were talking about the eye of a sewing needle then all these objections disappear.

Think! No one gets through the strait gate of repentance and the new birth without the miracle-working God performing a supernatural work. Born of the Spirit! A new creation! Ye are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.

All the humanistic activities and influences and pressures exerted on burdened sinners by well-meaning and zealous and sometimes good people will not put one through the needle's-eye gate of the new birth. Godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation. There is no salvation without repentance, no repentance without godly sorrow for sin, no godly sorrow without the personal presence and work of the Holy Spirit on the heart and mind.

Let's say there is a small door or gate in the wall of Jerusalem. Bring up your loaded camel, groaning under his load. Smelly, cantankerous, sometimes so mean he will break a man's neck with one bite of his teeth. Unload him, take him through the gate on his knees, load him back up and go on. There is no change. He still groans under his load; he is still an unclean animal. He still smells like a camel, looks like a camel, walks like a camel, because he is a camel. More about the change of nature necessary on the parable of the sheep.

But take a sword and hew that camel down so small he can go through the eye of a sewing needle and he will never be the same again. He will not bear that old load again. You say, "But that is impossible." That is exactly what Jesus said. But it is not impossible with God.

I greatly fear that thousands of people are being deceived by answering a few easy questions and being pronounced Christians when they are the same old sinner with the same old load.

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PART 22

Matthew 20:1-16 -- Vineyard Laborers Working For a Penny

Some have wondered why the parable of the talents reveals just exactly proportionate rewards to the faithful service rendered according to ability, but here everyone received alike. One has to do with breadth of service, and one with length -- one with rewards above life, and one

with basic life itself. But when we remember that Jesus is talking also about the relationship of the Jews and Gentiles it takes on even deeper significance. The Jews or Israelites who had been first in the mind of God since His covenant with Abraham, are going into eclipse after the destruction of Jerusalem and the Gentile nations are going to be evangelized and as a result of that evangelization shall prosper. But while it is true that the Jewish church went into eclipse and the Gentiles came to the forefront, it does not mean that Israel has been rejected and God has no further use for her. "Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid, but rather through their fall salvation is come to the Gentiles. If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?" (Rom., chap. 11)

I am quite amazed when I hear men who profess to love Jesus and the Word take the statement of the blind Jews at the crucifixion "His blood be on us and on our children" to mean that this was God's judgment. Far from it; this is what a few unbelieving Jews said. And it happened to them and their children also. But a few hours later, Jesus prays, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." Great and marvelous things are spoken of the restoration of Israel. The Old Testament prophets spoke about it far more than they did about His first coming. Read the prophets and understand why they puzzled over, "What and what manner of times the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow." And this glory was not just the Gentile age, but the glory of the time when Christ would take the throne of David, to order it and to establish it, in judgment and justice henceforth even forever."

So that even though the first (Israel) shall be last and the last (Gentiles) shall be first, yet Israel shall not be left out. Though last, they are still coming in.

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PART 23

Matthew 22:1-14 -- The Marriage Supper and the Wedding Garment

It appears to have been the custom in those ancient times for the Lord of the feast who required that every guest wear special wedding garments, to furnish those garments.

And so it is that He who is making a marriage supper for His own Son is inviting people to come. What chilling, thrilling words -- "The marriage of the Lamb is come." "And his wife hath made herself ready." "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen clean and white for the fine linen is the righteousnesses of saints." There is no contradiction here. But we need to draw fine lines. There are four types of righteousness spoken of in the Scriptures:

1. Self-righteousness. This is human works, not done in the power of the Holy Spirit, not done for the glory of God, but self-discredited by being done to be seen of men.

2. Imputed righteousness. This is Christ's righteousness imputed to us when all we who have sinned and come short of the glory of God, believe on Jesus after we repent. See Romans 4:22, 23, 24.

3. Imparted righteousness. This is the very substance of God's nature which is created in us in the new birth, when we are regenerated, and imparted to us in the fullness of the Holy Spirit when we are sanctified wholly.

Let no man tell you that God cannot make you good. "Barnabas was a good man." Reason! -- "Filled with the Holy Ghost." Result! -- "Much people was added to the Lord." Let no man tell you that Romans 1:8, "So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God," refers to our living in the human body. It refers rather to the fallen nature. For the next verse says, "But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you, and if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his." Enoch walked with God, and he was not for God took him, but before his translation he had this testimony that he pleased God.

When we become partakers of His holiness, a measure of His moral integrity, His purity, His holiness is ours. For the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of holiness.

4. The fourth type of righteousness is exhibited or exported righteousness.

This is when the Holy Spirit works through us to do the works of God. He will shine on our countenance, put love's sweetness in our smile, put love's sparkle in the eye, put love's wisdom in our words, put love's winsomeness into our personality, put love's gentleness into our hands, put love's courtesy into our manners, put heavenly anointing into our singing, testifying and preaching, and love's restraint even into our rebukes and reproofs.

He will put love's singleness into our wills, and guide our feet in the way of righteousness and true holiness. All these things are the warp and woof of our wedding garments. For they are not the righteousness of Christ imputed to us but our works in the Spirit, the result of the righteousness and holiness of Christ being imparted to us. This is a very important distinction. (Rev. 19:8.)

The Christian is not like some have said, "As a dunghill covered with snow becomes beautiful, so the Christian is still at heart a corrupt sinner but beautiful because he is covered by the righteousness of Christ. No! But rather, "The King's daughter is all glorious within" because Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it that He might sanctify it -- and "present it to Himself a glorious church (endoxos, splendid, noble, gorgeous, honorable) not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing but should be holy (Gr. hagios, same word as Holy Spirit, holy prophets, holy angels and holy covenant) and without blemish." (Gr. Amomos without fault, spot blemish or blame.)

The man who showed his rebellion and disrespect for the king by rejecting that which was freely furnished was rejected and cast out, and the parable has ended and literal truth begun, when Jesus said "outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

The previous parable shows that those who qualify even at the eleventh hour will still be rewarded. But no matter how early they may come, if they do not submit to the requirements laid down by the King, they will be disqualified as in this parable.

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PART 24

Matthew 23:24 -- Straining at (out) Gnats and Swallowing Camels

The people who were incensed at the oppressive hypocrisy of the Pharisees probably rolled in the aisles, holding their sides laughing at this one. Let's imagine the scene. Here comes the camel driver with his milk camel. Here comes a customer; the Pharisee, a supercilious hypocrite, so fastidious it has become insidious, so meticulous it has become ridiculous, and says, "A glass of fresh camel milk if you please, sir. " When he starts to drink, one of the gnats that was buzzing around the camel is fluttering in the cup. He strains it out in pained disgust, tosses out the milk, then turns around and swallows the camel from which the gnat came-head, hair, hide, hump, hooves and all whole. Gnats, flies, nits, ticks and warts; tail, teeth and toenails; everything! Now he smacks his lips, licks his chops, pats his distended abdomen, burps tremendously and walks away with a very satisfied look on his face.

Would you accuse Jesus of exaggerating? Well He did not. No never! The little trivia that the Pharisees were arguing over, were like gnats, the fundamental wrongs they were embracing were larger than camels, for they had eternal significance.

This is another instance of truth being spiced with humor. Some people think that all humor is foolishness. Far from it, humor is an excellent spice for truth. Because of this humor, this truth has gone around the world. Anyone who balks at small things of little or no significance and accepts wrongs infinitely larger is said to be straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel.

Some think that God does not have a sense of humor. The problem is that when God pulls one of His sly and tremendously humorous tricks on the devil, the time span is so long the geographical territory so vast, the cast of characters so numerous that people reading the story in the Bible have forgotten the beginning before they come to the end. For instance many fail to see the humor in Pharaoh decreeing the death of all Hebrew baby boys, then God circumventing him by having his daughter's heart opened to one whom he would rear and educate at his own expense to lead all his slave laborers from under his hand.

Or the Book of Job. The devil works on Job's wife, she looks Job over, covered with boils from crown to corns, and decides that he is a dead dog and can never be a husband to her again. So she suggests to him, "Curse God and die." But the devil underestimated the resurrection life that God could infuse into Job when He healed him. For Mrs. Job bore him ten more children, and must have sewed baby clothes for twenty-five years, washed his clothes and theirs and cooked his meals for 140 years after that!

Or the book of Esther. Haman, the devil's henchman, hanging on his own gallows.

Or Herod, who thought he was so powerful he could take on the Lord's own apostles. God did not send an army of Goliaths or livid lightning bolts, but just some little worms.

Only recently I have been chuckling over the statement of Joseph's brethren, "Let us slay him and cast him into some pit -- and we shall see what will become of his dreams." Little did they dream that that "we shall see what will become of his dreams" was a prophecy, as God overruled their evil and turned it into good, they saw many times what would become of his dreams. They came true! And they bowed before him in the dust many times just as he had dreamed they would!

Oh, the exquisite humor of sturdy, huge-muscled, heavily-armed and armored Roman soldiers guarding the tomb of Jesus. But the tomb had six sides, any of which He could use as an exit at will and they were only guarding one side. And while they thought His body was safely in the tomb, He had slipped out of His grave clothes assumed His resurrection body, slipped down through the floor of the tomb to preach to the spirits in prison (I Peter 3:19) and the angel rolled away the stone, not to let Him out but to prove that He was gone.

And a similar band of soldiers were guarding an empty jail where the apostles were supposed to be but when the council sent for them the next morning, the soldiers were guarding an empty cell.

One of the tricks God played on Israel's enemies and there were many in the six-day war of 1967, when the Arab League had decreed the extermination of Israel, happened on the Syrian front. Our Jewish guide told us about it, laughing, when he showed us a memorial with a "Little David Mortar" mounted on it. "There" he said, "is our atomic cannon." Then he proceeded to tell us how in the '67 war a large group of Syrian soldiers advanced on an Israeli outpost manned by three or four Israeli soldiers, in a light drizzle of rain. The Israelis decided to fire their Little David mortar. It makes a tremendous boom when it explodes. They sent one over the Syrian soldiers which when it exploded was quickly followed by a heavy rain shower. Someone in the Syrian army shouted "Atomic Bomb, radio-active rain, let's get out of here!" And they fled the field and left it to Israel.

There were many examples of just such psychological confusion and panic among Israel's enemies during those fabulous six days.

Humor alone may quickly become foolishness. Spice alone is not good food, but how much a little of the right kind of spice can add to food. And humor alone is not good food, but how much more palatable truth can become when mixed with a little humor.

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PART 25

Matthew 23:37 -- The Hen and Chickens

The love of a mother hen for her chickens is very fascinating indeed. Mother's kerosene heated incubators would hold 128 eggs each, and would generally yield over 100 chicks at a hatch. When she had all she wanted she would fill an incubator once more for the three children who were old enough to care for them and hardly old enough to earn money some other way, and we would usually get about 35 baby chicks each.

We would place them under a big Rhode Island Red setting hen after dark some night and by morning she would own them. Then we would pick out a spot in the orchard, build a house for shelter from the elements and from predators at night, tie the hen with a long cord, and carry feed and water to them. I have marveled at the way that mother hen would ignore pounding rain to shelter her chicks. And I would shiver with envy at the lucky little rascals who could plunge under her feathers, turn around and stick their heads out, and view the passing scene.

I read of one mother hen, who when a hawk dived down and grabbed a chick and started to fly away with it simply took wing and caught the hawk, flogging him with her wings until he dropped the chick and fled in panic, while she led the grateful chick back to his mates. But the strain of it all was too much for her. She died of shock or heart failure a few days later.

If such love as this could possess the heart of a small feathered fowl weighing about five pounds, think what love must have swelled the heart of the Son of God as He wept over Jerusalem, sheep without a shepherd, little chickens without a mother and remember that the Jesus of the New Testament and the Jehovah of the old Testament were the same person. You may read of His heartbreak over Jerusalem in Ezekiel, chapter 16 and Matthew 23:37.

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PART 26

Breaking Up a Goodman's House -- A Thief -- Matthew 24:43

If we do not clearly differentiate between a thief and a robber we will miss what Jesus is saying here.

When we speak of His second coming do we mean as a thief or as a conquering King? His appearing to judge the quick and the dead; the apocalypse or appearing unto judgment which God gave unto Him; that coming in the clouds of heaven with great power and glory when every eye shall see Him and they also which pierced Him, simply does not resemble in any way the coming of a thief.

A thief comes when no eye sees him. A thief generally comes at night. So any eye shall not see him. And so we have the doctrine of the rapture appearing of Christ, when He doesn't set foot on earth, but instantly circles the earth in the air with the speed of light catches away His bride both waking and sleeping, takes them to the marriage supper of the Lamb, while the earth will be reeling to and fro in the cataclysms of the great tribulation. Then when He comes back with His saints after the wedding (Luke 12:36) riding on the clouds of heaven with great power and glory every eye shall see Him; then His feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives. Then all tribes of the earth shall mourn because of Him, then He shall tread the winepress of Armageddon and His vesture shall be dipped in blood. Ezekiel, chapter 39 and Revelation 19 will then be fulfilled.

But when we see a goodman's house broken up; two women grinding at the mill, one taken, the other left; two men working in the field, one taken and the other left; two men sleeping in a bed, one taken and the other left; then we see the work of the Heavenly Bridegroom coming with a shout from Heaven, when the dead in Christ arise, the living saints are translated, transformed,

immortalized with a body like unto His own glorious body according to the working whereby He is able to subdue even all things unto Himself, and no one but His Own see and hear Him.

Paul uses an unusual word 'atomos' (I Cor. 15:52) to indicate the time involved in the first resurrection of the saints from among the dead, and the changing of the living saints' mortal body into immortal bodies. It occurs only once in the New Testament. The Greeks were the first to visualize matter as composed of very tiny particles. If you would cut a piece of matter until the smallest individual particle remained, that would be an atomos; uncut, indivisible. Paul also says "in the twinkling of an eye." Scientists tell us the eye can twinkle seven times a second. And light travels a speed equal to seven times around the earth in a second. But Jesus will need only one seventh of a second as He circles the earth with the speed of light (Matt. 24:27) in the twinkling of an eye and calls out His own redeemed regenerated and purified Bride.

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PART 27

Matthew 25 -- The Three-fold Parable -- Ten Virgins, Eight Talents, the Sheep and the Goats

A large volume could be written on this chapter for it centers around the theme of judgment, particularly the judgment of those who have had some knowledge of the Trinity. For the Holy Trinity is definitely involved in this chapter. In all three sections of the chapter we have these three great truths standing out.

1. Human opportunity, 2. Human responsibility, 3. Human accountability.

The chapter could be headed "Basis of Judgment, Our Treatment of the Trinity."

The parable of the ten virgins has to do with how we have treated the Holy Ghost and His grace; the talents, how we have treated God the Father and His gifts; and the sheep and goats, how we have treated the Son of God and His people.

Those who say that the five foolish virgins, are sinners are confusing Bible symbols. There are three representative types of women used to symbolize three types of churches in the New Testament. The virgin represents the regenerated, justified church, whose sins have been washed away, cast behind God's back to be remembered no more, as far as the east is from the west. They have such complete forgiveness that He classifies them with His virgin church and proceeds from then on, if they continue to walk in the light, to look at them and treat them as though they had never sinned. God's complete forgiveness is so perfect that it is almost incomprehensible to even the best of saints.

Doubtless, very few of us would have picked Solomon to succeed David and be in the royal line of Christ. What! a son of that woman? But God shows us that when He forgives He really means it. It is complete and perfect. (But the reproach will live on.)

The second type of woman in the New Testament revealing a type of church is the widow who represents the Jewish church whose husband is dead, and they will not believe that He rose again. You will find her described in Luke 18:1-8.

The third type of woman is the harlot which symbolizes the false church, professes to be the bride of Christ, but is an adulteress, committing adultery through her friendship with the world, and will accept the antichrist, and suffer the torments of the damned forever. You will find her described in detail in Revelation, chapters 17 and 18 and her judgment in the beginning of chapter 19.

So the virgins could never represent sinners. Both the foolish and wise are all in the same assembly, they all have lamps (testimony), lights, and all hope to see the Bridegroom when He appears. They are not post-millennialists.

The difference between the two groups of five were not of morality and immorality not of righteousness and iniquity, not of legality and lawlessness, but of wisdom. The wise took the position, "We don't know exactly what hour the Bridegroom will come; while our lamps are burning now, we do not have the supply of oil we need to last through the night. We will take oil in our vessels with our lamps. If He doesn't come before morning, we will still have adequate supply. "

The foolish reasoned like this: "Well, we have lamps, we have lights, we are virgins, we are qualified to go in to the marriage supper, if He comes by 10:00 which they usually do." Their sin was the sin of presumption, presuming that He would come before He did. Jesus warns us also of the other extreme of this sin; the unfaithful steward who thought He would come later than He did. (Matt. 24:48)

What is the oil? Surely all will agree that the oil represents the Holy Spirit. The regenerated believer is certainly under the influence of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit helps him to testify and overcome the world, the flesh and the devil. But Jesus is teaching us that the regenerated need and there is available to us a fullness, and an unending supply, an adequacy of the Holy Spirit to last us and keep our light burning through the darkest hours. And if we fail to get this fullness we will not be prepared when the Bridegroom comes.

Paul is saying the same thing to the Ephesians, when after writing special instructions, to husbands, wives, fathers, children, masters and servants he says, "Finally, my brethren be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Take unto you the whole armor of God that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil and having done all to stand!"

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PART 28

Matthew, Chapter 25, Part Two -- The Parable of the Talents

We think of the word talents today as meaning natural gifts or abilities. These certainly are gifts of God and are to be used for His glory and the advancement of His kingdom, and we shall

answer for their misuse or be rewarded for their wise use at the judgment. For instance: our ability to influence others by our example, words, etc., etc.

But the original meaning of this word was a unit of money by weight. We would say today an ounce of gold. So a talent of gold was equivalent to \$32,640., and of silver \$2,176. So money thus designated and entrusted to these men was no small amount.

Since I wish to comment more fully on stewardship when I get to Luke 16, I will just say here that Jesus certainly does not teach some of the false ideas about money that are extant today, viz:

1. All Things Common. That when a person becomes a Christian he would donate everything to the church and become a pauper. While it is true that some people did so as recorded in the first chapters of Acts after Pentecost, it is also true that neither the Holy Ghost nor the Apostles commanded them to do so. And when Peter deals with Ananias about his hypocrisy he makes it very clear, "While it remained was it not thine own, and after it was sold was it not in thine own power? Why have you conceived this thing in thine heart, thou hast not lied unto men but unto God!"

2. That money is evil. The Bible does not teach so. The love of it is the evil.

3. That capitalism is all wicked. To the unfaithful steward his lord said, "Why did you not put my money to the exchangers, that at my coming I might have received mine own with usury. Obtaining interest on money is not condemned when it is done through a financial institution which loans to business men for expansion who expect to make money with their borrowed money, and who are well able to pay interest. But to charge usury to the poor who are on the verge of starvation was a great evil. But to them we were to loan with no hope of even receiving the principal again, much less interest.

4. But some will say, "Did not Jesus tell the rich young ruler to sell all he had and give to the poor?" Yes, He did but that was an individual case where his possessions were his idol, and he showed it when he went away sorrowfully for he had great possessions. God may still personally command individuals to do so if their attitude and relationship with this world's goods are similar to his but it is not a universal commandment.

5. When a person gets rid of all his possessions he closes out his stewardship of temporal things, and forfeits his many opportunities for doing good in the years to come with the interest from his invested capital, or the net profit from his business, factory or farm.

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PART 29

Matthew 25 -- Last Third of the Parable, The Sheep and the Goats or How Have We Treated the Son of God and His People?

To help us understand the parable of the sheep and the goats, let us consider the five types of servants a flock owner would have.

1. A son who would be a shepherd and would possibly love the sheep as much as his father did. As David who risked life and limb to rescue the lamb from the mouth of the lion and the paw of the bear.

2. The Hireling. He might be a man of integrity who would care for the sheep and he might care only for the silver, and leave the sheep to the rapine of the wolves.

3. The sheep. They furnished food and clothing for the owner and his household.

4. The goats. They furnished food and a poor grade of leather. But their most valuable attribute was that they would fight stray dogs, jackals and wolves.

5. The sheep dogs. These dogs would often develop such affection for the sheep and such a solicitous care for them, that they would risk their lives for the sheep, watch for the approach of enemies in the night and alert the shepherd. There is a case on record where an owner of a large flock in the western United States went out one day to check on his flock, and found the man who had been hired to care for them for the summer had been gone for several days, AWOL, but the faithful shepherd dogs were still herding the sheep, keeping them together, and protecting them from wolves, though they had gone without eating since the hireling had fled.

For the sake of illustration, let us suppose that one of the shepherd dogs would decide that he would like to become a shepherd. He would go to the shepherd and express his desire to so be. He would soon learn that he would have to become a goat first. Suppose the shepherd would say, "First you will have to be catechized, baptized, confirmed, sign a card, shake the shepherd's hand, dress differently, talk differently, walk differently, etc., etc. But he would still be a dog. How vain indeed it is for people to think that the church or any ritual of it could transform a dog into a sheep or a sinner into a saint.

But suppose the shepherd could make the dog understand that by repenting and believing God's power could change him and he became a goat. By a similar miracle he could be transformed from a goat into a sheep. No goat by the process of growth can become a sheep. It requires a miracle. So no newly born-again Christian can get into the body of Christ by growth. We are born into the kingdom, but "by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." And to become a shepherd. Ah! that is different altogether. That is by appointment of the "Great Shepherd of all the sheep." "No man taketh this honor unto himself but he that is called of God as was Aaron."

After having been around sheep for thirty years and observing them carefully, and listening to an extended conversation from a man who had extensive experiences with goats, I have decided there are some cardinal differences between the species. While they are both clean animals and eat similar diets yet there are basic differences.

1. The goats crave and demand to be petted. Sheep do not. How like the difference between unsanctified and sanctified saints. The unsanctified crave and sometimes demand to be praised and recognized and their egos supported and comforted by men. But the truly sanctified while encouraged by appreciation of his life and labors does not desperately crave it and stridently demand it. His ego and id are supported, sustained, comforted and upheld by the presence of the indwelling Holy Spirit in all His fullness.

2. I have never observed any kind of stink about sheep connected with their sex life. The billy goat is notoriously known worldwide for the tremendous stink he raises in connection with his sex life. I have never seen sheep initiate any kind of action to encourage miscegenation with goats, but I have seen goats attempt it with sheep.

And I think the Scriptures emphasize this very point. "This is the will of God your sanctification that ye should abstain from fornication that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor, that no man should go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter" -- "for God has not called us unto uncleanness but unto holiness." (I Thess. 4:3-7)

The sanctifying work of the Holy Ghost in purifying the hearts of the children of God encompasses spirit, soul and body. (I Thess. 5:23) Anyone who cannot control his sex desires and keep them within the lawful bounds allowed by God's word, still has the goat nature and needs to dig deeper. If all people were truly sanctified wholly, it would put the divorce courts out of business, and stop the deplorable scandals of professing Christians trading companions and seducing the innocent, and contributing to the delinquency of minors. (And a great multitude of good moral people will not do this anyway.)

People who do, have the goat nature, or even worse the dog* nature, and need to be truly regenerated as well as sanctified wholly. It matters not how many seemingly supernatural gifts a person may profess, if he is not perfectly clean and scriptural in his sex life, he still has a deep spiritual need.

*Deut. 23:18, Heb., Keleb -- A Male Prostitute.

Speaking of divorce; it does not solve problems. It only multiplies them. And the carnage it wreaks on the children is tragic indeed. Jesus tells us hardheartedness is the cause of divorce. If people would just let Jesus take away their hearts of stone and make them tenderhearted, they could forgive and keep on forgiving. I know there are extreme cases where a person may become mentally unbalanced and the mate must separate to protect life, but separation for the sake of peace and safety, and divorce for the sake of something else, is very, very different.

And the same miracle-working God who can change a dog into a goat can by a similar miracle transform a goat into a sheep. Now is it not clear that this parable is teaching one of the same cardinal truths as is the parable of the ten virgins? As the wise and foolish virgins were all in the same assembly so were the sheep and the goats. As they all looked to the same shepherd, so the virgins all looked for the same bridegroom. They were all clean, but as the foolish virgins were

not qualified for the marriage supper, so the goats were not qualified to inherit with the sheep the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world.

This three-fold parable is certainly given in the proper order. It requires the grace of the fullness of the Holy Spirit to enable a person to be a good steward of God's gifts, to enable him to properly help "the least of these my brethren," and to be a wise virgin instead of a foolish one, a sheep instead of a goat.

Of Dogs and Wolves

Dogs and wolves represent unregenerate people. Dogs which are domesticated and civilized wolves represent civilization with its orderly government of laws where people have a certain amount of culture and manners. Wolves represent the violent and lawless element.

As dogs are useful to fend off wolves and protect the sheep, so a law abiding and law enforcing society is helpful in controlling the lawless and protecting the church. The state has the ministry of justice. "He beareth not the sword in vain." The church is given the ministry of mercy.

As some dogs when out of the sight of their owners revert to their wolf nature, killing every living thing they can catch, so many church members are merely domesticated wolves who when out of sight of their pastors revert to their wolf nature. It would astound many owners of purebred registered dogs that are so gentle around their children and so affectionate around the house if they could see them breaking up bird nests, killing young rabbits, running to exhaustion every deer they can scent, and then killing them and leaving them lie, and even killing or maiming children. So would many pastors be mortified if they knew what deeds their affectionate and gentle church members are perpetrating in secret.

One such pastor reported being involved in an auto wreck on the outer drive around Washington, D. C. More than one car passed which she recognized as her members'. But they could not stop! They were out for a night of carousing and adultery with another member's wife. Dogs all!

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PART 30

The Least of These My Brethren -- Matthew 25:40

Jesus could have meant one or all of three things.

1. His natural brethren, the Jews and other Israelites. If we are a Jew-hater or a Jew-baiter and despise the seed of Israel, we certainly do not want to go to Heaven, for we would be very uncomfortable there. For a Jew is going to be Sitting at the right hand of God, King of kings and Lord of lords. And twenty-four Israelites are going to be sitting on twenty-four thrones surrounding the throne of God. And the names of twelve Israelites are going to be over the twelve gates of the Holy City, and the names of twelve more are going to be on the twelve foundations.

2. His brethren, the ministers of the gospel. Jesus said to those one day whom He had called to be His apostles and ministers, "I have not called you servants but friends and brethren. " How tragic that many people have the ministers for their pet hate. Some of the fastest growing groups of false cults are fueled by this hate for the church and the ministers.

3. His brethren, all the born-again ones who have come through His cleansing blood. Jesus is called the firstborn among many brethren. Both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one (father) for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren. It would be safer for your soul to play with a rattlesnake or a cocked and loaded pistol than to slander and mistreat the Lord's ministers or brethren.

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PART 31

Mark 1:7 -- Fishers of Men

In fishing, the type of pole is not the essential thing. I have used a willow sprout and caught fish.

The type of line is not the essential thing. I have used grocery twine and caught fish.

The type of hook is not the essential thing. I have made my own out of safety pins and chicken mesh wire and caught fish.

But the important things, the things essential are:

1. Go where the fish are, or learn how to attract them to you.
2. Try to avoid frightening them.
3. Find fish that are hungry.
4. Offer them something they want or think they do.
5. Strike while they are biting.

1. Wesley states in his Journal that in his early years he considered it almost a sin to preach outside of a church building, but in later years he not only did so whenever he could get people together, but urged his preachers to do likewise. How foolish to build a beautiful canning factory on a high hill and send a handbill down to the ocean or river, and announce, "Come all you suckers and we'll take you captive and can you."

2. Try to avoid frightening them. Jesus said to His disciples at one juncture, "I have yet many things to say unto you but you are not able to bear them now. "And Paul tells the Corinthians, "I have fed you with milk and not with meat for you were not able to bear it."

If someone had shoved a geometry book in front of me when I was in the first grade of school, and said, "Look, Buddy, you have to master this, or you'll never be a scholar," I think I would have been discouraged enough to quit. But after I had had several years of math, and two years of algebra, I breezed through plane geometry with straight A's. How sad that some ministers full of zeal without wisdom will preach truth to sinners and young converts that it took them twenty years to see, and then reject them as unsavable because they do not jump to walk in it.

3. Find fish that are hungry. Not too easy to do in gospel saturated America. And millions have been so repeatedly inoculated with a watered down version of the gospel that they have become immune to the real thing.

Different Methods of Fishing

1. Fishing with a hook. Jesus sent Peter to do this one time to get tribute money. And Andrew did this to bring his brother, Simon Peter, to Jesus. And Philip did this in bringing Nathaniel.

2. With a net. The disciples used this method. We saw Galilean fishermen using this method in 1969.

3. But a much quicker and more effective way to fish out a hole is to use dynamite. Where one might cast a hook all day and not get a strike, or pull a net through and many fish would avoid it, yet a stick of dynamite would get everything in the hole including frogs and turtles. This was what Peter used on the day of Pentecost. The Greek word for power in Acts, first chapter and eighth verse, is dunamis, from which we get our word dynamite. He netted 3,000 that day and a little later 5,000. "But," purists exclaim, "dynamite is illegal to use in fishing." Yes, that's right, it is. I have never used it for natural fish. But remember when a preacher has real spiritual dynamic in his preaching, and is getting results, his ineffectual critics will accuse him of using mesmerism, hypnotism, mob psychology and other things less complimentary to achieve his results.

4. Another method is to use poison. Conservation Departments sometimes use this method to clean trash fish out of a lake so it can be stocked with desirable species. And false prophets use this method, with their false doctrine to poison people's minds against the truth that would result in their salvation.

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PART 32

Mark 2:28 -- The Son of Man Is Lord Also of the Sabbath

While the expression "Lord of the Sabbath" is a literal truth, yet Jesus used a parable to show the Pharisees their hypocrisy. Reminding them that since they would lead their livestock away to water on the Sabbath should not an act of mercy be performed on afflicted people that they might be healed on the Sabbath? (Luke 13:15 and 14:5.)

Then someone raises the question, "When is the Sabbath?" When we were in Israel we found three Sabbaths being observed. The Moslems were observing our Friday. The Jews were observing what we call Saturday (really from sunset and three stars Friday evening until sunset Saturday evening), and the Christians observing Sunday. There are some devout Christians who think it is not proper to call Sunday the Christian Sabbath, but that it should be called the Lord's day since it is the first day of the week.

There are others who say that when necessary to keep from offending someone who keeps Saturday we should observe both days.

I have never subscribed to either view. The command says, "Six days shalt thou labor," which could not be observed if we kept two Sabbaths the same week.

I am of the firm opinion that we are observing "God's seventh day, man's first-day Sabbath" even as was observed in the original creation.

Here's why. God gave Adam a first-day Sabbath. It was God's seventh day, but it was Adam's first day as he was created on the sixth day. This was observed unchanged until Joshua's long day when Israel and the earth fell behind the original Sabbath "about a whole day" as the sun stood still on Gibeon and the moon in the valley of Aijalon. Since Jesus was Jehovah of the Old Testament who had established the Sabbath in the first place He certainly had a right to re-establish it on the original day, by rising on that day and sending His Spirit on that day, and having the Holy Spirit teach the apostles and the early church to observe that day as the Christian Sabbath.

No pope or potentate has ever changed the order of the days in the week. They dropped days from the month in order to allow for the fact that there are 365+ days in an actual year, and to bring the seasons back into harmony with the calendar, but the sequence of days in the week was not changed.

Some claim we do not have a Sabbath now, and that there was none from Adam to Mount Sinai. But they forget that Israel was commanded to observe the Sabbath when gathering manna and that before they came to Sinai. And "Remember the Sabbath" certainly indicates prior knowledge, for we cannot remember something we have not known.

Others claim that observing one day for rest and worship out of seven must not be important because Jesus did not reiterate it. He certainly observed it by His actions. And while He did not reiterate much of the moral law one commandment at a time, He underscored its durability and pertinence when He said, "Not one jot or tittle shall in any wise pass from the law until all shall be fulfilled." Has the Sabbath been fulfilled? Evidently not. As long as men live in mortal bodies, they will need one day's rest out of seven. And those who refuse to observe this will suffer sad consequences, with time in the hospital, early heart failure, nervous and/or spiritual collapse regardless of who they are or how vital is the work they are doing, or how closely related to God's kingdom it may be. They will find that the law of the Sabbath is written in their bodies as well as in the Book.

Jesus said, "Are there not twelve hours in a day?" I venture that any man who will really labor twelve hours a day, six days a week, will be happy to rest the seventh, and will not feel like mowing the lawn or washing the car. One reason there is such widespread desecration of the Sabbath is that people are not really working six days.

And the immutable quality of God's law is shown in the fact that some of the most godly and devout ministers who thought that they should work at their ministry seven days a week have suffered such sad consequences.

Verily "faith does not make void the law." Neither the moral law, nor the laws of health.

When antinomians try to tell me that the Sabbath was a ceremonial law given to the Jews or Israel I must ask, "Whom am I to believe, you or the Son of God?" Jesus said, "The Sabbath was made for man," Gr. anthropos, meaning manfaced or humankind. This word for man is the same used by Peter after his vision on the housetop when he said he was not to call any "man" (anthropos) unclean, meaning the Gentiles. This proves conclusively that the Sabbath was made for everyone.

Those who reason that since we do not put people to death for desecration of the Sabbath, therefore there must not be a Sabbath today. To me this is utterly illogical. The church has not been putting people to death for adultery either for milleniums. Does this mean that the commandment against adultery is no longer valid? Or the prohibition against blasphemy, or idolatry or dishonoring father and mother?

To me the argument that since there are twenty-four time zones around the world, since a person living on the mountain would see the sun earlier and later than someone in the valley, and therefore since we cannot have a uniform Sabbath, we do not need to observe one at all is a most ridiculous argument.

The argument that "That thou shalt not kindle a fire in all thy dwellings" shows that God did not expect the Sabbath to be kept universally around the world does not hold water either. God is simple saying, "Don't let your fire go out on the sixth day. Gather enough fuel then to keep it going so you won't have the labor of kindling it on the Sabbath. " Clarke says the rabbins interpreted that commandment to mean not that they could not have a fire for warmth, but not to kindle one for business or to dress victuals. But the greatest revival since the first century, saw people strictly observing the first day of the week as "God's Holy Sabbath" in Wesley's 18th century England, Wales, Ireland and Scotland and calling it the Christian Sabbath, and expelling members who desecrated it by doing ordinary work thereon.

I do not profess to be able to tell every man what he can and cannot do in the Sabbath. Jesus said it is lawful to perform acts of mercy on the Sabbath. What He did on the Sabbath were such with no remuneration to Himself.

I would not condemn, yea I would certainly approve a dairyman milking his cows on the Sabbath; it is an act of mercy -- or a nurse or doctor caring for her or his patients. There are many people who ask many questions about this. As what about working in a light plant that runs seven

days a week? Or using electricity seven days a week? I say in all these things, I do not have all the answers, but I can recommend One who does. Jesus has promised us One who will guide us into all truth. If we really want to do His will the Holy Spirit will let us know when we are out of place on the Sabbath day.

The argument that if we have divine love, even though we do not have a commandment to keep the Sabbath, and even though we do not have a Sabbath, we will keep the Lord's Day strictly as a day of rest and worship. I ask "Why?" If there is no command, then love would not constrain us to do so, for love is the fulfilling of the law. And this is the love of God that we keep His commandments. (I John 2-3) No, dear reader, we do have a command to keep the Sabbath, and if we say we love God and do not keep His commandments we are a liar. (I John 2:4)

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PART 33

Luke, Chapter 10 -- The Parable of the Good Samaritan: The How Much More Logic of Jesus

In many of the parables of Jesus He asks "How Much More?" In others it is implied as in this one.

The Jericho road was one of the most heavily traveled in all Israel. Many people including priests and Levites whose business was in Jerusalem, lived by choice in Jericho for it was the city of palm trees; had a sub-tropical climate, would be warm and comfortable when chilling winds or even snow chilled Jerusalem which had an elevation 3,800 feet higher.

Very likely the man robbed and left half-dead was a Jew. The Jews understood the command "Love thy neighbor as thyself" to mean just Jews, not aliens or strangers.

Jesus gave the parable in answer to the challenge of the lawyer who tempted Him by asking what he should do to have eternal life. And when Jesus finished His answer by saying, "And love thy neighbor as thyself" the lawyer fudged and hedged by saying, "And who is my neighbor?" And Jesus let the Samaritan answer him. "Anyone you see in need near you is your neighbor," not just a Jew.

What a stinging rebuke it must have been for Jesus to relate the account of a priest and Levite who passed up the needy man without ministering to him, a fellow-Jew! How much less would they have considered doing so had he been a Samaritan (dog). So Jesus is saying, "If a Samaritan (whom you call dogs) was good enough to stop and minister to a needy Jew, how much more should the priest and Levite, yes, and you lawyers, minister to those around you in need."

There are some who interpret this parable to mean that the good Samaritan represents Jesus. There is only one way I can see Jesus using it this way. Since He had come through Samaria and His critics had repeatedly called Him a Samaritan, He could have been throwing this back in their teeth as He often did their false accusations, by saying in effect "All right, if I, a Samaritan, am feeding the hungry and healing the sick, how much more should you be doing it?"

One wonders where the temple workers were going in such a hurry that they could not stop and minister to him. Perhaps they had speaking engagements in a Jericho synagogue that night to speak on the commandment "Love thy neighbor as thyself." To pause would make them late for their engagement.

It reminds me of a time when I pushed my car with all possible speed with safety one whole day through a blizzard that had slicked the roads with soft snow, to start a revival that night. When half-way there I began to see cars in the ditch, stalled on hills and people walking to the next filling station to get help. But I was running late, I could not possibly stop to help them. When I finally arrived at church the lights were out and the people gone. I felt utterly defeated. And quite guilty about all the people I had passed up that day who needed my help. I promised God I would not do that again.

On a busy four-lane highway, on the way to church, later, we saw a car pulled off ahead and a man standing in his sock feet with his shoes in his hand.

I stopped to see what was wrong. He wanted to go into town, pawn his shoes and get enough gas to get home. I told him to put his shoes on, I would bring him some gas. I came back shortly with two gallons and had him follow me to a station where I put enough in for him to get home on, sixty miles away. While in the station I said to him, "If you come back to the Lord He'll give you a job." (He had told me he was a backslider.) I could tell by the look on his face the shaft had gone home. He went his way and we went ours, late to church.

About a year later the phone rang. It was this young man. "Brother Dorsey, I just wanted to call you and tell you how much I appreciated what you did that night." "Why," I said, "I didn't do anything except buy you a little gas." "Oh," he said, "it wasn't just that, but you were the only one who stopped. And I wanted to tell you that I have come back to the Lord, and I have a job."

Well of course that made me feel good, but I chuckled inwardly and have done so many times since, at the trick the Lord and I pulled on the devil that night. For I hadn't had any money either, and had bought his gas on my credit card.

Wesley urged his people to, "do all the good you can, to all the people you can in all the ways you can, as long as ever you can.

Paul says "Do good unto all men especially to those who are of the household of faith. "

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PART 34

Luke, Chapter 11 -- Another How Much More Parable and a Series of Trinities

Three friends, three loaves, three ways of obtaining, three desirable foods and three cruel substitutes.

The disciples have asked Jesus to teach them to pray, after they have heard Him pray. And they remembered that the disciples of John prayed, and the disciples of the Pharisees.

In this parable Jesus shows the importunity of a desperate seeker and how he obtained what he was after.

But also in answering their request to teach them to pray He directs them to pray for the gift of the Holy Spirit as a child desires to be filled with bread, eggs or fish. And no earthly father would be so cruel, especially if he were a saved disciple of Christ as they were, to give a stone for bread, a serpent instead of a fish, or a scorpion instead of an egg.

And so He asks them a question which should give confidence to their praying, "If ye then being evil [not doing evil, but still unsanctified, the being of the evil nature would be in their hearts until Pentecost], know how to give good gifts to your children, How much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them [His children] that ask Him!" How much more lovingly, how much more willingly, how much more abundantly, how much more satisfyingly, how much more ungrudgingly and how much more enduringly!

And when the Holy Spirit is come He will teach us to pray as we could never learn any other way. For He will give us the desire to pray. He will inspire the thought to pray. He will give us a real burden to pray. He will in some situations help us to pray audibly, other times silently, and He will at times make intercession through us with groanings which cannot be uttered. (articulated)

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PART 35

Luke 13:6 -- The Barren Fig Tree The Digging Ministry Last Resort Before Judgment

How many people will object to the preacher and his message when he preaches practical holiness of life as well as heart. They will accuse, "He's too nose-y, he meddles where he has no business, he's too pointed and sharp in his preaching. He causes division. Jeremiah 48:10 says "Cursed be he that does the work of the Lord deceitfully and cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood. "

Is this not a perfect description of that preacher who deceives his people into thinking he's a strong preacher against the world, the devil and sin, but is so ambiguous in his statements, and deals in such broad generalities that no one is offended because he has kept back his sword from blood, that is, his truth hasn't touched anyone's life?

But this dresser of the vineyard says, "Let me dig around it. It is too earth-bound. My mattock will go deep enough to prune this over-extensive root system; I'll jar this tree out of its rut, its complacent ways, its dependence on past growth; I'll challenge it to put out some new growth; I'll fertilize it and see if it will bear fruit."

Should a preacher preach truth that causes division? Did Jesus? Practically every place He went with the exception of Samaria, there was a division of the people because of Him and the same is true of the apostles. Wherever there is a mixed congregation of saved and unsaved, holiness lovers and holiness rejectors, if the truth is preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, without fear or favor it will cause division. Some will love it, some will hate it; some will embrace it, some will just not face it.

This pruning of the tree, both root and branch is a very important practice in the care of fruit trees. More about it when we get to the fifteenth chapter of John.

I once heard a popular holiness preacher declare before thousands in a camp meeting, "It's not my business to tell you how to live. It's my business to tell you how to get full salvation, and the Holy Ghost will tell you how to live." He received a great chorus of amens. Is this true? Is this the only business of the minister? Is it not his business to declare "all the counsel of God?" I am impressed after reading the New Testament through more than forty times that about ninety to ninety-five per cent of the epistles and Sermon on the Mount are detailed instructions telling us how to live after we receive salvation! For instance, the beatitudes through verse 8 take us to the pure heart experience in Matthew, chapter 5 and the rest of chapter 5 and chapters 6 and 7 tell us how we are to live afterward. Or Romans, chapter 12. The first three verses deal with full salvation. The rest of that chapter and chapters 13 and 14 tell us how to live after a Christian gets his metamorphosis or transformation.

I would quickly admit that over-emphasis on ethics which neglects the heart life tends to legalism, or Phariseeism, but I think also the testimony of church history is clear, that though a church may have a very clear and scriptural statement in its discipline or manual for all the ethics of practical holiness including plain statements against worldly attire, when the preachers stop faithfully declaring it from the pulpit it floods in and inundates the church.

It takes a God-fearing humility to stand up before a congregation and bear faithful witness against worldly practices, when one would be so much better received with no resentment manifested, dealing with the great themes of redemption, propitiation, regeneration, sanctification, glorification, the second coming, the restoration of all things etc.

How many church leaders would be deeply hurt if accused of being holiness rejectors. "But," they would remonstrate, "how could that be, when we preach the doctrine and insist on the experience and profession of it?"

But we insist, if they reject the scriptural ethics of holiness including abstinence from worldly adornment, immodest clothing, and everything else coming under the heading of lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and pride of life, they are holiness rejectors.

Is "Thou shalt not steal" a command? Then so also is "Let not your adornment be that outward adornment but let it be the hidden man of the heart, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit which is in the sight of God of great price." Jesus said, "If a man love me he will keep my commandments."

Does a keeper of a vineyard or orchard pay any attention to the way his trees live? He watches them very closely to see if there is any manifestation of something contrary to healthy life. And all he has to go by is the appearance of the bark, the leaves (dress) and the fruit.

Now suppose the owner of the fig tree had gone down one day to pick some figs and he found the tree sprouting feathers, flowers, furs, jewelry and splotches of paint. I'm sure he would be astounded. But it is no more ridiculous for a fig tree to have these things than it is for a professing Christian, who is supposed to be bearing the fruit of the Spirit, which includes meekness.

For the God of all beauty yearns to beautify His people with the beauty of salvation and holiness until there is no desire, nor need for them to borrow beauty from the mineral, plant, bird or animal kingdoms. But economical, neat, clean, modest, adequate clothing of quiet color, cut and styles is not adornment.

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PART 36

Fig Leaves -- Matthew 21:19

Fig leaves symbolize self-righteousness as this is what Adam and Eve used seeking to cover their nakedness when they had forfeited their robes of light. But their wise Creator knew the fig leaves were utterly insufficient and with a blood sacrifice furnished them with the skins of animals. All human righteousness that does not come through the blood of Jesus, God's sacrifice for sin, is just as insufficient as their aprons of fig leaves. Fig trees which bear nothing but leaves are symbolic of those Christians who do not bear true fruit of the Spirit, and are headed for judgment.

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PART 37

Luke, Chapter 15 -- The Three-fold Parable of the Return of the Backslider

This parable teaches many great truths. For instance, quite a message is conveyed on "The Adequacy of Divine Love." The love of Jesus the Good Shepherd was adequate to hunt and find the lost sheep and bring it home. The love of the Holy Spirit working through the church (woman) is adequate to find the lost silver and bring it back. And the love of God the Father is adequate to receive the Prodigal Son and restore him to sonship again.

It has been dealt with as three types of sinners. The sheep the bewildered sinner, the silver the unconscious sinner, and the son the willful sinner. But none of these could be called sinners who had never been saved unless it refers all the way back to "as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive!" For the sheep was one time in the fold, the silver was one time with its mates, and the son, one time in his father's house.

If a person would ignore the sheep and the son and deal only with the silver I can see where one could say, "See he was totally dead, insensible, he could do nothing about his own salvation. It was a sovereign act of another that did it all." But to this I would reply, "The silver was just as insensible after its return as it was before." But Jesus picked these three symbols from the mineral kingdom, the animal kingdom and the human kingdom to teach basic truth about people who stray and we must draw very fine and careful lines not to teach false doctrine from them.

Death in the Bible never means insensibility to the soul. When scriptures sound like it, they are referring to the body only. Death as it applies to the human race means separation. The soul that is dead in trespasses and sins is separated from the life that is in Christ Jesus but he is not insensible. He may be unaware that he can be alive in Christ, but he is not insensible. I have heard men use a dead body as an illustration of a dead sinner, or a dead saint crucified with Christ. But whoever takes this to the point of insensibility is going too far. "I sleep but my heart waketh" is more nearly the truth. I was a backslider one time, but I certainly was not insensible as a corpse. I would sit in a dead church that had starved me to death spiritually, and when the songs of Wesley and Watts were sung, something would bubble from within to choke me up.

A dead body will not react if kicked or abused, but neither will it react if asked to witness, sing or give an offering. The most truly alive person there is is one who is truly filled with the Holy Spirit, and most sensitive to injustice and slights, especially if done toward our wonderful Lord Jesus.

This parable was spoken in response to the Pharisees' criticism of Jesus for receiving sinners and eating with them.

I have seen all three types. The bewildered, the unconscious and the willful. Let's look at the difference between these three symbols.

The Sheep. The sheep had a memory. It knew there was a fold and a flock and a faithful shepherd. It had a will, which was why it was lost. Had it not exercised its will in the wrong direction it would not have been lost; it would still have been with the flock. Animals do have wills. Anyone who thinks otherwise should try to work a mule! I saw a small insect exercise its will last summer when it fell into my berry pail while I was picking blackberries. I broke off a dead weed for it to climb out on, for the sides were too slick for it to climb. At first it whirled to flee from the weed. Then it stopped, deliberately turned around, climbed up on the stick and was lifted out. But while the sheep was willing to come back to the fold it did not know the way.

And so the Lord is not teaching insensibility but inability, in those who are confused. While it had the will to come it was bewildered and no doubt exhausted. What it could not do the Good Shepherd did. Did it have any part in its salvation. Yes indeed! It answered when He called its name. And it submitted to Him to be carried back to the fold.

And I have seen unsaved people like the silver. It was a type of the soul with an image and superscription of its creator, but was without value for it was out of circulation and out of the hands of anyone who could value it. But as soon as it is recovered it regains its value.

I have seen unsaved people who acted like they would like to be saved. They would come to church every night of a revival, listen to the songs, the preaching, weep through the altar calls, but it took super-human effort of the church and the Holy Spirit to get them to move.

And I have known many like the prodigal son, who knew where father's house was, knew they were lost, knew the way home, and to me this is striking. The Good Shepherd came to the sheep that was lost, the woman to the coin, but no one came to the Son, for he knew what he must do, where he must go, and what he must say. And so God does not do for us what we can do for ourselves.

I am afraid a great many prodigals are waiting for the shepherd to come and carry them back, or for conviction like they had the first time, but they may never have it. If they will come just like the Prodigal Son, they will find a warm welcome, and adequate forgiving love to bring them back to Father's table again. The story of the Prodigal Son surely refutes the "accept-believe" doctrine of the modern mass-evangelism movement.

It goes something like this. Jesus did it all. He bought you and saved you at Calvary. He has done all there is to do. Since we are not saved by works but by faith alone, all one must do is look up and accept what He has done and one is saved. Let's look at this in the light of the Prodigal Son and other New Testament Scriptures. Suppose one of those preachers would go down to the hog sty and tell the Prodigal Son, "Now Son, Father's house is all ready, the feast is waiting, all you have to do is believe you are in Father's house and you will be there." He might shut his eyes, hold his nose, stop his ears and intone a million times, "I believe I'm back in Father's house," but he would still be in the pig pen. Paul says godly sorrow works repentance unto salvation -- no salvation without repentance, no repentance without godly sorrow.

The false appeal of those who say "believe and accept" is based almost entirely on one verse "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God." But the context reveals He was talking about devout Jews whose sacrifices would have been made, who needed just one thing, to believe on their Messiah. Even the wicked Jews who crucified Christ, were commanded by Peter to repent.

The only people Jesus saved by His death, were the Old Testament saints (and they still had to believe on Him when He went down and preached to them after His crucifixion), plus all the irresponsibles of all ages such as innocent babes and idiots.

The Bible does not teach that we are saved by His death. We are reconciled by His death but we are saved by His life. A dying Christ made provision for our salvation but it takes a living Christ to save us.

The burden of the modern preacher trying to get sinners to "accept" Christ does not have a precedent in the New Testament. John the Baptist preached repent, Jesus preached repent, so did Peter to Jews, and Paul on Mars Hill, preaching to Gentiles declared, "God now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." And to the Corinthians, "Come out from among them and be ye separate and touch not the unclean thing and I [God] will receive you!" So that His burden was not

to get people to accept Christ, but to get them to repent and forsake sin, and the old crowd, so He could accept them.

Another thing about the Prodigal Son. He did not come home with a shoat under one arm, and a feed trough under the other. He knew those things would be abomination to his father. No, he left the old country, the old crowd, the old unclean associates, the old occupation, and came home a pauper with a contrite prayer of confession and repentance on his lips and was forgiven and restored to his former place.

For me to tell sinners to accept Christ without repenting and forsaking sin, may be not only futile but fatal. He saves us from our sins not in them.

We do not find Christ by praying, "Lord, if you'll save me, I'll give up my sins. " That is not God's way. God says, "Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts and let him return to the Lord and he will have mercy upon him and to our God and he will abundantly pardon." Isaiah 55:7

Good advice fell on my ears when I hitch-hiked to a certain Bible school to attend their mid-term revival for the purpose of seeking to come back to God.

Rev. John Thomas, the Spirit-filled Welch evangelist said, "From the moment you start seeking God, start living like you think a sanctified person ought to live."

"But," some would object, "does not the Scripture say, 'Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God?'" Yes, it does and it also says, "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." And this heart faith is not possible until repentance. See the parable of the two sons whose father said to each, "Go work today in my vineyard." The first (representing the Pharisees) said, "I go sir," and went not. The second (representing the publicans and harlots) said, "I will not," but repented and went. "Which," said Jesus "did the will of his father?" They said, "The second." And Jesus answered, "And I say unto you, the publicans and harlots shall go into the kingdom of God before you because they repented at the preaching of John, but you when you had heard him would not repent that afterward you might believe him."

This shows that repentance must precede saving faith. Any faith which does not include obedience is spurious. The same Greek word, *peitho*, is translated both believe and obey in the New Testament and the same Greek word is translated unbelief and disobedience. Faith without obedience is presumption.

But there is another representation in this chapter the elder brother, pouting, jealous and sulking who typified the Pharisees. They were jealous of the sinners who were eating with Jesus, just as the older brother was jealous of his younger brother eating at his father's table. While he was still on the property he was certainly out of fellowship with his father, and was casting a painful burden on his father's heart when he would have been rejoicing, as the older brother should have been for the return of the Prodigal.

Whatever else the fifteenth chapter of Luke teaches, it does not teach that salvation is a sovereign act of God, independent of human will, and it does not teach that it is a human work that can be accomplished without the interposition of divine power. But there is another, integrated interpretation that fits better than dividing the chapter into three parables and that is that the sheep, the silver and the son are different phases of the same truth showing lost men's three great inabilities in the matter of finding the happiness for which the heart hungers. The sheep shows man's philosophical and intellectual inability. The sheep's powers were insufficient to make a map that would guide it to the fold. And God has declared that when in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For God hath made foolish the wisdom of this world. And all the most noble and grand ideas of Aristotle, Plato and all the other great teachers of the world were never sufficient to show one sinner how to get to God.

The lost silver shows man's physical and natural inability to bring himself to God. And thus the vanities of all the humanistic religions. Consider all the sincere things people do in the flesh to try to restore themselves to God's presence and fellowship -- all the mortifications of the flesh, even giving their bodies to be burned but totally ineffective.

And the lost son shows the self-defeating futility of Hedonism. Eat, drink and be merry, says the philosophy of the age. If abundance of finance and the friends it will buy would help a man find happiness the Prodigal Son should have found it. This part of the parable touched a very raw nerve with the Pharisees for they had evolved the idea that to be rich meant you were righteous, and to be poor meant you were wicked. How it must have enraged them when Jesus told about a rich man going to Hell and a beggar going into Abraham's bosom. This was the philosophy of Job's three friends (?) whose words God said were not right.

And of course where the sheep knew not and the coin could not the older brother would not. And the older brother shows the insufficiency of self-righteousness. "I never at any time transgressed thy commandment." Yet he was not in fellowship with his father, and would not go in. What an indictment of the Pharisees this was by our Lord. It was exercising his will in the right direction along with the knowledge of where to go, and what to do that brought the Prodigal Son home. And while the older brother had the knowledge, he exercised his will in the wrong direction and was not in simply because he would not or would not.

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PART 38

Luke, Chapter 16 -- The Parable of the Rich Man Who Had a Steward, A Real Life Account and the True Account of a Rich Man Who Was a Steward

The theme of this sixteenth chapter is stewardship.

How different are the philosophies surrounding us today. "What's yours is mine and what's mine is my own." "What's yours is mine if I can get it." "What's yours is mine and if you won't give it to me I'll sue you at law to get it." "What's yours is mine and I'll get it if I have to foment a revolution and overthrow the government to do so." The philosophy of Jesus says, "All things

belong to God; the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof. You are His stewards." We must use wisely and multiply the means entrusted to us and give an account when we stand before the God of the whole earth.

Between the parable of the rich man who had an unjust steward and the true account of the rich man who was an unjust steward we find ten fundamentals of stewardship. We would do well to take prayerful heed to what Jesus is saying here and let these things sink deeply into our hearts; put them into practice that we do not suffer the fate of him who cried out from the torments of hell for one drop of water.

1. His lord commended the unjust steward because he had done wisely. What had he done? Aware that his stewardship was soon to end he immediately began to make friends through the use of his powers as a steward to achieve temporal security for himself. So that when he was put out of his stewardship they would receive him into their houses. His earthly lord did not commend his injustice, but his wisdom. And then Jesus directs a very serious indictment against the people of God, "Verily I say unto you the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light. " That is, they know how to use worldly wisdom to provide worldly security for themselves for this world. But the children of God are so remiss in using wisdom to make the unrighteous mammon provide security for them in an eternal habitation!

2. Jesus is saying to us, "Take this unrighteous mammon, filthy lucre, or money that has been used for all types of sin, bribery, gambling, etc. , and invest it in such a way that you will have friends in the eternal habitation waiting to receive you when you arrive. And one way it provides us security is that where our investments are, that's where our heart will be and that is where we will expend most effort to go. A dollar invested in gasoline or groceries or gadgetry is soon gone and forgotten with little to show for it. But invested in a gospel tract or a Testament to give to someone, or other good solid literature, may be multiplying and bearing fruit for years to come.

3. Little things are accurate indicators of our integrity as stewards. A tree trunk or light pole does not reveal the direction of the wind, but a straw or blade of grass does. He who wastes pennies will lose dollars in dividends, but he who invests them in God's kingdom will reap rich rewards now and hereafter.

4. Verse 11. If you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon. Faithfully investing in God's work. Faithfully bringing all our tithes into the storehouse. We can be generous in our offerings after we tithe, but tithing is not a sign of generosity. For it is not ours to give. It is the Lord's already. We can be generous only in offerings. I am not expecting to see someone who refuses to tithe have the glory of God shining on the countenance. Who will commit to your trust true riches?

5. Verse 12. And if you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? In this world the best and oldest and most mature of us are still children in God's sight, but when we get a body like unto His with the marvelous improvement of mind and wisdom and understanding that will come, we shall achieve majority, and receive that inheritance

unto which we were born again reserved in heaven for us, incorruptible that shall never pass away.

6. Verse 13. Stewardship of our heart's loyal service. No servant can serve two masters. He will love one and hate the other or hold to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and mammon. If the cynical proverb of the world, "Every man has his price," is true, then God has no servants. But I'm glad it is not true. There is not enough gold in Fort Knox nor enough greenbacks in all the U. S. mints to buy a man who has truly died to sin, the world, the flesh and the devil, and Christ is truly his Master. Elisha is a case in point.

7. Verse 14. Covetousness is the avowed enemy of stewardship. And the Pharisees who were covetous heard all these things and they derided Him. Why, covetousness wants to turn every steward into a miser. No wonder the scriptures say bluntly, "Covetousness is idolatry."

And the tenth commandment, "Thou shalt not covet," is not left to last because it was least but because it was basic and fundamental and underlying all the rest. If we transgress any of the other nine, it is likely that covetousness was at the heart of it. A priest who listened to confessions for thirty years testified that in all that time he never heard anyone confess to covetousness! Yet it is one of the most common widespread, ubiquitous sins known to mankind.

8. Verse 15. The two yardsticks. What God sees on the inside, what men see on the outside. And, what is highly esteemed among men, (unregenerate, and covetous) is abomination (Gr. bdlugma from bdlusso, meaning a stink, disgusting, detestable, abhorrent idolatry) in the sight of God. Just think of all the vain things that are highly esteemed today. Voluptuous pulchritude in women, ostentation in architecture, especially in church buildings, gaudiness in dress, luxurious ease in living, sponging off the public treasury, gaining influence and fame by lying, deceit and treachery, a mink coat costing a quarter of a million dollars, a race horse selling for a million dollars, an overgrown boy signing a multimillion dollar contract to play major league ball, even desecrating the Sabbath Day. These are all abomination to God. What athlete could excel in any sport in America today if he did not have good legs? What horse would be valuable if he did not have exceptional strength? But the Scriptures teach that "God does not delight in the strength of a horse and takes no pleasure in the legs of a man." (Ps. 147:10) What a difference in the human and divine measurement of values!

9. Salvation is (like the last judgment will be) on an individual basis. Verse 16. God will not judge people enmasse neither does He save them thus. Every man presses into the kingdom of God for himself. Every man must confess his own sins, every man must repent for himself. Every man must make his own wrongs right. Every man must receive Christ as his own Savior personally for himself.

10. Verse 18. Stewardship of our human affections. Whosoever putteth away his wife and marrieth another committeth adultery and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.

Some people speak of falling in love as though it were a predestinated fate from which there was no alternative. The Scripture says, "Set your affection on things above" showing that we

have control of what our affections are set on. It is very likely that the rich man who went to hell had been involved in divorce and remarriage for it was very common among the wealthy of that day. It may be that like Herod and many people today it discouraged his repenting to get right with God when he heard the truth.

But if we will examine carefully what is said about the second rich man we will see that he failed in every one of the ten principles of stewardship. May God help you and me not to fail.

Those who would say the story of the second rich man is a parable are in my estimation not aware of the true nature of a parable.

Jesus did not say, "Hear another parable of a rich man." He said, "There was a certain rich man." Josephus tells us his name was Dives. Jesus refrains, because what He had to say about him was not good. He says, "There was a certain beggar named Lazarus," and I am not about to believe otherwise. This is enough to show it was not a parable. But being a parable does not make a thing untrue, but rather enforces the truth for Jesus never used anything in a parable which was not true and known to be true.

Instead of seeking to relieve our fear of hell by denying that there is such a place of torment, let us rather forsake our sins, confess them, be saved from them, live a clean, upright and holy life, and we need not be afraid of it.

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PART 39

Luke 17:3-10 -- Faith and Faithfulness

This is indeed a difficult parable until we discover two words: Faith and faithfulness. They are the keys. Faithfulness is our serving God. Faith causes God to serve us. This parable was spoken to the disciples in answer to their face to face prayer, "Lord increase our faith." Jesus is saying to them, the foundation for faith is faithfulness. If you want faith, obey, do all that is commanded you to do. Let's paraphrase the story and see if it sheds any light on this.

Verse 8. "Make ready and serve me until I am satisfied, and then I will serve you until you are satisfied." Do you see that tree being plucked up and planted in the sea? Who did it? God did? Why did He do it? Because He had a servant who was so faithful in doing everything God wanted done. Let me repeat: Faithfulness is our serving God fully, totally and completely. Faith is God serving us. Being an unprofitable servant is the highest standard that some teachers teach for the Christian. If that is the best then we shall all hear, "And cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. " (Gr. word achreios is the same.)

But if we, after we have done all that God commanded us to do, will stand on His promises and believe God, it will open channels for His unlimited power to start flowing to do in a few seconds what we could not have done in years. So that we are not unprofitable. The unprofitable servant was a duty servant, doing only what he had to do to not be found in disobedience. But the profitable servant is the love slave, going above and beyond the call of duty, seeing the enormous

things that need to be done, standing on the foundation of his faithfulness, he believes God to do the impossible and asks great things of God, expects great things from God, and sees mighty works done by God.

A few years ago a farm couple was attending the church I pastored. He had \$6,000 worth of soybeans in the field. It rained all through September, October, November and December until he could not combine. In January three cold nights froze a crust on the ground and he started combining. As Hildred and I called one day while he was combining, we visited with his wife briefly and as we finished praying I glanced out the window and saw it snowing. "Lord," I cried, "Send this snow to New Orleans; Earl Mount wants to combine beans." My wife and I were both surprised at what I had said. The second day after, the Cincinnati Enquirer carried a picture story of teenagers making snowballs in New Orleans -- the first time in ten years. And Earl told me that it snowed up to two inches within two miles on each side of him, but no snow fell on his bean fields, and he combined them all.

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PART 40

Luke 18:1 -- The Widow and the Unjust Judge

This parable has often been explained as referring to the Christian church. How could it apply to us since we are not to seek vengeance on anyone? But this should be an encouragement to the Christian to pray as one of our Lord's "How much mores."

As we have previously stated, this refers to the widow church, the Jewish church who clamored for the death of her Husband in Pilate's judgment hall and spread a lie about His resurrection, and refused to believe He was their Messiah.

But did their Husband cast them off forever because of this? No, He did not but they have been suffering in exile ever since, all over the world, going to unjust judges seeking vengeance on their adversaries, and it is very slow in coming. But as the unjust judge finally answered the widow's cry, "How much more" will God, the just Judge of all the earth avenge His Own elect which cry unto Him day and night though He bear long with them? "I tell you He will avenge them speedily. " The day is coming when all the nations of the world will gather against Israel and Jerusalem is going to be destroyed, and many people will die, and those nations will plan to exterminate Israel from the face of the earth. But the God who preserved them from Abraham to Christ, delivered them from wicked Haman and from the Arab nations in 1967; when it looks like they are going to be annihilated at last will come riding on a white charger out of Heaven, coming with His saints after the wedding, and will face the armies of the Antichrist and destroy five out of six of them with the sword that goes out of His mouth, until the blood will run up to the horses' bridles and out for 200 miles. "And He will avenge them speedily." And they (Jews) shall look on Him whom they have pierced, and shall mourn for Him as one mourneth for his only Son. Read Zechariah, chapters 12, 13 and 14 for a more complete picture.

Since God assures us He will answer the prayer of the widow church for vengeance "How much more" should we be encouraged to believe He will answer the prayer of His bride and wife for mercy, as we pray for His enemies and ours, etc.

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PART 41

Luke 18:17 -- Receiving Christ as a Little Child

Statisticians tell us that nineteen out of twenty people who find Christ, do so before they reach age twenty. And only one in a hundred thousand Christians found Him past age seventy. The conclusion was that very few people change any habits for the better past the age of thirty-five.

The wise man said, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth while the evil days come not."

Contrary to many intellectuals the gospel of salvation through Christ is not so complex that one must be an adult to grasp it. I can testify that I first met Christ when only six years old, and either one or two weeks later, received the Holy Spirit, the most outstanding witness being that of overflowing perfect love. There have personally come under my observation hundreds of children from the age of three on up who have come seeking Jesus as their Savior and have not been disappointed.

As a result of my age -- six meeting with Him, I was saved from cigarettes before I smoked the first one, and from alcoholic drinks before I ever saw one, much less tasted one. How much better to come to Christ early and have the life saved as well as the soul. How much better to have a mind like a fertile unplanted field, to receive with meekness the engrafted Word, and have the memory filled with the songs of Zion, the Scriptures, the happy testimonies of saints, the thrilling memories of revivals and praise meetings, than all the sordid scenes of sin and shame. And these would come up in future years to bring a sense of shame and regret.

The evil days are coming for those who do not find Christ in their youth. The evil days of an unwise marriage, an immoral occupation, sinful habits deeply ingrained, wrecked health, a calloused conscience, a hard heart, blinded eyes, a mind damaged by drugs or alcohol, a grieved Spirit, an angry God, an untimely death, a Christless grave, and a hopeless eternity.

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PART 42

Luke 21:35 -- His Coming Is With the Swiftmess of a Snare

My six brothers and I all ran traplines as boys. I began when I was seven. We also set snares. The first winter my two snares caught five rabbits. The year I was sixteen, a junior, I had several snares and caught fifty-five rabbits. The proceeds from my trapline bought many of my school supplies. The snares were homemade with carpenter's chalkline, a green sassafras pole, a forked stake, and a circle of small stakes; a flattened stick rested with one end in the fork of the

forked stake and the other on the trigger baited with a slice of apple. With a lasso on the end of the string around the circle of small stakes. When Mr. Rabbit would bite down on the apple the snare would spring, the lasso would encircle his neck and probably break it. It was so swift he never knew what happened. It would spring as quickly as a bow shoots an arrow-probably in the twinkling of an eye. Jesus said His coming would be as a "snare on all them that dwell on the whole earth." It sounds like it is going to be sudden indeed -- no time then to repent, make restitution, or anything else. No wonder Jesus said, "Be ye therefore ready for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh. "

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PART 43

Luke 22:31 -- Sifted as Wheat

Someone has well observed that when God sifts us He rids of chaff to leave pure wheat, but when Satan sifts, he wishes to destroy the wheat and leave nothing but chaff.

The New English Bible renders, "Lead us not into temptation" Put us not to the test! this is a very poor rendering and is not consistent with their own rendering in James, chapter one, "The trial of your faith" they render "The testing of your faith."

When the Scriptures say, "God did tempt Abraham," it means He tested him, for God does not tempt any man to sin, but He does test us. Our faith is going to be tried. God tells us, "The trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." I Peter 1:7.

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PART 44

John 1:51 -- Son of Man

This is the earliest in any gospel that Jesus calls Himself the Son of man.

If He had not been the Son of God, calling Himself the Son of man would have sounded trite and foolish. But being the Son of God it is a glorious mystery. Great and good men, for centuries have been singing and writing about the kenosis, the incarnation. Filial titles of Jesus referring to His humanity occur 120 times in the New Testament, and those referring to His deity 125 times.

One of the greatest of the theologians says, "Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness. God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

There are many reasons why God came in the flesh. One of the greatest is that He might be both a "merciful and faithful high priest." If He had not come in the flesh, He might have known what it would be like, but it would have been very difficult for men to believe that He would

know. But now that He walked in the "likeness of sinful flesh," and was "tempted in all points like as we are," we know and all men can much more easily believe that He knows.

This scribe never feels both so inspired and so inadequate as when attempting to write about it. Here are two sonnets on the subject.

The Kenosis
(Two Sonnets)

Worshipped by angels, by prophet and sage,
True Son of man, He was God without age.
Who could encase in a hummingbird's heart
Yon flying eagle and not lose a part?
Yet, (emptied) Logos -- Jehovah His name
Humbled Himself to a wee baby's frame.
No history tells it -- for no history can,
He was the Christ -- child-divine Mystery-man!
Calm in the temple, a precocious lad
Stultified doctors -- they simply went mad!*

Now see Him weep as a kindhearted friend,
Then boldly speak a man's death to an end.
Though thousands touched Him and drew many more
Yet they would never exhaust all His store.

Demons, diseases or death's gloomy pall,
Tempest and storm, He was Master of all.
Virtue flowed from Him in fishboat and field;
Blind, deaf and dumb and the leper He healed.
Death could not touch Him until His own hour,
Then could not hold One of such pristine power.
Now, He exalted to High Heaven's throne
Prays for His church and is Chief Cornerstone.
When earth is pure and His City comes down
He shall possess to all kingdoms the crown.
Then He shall call to His faithful and true
"Come, Love, My throne I am sharing with you.
-- JFD

*Gr. existemi -- drive out of wit, insane.

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PART 45
John 3:8 -- The Wind Bloweth Where It Listeth

Thou hearest the sound thereof but canst not tell whither it comes or whither it goes, so is everyone that is born of the Spirit. This does not mean that the Spirit blows on everyone to give them spiritual life, even as the natural wind blows impartially on everyone. For the Spirit will impart life only to those who repent and believe. But this refers to His invisible life-giving power. We see this figure used in Ezekiel also where the wind was commanded to come and "breathe upon these slain."

But it was not the natural wind. For the natural wind had been blowing on them many times and they were still dead. Those who say the spirit of man is simply the air he breathes are considerably off the mark. If this were so, then to have the breath knocked out of us would be the same as being dead, and all that would be necessary to resurrect a dead person would be to pump his lungs full of air. And of course neither of these is true.

When God breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of lives (Heb.) God was not breathing natural air. For God is a Spirit and spirits do not breathe air. But breathing into him the breath of lives, of spirit, soul, and body Adam expanded his lungs and breathed air for himself.

The most common symbols for the Holy Spirit in the New Testament are wind, water, wine, fire and oil. Each shows some particular and peculiar work of the Spirit.

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PART 46

Well of Living Water Springing Up -- John 4:10-14

Jesus refers here to the Holy Spirit as an artesian well in the heart. Among other marvelous things about an artesian well is that it is self-cleansing. A cistern accepts and stores any dust, dirt, chaff, sediment, corncobs, trash paper, and anything else that comes its way. This cistern is typical of humanistic religions of whatever concept, creed or culture. And how stagnant and stinking a cistern can become. I used to help clean out the cistern that sat by our big livestock barn. It was enough to turn the stomach. But an artesian well! Oh! It is self-cleansing. Any trash, dust, dirt, paper or other foreign matter is immediately expelled in the overflow, and from deep in the heart of the earth come inexhaustible supplies of fresh water to replenish what flows out. We observed one of the most magnificent examples of this at Silver Springs, Florida. And Jesus is promising those who ask just such a spiritual artesian well.

God laments over Israel, recorded in Jeremiah 2:13 to this very point. "My people have committed two evils. They have forsaken Me the Fountain of Living Waters and have hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."

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PART 47

John 3:14 -- Jesus As a Serpent

As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness even so must the Son of Man be lifted up.

The story of the brazen serpent is an amazing story. The Israelites had murmured and God had punished them by sending fiery serpents among them biting them until many died. Then God told Moses to make a brazen or brass serpent upon a pole. Newly cast it would be the appearance of fire. Whatever Israelites looked there in faith would be healed of their snakebites.

Jehovah of the Old Testament who told them to do this was looking ahead to Calvary when in the flesh, He Himself would be hanging on a pole, the cross. Why is this? Why not a lamb on an altar? Why a serpent? Is that not a symbol of the devil? Is that not a symbol of sin? That is just the point exactly. Paul says, "God hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." Jesus had no sin of His Own, but in Gethsemane the load of the whole world's sin fell on Him as was prophesied, "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. . . . He bore their iniquity. . . . He bore the sin of many. . . ." (Is. 53) And I Peter 2:24, He bore our sins in His Own body to the tree, that we being dead to sin might live unto righteousness by whose stripes we were healed.

Jesus became the representative of sin. He became the representative of the world's worst sinner; He became the personification of sin; yet He did not sin Himself nor become a sinner. But think of all the ways He identified Himself with the sinner between Gethsemane and Calvary.

1. The crown of thorns. The thorns came on earth as a curse. He was the King of curses.
2. Hanging on a tree. "Cursed is everyone that hangeth in a tree. " (Gal. 3:13.)
3. The Spittle. This would have made Him ceremonially unclean for seven days.
4. Numbered with the transgressors. Made His grave with the wicked.
5. Stripped of His garments. Nakedness is a type of sin.
6. The Judgment Hall. Ceremonially disqualified from eating the passover. When He Himself was become the Passover for the whole world.
7. He became the world's scapegoat -- the world's sin offering.

Because this serpent on a pole represents healing, the American Medical Association has adopted it for their symbol.

Sadly, Israel later made an idol of that brazen serpent and worshipped it. Hezekiah called it (Nehushtan) a piece of brass and destroyed it. Just outside St. George's Hotel in Old Jerusalem is, or was in 1969 a sign, "Nehushtan Brass Works" -- the same word Hezekiah used.

When the Israelites looked at the serpent on the pole they could realize that the serpent was now lifeless and harmless, and so Jesus took our sins and the "old man" of sin and nailed them to the cross with Him there, and we looking in faith can see not only our sins lifeless and harmless

and the old man crucified with Him there, but we can see the One who rose again and saves us by His life.

How often have we heard the expression "John 3:16 is the great love gift of the Bible." God so loved that He gave His only begotten Son. But a great many forget that two members of the Trinity made a love gift at Calvary. While God was loving the world and giving His Son to make it possible that "whosoever believeth should not perish but have everlasting life" at the same time "Christ loved the church and gave himself for it that he might sanctify it." (Eph. 5:23.)

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PART 48

John 6:53 -- Eating the Flesh and Drinking the Blood of the Son of God

This saying of Jesus has caused much confusion in the history of the Christian church and is back of a wide divergence today. It sounds like Jesus is saying that we must eat His actual human flesh and actually drink His blood, I am in favor of taking the Bible literally every place it is possible when the Lord's own interpretation and prayerful sanctified common sense does not forbid it. But our Lord's own words do forbid us to take this literally. The Jews were amazed and strove among themselves at it, and His own disciples murmured at it. But Jesus very plainly shows that He was not talking about His own natural flesh and blood when He said, "What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before," do you think My natural flesh and blood would be available to you then? I am not talking about My natural flesh and blood, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing, the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life, and they shall judge you at the last day." So then it is His Word that He wishes us to eat and drink that we may have eternal life. At least one disciple understood it thus, for when Jesus asked the twelve -- "Will you also go away?" Peter answered, "To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

Taking communion is no substitute for what Jesus is saying here. I am a firm believer in observing the Lord's supper. Wesley records many instances of penitents receiving assurance of sins forgiven, while observing the Lord's supper by looking past the emblems to the Lamb of God whose broken body and shed blood made atonement for their sins. Many sick people have been healed at the same time, but it is no substitute for the Scriptures, nor searching them, delighting ourselves in God's Word and meditating in it day and night.

Some have tried to take it literally by praying over bread and fermented wine and claiming it was turned into the very body and blood of the Lord. This is a delusion. Fermented wine could never be even a type of the blood of Jesus, since fermentation is corruption and Jesus' blood is incorruptible, i.e., not subject to corruption.

We have striking proof of this on the island of Timor during the great revival of recent times in Indonesia. Some of the poor and devout who wanted very much to observe the Lord's supper were led to pray over the water of a certain spring -- not to turn it into the blood of Jesus, but to turn it into sweet wine. And it was. Dr. Karl Koch's book *The Indonesian Revival*

documents this, and G. T. Bustin, and Helen Mooshian who were there at different times later confirmed it. And what was left over did not ferment.

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PART 49

John 7:12 -- He That Followeth Me Shall Not Walk in Darkness But Shall Have the Light of Life

Darkness, the absence of light in the natural world is negative, nil, nothing. Darkness in the spiritual world is absence of light plus the presence of evil and error.

If we turn from Him to walk in our own way we immediately walk in the darkness of our own shadow. Jesus calls Himself the Light of the world. Satan is called the prince of darkness. John the beloved uses the same metaphor in the first chapter of his first epistle when he says, "This then is the message we have heard of him. . . that God is light and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness we lie and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, We have fellowship one with another [we and God and we and our fellow Christian], and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

It is amazing how those people who insist on a sinning religion lift one verse out of this chapter, explaining it contrary to the whole context, choose verse eight instead of verse six. If their interpretation of verse eight is correct then the rest of the chapter does not make sense. We understand that when John is saying "If we say we have no sin," he was addressing those Gnostics, whose errors he sought to refute, who were great pretenders to knowledge, to the highest degrees of the divine illumination, and the nearest communion with the fountain of holiness, while their manners were excessively corrupt. (Clarke)

If we understand that John meant by "we," we as natural born sons of the first Adam then everything else in the chapter fits. Any unregenerate person who says they have no sin to be cleansed from lies and does not the truth. Any professing Christian who says he has fellowship with God and walks in sin is a liar; these are two sides of the same coin.

Daniel was another example of a pure, holy man who classified himself with sinners. His worst enemies testified, "There is no error or fault in him." "If we trap him, if we find fault it will have to be in something pertaining to his God." Yet when he prays his intercessory prayer for Israel (chapter nine) he uses the plural pronoun and agonizes, "We have sinned, we have not believed thy prophets." Yet he could not possibly have been talking about himself, for it was because he did believe the prophecy of Jeremiah that he was praying that prayer in Babylon. But truly wisdom is justified of all her children whether it be carnal or spiritual.

So John takes up this thought again in the third chapter of his epistle when he says, "He that is born of God does not commit sin, for His seed remaineth in him and he cannot sin because he is born of God. "This is saying no more and no less than to say a truthful man cannot tell a lie, for he would not be a truthful man if he did, and an honest man cannot steal for he would not be honest if he did. If the child of God must sin every day in word, thought and deed, then John does not know what he is talking about, for he says this is how we can tell the children of God from the children

of the devil, for the children of God work righteousness and are righteous even as He is righteous and the children of the devil are committing sin and this is how we know them apart. For the man who says there is no such thing as living above sin or the man who said "there is nothing to this heartfelt religion," the answer of the old black saint is equally applicable, "As far as you knows they haint."

The "West Virginia Wild Man" told me he did not know whether there was an Atlantic Ocean or not as he had never seen it. This was a degree of unbelief I have never met before. At the time I talked to him I had not seen it either, except with the eye of faith, but I firmly believed there was one because I believed my geography book and my teachers. Now that I have seen it, smelled it, tasted it, felt it, handled it, and flown across it eight times I know there is one. I am also reminded of the dear old saint who said to me, "Brother Dorsey, you don't really believe a man landed on the moon do you?" I said, "Why sister, I most certainly do. Do you think the United States government could pull a hoax of that magnitude and the Russians would let them get away with it?"

Neither do I believe the apostles could have testified to and preached salvation from all sin, as they did and sinned e very day in word, thought and deed, and their enemies would have let them get away with it! Never!

One of the arguments that hinders many people from believing in deliverance from all sin is the idea that since we are surrounded by sin and sinners and see it and hear it we cannot help sinning in our thoughts. I answer, "Did Jesus sin every day in His thoughts?" He had to think about sin. That's why He came from heaven. He preached against many kinds of evil. But we need to realize there is a vast difference between evil thoughts and thoughts of evil. An evil thought comes out of an evil heart (Mark, chapter 7) and defiles a man. But the thoughts of evil that come to pure hearts every day from outside and are dealt with as a Christian should: They are not welcomed, they are not invited, they are not dwelt on with pleasure, but rejected as foreign and undesirable; they are not sin.

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PART 50

John 10:1-28 -- The Good Shepherd, the Lambs, the Sheep and the Sheepfold

He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. In verse nine Jesus says, "I am the Door." Not a door but the door. No, all religions are not equally good. No, all religions do not lead to the same place. If Jesus were not all He said He was, then He was an incorrigible bigot. But I believe He was all He said He was. He said, "No man cometh to the Father, but by me."

Two Moslems were asked in Jerusalem by one of our tour group members -- "How long have you been praying?"

"Eighty-five years. "

"Have you gotten an answer yet?"

"No, but we're still hoping?"

Why is this? They worship the God of Abraham. They do not worship idols. They receive no answer because they do not come through Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, man's only Advocate with the Father.

Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice. "

My last flock of sheep were just across a four-lane highway from a neighbor's flock. My sheep were well-fed. His were not. Mine were healthy and free from parasites. His were not. Mine were in good flesh, his were poor. When I called my sheep, they would all come. His would come as far as they could until the fence stopped them. I felt sorry for them. When he called his sheep, mine paid no attention. A healthy sheep comes only to its master. A sick sheep will follow almost anyone.

"All that ever came before me were thieves and robbers." (Verse 8) Jesus did not mean the Patriarchs and prophets. But He meant all false prophets and christs professing to be the door.

Some other similarities between sheep and God's true people:

1. They are clean by nature. They are not externally sheep and internally swine. They like clean bedding places. They do not like to walk in mire. They do not appreciate fouled feed or drink. My sheep were never offered tobacco. I'm sure they would have refused it. They were never offered beer. I'm sure they would have sniffed and turned away in disgust.

2. Sheep are not popular in farm programs. Though the experts say that in many areas sheep are the most profitable livestock a farmer can raise, they are sold last at sales, considered last in pastures, feed programs and shelters. And so God's people have very few if any legislators considering them in the halls of Congress or state legislatures but we are coming to the front some day when the Good Shepherd takes over all the kingdoms of the world.

3. Sheep need fences. When the earth was young and shepherds and flocks were few and far between this was not necessary but it is today. And churches need fences also, saying both to the sheep inside and the swine outside, "Thus far shall you go and no farther." We need strict Scriptural rules for membership, to keep our sheep in, and to keep the hogs, dogs, frogs, wolves, jackals and jackasses of the world out. The same fence that kept my sheep out of the neighbor's pigpen kept his hogs out of my sheep pasture. They would have gone over there only out of curiosity, for there was no appealing pasture to entice them. But his hogs would have rushed into my sheep pasture at the first opportunity, turning the sod upside down, feasting on grubs and earthworms and roots, until there would have been nothing for the sheep to eat. This is the sad experience of God's true sheep in many places where the world has been permitted to come into the church membership and have brought programs and hired pastors who gave the sheep nothing to eat, but destroyed what little they might have had.

4. Poor Fences Make Roguish Sheep. If there is a hole large enough for one sheep to go through, the rest of the flock will follow. Wesley's advice to his class leaders was, "Make no exempt case, better one suffer than many. Enforce the rules impartially." My observation has been, that ministers must faithfully preach all the counsel of God against the world, the flesh and the devil and enforce discipline faithfully and unpartially or the proud world will press in and take over the church. How sad when church leaders give up their ban against the wedding ring, and then see all other types of jewelry quickly flood in.

5. Leaders of the Flock Lead Slowly; Mostly by Example. I have seen the sheep lying in the shade when evening feeding time came; the leader would get up and walk a few steps toward pasture, and stop. Another would get up, walk up behind her and stop. The leader would take a few steps and stop again. When they were all lined up she would proceed to pasture, not a sound having been made. I have noticed this deliberateness, this lack of nervous haste in everything they do when not disturbed by outside influences. What a rebuke to the hurried spirit of this age.

Diseases of Sheep and Their Symptoms.

In caring for my sheep I obtained a book from the County Agent Diseases of Sheep which told the disease, the symptoms and the cure.

I would watch my lambs when they were approaching marketable age and weight and could tell at a glance if they were suffering from internal parasites. If they were, there would be a hollow in front of the hip bone about the size of my hand. I could have mixed up some patch plaster and filled it in, or even taken some old wool and sewed it in to fill the depression, but I did nothing of the kind. I gave them a treatment for internal parasites and in a few days the sunken sides had all filled in.

I heard of a man with a severe headache, who stepped into his doctor's office and demanded something for his headache. The doctor demurred saying, "I do not treat symptoms. If you will allow me to examine you and determine the cause of your headaches, I will then recommend treatment."

When I noticed my ewe that had lung worms with her ribs and backbone showing and a hacking cough, I could have gotten her a sheep fleece to hide her ribs and backbone, and given her some cough drops but I did not. I went by the book. The book said she had lungworms. I followed directions to the letter. With a 2 1/2 size fruit can, one end cut out and the other punched full of holes, with absorbent cotton in the bottom I poured in some chloroform, held it over her nose until she was about ready to fall down, and turned her loose. She staggered like she was drunk, looked at me starry-eyed for a while and recovered. The chloroform killed the lungworms, and she fattened up and became one of my sleekest ewes.

When ticks appeared I did not go over my sheep "Tickpicking" and "nit-picking" one at a time to remove them. I simply obtained the recommended powder, sprinkled it on their necks, and the ticks all disappeared.

How often we preachers make the mistake of preaching at symptoms. Actually the symptoms of a disease are the doctor's most faithful allies. I heard of a doctor's office that had a sign "Please do not trade symptoms." Another good one would be "Don't take something that will eliminate the symptoms without curing the disease."

If I see symptoms on God's flock which indicate an internal problem, I would be foolish to preach at the symptoms, and ignore the disease. If the people would eliminate the symptoms, then we could both be deceived into believing they no longer had the disease. But if we treat the disease and cure it, the symptoms will certainly disappear.

There needs to be one caution here however. In spiritual matters, both the symptom and the disease may be immoral. For instance, covetousness in the heart may cause a host of secondary sins in the life-stealing for instance. So it is perfectly in order for a minister to faithfully preach against both stealing and covetousness. But there is some truth which can be preached to born again Christians which it would not be wise to preach to unsaved people, and some to mature Christians which would not be wise for babes. See John 16:12; I Cor. 3:2-3.

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PART 51

John 10: 28-29 -- The Sheep's Security

And they shall never perish -- no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

When we come to the security of God's people, there is a very wide doctrinal cleavage. There are those who claim that our security is unconditional. In spite of anything we do we are secure. However, I am just as firmly convinced that the Scriptures, while assuring us that there is security in God, also warn us repeatedly in almost every conceivable way to remember that our security is conditional and for us to be on guard.

If the sheep are unconditionally and eternally secure, then the wolf does not come to kill and to steal and destroy. Jesus should have said, "The wolf comes to ruin their influence. But the wolf does catch some when a hireling is in charge, (and flees) and kills and destroys and scatters the flock.

I think most people will admit that to be secure your name must be in the Book of Life. God told Moses "Him that sins will I blot out of the book." (Ex. 32:33) And Jesus told the churches in Revelation 3:5 "Him that overcometh I will not blot out of the Book." While it is true that "No man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand" it is not true that we cannot exercise our wills contrary to God's will and take ourselves out of His hand. Lucifer did! Read Isaiah, chapter 14, and Ezekiel, chapter 28. A third of the angels did! Adam and Eve did! King Solomon did! Judas and millions of others did.

But that a sheep can be one of the fold and then be lost is clearly set forth in the story Jesus tells of the lost sheep. And if the Shepherd had not found it quickly it would have been assimilated into the flesh of jackals or eagles. It certainly could not be said "Once a sheep always a sheep."

It would be just as sensible to say that the sheep that fell victim of a wolf, was never really a sheep as to say that a backslider was never truly a Christian.

It is easy and common for people to be trapped by the imperfect logic of human wisdom to believe in "irreversible relationship" or unconditional security, or "once a son always a son."

My oldest brother has been dead over ninety-three years. He died many years before I was born. As a child I did not know he had ever existed. There was no place set for him at the table. There was no chair reserved for him in the family circle. He was not part of the family. He was dead. He did not have to be unborn to get out of the family. All he had to do was die. He was no longer an heir. He was assigned no tasks. His voice was not heard. His advice was not asked. He never prayed. He gave no testimony, He was dead. His name was not mentioned in the last will and testament. He was given no presents. He was not remembered at Christmastime. He had no birthday anniversary observances. He had died. He was not on the church roll. He was elected to no church office. He sang no hymns. He showed no brotherly love. He was dead. And sin produces death. The soul that sinneth, it shall die. No, we do not have to be unborn to get out of our earthly father's family. And we do not have to be unborn to get out of our heavenly Father's family. Just willfully sin. That produces death and we are out of the family.

People who are spiritually dead may still have their names on a church roll, may still bring their tithes in, sing hymns and even preach, but if they are not "abiding in the vine" they are dead.

Feed Is the Most Important One Thing in Caring for Sheep

This was one of the resurrection commands to Peter (not fight, nor fleece) but "Feed my sheep." A shepherd can get closer to his sheep with feed than any other way. My sheep have always had a fear of me, but when I pick up the feed bucket -- Ah! Then they crowd around, step on my toes, and shove me along the trough as I spread the feed. But when I have the syringe in my hand instead of the feed, and that certain look in my eye, then they crowd to the farthest corner, roll their eyes, hide behind each other and wish they belonged to some other flock. If they could, they would at this time, without doubt, ask for their letters and join a group where the shepherd would do nothing but feed them.

Sheep Have No Healthy Respect for a Shepherd Who Does Nothing But Feed Them.

The preacher who says he loves his people too much to reprove, rebuke and exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine, will have them trampling all over him.

If sheep find a rewarding portion of feed every time they are called they will always come. If they come about three times and find nothing they will stop coming. Ever wonder why people quit coming to church? However, there is a difference. No dogs or hogs were allowed at my sheep feed trough. They were not allowed to run with my sheep. And the sheep did not have to compete with them for food.

Dry Concentrated Feed Requires Good Available Water Supplies.

There will be serious and sometimes fatal digestive disturbances if adequate water is not provided in winter when they are eating dry feed.

The preacher who gives himself to study and neglects his prayer life will no doubt have something concentrated to feed his people but it will be dry. How important it is to pray down the anointing and blessing of God upon the truth we present. For many lambs in January, feed well in August. For healthy lambs in January feed well in December.

Purchasing my last flock of sheep in November I could do nothing to influence the number of their first lamb crop. They had an eighty per cent lamb crop and raised sixty per cent. The next year they dropped 175 per cent and raised 150 per cent, more than double because I paid particular attention to what they ate the first two weeks of August, and during the month of December.

Blessed indeed are those pastors who realize and put into practice the skillful and adequate and prolonged preparation of their people, that they may be fruitful and bring forth many and healthy converts during revival time.

Well-fed Sheep Can Stand Rugged Weather Well Without Injury.

Before lambing time one year I separated the ram and made him a little shelter in a separate lot. Early one morning before daylight during a driving blizzard from the northwest I went down to check on the ewes. I checked with my flashlight to see where the ram was. He was not in his shelter. He was bedded down in the open in the highest point in his lot. He was all covered with snow except his eyes and nose. He was chewing his cud. He was comfortable. He was well-fed.

When Sheep Feed Themselves They Are Regular Both Morning and Evening.

It is a marvel how regular they are. One could almost set one's watch by their coming out of the shady woods at 5:00 p. m. in the heat of summer and moving slowly with the shade out into pasture.

An hour or two on good pasture and they have gathered enough to chew on most of the night. And the same in the morning gave them enough to chew on through the day. How many times do you think a sheep chews each bite? fifteen or twenty? No! Sixty-five to ninety times! And I thought of our people rushing to church, rushing home, too busy for morning and evening devotions, wondering why they are having spiritual problems. No wonder they are not blessed.

Blessed is the man who meditates on God's word day and night. (Psalm 1:2)

Is it just a coincidence that the word ruminates which has for its primary meaning "an animal chewing its cud" has for its secondary meaning "to ponder, to think on again and again?" Paul's advice to Timothy fits well here. "Meditate upon these things, give thyself wholly to them." (I Timothy 4:15)

My guess is that most of the spiritual problems of many people could be solved by adequate nutrition. But it takes time to feed the soul, even more than it does the body. But what our body does for us automatically after we swallow our food, we must do volitionally after we hear the truth by meditating on it.

The person who neglects his secret devotions is headed for a tragic fall. The person who does not find a spiritual summer in his devotions is headed for a fruitless fall.

When Pastures Are Not Changed Frequently Many Lambs Will Die of Parasites.

While natural sheep can move from one pasture to another, people cannot do this quite so easily.

Wesley provided for this change of diet by having two or sometimes three pastors work together in circuits. So the people had a varied diet. Not only is variety the spice of life, but it is necessary for good nutrition. The wise pastor does it with frequent guest speakers, and evangelists whose ministries are different from his.

Sheep Can Smell Salt for a Long Distance Away.

Salt is a Bible standard of excellence. We are commanded to have salt in ourselves. When sheep have been two weeks without salt, they will turn from the feed trough to go to the salt block, and not just lick it, but try to bite off chunks. It furnishes the chlorine for the hydrochloric acid necessary to digest plant fiber and other nutrients. Thus salt furnishes the elements that will lift something from a lower to a higher kingdom.

And when Jesus calls us the salt of the earth this is implied. We have the secret of seeing people in Satan's kingdom translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son.

If I do not have salt available should I blame my sheep for going to the neighbor's if they can find it there?

There is much talk today of church loyalty. I am afraid of blind church loyalty. If church leaders are unflinchingly loyal to God and the principle of righteousness and true holiness, there will be enough salt in their plans and programs to attract their sheep. If not, their best sheep will go where they can find salt, and all the shrill and frantic cries and demands of their leaders for loyalty will not avail.

Sheep Have Many Enemies.

There is an ageless enmity between sheep and dogs. To my knowledge my sheep had never been chased nor injured by dogs. But when a dog comes within sight or sound they throw up their heads and begin to show signs of fear and nervousness and start for the shelter of the fold. However, this fear does not seem to be hereditary. It seems to be a conditional reflex passed on from generation to generation. Sometime before I ever owned these sheep their ancestors had spent

a night of terror with a pack of dogs puffing them down, killing, maiming and terrorizing. And the parents have conditioned the young each succeeding generation.

One day one of my small lambs walked up and touched noses with a neighbor's rat-terrier without the least sign of fear. It was not difficult for me to imagine the conversation which followed a little later.

"Mother, I have a new boy friend!"

"Now look, little girl, we don't have half-brothers for our boy friends."

"Oh Mother, I don't mean one of them; this one lives next door."

"Daughter! I'm horrified by your ignorance. Don't you know that's a dog! Do you hear me? A dog! How utterly ridiculous! Do you not know that dogs are our most dangerous enemies?"

"But, Mother, he's different. He's white just like we are and he's so friendly and nice. And he says he likes me and he wouldn't mind being a sheep himself. I believe I can change him."

"Now listen, child, many an innocent lamb has fallen for that same old line, and had some gay dog pull the wool over her eyes. He's a dog and his parents are dogs and nothing but a miracle can ever change him. His best intentions and your best efforts will never do it. Let him become a sheep first inside and out and then we'll see about your being friends with him. Now you stay away from him, and if you see him coming, you run to me and I'll stamp my foot and he'll tuck his tail between his legs and run."

He must have. I never saw him come calling again. The lamb evidently accepted her mother's counsel, for the unhappy affair ended and the lamb learned to be afraid of dogs just like her mother was.

Is it possible that a mother sheep can teach her youngster more effectively than a Christian parent can teach hers to "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers."

Sheep Must Be Forced To Take Treatment for Internal Parasites Four Times a Year.

No sheep of mine ever offered to take this medicine. I had to corner them and force it down them. How happy indeed are those people who accept the negative with the positive, the bitter medicine with the sweet, who will encourage the minister with a "Pour it on us, Lord" and highly esteem him for loving them enough to declare unto them all the counsel of God.

When My Sheep Were Cornered So There Was No Escape They Would Drop to Their Knees.

What an example for us. When God's truth gets us into a corner, do we hedge and fudge and alibi, or drop to our knees and do serious soul business with God?

Sheep Have an Amazing Capacity To Suffer Silently.

It was no accident that the inspired prophet speaking of Jesus 700 years ahead of time said, "He is led as a lamb to the slaughter and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb so he openeth not his mouth."

Our local pastor went along one day when I took my sheep to the shearer. He marveled at the way they sat there leaning up against the shearer -- without a struggle, without a sound, until we came to old Rattle Brains, the biggest, fattest ewe in the flock. She struggled, resisted, stiffened her spine, flailed with her feet and did her best to get loose.

Since the wool is about one tenth the weight of the sheep I have compared it to the tithe. I explained, "You see that stubborn ewe? She has been barren for three years. She has not been bringing any converts and now raises a fuss about bringing in her tithe. She's headed for the deepfreeze." A great many church members who have dared to rob God of His tithe have gone into deep-freeze churches.

A New Member Should Be Closely Examined Before Being Allowed in the Flock.

The first ram brought external parasites. Before he came I had not seen one-not even at shearing time. But a few months after he came the whole flock was crawling with them, especially the lambs. Fortunately there was a powder available that, sprinkled on their necks, completely eliminated the problem. How careful we ought to be of taking strangers into our churches.

The One Who Volunteers To Lead the Flock in Time of Panic Is Not the Same One That Leads Them To Pasture.

Dupont who invariably dropped twins and raised them was the one that led them to pasture. She was not the oldest ewe in the flock but she was the wisest. One day when a grader was smoothing our long winding gravelled driveway up the hill past the sheep shed, I watched as the sheep jumped up from the shady end of the shed. Old Rattle Brains who had fought the shearer took off running like her life depended on it. The rest of the flock was strung out behind her. The one in the very rear was Dupont who knew there was no danger and she was barely trotting with every curve of her body showing her protest at how ridiculous the whole performance was.

Many a church no doubt has one of these supernervous persons like Rattle Brains who think they have "come to the kingdom for such a time as this" and magnify every little disturbance as though it were a great cataclysm about to destroy the church.

Ways Sheep Are Not Like Christians.

They do not have to be born twice to be sheep, but people have to to be Christians. While sheep have a will, they do not have the wide multitude of options that people do. For instance, they cannot choose to be a sheep or a goat or a dog. People can choose to be wicked, sinful, righteous or holy. They can choose to be a Christian for life for a while, or not at all.

Sheep do not make moral choices as people do. Not having a moral nature or God consciousness, they know nothing about guilt or forgiveness. Sheep have no obligation to witness to goats or dogs in the hope that they may wish to become sheep.

Sheep cannot avoid the ministrations of their shepherd the way people can avoid the approaches of God. For instance when my sheep needed treatment for internal parasites I crowded them into a corner and gave it to them. Overseers cannot do Christians this way. All their help must be received voluntarily.

When the first Adam fell into sin the whole creation fell with him, including the animal creation and came under a curse. When the second Adam comes and lifts the curse it will automatically be lifted from the whole animal creation.

Sheep Show Little Gratitude.

It would be impossible to explain to the sheep why I force them to do some things and take some medicine I give them. And it is just as impossible for God with our limited understanding to explain some of our sufferings to us.

Only once did I ever have a sheep show the least sign of gratitude for all I had done for them. One old thin ewe in her last year of life turned her head and licked my wrist as I helped her lambs to suckle. Jesus marveled at the nine lepers He healed who did not take time to show their gratitude.

I ached inwardly for an outstanding Christian who spoke at our annual conference. Because he was a Christian he was interned by the Japanese war lords in his own country during the Second World War. After his marvelous message, this scribe was the only person who went forward to shake his hand and express appreciation to him for his life and testimony.

When Sheep Fail To Have Lambs They Fight Among Themselves.

One autumn when we came back from a six-weeks' evangelistic tour we found our young borrowed ram at the point of death from worm infestation. It was late and I was just too busy to get another ram.

Of course there were no lambs next spring. Then I began to notice the ewes fighting among themselves. They would butt each other until they were exhausted, stand and pant awhile and go at it again. I had seen rams fight but never the ewes -- no, only when they failed to bear lambs. And I am confident that many church fusses and quarrels would have been avoided if those who were supposed to be spiritual mothers had been bringing converts into the kingdom and caring for them. It is enormously frustrating to be spiritually barren and see your own natural children taking the way of the world.

Sheep Do Not Do Well in Low, Wet Country.

There is too much heat, too many insects and fungi, and too much foot rot.

Many times I noticed my sheep bedding down in the highest spot of whatever lot I had them fenced in.

In our western mountains moose are found along the streams feeding on the willow bud and bark, a little higher, mule deer and elk, but on the highest elevations, that supreme test of the hunter's skill and stamina: the bighorn sheep. They are nimble and fleet of foot. They are not afraid of dizzy heights. They find impossible places called sheep ladders where they jump back and forth from side to side in almost vertical fissures of the rock and gain the highest elevations where even a wolf cannot follow them. And there in the bright sunlight above the clouds they lie in peace and chew their cud enjoying a million-dollar view.

And so God's true sheep love the heights, the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Sheep have a socially gregarious nature. They prefer the company of other sheep.

A professor may be a lone wolf; this does not apply to sheep. I have seen both adult and young sheep graze away from the flock until a hillside or clump of brush would cut off the view. When they became aware they were alone, they would forget grazing, start to bleat and start looking for the rest of the flock.

The radio is all right for some things. But one of the proofs that we have passed from death unto life is that we "Love the brethren." And we are commanded "to forsake not the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is but exhorting one another and so much the more as we see the day approaching."

I am in favor of rugged sanctified independence among Christians. That they be not solely dependent upon a church or preacher for their spiritual food, but when they become so independent that they no longer crave nor benefit from fellowship with other born-again believers I have serious doubts about their relationship with God.

There Is a High Degree of Mother Love Among Sheep.

Sheep that are well-fed and healthy that is. A ewe that will not own her young is far from normal. I have seen mothers at lambing time giving undivided attention to the serious matter at hand. With quiet groanings that could not be uttered they brought forth. Much like I have heard from great saints around seekers at an altar. One of my sheep pastures bordered a four-lane federal highway. I have seen a ewe go out there alone to bring forth her lamb. Possibly a half million dollars worth of cars went by while she was in the process. She paid them no attention. She had something far more important in mind. She was busy seeing to it that that species of creatures called sheep should not perish from the earth. This is one time she will not run from either the dogs or the shepherd. This is one time the feed trough is not the most important thing in her life. She will go to the feed trough but if he bleats, she goes to him immediately.

For the first few days she is at his side day and night. I have seen the old sheep with heavy fleeces lie down on frozen ground during a cold winter day. And the lambs would hop up and bed down on their warm fleecy backs. What a perfect bed for a young lamb with his short fleece.

This suggests one of the most common and tragic failures I have observed in the churches where I have been called to evangelize: This lack of mother love, this lack of care for new-born souls.

The true shepherd who is willing to lay down his life for the sheep, does not love them any more than the ewes love their lambs.

The old ewe that I called "Wolf" because she had a curl in her tail and her backbone and ribs showed; the only one that ever showed me the least sign of gratitude literally gave her life for her last two lambs. Her teeth were quite worn, and after her last set of lambs were born she was quite thin. I made frequent trips to the supermarkets to pick up cabbage and lettuce leaves for her but she continued to fail. In a last desperate effort to save her life until pastures should turn green again I separated her from her lambs. But she cried for them so piteously I returned them to her. She gave her "last full measure of devotion" and lay down on the sunny hillside and went to sleep for the last time. But she left me two healthy ewe lambs to take her place in the flock. Would God all church members would do as well.

The Lambs

The two most important rules for lambs are the same one. Never make pets. They invariably becomes pests! They are in the car, in the house, on the shepherd's toes, soiling his clothes and when they get older will start butting him. They have gotten too familiar and have lost their respectful fear. Foolish indeed is the minister who makes pets among his parishioners. They will invariably turn on him and give him serious trouble.

The First Three Hours in a Cold World Are the Most Critical.

If not warmed soon from within they must be warmed from without.

One night after prayer meeting I looked into the sheep shed and found a set of new-born twins mothered by Rattle-Brains. Icicles hung from their ears and tails and she was doing nothing for them. I grabbed them up in a bushel basket, took them up to the house and Hildred and I got them over the floor furnace, warmed them and dried them. I took them back down. Old Rattle-Brains had completely forgotten them. I tied her up so she wouldn't fight them, and showed them where the breakfast nook was. They were delighted, their little tails going like windmills. She owned them, and they lived and prospered. And I found that most lambs that survived the first three days would live.

Who is there who will give the young converts the attention they need during the first few days of their new life?

No Need To Buy or Steal Sheep To Enlarge the Flock.

A well-cared for flock will double and sometimes triple their number in one year. The good shepherd will have sheep to sell.

I come as near feeling scorn for a minister when I see him hanging around the altar in another pastor's revival trying to get next to his lambs to coax them away as I ever come in my life. What's wrong with his flock? What's wrong with him as a shepherd that his flock is not fruitful?

Lambs Are Counted with the Sheep.

From the time a lamb was born I always counted them with the sheep. How often have I heard "Our young people are the church of tomorrow." They had better be a vital part of the church now, or they will not likely be after we are gone.

Lambs Must Be Fed Carefully, Frequently and Separately.

There are some good, zealous and well-meaning people who have a distrust of youth and children's services. But the quality of such would be largely dependent on the wisdom and spirituality of the person in charge. Lambs need to be fed more frequently and with more nutritious feed than old sheep. They need to eat alone. If fed with older sheep, the adults will crowd them out, gobble up the feed and the lambs will have little if any. Have you ever seen older folk take over a youth service in the public sanctuary, whether it was praying, testifying, answering quiz questions, or finding Bible verses?

Lambs Love Warmth in Cold Weather.

If there is a sunny spot in the barn on a cold day, they will flock to it to bask in the warmth. How important it is to make young people, especially young converts feel a real loving warmth and caring atmosphere surround them after they find Christ.

Lambs Must Exercise and Play.

It is part of their requirements for growth. Hildred and I have watched and laughed until tears ran down our cheeks at the antics of our lambs. Those about the same age would run races, jump off the high places, and kick their feet extra paces while airborne. They would climb the highest knolls and shove each other off while their elders lay calmly by chewing their cuds. It would have been as abnormal for them to have acted like old sheep as for their elders to have acted like lambs. "When I became a man I put away childish things." (Well, mostly, Oh! my muscles!)

Lambs Can Be Killed with Kindness

I left too much shelled corn in the trough once when I left for a few days and came back to find a hundred dollars worth of lambs dead-too much starch which turned to sugar. Too much sweetness!

Lambs Can Be Overburdened Too Young

Experts advise against allowing the ewe lambs to bear young their first year. Contrary to my wishes, some of mine did. But everyone that did, died either while their young was a-borning or within the next few months. I greatly fear it is possible to kill our young converts with over zealotness in insisting that they grow up too swiftly. As one wise mother said, "Don't try to put old heads on young shoulders."

The Shepherd

The shepherd must be a man of authority. Jesus spoke with authority and not as the scribes, reflecting someone else's opinion. Paul instructs Timothy to speak with all authority. No minister who is not sure the Bible is the word of God and who is not sure his doctrinal views are correct, or who is in bondage and fear to someone in the church (some church boss), is fit to be a shepherd.

The Church Boss

One of my rams decided he was going to be boss of the flock. He repeatedly challenged my authority. When I would catch a lame ewe to examine her foot, or trim her nails if they were grown under he would come charging up with his head down in battle position.

I would have been very foolish to have assumed a like stance. I would have lost the first battle with a broken neck or fractured skull. No, I knew that would never do. It is his toughest point. No, I knew he had a very sensitive spot on the end of his nose. When he came charging up I would give him a quick slap there. He would turn away, shaking his head and retire to his corner. He was baffled. I had not bruised him. He had not touched me, but he was greatly pained and confused because I would not fight his way.

The last time he offered to fight there were about four inches of snow on the ground as he came charging up to hit me in the back of the knees. I watched him out of the corner of my eye 'til he was close enough for me to grab him. Then I flipped him on his back so quickly he didn't know what was happening. I raked up big handfuls of snow and gave him a good face washing. I did a thorough job. I rubbed it well into his eyes, nose, mouth and ears. It so cooled his fighting ardor, he never offered to fight me again.

Brother Charlie Wireman says he would rather meet the devil himself than a church boss. For if you resist the devil he will flee from you. but if you resist a church boss he'll jump on you.

One thing sure, you cannot conquer a church boss with carnal weapons. You'll have to find his tender spot.

Sheep Without a Shepherd.

Sheep without a shepherd will be in immediate and constant danger. A full-time shepherd will live with his sheep and watch over them twenty-four hours a day. A true shepherd loves his sheep. He would not be afraid or ashamed to take one in his car to the vet if the case demanded it. I read of a city woman who married a sheep rancher. One day when they started to town she looked back to see three sheep in the back seat. She was indignant. "Sheep in our car!" He answered,

"Sheep bought the car." What about the pastor whose car is too nice to haul poor people to church? Didn't sheep buy his car?

The Shepherd Had Better Know What His Sheep Feed on Twenty-four Hours a Day.

One day I noticed a lamb running in circles -- getting nowhere but into exhaustion. Another was walking around with its nose pointed up in the air. I called the vet. "Sugar deficiency," he said. I bought some molasses feed. No improvement. I went to the county agent's office. "What do you have on diseases of sheep?" He started pulling out the booklets. Here it was. Here was the trouble. Everything dovetailed for tetanus, except my lambs did not have locked jaws. I kept on looking. Forage poisoning -- everything dovetailed.

I went over the pastures from then on, eliminating milkweed, nightshade, snakeroot, water hemlock and young burdock. The problem disappeared.

When the people of God do not come to church at feeding time, run in circles without getting anywhere, or go around with their noses in the air, they have been feeding on something that has poisoned them.

Has the pastor any responsibility to warn his people about poisonous literature? He certainly does! It can ruin their appetites, as can worldly music and worldly entertainment.

The Sure Authority -- The Standard of Perfection

A certain man I know left the farm after high school and entered the business world. But he still loved husbandry. One year he went to the hatchery and bought twenty-five of every breed of chickens available. When they were grown he took a copy of a book on poultry titled Standard of Perfection and carried it with him as he picked the best two or three fowl from each breed. The book told exactly what the specifications for perfection in each breed would be. If Barred Rock, how many black and white bars on the wing. If single comb, how many teeth in the comb. How far down on the legs and how far up on the neck the feathers should come. Then he took his selections to the county fairs around the state and won a great many blue ribbons. Some old farmers who had been in poultry all their lives would ask him, "What do you do?" "Oh, I'm in the retail grocery business." "We don't understand; we've raised poultry all our lives, and you come in here and take the first prizes." He would laugh inwardly for he had a secret that he refused to share. He knew that the book, Standard of Perfection, was the same book the judge of the poultry would use. The poor farmers did not even know there was such a book!

When I purchased my last flock of sheep, I went to the County Agent's office and obtained a book about sheep written by three men who were really knowledgeable. My lambs when taken to market consistently topped all others. One day when 100 lambs sold my three were tops. As my wife overheard the producer say to me, "Why yours were tops, of course; they always are," I turned away from the phone with a big smile, whispering congratulations in both my ears, and she came at me with her hands and fingers outstretched to give me a head-shrinking treatment. I fled. She caught me. When she finished and went back to the kitchen, I looked up to God with a tremendously sobering thought bringing tears to my eyes, "Lord," I cried, "how can I be sure the

lambs I send up there will be tops?" I received an answer quickly, gently and clearly, "Just go by the Book."

Because I knew I did not know how to care for lambs I had sought this book written by experts, had read it carefully and referred back to it many times in caring for my sheep. Men who had raised sheep all their lives did not bring the quality lambs to market that I did, just because they did not go by the book. They might not have known there was such a book. They might have had it and neglected it. They might have known and forgotten.

What a thrilling, chilling thought! The Judge of all the earth in the day of judgment will be using the same Book He has given us. We ought to be searching the Scriptures, God's Book, observing carefully, remembering accurately, comparing constantly to understand His "Standard of Perfection" for us, and bringing all our lives inward and outward into conformity with it.

How sad and how futile for ministers to try to produce saints by lecturing them from human wisdom, and neglecting God's Book. It simply cannot be done. God's Word is the only sufficient rule of faith and practice. His words are spirit and they are life and they shall judge us at the last day.

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PART 52

John, Chapter 11 -- Parable of Persons

Lazarus is a good example of those people whose life and experiences are parables, the interpretation of which is not terribly difficult but quite thrilling.

Lazarus represents mankind. His death for four days represents the four 1000 year days since God had driven man out of the garden. Martha represented the Jewish church, especially the Pharisees, careful and troubled about many things, and criticizing Jesus and her sister, Mary, who represented the true church, who had such victory over the mundane she had time to sit at Jesus' feet. The grave is a type of our death in sins. The graveclothes is a type of the need for a further work after regeneration. His resurrection is a type of our new birth, when we come from death to life from the power of Satan unto God, to receive forgiveness of sins, and the second work on him "loose him and let him go" receiving an inheritance among all them that are sanctified.

Since I believe that everything in the natural world has its origin and true example in the spiritual world, and that the natural world is just a shadow cast by the spiritual world, it is easy for me to see many Old Testament saints as walking parables. Many of them typified in some way the person, power, attributes or life of Christ.

The best example of this is Joseph. As a type of Christ:

1. He was the first-born son of his father's love.
2. He had a coat of very different design from his brethren.

3. He enjoyed a special love of his father.
4. He had revelations of his future dominion.
5. He was sent on an errand of mercy to his brethren.
6. His brethren were jealous of him.
7. They hated him.
8. They plotted to kill him.
9. He was sold for the price of a slave.
10. He landed in the house of Potiphar, the chief executioner.
11. He was betrayed and lied about by an adulterous woman, as Jesus was by Israel.
12. He was cast into prison.
13. He immediately had all the keys to the place.
14. He declared two kinds of judgments while there. (To the butler and the baker.)
15. He went directly from prison to the throne.
16. Now he has the keys to all Egypt's storehouses.
17. Now no one but Pharaoh is greater than he.
18. Now all authority is given him over all the land of Egypt.
19. Now an Egyptian can say to hungry people coming from all over the drought-impoorished Middle East, "My Pharaoh shall supply all your need, according to his riches in Egypt, by Joseph."
20. Then his brethren who had hated him come and kneel before him as he had prophesied.
21. He speaks kindly to them and reconciles them by saying, "It was not you, but God, that He might save much flesh alive." And so Jesus was sent down-down into Bethlehem, down into Egypt, down into Nazareth, down into a false judgment, down into the tomb, down into the heart of the earth, and declared God's judgments to two classes of people, but He gained the keys of hell and of death and when He ascended He went directly to the Father's throne. Now He has the keys to all Heaven's storehouses. And we can say confidently to any hungry person from anywhere in the world, "My God shall supply all your need, according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

When His brethren, the Jews, come from all over the world and He reveals Himself to them, they shall look on Him whom they pierced and mourn because of Him, and He shall comfort them, and deliver them from their enemies, take the throne of David and reign for a thousand years.

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PART 53

John, Chapter 15 -- The Vine and the Branches and the Companion Parable of the Olive Tree

From Romans, Chapter 11

This chapter and its parable should be dealt with under several headings.

1. Who the Vine is.
2. How do people get to be branches in the vine?
3. What the fruit is.
4. How the grafting is accomplished.
5. How a branch is cast forth and why.
6. The difference between fruit in the animal and vegetable kingdom.
7. The law of the dwarf fruit trees.
8. Why grafting is necessary.
9. Why spiritual grafting is contrary to nature.
10. Scions that inspire the host.

Who the Vine Is.

It is amazing how people can ignore the plain statements of our Lord and interpret the parable to suit themselves. For instance one said, "We are the vine, and our sins are the branches, and as the branches were broken off and cast into the fire so we are to break off our sins and destroy them." This is hardly worthy of notice but it illustrates the point.

1. Jesus said clearly and plainly "I am the true vine."

Indicating

- A. There were False vines.

B. There was only one true Vine.

C. Contrary to nature where the root would be wild and the branch tame, here the root and stock is good and the branches are cut out of the wild olive tree or the wild grape vine.

D. Christ is not one of many ways to God. He is the only way. No man cometh unto the Father but by Him.

2. How do people become branches in the true Vine?

This requires a supernatural intervention by a higher power. As no vine or tree has the power to do any grafting, so no sinner can graft himself into Christ the true and living Vine. This shows how utterly hopeless is the case of the sinner who thinks he can save himself by good works, reforms, resolves or any other method.

3. What the fruit is.

Many people insist the only fruit of a Christian is other Christians. But not so; when Jesus is using something from the animal or human kingdom, yes. But the fruit of the branch of a grapevine is not other branches. No one tends a vineyard just to produce other vines or fruit trees to produce watersprouts. No, a vineyard is cared for to produce grapes. Now the grapes do have seeds in them which will grow and produce other vines, but Jesus is not talking about that in this parable. He lists no fruit, some fruit, more fruit, and much fruit as possibilities. The valley of Eschol is still producing enormous clusters of grapes weighing up to 120 lbs. with individual grapes as large as golfballs. I saw these vines in March and they were pruned back almost to the ground.

But in this parable Jesus is talking about the fruit of the Spirit: Love, Joy, Peace, etc. Count the times He mentions love and joy, when He stops talking about fruit.

4. How the grafting is accomplished.

Authorities say there are almost a thousand ways to graft fruit trees. But one thing is common to them all.

There must be a intimate meeting of the cambium, or life-bearing layer of the host and the branch. The life of the vine must flow into the bud or scion. The grafting knife must be very sharp. God says His Word is sharper than a two-edged sword. The one who does the grafting must be skilled. There is never a lack here on God's part. But the person who handles the sword of God must be skilled. Rightly dividing the Word of truth is interpreted by some to mean "To make a straight cut. To dissect or expound correctly the divine message." No branch can do this for itself. It requires a higher power.

5. How and why a branch is cast forth.

Jesus tells us why. "Every branch in me that bears not fruit. . . and if a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered and men gather them and cast them into the fire and they are burned. " Now a branch does not have a will. But a human branch does. Jesus infers this when He says, "If a man abide not in me." Many things co-operate to get rid of the dead branches. I once saw a big fox squirrel jump and grab a dead limb and break it off. Bears climbing an apple tree will break off the dead limbs. High winds, heavy snows, limbs clashing in a gusty wind will break them off. But the tree itself has a process of growing tightly around the dead limb squeezing it out. For its own protection that dead limb needs to be rejected, for that is a chink in the tree's protective armor, where an enemy can enter and destroy the heart of the tree. And when a branch is rejected you may be sure it is not going to be grafted in somewhere else. It is dead. And there is only one true Vine.

6. The difference between fruit in the animal and vegetable kingdom.

In the vegetable kingdom, the wisdom of God saw fit to surround the seeds with desirable, nourishing and attractive fruit. When people, animals or birds eat the fruit, they scatter the seeds, thus assisting to propagate the species. But among those animals which do not lay eggs, and among the human family the young are referred to as fruit. So children naturally are a type of children spiritually, as are lambs in a flock of sheep. And we need to remember that children need both a father and a mother. And just as certainly as God is the Father of all truly born-again Christians, the church is their mother.

7. The law of the dwarf fruit trees.

As people live on smaller and smaller acreages these days the dwarf fruit trees are becoming increasingly popular. To produce a dwarf tree the scion must be grafted on a species that does not grow very tall. A pear for instance on a quince root. And I think this explains why we see so many professing Christians who are pigmies and dwarfs instead of coming to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

They have been grafted, not into Christ but into something else.

They have been grafted into a church, or on to some spiritual or charismatic leader, or some far out oriental religion, or some charitable organization, or some oathbound society, or to some spurious doctrinal system that will leave them stunted and dwarfed for life.

A. Another reason they may be a dwarf is that they are growing too close to another Christian.

8. Why is grafting necessary?

While it is true that most trees will reproduce from seeds, it is also true that almost no fruit trees come true to seed. Neither do Christians. You might plant for instance a bushel of peach seeds from your favorite Elberta or Hale Haven tree, and it is not likely that you would get one peach as good as the original. Mother planted peach seeds for years, and all she ever got were little gray hard peaches about half as big as golf balls.

There are those who think that when a man improves his soil or plants or animals, he is tampering with God's creation. I do not feel that way about it at all. If soil is sour it should be sweetened with lime, and if it is lacking in minerals and plant food, they should be added. If an apple tree is not bearing good fruit, then graft something good onto it and cut out the old limbs. To me this is in the area where we are co-laborers with God.

The story is told of a farmer who bought a rundown, badly-eroded farm with the topsoil mostly gone. He terraced, limed, fertilized, farmed with the contour and built it up into a highly productive farm. One day the pastor came to call. The farmer took him on a tour of his farm. As he came to each field he described its previous condition and then told what he had done to bring it to its present attractive and productive state. The pastor would say, "Well, you and the Lord have certainly done a most wonderful job on that." After the pastor had repeated this remark about the fifth time the farmer said, "I wish you could have seen these fields when the Lord was farming them by Himself." This may seem sacrilegious but there is a great truth here. It is estimated that in raising a crop, the farmer does about five per cent and the Lord ninety-five per cent. But if the farmer does not do his five, the Lord will not do his ninety-five.

It was so striking the first time I drove through Florida. I was quite disappointed at the great stretches of scrub pine and stunted oak, sand and palmetto, very unproductive, and not attractive to look at. But when we drove down old State Route 19 and came to places where men had been co-operating with God for fifty to a hundred years it was very, very beautiful. Ever taste a wild orange? I have no desire to taste another one. Ever taste a Mineola Honey Bell Tangelo? They are just about the ultimate taste delight in a citrus fruit, and are the result of man's co-operating with God, using the intelligence God has given him in selection, pollination, grafting, crossbreeding and hybridizing. And all that is necessary to perpetuate the species is a graft.

9. Why spiritual grafting is contrary to nature.

Paul tells us in Romans, chapter 11, that we were cut out of a wild olive tree and grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree. Why is it contrary to nature? It is this way.

In natural grafting a wild root is used and a tame branch (scion or bud). This works fine because the wild root does not have the power to change the nature of the tame branch so tame fruit is obtained. But in spiritual grafting Jesus is the root and stock, and sinners, Jew or Gentile are the branches, and when we are grafted into Him, He has power to change our nature, so we will bring forth His kind of fruit. So we are "partakers of the divine nature." (II Pet. 1:4) The idea that Christians must keep their old sinful nature is in harmony with natural law, but not with supernatural. "The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." (Rom. 8:2.)

10. Some grafts inspire their host trees to send their roots down deeper. It has been discovered that some scions such as McIntosh Apple will somehow inspire the host into which it is grafted to send its roots down deeper in search of more nutrients and water supplies and produce more and better fruit than other apple varieties will do.

When I came across this, my mind went back to a man like Moses. God twice told him He was ready to destroy Israel and raise up a new nation from him. It seemed God was at the end of His patience, long-suffering and mercy. But Moses inspired God to reach deeper into the infinite resources of "His mercy that endureth forever" and spare them. And this is the privilege of all intercessors. The idea that prayer doesn't change anything is not the testimony of history, either sacred or profane. God is delighted to honor an intercessor's prayer and change things, especially when the change is from God's judgment to God's mercy. God would have been perfectly just to have wiped Israel out when He talked to Moses about it. He would have been glorified unto all eternity in the administration of that perfect justice. But God is more pleased to show mercy if He can find someone to pray, to really intercede. Every time a sinner prays the true prayer of a penitent and believes he changes things. Instead of a just judgment sending him to hell, a merciful Savior forgives him, takes him into the family of God, makes him a joint heir with Himself, writes his name in the Lamb's book of life and he becomes an heir of God. That is quite a change. And the man himself has undergone quite a change. The crook has become a Christian. The blasphemer begins blessing God's holy name, and the thief becomes honest. The former idler wants to work. The harsh, hateful man becomes loving. Quite a radical change is wrought by prayer.

Quite another change wrought by prayer is that which happens when a born-again believer is baptized with the Holy Ghost and has his heart purified. The biologist has a name for it -- metamorphosis. It is what happens when a lowly ugly caterpillar becomes a beautiful entrancing attractive butterfly. It is the word Paul uses in Romans 12 when he urges the Christians to present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy acceptable unto God (a sinner cannot do this) and be not conformed to this world but to be transformed (metamorphosed) by the renewing of their minds that they might prove what is that good, and acceptable and perfect will of God.

While it is not proper to call the changing of a caterpillar into a butterfly a miracle, it is certainly beyond the skill of human hand and the wisdom of human brain.

And I'm sure if a butterfly one year older than this year's caterpillar would testify to him and tell of the snowcapped mountains he had seen, and the alpine meadows full of glorious flowers, and the crags inhabited only by mountain sheep and goats, and how his one little sip of nectar that morning had energized him for hours, the caterpillar chewing voraciously on his cud of long green, would have called it all fanaticism.

But the day comes, when he spins as it were his own shroud, and lies down and to all intents and purposes dies, and when the fire of the sun revives him in the spring, he comes out in a glorious resurrection. He is not now an ugly earthbound caterpillar, but a glorious creature on good terms with the most fragrant flowers and the dizziest mountain heights, and on good terms with others of like nature.

Prayer doesn't change things? One hundred twenty prayed for ten days and were all filled with the Holy Ghost! They had their metamorphosis. Later the record says that the place was shaken where they prayed.

If a person believes that everything was foreordained, predestined and predetermined before the foundation of the world, then I can see where they would have a hard time believing that

prayer would change anything. And while I feel deeply sorry for them I vehemently, most vehemently disagree with them.

A Tree Will Bear Fruit According To Its Nature.

For sake of illustration let's say that my mother sent me one day when I was a boy to bring her a bucket of Grimes Golden apples for canning. I would approach the tree and say, "Mrs. Grimes Golden, my mother has sent me to get some of your fine apples." And the tree would answer, "Since you were here last a preacher has convinced me that I have to bear crab apples every day in word, thought and deed. Because -- you see those crab apple trees across the road? Well, the bees have been carrying their pollen over here and I just can't help it. You'll have to impute Grimes Golden apples to me, but really I have nothing but crab apples." Doesn't that sound foolish? No more so than for a man to teach that God imputes holiness to men, and they can be holy when they are actually corrupt.

Jesus said, "A good tree cannot bring forth corrupt fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."

Things That Affect Quality and Quantity of Fruit

1. Feeding or fertilizing.

One year when Mother was not able to care for her small orchard I offered to prune, fertilize and spray it and get my money back from apples. Nitrate of Soda was purchased and five pounds spread around each tree. It was a good apple year. The trees were loaded with the greatest mass of bloom we had ever seen. That September my new bride helped me pick the apples. We harvested as many as fifteen bushels of Red Delicious apples from one tree. So every Christian needs to be fed -- fed from the Word to be enabled to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

2. Water

Being in an area of abundant rainfall, irrigation was not necessary. But plentiful water supplies are a necessity for a good fruit crop. The Psalmist mentions this in Psalm 1. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of waters that brings forth his fruit in his season. His leaf also shall not wither and whatsoever he does shall prosper. The showers and anointings of the Holy Spirit are the Christian's water supply. We must have them.

3. Purging or pruning.

"When," I asked Mother, "is the best time to prune?" Her answer: "The experts say the best time to prune is when your knife is sharp." This must be done by someone who knows what he is doing. If a grapevine is pruned too closely it will produce what is called second crop and the fruit will not mature but will be hard and bitter. (Preacher brother, have you been getting some bitter fruit? Maybe you are pruning too closely.) If they are not pruned closely enough, there will be too many individual grapes and they will not mature. (Preacher brother, are your folks afflicted with a

childish spirit?) If there are too many branches, too many leaves, too many clusters of fruit, there are just not enough nutrients to go around to mature them all.

How about the Christian minister who has too many interests, who has himself so thinly spread that he cannot bring anything to full fruition. He may help many people slightly but bring none to full discipleship. How sad for it to be said of us, "Children are brought to the birth and there is not strength to bring forth." Or to have Jesus say, "I have not found thy works perfect before God." (Rev. 3:2) How much better to prune off some of our interests and concentrate on the great work of God's kingdom and see that we bring forth fruit to perfection. (Lu. 8:14)

4. Exposure to the elements.

A. Fruit produced in hot houses and under glass does not have either the flavor, nutrition nor durability of fruit exposed to the elements. All there is in the sunshine, rain and breezes does something for the fruit that improves it.

5. Type of light under which it grows.

Quite a while ago I read somewhere that a photographer doing time sequence pictures decided to get some of a cluster of apples ripening. He rigged up a glass-covered box affair to protect his equipment with a timer on the shutter that would trip it automatically, periodically. He came back every few days to check on it. To his amazement he found that other clusters of apples were ripening but those under the glass were staying "green and growing." They were made abnormal by unbalanced light. Telling some of his research scientist friends about this they did a project testing mice under different kinds of light. They discovered that under one type of fluorescent light, there would be an unusual increase in incidence of cancer. Under another color of fluorescent there would be almost all females and few males among the offspring. Incandescent bulbs were the nearest to sunlight of anything, but nothing could duplicate sunlight. Without sunlight there would be abnormalities.

If ministers preach lopsided truth (God's light), is it any wonder that Christians are abnormal, diseased, barren and lopsided? Or that some churches have few if any men in them? It was a constant source of encouragement and blessing to me, the more than thirteen years I pastored near Cincinnati, that our congregation would have a goodly number of boys and men -- often more than women and girls. I felt this was a good indication that I was giving them balanced light. And my many spiritual sons in full time kingdom work are a great source of encouragement to me also.

6. Ripeness when Picked.

No fruit with which I have been acquainted has the flavor and other qualities when picked green that it will have if allowed to ripen on the vine or tree.

How often has the Spirit been grieved when zealous and well-meaning people have surrounded someone and pressured them unduly to go to an altar when they were not really ready. And many have been the failures that followed. This is another case where we ought to talk to God more and people less. Higher quality fruit will result.

7. Lopsided trees. A small tree growing too close to a big tree is bound to be lop-sided for it gets light only on one side. The reflected light it gets from the big tree is not sufficient to sustain life or produce fruit on that side.

Lop-sided trees blow over much more easily than well-balanced trees do.

A large pin-oak that stood for many years in our "back 18" was a good example of a well-balanced tree. It was not close to any other tree. It received light from all sides. It was beautiful and symmetrical. When my brother who was farming that year decided to remove it, he and another brother went to work with a cross-cut saw, ax and wedges. They notched it, sawed from the other side, wedged to keep the saw from pinching, took the saw completely through the tree and took it out. The tree still stood. It was well-balanced. They huffed and puffed, and pulled and mulled with pain and strain but walked away and left it standing there. A wind later blew it over.

A Christian who idolizes another older, greater Christian and tries to imitate him and get his light from him will be lop-sided and will easily blow over when the storm comes. While we need to prayerfully consider any truth we get from any source yet "ye have an unction from the Holy One and have no need that any man [human wisdom] teach you" (about divine things). God's program calls for apostles and prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers for the work of the ministry, for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of the body of Christ so that we are not to take the attitude that all our light must come directly from God. And that even Spirit-filled and God called messengers cannot tell us anything for our good.

But we must not be totally dependent upon human channels. A royal priesthood indicates that each of us has access to God through Jesus Christ. And one of His names is Counselor.

Happy and prosperous indeed is that Christian who has the discernment and wisdom to take all truth he receives at the mouth of two or three dependable witnesses and apply it to his own heart and life and grow in grace and keep walking in the light, rejoicing evermore, praying without ceasing and in everything giving thanks.

Not in bondage to any but respectful to all. Weighing and comparing with the Scriptures any new thing he hears and above all being quiet enough before God to discern that still small voice when it indicates "This is the way, walk ye in it. "

Have you understood all these things? Then you have a treasure house and can bring forth out of your treasures things new and old.

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THE END