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## **SUNDRY THEMES**

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Digital Edition 11/02/2003  
By Holiness Data Ministry

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## **01 -- WHY CORKY DIED**

I was just a lad -- maybe 9 or 10 years old -- when I heard about Corky R\_\_\_\_'s death. I only knew of him -- didn't really know him. He was a teenager in Payette High School, but even though I was not really acquainted with him, for over more than half a century I have never forgotten the news of his sudden passing, and the unusual circumstances related to it.

No, Corky didn't die in a car wreck, the way numbers of teenagers did, even back in the middle to late 1940s. Still, his death might well be termed "an accident" -- even though it was caused by something he did on purpose. The "accidental" aspect was in the fact that he did not realize that what he planned to do, and did, would cause his death.

CORKY R\_\_\_\_\_ DIED BECAUSE OF EXTREMISM! His death was caused by something, which if he had used with sound judgment and moderation might well have been beneficial, but which he used to the extreme, resulting in his death.

Before I relate the specifics about Corky's untimely death, let me present several Scripture verses that bear on the matter of EXTREMISM VS. MODERATION -- followed by a brief observation after each:

Joel 2:23 -- "Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month."

Moderate rain in a timely season is often a great blessing -- extreme amounts of rain at any time are often very destructive and sometimes fatal. Hurricane Isabella which struck the east coast of the U.S. this Fall of 2003 is a prime example. In the above verse, God promised to bless his people with moderate rainfall during both rainy seasons -- enough to water the earth without wasting the earth with floods and erosion.

Philippians 4:5 -- "Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand."

Strange as it may strike some -- IT IS POSSIBLE to go to extremes, even in the practice of GOOD AND HOLY THINGS. The pendulum in one's beliefs and conduct even concerning things virtuous and spiritual can swing too far to the left or too far to the right.

Ecclesiastes 7:16 -- "Be not righteous over much; neither make thyself over wise: why shouldest thou destroy thyself?"

Technically, one cannot be too righteous -- but -- practically speaking, one can carry the attempted application of righteousness to an extreme -- to where it goes beyond true righteousness into an area beyond the bounds of God's will and beyond good sense -- to where one's distended and exaggerated notions about righteousness become self-destructive, and sometimes destructive to others as well.

For example: -- God requires one to be truthful, but I seriously doubt that he would require such as the following: -- You are traveling across country and just after crossing into a different time-zone you pull into a filling-station to gas-up. Not having a time-piece, the station attendant asks you the time, and you reply after glancing at your wristwatch, "It's 7:20 p.m." Then you pay the man and leave. Only after you have traveled a half-hour down the freeway, does it dawn upon you that with the change of time-zones you told the man it was 7:20 p.m. when it was only 6:20 p.m. in the time zone you and he are now both in. Feeling awful and condemned for having spoken an untruth, you look for the nearest exit whereby you can pull off and go back to that station, do so, and after traveling the half-hour back to the station you pull in, and then go in and apologize to the attendant for telling him something that was not so!

THAT, MY FRIENDS, IS WHAT I WOULD LABEL AS "OVER MUCH RIGHTEOUSNESS"! -- a state of mind and course of practice which if not abandoned can become

spiritually self-destructive, and if forced off upon others as "necessary" could also destroy them in like manner.

Don't tell me such an extreme spiritual bondage never befalls folks -- THIS FORM OF OVER MUCH RIGHTEOUSNESS ONCE TOOK HOLD OF ME! As a result, it landed me out of the ministry for a while, after having gotten me into a pitiful state of mental confusion, to the point where I was following "angel of light" impressions toward my own spiritual destruction! I will elaborate no further. I will simply assert again: I KNOW WHEREOF I SPEAK!

Prov. 30:7-9 -- "Two things have I required of thee; deny me them not before I die: Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain."

"The Extreme" is the danger in the above statements -- moderation is the safe point. Too little could tempt some to steal; too much could tempt others to a proud independence that denies and profanes God. Sufficiency -- not too little, not too much -- a moderate amount, just enough to get by in this world is all we really need of this world's goods. Go to the extreme either way from this, and it often breeds trouble.

Other Scriptures might be cited, but next -- let me tell you HOW AND WHY CORKY R\_\_\_ DIED:

He died from EXTREME COLD -- No, not by freezing, but by the swift meeting of extreme heat with extreme cold. He had been out haying on a hot summer day. I have done the same, and I can just imagine Corky as he pitched the hay onto the wagon or loaded the bales onto the same, picturing to himself how wonderful some ice-cold water would taste -- with ice-cubes in it! I can imagine him also, as an inexperienced and unwise teenager, carrying the picture even further in his mind and THINKING HOW WONDERFUL IT WOULD BE TO GO HOME AND COOL OFF IN A BATH-TUB FULL OF COLD WATER WITH ICE-CUBES IN IT!

So, as I recall the story, this is what Corky did. After coming home hot and sweaty following his work under the hot sun in that hay-field, he ran cold water into the bath-tub, put ice-cubes in it, and somehow managed to get himself down into that lethal bath -- lethal especially to one like himself whose body temperature would drop down too far, too fast!

Thus, the ice-cube bath that Corky planned to bring him pleasure and comfort -- because it was A LETHAL EXTREME -- KILLED HIM!

It is true that some times and in some things God does prefer one extreme or the other to that which falls in between. For example, Christ says to the Laodiceans in Revelation 3:15-16 "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth."

However, one should not take the Scriptures which exhort Christians to be zealous, to apply their whole might, and to be aflame as meaning that there is nothing in which moderation is God's will, part of sound, sanctified reason, and very, very important!

Concerning extreme HEAT spiritually, while God want's His people to be "on fire" with holy zeal for Him and for His work, He does not want them to "blister-the-hide-off" or burn-up those who need only more warmth, nor does he want his fiery zealots to be so heated in their passion that they are ready to incinerate all who disobey the Lord -- like the pre-Pentecostal James and John:

Luke 9:54-56 -- "And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village."

On the other hand, one can be extremely COLD spiritually. -- It is true that in some Scriptural figures, COLD is used to describe things which are spiritually good:

Proverbs 25:25 declares, "As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country." In various ways one can liken the Good News of the Gospel to thirst-quenching and refreshing "Cold Waters".

Again, in Proverbs 25:13, we can see the Gospel Message and Messenger as like a refreshing Cold: -- "As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, so is a faithful messenger to them that send him: for he refresheth the soul of his masters."

But once again, JUST AS EXTREME HEAT KILLS, SO DOES EXTREME COLD:-- Psalms 147:17 -- "He casteth forth his ice like morsels: who can stand before his cold?"

And, ONE'S SPIRITUAL COLDNESS MUST NOT BE THE WRONG KIND OF COLDNESS, OR AN EXTREME FORM OF THE RIGHT KIND OF COLDNESS!

Yes, God want's his people to "turn the cold shoulder" to Satan's temptation toward any passion that warms-one-up toward sin -- and -- therefore, worldly folks may sometimes feel that a Christian is giving THEM "the cold shoulder" as well when the faithful child of God politely, but firmly rejects a wordling's overtures toward what amounts to warming himself at the fires of those who crucify Christ.

However, in turning "the cold-shoulder" toward worldliness, one needs to take heed lest part of that coldness emanate from a heart that is "waxing cold" also in the Love of God: -- Matthew 24:12 -- "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold."

If one's coldness toward worldly folks is a frigid, hard-hearted, sub-zero blast blowing out of a legalistic heart void of the Loving Warmth of the Holy Spirit -- "WHO CAN STAND BEFORE [SUCH] COLD?" The wrong kind of spiritual coldness or even too much of what would

otherwise be the right kind of coldness CAN -- AND DOES -- KILL SOULS whom Christ wants to woo and win with the WARMTH OF HIS TENDER, SAVING AND SANCTIFYING LOVE.

"He that winneth souls is wise" (Proverbs 11:30 ) -- wiser than some who turn on the refrigeration when the heater is needed -- wiser than some folks who turn the cold shoulder on people they meet in the world who are freezing to death spiritually for lack of some real warmth from someone who really cares -- wiser than some who turn folks attending their church out into the cold when they need the warmth of Christian fellowship. Often there are souls in a congregation who don't measure up to all that some believe they should, but who are still best kept where they CAN take in some vital spiritual warmth and thereby get the spiritual help they need.

Proverbs 18:24 says, "A man that hath friends must show himself friendly.." Yes, there are times when a cold aloofness toward sin does help keep a Child of God from sin, but an almost constant coldness and aloofness in a professed Christian's demeanor and spirit toward others in the world will seldom "warm them up to the idea" of getting old-time religion. Conversely, a little warm friendliness shown by a Christian has often "broken the ice," melted the heart of a worldling, and been the means of leading that one to Jesus.

Corky R\_\_\_\_\_ accidentally killed HIMSELF with extreme cold after becoming extremely warm. But, I doubt if people faulted him, so much as pitied him: -- "Poor Corky! He didn't realize the danger in what he was doing!"

But what if one of Corky's PARENTS had prepared that ice-cube bath for him and had persuaded him to get into it, or had demanded that he bathe in that frigid water? I don't know about back then, but nowadays there's a good chance that the parent of an underage child who made such a demand resulting in the child's death would be sent to prison!

Why? Parents of a dead boy who died because they persuaded or demanded that he get into a tub of ice-water right after coming into the house heated and sweating from a day's work in a hot hay-field would be told, (in effect, if not in these exact words): "EITHER YOU KNEW BETTER! -- OR -- YOU SHOULD HAVE KNOWN BETTER THAN TO GO TO THE EXTREME OF HAVING YOUR CHILD TAKE AN ICE-CUBE BATH -- AT ANY TIME -- AND ESPECIALLY AT SUCH A TIME AS HE DID!

When the Psalmist asked in Psalms 147:17, "Who can stand before HIS cold?" -- he was referring to GOD'S COLD. God can make it SO COLD that no creature besides himself can STAND THAT COLD! -- and -- in the opposite extreme, God can also make it SO HOT that no creature besides Himself can STAND THAT HEAT!

But, being All-Wise, All-Loving, and UNLIKE MANY FINITE EXTREMISTS, GOD NEVER APPLIES THE WRONG EXTREME IN THE WRONG WAY AT THE WRONG TIME! -- and -- HE IS NEVER CULPABLE -- never guilty of applying the wrong thing, or the wrong amount of a thing with a wrong motive or spirit -- ever.

Unfortunately, finite MEN AND WOMEN OFTEN DO GO TO CULPABLE EXTREMES -- and sometimes EVEN WELL-INTENTIONED, AND GODLY PEOPLE go to an extreme when they should not, or use the wrong extreme, at the wrong time in the wrong way.

And -- as with Corky R\_\_\_\_'s case, EXTREMES WRONGLY APPLIED CAN BE FATAL WHETHER THAT IS THE INTENDED EFFECT OR NOT.

A-la Moses at Meribah (Numbers 20:10), a preacher who vehemently hates sin and worldliness -- unless he is careful -- can unwittingly allow Satan to over-heat his passionate hatred for sin in such a way that he blasts forth a white-hot stream of verbally flaming hatred directed toward the sinners in his congregation (and not merely toward their sin) so that, withered under his assault, they "jump out of the frying pan" of his audience "into the flames" of eternal perdition -- the exact opposite effect intended by God in the preaching of the Gospel.

And preachers who have drifted into legalism can begin to use such verbal flame-throwers to torch people in their congregation who are guilty of nothing more than disagreeing with their position on this or that.

WHO CAN STAND BEFORE SUCH HEAT?! -- Sinners and Saints both scurry out the door when a preacher's flame-throwing remarks are intended more to scold, scald, blister, burn, peel, and incinerate, than they are intended to gently warn and correct, warm, heal, and edify the souls who sit in his congregation!

LIKEWISE, WHO CAN STAND BEFORE SUCH COLD?! -- Sinners and Saints alike go shivering and shuddering out the door when the preacher's diatribes whoosh forth spiritually like a sub-zero, bone-chilling, and freezing Arctic blast -- intended to get rid of them in a back-door (revival?).

This -- not to be light, but to cast some light on this cold point: -- Perhaps you have heard the story going something as follows:-- As a preacher was preaching one cold, winter day, the furnace went out and the auditorium began to chill. Droning on, quite oblivious of the problem, the preacher continued his prolonged discourse. Soon, one in the congregation wrote a note, having it handed to the end to the pew with the whispered direction that it was for the Janitor. But, someone along the pew mistook "Janitor" for "Pastor" -- whereupon, an Usher carried the note up to the platform and discreetly slipped it to the preacher. When the preacher glanced at it, he read:

"YOUR HEAT'S OFF, BUT YOUR BLOWER IS STILL RUNNING!"

Long after the soul-warming heat of Christ's Spirit has been turned off, the ice-cold "blower" of some legalistic preachers is "still running" -- and that, quite intentionally and quite lengthily!

It will not do to say:-- "I didn't MAKE THEM leave!" -- or if more than one is involved -- "We didn't MAKE THEM leave!" Technically, that might be true, but few Sinners or Saints will continue to "STAND THE COLD" long when it is obvious that they are unwanted and are certainly unwarmed in the congregation of such icy and cold-hearted legalists!

On many occasions in my life, I did a lot of door-knocking, either as a pastor or as a door-to-door salesman. In doing this, at the door it was not too hard for me to tell when I was "unwanted" -- and I found it very difficult to try to get inside if I sensed that. Some door-to-door salespeople seemed to have a "rhinoceros-hide" and could go right on in where they really weren't wanted. This I found to be against my nature -- nor do I feel comfortable staying where I am not wanted.

If the preacher and/or others in a congregation want folks out the door, often it is not necessary to slam doors in folks' faces, nor is it always necessary to rule them out, or to shove them out. Sometimes all that is necessary is for a preacher and a few others in the congregation to turn on their cold spiritual-blowers, and leave them running, directed right at the undesirables until they feel compelled to go somewhere else where there is some inviting and genuine spiritual warmth.

Remember those mentioned in Matthew 25:44-45? -- those that Jesus said had been "naked" -- without sufficient clothing -- and who were no doubt thus "cold" at times? They needed clothing -- they needed warmth -- but, **THEY GOT NOTHING BUT THE COLD SHOULDER!**

Also, do you remember what Jesus said about that cold and heartless treatment?:-- "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to ME." -- Let me paraphrase: "It was ME to whom you **TURNED THE COLD SHOULDER!** It was ME that you **LEFT COLD AND UNCLOTHED!**"

Those who are given to extremism to any degree in any way should take heed. That extremism might adversely affect the Wrong PERSON!

How many? -- who have been extreme in the wrong way, in the wrong thing, at the wrong time and with the wrong spirit -- will hear Christ's condemnation of that behavior at the Judgment, being in effect either: -- **YOU KNEW BETTER!** -- OR -- **YOU SHOULD HAVE KNOWN BETTER THAN TO GO TO THE EXTREMES TO WHICH YOU WENT!** -- extremes that contributed to the needless suffering of some of God's Children, or that resulted needlessly in souls being lost, world without end! Selah.

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**02 -- ALTOGETHER SEPARATED FROM THE WORLD? -- NOT POSSIBLE NOW**

1 Corinthians 5:9-10 "I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world."

Increasingly, tee-total separation from the world is becoming impossible:

Buy groceries where they don't sell booze? -- Where ya gonna do it?

Not reveal your anatomy and still fly on commercial airliners? -- How ya gonna do it? When increasingly the airlines are using "see-through" technology capable of viewing everything beneath one's clothes -- this, in an effort to discover hidden weapons, etc. Recently facts about this technology were published, and the "see-through" technology was so thoroughly revealing that even its inventors were somewhat surprised. I understand that they plan to create a little electronic "fig leaf" which can be used for some covering, but -- will they always use it? I doubt it. Therefore, some holiness folks who fly commercially will be forced to decide whether it will be "a slow boat to China" or a fast jet -- after undergoing scrutiny that may reveal their entire anatomy. I do not raise the subject to suggest that to be holy one must take "the slow boat," but to suggest that it is impossible to totally escape from all things in the world that are distasteful or unholy.

Not allow snoopers to listen to your phone calls or read your emails? -- Forget it! -- "then must you needs go out of the world," -- and even then these things might be read from millions of miles out into space.

Preach the gospel on nothing but the radio? -- Look out! Preach the Word over the air and there may be a wicked ad voiced just before or after your program!

Use email but no internet browser? -- Look out again! -- It is possible to access the internet through email programs!

Ever increasingly, and very rapidly, technologies are merging into one tool -- your phone is your computer, is your camera, is your email program, is your internet connection.

If some church leaders are already beside themselves trying to figure out how to ban this while accepting that, how to rule this in and that out, how to write enough rules to cover every new invention now out -- they are sure to go bonkers in the near future over how to draw what line where and how.

At some point -- I predict that if Jesus tarries, some leaders are going to be forced to concede that they must allow the Holy Spirit to guide people individually in what they allow or disallow in the use of many technologies -- especially when many of those technologies will come in one small device, clipped on the belt, installed in the auto, or even in one's land-line phone device.

When pastoring in Coeur d' Alene, Idaho some years ago, I happened to pass by a vile, female clothing store -- more aptly described as an "unclothing" store -- it was named "The Altogether". The woman who apparently owned and ran the store was trying to sell the most skimpy excuses for feminine attire then available -- so close to nothing that one wearing them was near to being "altogether" unclothed.

Some time later, I again passed that store-front, and "The Altogether" was altogether out of business -- at least in that location.

What is my point?



Just this:-- Those who push as close as they can for "The Altogether" separation of saints from this world may also soon be "out of business" -- for they strive for what cannot be -- in this world. Yes, Christians MUST BE SEPARATE FROM THE WORLD -- "Yet not altogether.. for [to be thus tee-totally separated they] must ye needs go out of the world."

Such a total separation IS coming -- at the Rapture -- and they only shall be raptured to meet the Lord in the air who are spiritually separated from the world in their loves and lives, but at the same time, they only shall be raptured who have obeyed the Lord's command: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

Those who unwisely press for an overmuch isolation from the world here and now, whether they intend so to do or not, actually hinder the furtherance of the gospel, place Christ's Light under a bushel, and, in effect, disobey the Great Commission.

Prior to Pentecost, "the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews..." In too many cases today still, holiness assemblies are too much like "closed door" societies -- for fear of worldly intrusion.

It is interesting that while Mark 2:16 and Luke 5:30 reveal that Jesus went among and ate "WITH sinners" Hebrews 7:26 tells us that when He did so He was still "SEPARATE FROM sinners" and "undefiled"! His was not an "Altogether Separation From The World" until His Ascension.

In John 17:15, Jesus interceded, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." Pentecost brought the answer to this prayer, with the mighty Baptism of the Holy Ghost that made the Church inwardly "undefiled and separate from sinners" while still not taking them "altogether out of the world."

Just as Christ was inwardly "insulated" from all worldliness and not outwardly "isolated" from all worldly people -- until his Ascension, even so He wills it to be for His Church -- until their Ascension at His Return. And -- this, His method, of preventing worldliness while promoting heavenliness is the only one that will work. Try the other method, and unwise ecclesiastics may indeed become more monastic and isolated, but in so doing they will also soon be "out of business" in spreading the true gospel. Selah.

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### 03 -- BRITTLE OLD BOTTLES ARE BURSTING

(KJV) Matthew 9:17 -- "Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved."

(NIV) Matthew 9:17 -- "Neither do men pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skins will burst, the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved."

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## I. WHY -- "BRITTLE OLD BOTTLES ARE BURSTING"

With God's Spirit, under the New Covenant, the constant demand is: -- Expand or Expire! When Christ shed forth the Holy Ghost on Pentecost, His Spirit was not poured into the brittle, old wineskin of the Law, but into the flexible, new wineskin of human hearts. The governing of the Church was not to be through "The Power of an Endless List" of written rules, but through "The Power of an Endless Life" -- Christ's Spirit within the believer's heart, purifying it and individually guiding and expanding Himself in that vessel.

Christ's Method was not Expansion of the Law, but rather Expansion of the human heart and soul. First, because Expansion of the Law was impractical: -- All of the necessary rules to guide every individual Christian through every moment of every day of life, "if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books" (John 21:25) necessary to do that. Second, because Expansion of the Law was impossible through its very nature. It had served its purpose, but was now an old, inflexible, inexpandable bottle.

But, wrote Paul, "what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:3-4).

The Old Covenant Bottle, the Law, could not, cannot, expand, and therefore has expired in its old form as the Governor of God's People -- yet it is being fulfilled in the new container -- human hearts purged and filled with the Holy Ghost.

WHY "Brittle Old Bottles Are Bursting"? -- Because some sincere, but mistaken Christians have tried once again to pour the New Wine of Christ's Spirit into the Old Wineskins of multitudinous rules and regulations to govern God's People. Their organizational leadership will not expand with the vision and passion of the Holy Ghost, and because of this misguided inflexibility, their ecclesiastical bottles are bursting.

Under this point, consider the following comments on Matthew 9:17 from Clarke's Commentary, Wesley's Notes, and Spurgeon's Commentary:

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## CLARKE'S COMMENTARY

Verse 17. New wine into old bottles] It is still the custom, in the eastern countries, to make their bottles of goat skins: if these happened to be old, and new wine were put into them, the

violence of the fermentation must necessarily burst them; and therefore newly made bottles were employed for the purpose of putting that wine in which had not yet gone through its state of fermentation. The institutes of Christ, and those of the Pharisees, could never be brought to accord: an attempt to combine the two systems would be as absurd as it would be destructive. The old covenant made way for the new, which was its completion and its end; but with that old covenant the new cannot be incorporated.

Christian prudence requires that the weak, and newly converted, should be managed with care and tenderness. To impose such duties and mortifications as are not absolutely necessary to salvation, before God has properly prepared the heart by his grace for them, is a conduct as absurd and ruinous as putting a piece of raw, unsoured cloth on an old garment; it is, in a word, requiring the person to do the work of a man, while as yet he is but a little child. Preachers of the Gospel, and especially those who are instruments in God's hand of many conversions, have need of much heavenly wisdom, that they may know to watch over, guide, and advise those who are brought to a sense of their sin and danger. How many auspicious beginnings have been ruined by men's proceeding too hastily, endeavouring to make their own designs take place, and to have the honour of that success themselves which is due only to God.

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#### WESLEY'S NOTES

V. 17. New-Fermenting wine will soon burst those bottles, the leather of which is almost worn out. The word properly means vessels made of goats' skins, wherein they formerly put wine, (and do in some countries to this day) to convey it from place to place.

Put new wine into new bottles-Give harsh doctrines to such as have strength to receive them.

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#### SPURGEON'S COMMENTARY

His teaching and spirit could not be associated with the Pharisaic order of things. Judaism in its degenerate condition was an old skin bottle which had seen its day, and our Lord would not pour the new wine of the kingdom of heaven into it. -- John's disciples were trying to emulate the Pharisees, and make common cause with them to save the old church. Jesus would have nothing to do with this project. he would have a new church for his new doctrine and for his new spirit. There was to be no amalgamation. Christianity was not to be an outgrowth of Rabbinism. There was to be a severance between Jesus, and the scribes and their school of thought; for he who had come was resolved to make all things new. There is rare teaching here, and guidance for the present crisis. Compromises are often proposed, and we have good people, like John's disciples, who would have us conform to what they think good in things established; but we had better act consistently, and begin de novo. The old cloth will always be tearing, and tearing all the worse because of our new pieces; therefore let us leave the old garment to those who prefer antiquity to truth.

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## II. WHAT IS THE RESULT WHEN "BRITTLE OLD BOTTLES ARE BURSTING"?

Inevitably, two things:

- (1) The Wine runs out.
- (2) The Bottles are ruined.

"the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined"

The "Wine" is God's Spirit -- but more particularly, God's Spirit in the hearts of His sanctified saints who are grieved over the inflexibility of an Old-Testmant-Type rulership being forced upon them -- a rulership that forbids and hinders the individual guidance and expansion of the Spirit within them. Try to "Bottle Up" Spirit-filled Saints within the confines of multitudinous written rules and they will burst forth from such and "RUN OUT" of such an organization!

The "Bottles" are inflexible church organizations -- which are "RUINED" when grieved saints "RUN OUT" of them! Ruined because of inflexible leadership -- ruined by ruptured fellowship -- ruined by emptiness, retaining their rules with numbers of their former members gone, never to return! -- and ruined by the inability to HOLD any wine poured into them! Pour New Wine saints into an Old Wineskin organization and after they enter the portal they will almost immediately spill forth out of that organization through ruptures caused by previous burstings or by newly created ruptures after they arrive!

Folks, do you know what can discourage a pastor more than about anything else?: -- Seeing a constant stream of new folks pour in the door of his church who get saved and filled with the Holy Spirit, who then quickly pour back out of the church through the ruptured holes of unwise organizational rigidity and legalism!

Ruined, Old-Bottle Church-Organizations CAN'T HOLD THE WINE! They CAN hold Conferences; they CAN hold Standards; they CAN hold much that is good; they simply CANNOT hold WINE -- and THAT is supposed to be why they exist. It is high time that some folks in some conservative holiness churches stopped blaming the exodus from their ranks on worldliness in the hearts of all those who are leaving.

That fact is -- RIGHT NOW -- WINE -- SPIRIT-FILLED SAINTS -- are spilling forth out of some groups because of ruptures caused by hyper-legalism in church government. When WINE pours forth -- DON'T BLAME IT ON WORLDLINESS! Lay the blame where it belongs: upon ruptures caused by Old-Wineskin inflexibility. This is why some, if not most, of "the grieving" are "leaving" in some cases today.

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## III. WHAT CAN BE DONE WHEN "BRITTLE OLD BOTTLES ARE BURSTING"?

In Joshua 9:4 we read of how the Gibeonites, in deceiving Joshua, "did work wilily, and went and made as if they had been ambassadors, and took old sacks upon their asses, and WINE BOTTLES, OLD, and RENT, and BOUND UP."

Apparently, sometimes in Bible days when an old wineskin was ruptured and rent, instead of throwing the wineskin away they sewed-up the tear -- they "bound up" the rupture and continued to use the old bottle.

However, this is NOT what really needs to be done to remedy the problem. A church that is constantly rupturing and losing the wine of Spirit-filled members needs to make a complete change in the primary way it promotes the Kingdom and holiness in the hearts and lives of those filling its pews.

When a rupture occurs and the WINE of genuinely sanctified saints runs out, it will not do to say: "Well, that wasn't WINE we lost when our Church ruptured; no, that wasn't WINE, that was a bunch of WORLDLY FOLKS, and we are better off without them!" Neither will it do to "bind up" the rupture in the Old Bottle and try to refill it. It will only rupture again, -- and again -- and again! Don't tell me that is not so. You know it is. You see it happening.

What can be done to really fix the problem? Jesus gave the clear and simple solution: "put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved." Emphasize being genuinely saved, purged, and filled with the Holy Spirit -- but allow Christ to pour that WINE into the NEW BOTTLE of each human heart -- and -- free from excessive and oppressive rules and regulations -- allow HIM the necessary room to govern, guide, and grow each saint into HIS WILL, HIS WORK, AND HIS LIKENESS.

It will be only when sanctified leaders are wise enough to stop trying to pour New Wine into Old Bottles that the repeated ruptures in conservative holiness churches will cease. "WHEN SHALL IT ONCE BE?" (Jeremiah 13:27). -- Ever? -- or -- Never?

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04 -- IT'S ALL IN HOW YOU LOOK AT IT!

My wife just gave me a head-rub to relieve pressure I frequently feel in the top of my head. After I pondered what it might be, she reminded me that I once had an MRI of my head -- and that they had not found anything. They did an MRI of my head and FOUND NOTHING! Well, such an observation about their findings really leaves me feeling empty-headed!

It's all in how you look at the meaning of her remark, of course -- at least I hope so!

HERE IS SOMETHING ELSE -- not profound, really, but something I never thought of until several days ago -- never in all of my 66 plus years:

DO YOU REALIZE? -- That as you move forward down the road in your vehicle, BOTH WHEELS ON THE LEFT SIDE of your vehicle are ROTATING COUNTER-CLOCK-WISE, and at the same time BOTH WHEELS ON THE RIGHT SIDE of your vehicle are ROTATING CLOCK-WISE!

Think about it now: -- If two people on the opposite sides of the street watch you pass in a forward motion, the person viewing the left side of your vehicle will see that the rotation of your wheels on the left side is in a counter-clock-wise motion -- while, at the same time the person viewing the right side of your vehicle will see that the rotation of the wheels on the right side of your vehicle is in a clock-wise motion!

Let me go one further:-- If you had your vehicle up on a hoist, and the drive-shafts were rigged to spin right-side wheels viewed from the right in a clock-wise motion and left-side wheels viewed from the left side also in a clock-wise motion -- THE WHEELS WOULD BE TURNING IN OPPOSITE DIRECTIONS -- and -- if you dropped that vehicle to the ground with the drive-shafts thus rigged to turn the wheels, YOU COULD MOVE NEITHER BACKWARD NOR FORWARD -- the wheels on the right pulling against the wheels on the left, and vice versa.

BUT -- whether wheels are seen turning in a clock-wise or counter-clock-wise motion all depends upon HOW YOU LOOK AT THEM! It all depends upon your point of view!

In fact, as all know, when a car is moving forward all four wheels must be turning in a forward direction. If you were to put a car up on a hoist with someone in it to put it in gear with the wheels turning forward -- and if you then viewed both right-side and left-side wheels from beneath -- to the right of the car -- all four wheels would be seen rotating in a clock-wise motion. At the same time, you could move over to an exactly opposite position on the left side beneath the car and all four wheels would be seen rotating in a counter-clock-wise rotation. Whether any wheel, at any time, on any thing, is seen rotating in a clock-wise or counter-clock-wise motion depends totally upon which side of the wheel the beholder is viewing.

Like old Bud Robinson said about an observation he made in a recording of his Hospital Experience: -- "You say it don't amount to nothin' -- well, maybe it don't" -- but, at least it is something that dawned upon my tired old brain for the first time a few days ago -- and it does illustrate that WITH MORE THAN ONE THING "IT'S ALL IN HOW YOU LOOK AT IT"! Indeed, your perception of many things may depend upon how you look at them.

Wife said they didn't find anything when they did an MRI of my head. How do you take that? -- Well, "It's all in how you look at it"! One might say "she meant nothing by it" -- but that too could be suggested to mean that she's married to an "air-head"! :-)

At the end of this trivia, let me make the following sober and sane observations: -- One must not conclude that the nature of EVERYTHING depends upon "how one looks at it" -- Morally, Right is Right if nobody but God sees it that way, and Wrong is Wrong if nobody believes it but God. But, those who are wise realize that with finite human beings ONE'S PERSPECTIVE weighs heavily in one's PERCEPTION of what a thing is, what a thing is doing, and what a thing should, or should not, be and do. The only Being Who sees all things, at all times,

from every perspective, with a totally correct perception is GOD. He has revealed in the Bible His inerrant perceptions of all things necessary to Man's eternal life and godliness, and by His Spirit, He is also able to illumine to the minds of His people the correct perception of those things as applied to every thing at every moment in their lives.

For the sake of illustrating the frequent misperceptions of unenlightened -- or partially enlightened -- human judgment, let me put it this way: -- Too often blundering and blind-sided men will insist that all four wheels of a thing or issue must be seen from both sides as rotating in the same clock-wise, or counter-clock-wise, motion. But after they concoct such notions and construct such vehicles and then put them down "where the rubber meets the road" -- the thing won't move! -- or, set down upon a slippery, icy surface, will spin like a top or go in circles like a whirling dervish -- wasting a lot of time, energy, and expense -- getting nowhere!

When things get locked up and won't move, it is often because one's perspective has led him or her to the wrong perception of how a thing must be constructed in order move. Or, when things spin in place like a top, and then swerve off into the ditch instead of moving forward as they ought, it might well be that it is because the machine has been constructed by one who failed to consider both sides of an issue, and who concocted his invention from only his own, one-sided perspective. Selah.

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05 -- THE NEED: -- A GROWING INTERDICTION? -- OR -- A GROANING INTERCESSION?

To stem the flood-tide of worldliness -- A growing INTERDICTION? or A groaning INTERCESSOR? Which is most needed? A STRICTLY-WRITTEN, PRECEPT-FILLED MANUAL? or A SPIRIT-FILLED, PRAYING MAN? Which shall it be? When the former of these is over-emphasized and the latter neglected, conformity is demanded and unity destroyed; but when the latter is preeminent revival is certain and unity is preserved.

THREE TIMES CONFORMITY is mentioned in the Bible:-- (a) Rom. 8:29, where it is stated that God has predestinated His people to "be conformed to the image of His Son; (b) Rom. 12:2, where Christians are commanded to "be not conformed to this world," and where instead they are told: "be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind..."; and (c) Philippians 3:10, where Christians are exhorted to be "made conformable unto his [Christ's] death."

It is clear from the above verses that indeed Christians must not be "conformed to the world," but it is equally clear that the only way anyone can escape worldly conformation is through the inward TRANSFORMATION of the New Birth, and by spiritual CONFORMATION TO CHRIST'S DEATH!

In other words, Conformity to the World is not escaped, nor is one preserved therefrom, by Conformity to Religious Rules, but escape and preservation from worldliness is accomplished first by a genuine, spiritual Transformation, and second, by a genuine, spiritual Conformation to Christ's Death to obtain and retain the mighty Baptism of the Holy Ghost.

The tragic error of many in the Holiness Movement today is the insistence upon writing and enforcing more rules, as the means to prevent conformity to the world, when the energies they spend openly in long conference debates to create and pass more and more rules should instead be energies that are spent in secret, praying down a revival that will bring more and more genuine, spiritual Transformations, Conformations to Christ's death, and Holy Ghost Revival!

The fact is, it is far easier to INTERDICT WITH RULES than it is to INTERCEDE FOR REVIVAL. It is much easier to stand up publicly in conference and speak "Great Swelling Words" against perceived worldly inventions than it is to bow down in private and sweat "Great Drops of Blood" for Holy Ghost Revival! -- and this explains WHAT is happening in the anemic, present-day, conservative holiness movement, versus WHAT SHOULD BE happening -- and WHY. Don't say it isn't so! -- You know it is.

When God spoke through the prophet Ezekiel, he did not say, "I sought for A MANUAL that should MAKE UP THE HEDGE" against worldliness"!

No -- ten thousand times, NO! -- Instead, he said in Ezekiel 22:30, "And I sought for A MAN among them, that should MAKE UP THE HEDGE, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none."

It is a groaning, interceding, Holy Ghost filled MAN who constitutes GOD'S HEDGE against worldliness -- not a growing, interdicting, MANUAL!

A Groaning INTERCEDING MAN? -- or A growing, INTERDICTING MANUAL? -- which shall it be? No matter how small the interceding MAN may be, no matter how unnoticed he is at conference, he is God's means -- God's effective MAN -- to stem the tide of worldliness from making inroads into the Church; but -- no matter how large the MANUAL, no matter how many rules are written in it, and no matter how many pages it contains, without Holy Ghost intercessors and Holy Ghost Revival, it amounts to nothing more than an ineffectual volume of human interdictions that are doomed to failure -- and worse yet, interdictions that are certain to divide the Church.

Don't tell me it is not so. You know it is.

THREE TIMES UNITY is also mentioned in the Bible: -- Psalms 133:1 declares: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" A MAN who has the Law of God written on his heart, and who emphasizes this experience, finds himself pleasantly united with all others such as himself. A MANUAL, printed on paper and detailed to the "Nth" degree and forced upon all by well-intentioned, but over-zealous, church leaders, often creates both an unpleasant atmosphere in the church and division in the ranks. Frequently, when the whole matter should have been taken secretly and exclusively to the Closet, instead, it is taken openly and executively to the Conference! And, instead of seeing a Holy Ghost Revival, the Church experiences another unpleasant, heart-rending, number-shrinking, Man-Caused Reversal and Split.

Secondly, in Ephesians 4:3 we read: "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." A GROANING, INTERCEDING MAN will endeavor to keep the unity of the



Spirit, even if doing so sometimes requires that he acquiesce to the different views of others. A GROWING, INTERDICTING MANUAL is often the endeavor of a few to force their own views on things upon all others. If they spent one-third as much endeavor in secretly GROANING AND INTERCEDING as their endeavor at publicly GROWING AND INTERDICTING their rules, "the unity of the Spirit and bond of peace" would be much better "kept".

Thirdly, Ephesians 4:13 reads: "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

Realistically, wise Christians know that the perfect "unity of the faith" awaits the arrival of the "perfect man" -- the "glorified man". When sanctified mortals have put on immortality; when the pure in heart are also perfect in mind, then it is that all of God's people "shall see eye to eye" ( Isaiah 52:8), in perfect agreement and unity.

Until that Perfect Day, would it not be better if there were less emphasis placed upon Strict Manual Precepts and more stress laid upon Stretched-Out, Men of Prayer? -- less dependence upon a Growing Interdiction of Rules and more dependence upon a Groaning Intercession and Revival? Selah.

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## 06 -- MENTAL MORONS AND SPIRITUAL OXYMORONS

There are morons -- such as those whose IQ is so low they can never learn the alphabet -- and then there are many today with very high IQs whose supercilious reasoning is loaded with spiritual oxymorons.

A moron is a mental "fruitcake" -- a dunce; an oxymoron is "a rhetorical figure in which incongruous or contradictory terms are combined, as in A DEAFENING SILENCE or A MOURNFUL OPTIMIST" -- (American Heritage Dictionary).

Little Tom, in the following story, used what might well be classified as an oxymoron: -- His brother, nine-year-old Henry, struck upon the idea of hiring little Tom as his servant. "I'll give you ten cents a week," he said. "O.K.," little Tom agreed. Henry then felt he'd offered too much money. "I can only pay you five cents a week after all!" he said. "O.K.," said Tom, just as cheerfully. Thinking he could get his brother's service for even less, Henry said, "All I can pay is a penny a week." "Well, O.K.," said Tom, "but don't RAISE IT ANY LOWER."

According to my computer dictionary the word oxymoron comes from two Greek words: "oxus" meaning "sharp" and "moros" meaning "dull" or "foolish". Oxymorons, therefore, present striking contrasts and incongruities in an expression. Using the English meanings of the two Greek words from which the word is derived, I would be using an oxymoron if I said that a person was "Sharply Dull".

For the sake of this little article, however, I will designate one whose spiritual thinking incorporates oxymorons as being himself, or herself AN OXYMORON -- one who is "sharp" mentally but "dull" spiritually -- perhaps a genius intellectually, but one who is spiritually a dunce -- A SPIRITUAL OXYMORON, if you please.

Today's "Spiritual Oxymorons" include the following:

(1) Those who think they are ELEVATED in their DEGENERACY. If I were to say that so and so is an "elevated degenerate" I would be using an oxymoron, and, I would term those who believe that their degeneracy has elevated them as "Spiritual Oxymorons" -- even if they be geniuses with Doctors Degrees. Those whose supercilious and pompous notions about their high and mighty positions in the world might well be warned concerning their real, spiritual estimation in God's sight with little Tommy's words: "Don't raise it any lower!" The more elevated one's notion is of himself, the more degenerate and lower he is in God's sight, "For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke 14:11).

(2) Those who think they are LIVING while being DEAD. If we were to speak of "The Living Dead" we would be using a rhetorical oxymoron, but -- there are, if you please, "Spiritual Oxymorons" who fit the description. I recall a story something like the following: One day a man saw a turtle walking along a pathway. In his meanness, he decapitated the turtle, and went on his way. By and by another man walking along the same path encountered the turtle's severed head and next the beheaded turtle walking on down the path without its head. He then remarked: "Poor thing! Dead, and don't know it!" In 1 Timothy 5:6, God's Word declares: "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." There are many such paradoxes in the spiritual versus the natural realm. He, or she, is a "Spiritual Oxymoron" who cannot perceive them and who actually believes the opposite of the truth presented in the paradox.

(3) Those who think themselves RICH in their POVERTY. If I were to say that he or she is "richly poor" or if I were to refer to "the impoverished wealthy," I would be using oxymorons. But, if folks are actually poor spiritually but while thinking themselves to be spiritually rich, we might term such as "Spiritual Oxymorons". They would fit the description of those in the Laodicean Church, of whom Christ observed in Revelation 3:17 -- "Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Thus, we can see that today's "Spiritual Oxymorons" include many in the professed Church.

(4) Those who consider themselves to be PROGRESSIVE while actually BACKSLIDING. I read of how, years ago, when Admiral Perry's expedition was traveling across an ice-flow toward the North Pole, they traveled for some time, thinking that they were making progress northward. But, to their dismay, when they finally reckoned their position by the polestar, they discovered that the entire ice-flow upon which they had been traveling had been drifting south! Had they thought to read their position by the polestar, instead of judging their position by that beneath, before, behind, and around them, they would have discovered their drift earlier!

What a perfect picture of what happens to entire holiness denominations. They begin to drift in relationship to the spiritual "Pole-Star," Jesus Christ. But, because they are all together in a

group, and take their eyes off of Jesus, they measure their progress by unscriptural, unreliable methods, and they fail to detect their subtle, but often fatal, drift away from Christ and toward the world and hell! This is not to say that the Church should become monastic, for that too can become an iceberg spiritually upon which legalistic groups who are frozen at heart enact all sorts of rules and regulations against myriad things while drifting backwards from Christ. "Progressive Backsliding" is a rhetorical oxymoron, but still, many in both the ultra-liberal and ultra-legal fringes of the Church today who think they are "Progressive" in their judgments are actually "Spiritual Oxymorons" who are "progressively backsliding" en masse away from Christ.

(5) Those who consider themselves to be GREATLY ENLIGHTENED while being GREATLY DARKENED in their minds and hearts. Jesus warned in Matthew 6:23 -- "If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" The fact is, the brighter and more highly enlightened men think themselves to be, the darker their minds actually are, "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart" (Ephesians 4:18). If I was to speak of "A DUMB GENIUS" I would be using a rhetorical oxymoron. In fact, however, there are many "Spiritual Oxymorons" today who are just that: Spiritually "Dumb Geniuses"! They think they know too much to believe the Bible, when in fact they know too little in disbelieving it! These self-esteeming "wise men" should be "ashamed" for "lo, they have rejected the Word of the Lord; and what wisdom is in them?" (Jeremiah 8:9). Certainly their brightness is not that "wisdom which is from above" -- their supposed enlightenment and "wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish" (James 3:15) -- and, far from being bright, it is as black and blind as outer darkness!

(6) Those who think themselves EVOLVED when they are actually DEVOLVED. God has created this universe in such a way that by examination of the continuing process the time of its origin cannot be determined. Let me elucidate.

God created Adam and Eve as adults -- and, one second after each came into existence they appeared to be, let's say, 33 years old. Also, in the Garden of Eden may have been trees of various diameters which were created instantly, not having sprung up from seed. Cut three of them down and count the stump rings:-- 20 in one, 50 in another, and 100 in the third -- making it appear that they were of three different ages, when in fact they were all created instantaneously -- at the same time! The ongoing growth of instantaneously created trees in the Garden of Eden would have produced a new ring each year, but counting those rings would have led to the wrong conclusion about the age of each. Likewise, examine the various strata of the earth and it may appear to be billions of years old, when in fact God created it in a mature state 6,000 years ago -- just like the Bible said.

Do I hear somebody say: "God wouldn't do that!"

I reply: "Why not? If He created a mature Adam and Eve (as we know He did), then He could just as easily have created a mature universe. If examining the physical and material evidence of our First Parents' bodily appearance and the rings of the trees in the Garden of Eden would have led one to believe that they originated at various times long before they did, then I say that it is possible, if not probable, that God also created a mature universe, in such a way that the examination of the layers of strata in its physical evidence cannot be used to determine its age.

When it comes right down to it, folks -- either God's Word is true concerning the age of the universe, or evolutionary teachings are true, and God's Word is false. I suggest that God created a mature universe, just as he created a mature Adam and Eve, and we cannot "count the rings" of material evidence and reach the right conclusion. We must believe the Bible account to correctly assess the age of God's Creation.

The solemn fact is -- today's Spiritual Oxymorons are not EVOLVED up from apes, but rather they are DEVOLVED down into "animalistic apes" -- far below the noble beings God originally created. The theory of "Evolution" would more aptly be described as "Devil-ution" -- so far removed from the truth that only a Spiritual Oxymoron is dumb enough to believe it!

One "parting shot" on this subject: -- When God sent angels in the form of men during Bible times, no doubt some of those angels had long beards which appeared to have grown over days or weeks, when the fact was -- "poof"! God spoke, and they "were" -- a moment before those beards did not even exist, and then suddenly they appeared as if having "evolved" and grown for days or weeks! Psalm 33:9 tells us: "For he [God the Creator] spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast." No sir! This universe did not evolve over billions of years, GOD "SPAKE AND IT WAS DONE" IN EXACTLY THE AMOUNT OF TIME HIS WORD SAYS IT WAS DONE! If you don't believe that, YOU DON'T BELIEVE THE BIBLE!

(7) Those who think themselves PURE when they are FILTHY. If I were to speak of that which is "Purely Filthy" it would be a rhetorical oxymoron. Yet, we might say that much being produced today is "pure filth" -- nothing in it but that which is vile, rotten, dirty and immoral. But, we have gotten to the place today where the dirtier some folks are, the more pure they are in their own eyes. In Proverbs 30:12-13 we read: -- "There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness. There is a generation, O how lofty are their eyes! and their eyelids are lifted up."

In the eyes of millions of Spiritual Oxymorons today, the filthy are those who speak against homosexuality; the vile are those who stand against abortion; the dirty are those who believe in chastity and moral virtue; the socially threatening "Typhoid Marys" are those who want God left in the Pledge of Allegiance and who want the Ten Commandments left inscribed in stone where long they have been in public places.

Today's Spiritual Oxymorons have things turned around more backwards than did the infamous and immoral Mae West who declared years ago: "When I'm bad, I'm good, and when I'm real bad, I'm real good!"

The more FILTHY today's Spiritual Oxymorons are, the PURER they are in their own eyes. As they see it, the "bad guys" and the "dirty dogs" of society today are those who believe in decency, chastity, righteousness, and purity.

Through the ancient prophet, Isaiah, God has pronounced the doom of today's Spiritual Oxymorons: "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light

for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!" Isaiah 5:20-21

Far more sad than being a Mental Moron in time who shall spend eternity in heaven, shall be the fate of those who are today intellectually brilliant, but who are Spiritual Oxymorons that shall spend eternity in Outer Darkness ruing and suffering the results of their spiritual ignorance.

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## 07 -- NO SUCH THING AS A PUSHY LEADER

Exodus 21:29 gives instructions concerning an "ox" that is "wont to push."

I have heard of ancient (Roman?) coins picturing an ox, along with both a yoke and an altar -- the message of the picture being of one who is equally ready to serve and ready to die in sacrifice -- ready to pull in the yoke or die upon the altar -- whichever be the will of the master.

True spiritual leaders fit this picture. They do not push so much as pull; they do not demand of others so much as set the example of sacrifice before others in their own lives.

In fact, it is impossible to lead and push others at the same time! Therefore, in a very real sense, **THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A "PUSHY LEADER"** -- such a term would be an oxymoron with the adjective contradicting the subject.

A true spiritual Leader in God's work is an **OX WHO PULLS** -- one who continually invites others to follow him as he follows Christ, wearing the yoke and pulling the load; he is never one who removes the yoke from his own neck so as to be able to get behind others and push them into moving forward as he himself wills.

A true spiritual Leader in God's work is an **OX WHO SACRIFICES HIMSELF** -- one who spiritually dies daily, and who is willing to die physically, if need be, to promote God's cause -- one who moves others to follow his own sacrificial example.

A true spiritual Leader in God's work is **NEVER AN OX WHO PUSHES!** -- one who insists that folks go in the direction he shoves them from behind, but rather he is one who stays in the yoke, plowing a straight line as God leads him -- without demanding that all others behind him plow in exactly the same row.

Did you ever notice? When a farmer is plowing with multiple plowing teams or tractors, often each plower following the other is plowing a new furrow (or new furrows) beginning just at the edge of the preceding furrow(s). The multiple teams do not all plow down the same furrow!

Often, it is thus with God's work. In order to get the most done, God sets his teams of workmen to plowing just to the side of those preceding, so as to plow the widest possible swath in the shortest possible time.

To a leader who is tempted to be, or who has made himself, an "ox wont to push" -- can we not hear the Heavenly Husbandman saying: "Plow your own furrow! Don't insist that all others go down your same row! And, above all, don't push people! -- for in order to push them, you must stop pulling your own plow and get out of your own yoke to do so!"

Church Leader, you should realize that if you yourself plow a straight row, then the fellow following behind you will have little trouble plowing a straight row adjacent to yours -- even though he is not re-plowing your same furrow!

Serving, PULLING OXEN, Christ uses...

Sacrificially CONSUMED OXEN, are to Christ a sweet smelling savour...

But PUSHY OXEN -- Christ does not, cannot, use -- and if they become WONT TO PUSH -- habitual pushers, they are injurious to His Kingdom, and actually fall under His condemnation:

Exodus 21:29 -- "But if the ox were wont to push with his horn in time past, and it hath been testified to his owner, and he hath not kept him in, but that he hath killed a man or a woman; the ox shall be stoned, and his owner also shall be put to death."

There simply is NO SUCH THING AS A "PUSHY LEADER" in God's work. A man or woman who is "pushy" may hold a high position in a denomination, but such an one cannot be a true leader, even though such ones often imagine themselves to be leaders while shoving others down a row of their own insistence. Selah.

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08 -- MOVING REUNIONS -- Compiled by Duane V. Maxey

Perhaps at some point I will want to enlarge this little collection. For now, having been inspired along this line of thought by a little piece that I just published via email, I have added to it several other stories of moving and dramatic reunions. All of these stories are very appropriate reading for the Lord's Day, and for any other day as well. -- DVM

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01 -- TWO BROTHERS AND THEIR MOTHER

Chapter 8 From:

THE VOICE OF GOD -- hdm0551

By Paul Frederick Elliott

[This moving story was inserted into P. F. Elliott's book as Chapter 8, but it was not written by him. He does not show the author, and at the close of the story, its source is merely shown as "Selected". -- DVM]

A most touching incident occurred here last Sunday in a church. Two young men tramps, who were dressed in rags, were brought back to the fold of Christ. How God led them there, and their dear old mother together in church at this meeting, and how they fell in each other's arms, was the most touching thing I ever saw.

About one block below our place of business stands the church. It is a large and handsome building, far more beautiful on the inside than on the outside. This church, seating about one thousand people, with the gallery, was filled to the utmost last Sunday (January 26, 1895). The audience was composed of all, classes of people, both rich and poor, God-fearing and ungodly people.

As in all great revivals, many came only for curiosity's sake, and others to point the finger of scorn and to scoff. Those who have wandered far away from the fold of God have become His meek followers, and now dare to face old friends and testify in unmistakable words of Christ's wonderful saving power. The Holy Spirit has always, in time past, and will in the future, use such incidents as that which took place here, which almost compel sinners to feel themselves lost, and make them cry aloud to God for mercy. It was the most heart-touching scene I ever saw.

Even now, although it is past, it comes to memory time and again. They brush aside every obstacle and fill my eyes. But I am thankful to God that I was there, because it has drawn me closer to Him. It has strengthened my faith in Him most wonderfully that He is able to save to the utmost, and no man, however low he has fallen in sin, no matter how far he has wandered away from God, need despair.

How many have shaken their heads and said, "It's no use to pray for such men, as they have sinned until their hearts are so hard that God Himself is not able to move them." But, thanks be to God, such was proven not true by the case of these two tramps. I will tell you now about it.

As I said, the church was full, and these tramps were dressed in rags. One arose to his feet. By his clothes you could readily tell what manner of life he lived. There was deep silence all over the church. We could hear the clock tick. It seemed as though we were all holding our breath. But when we looked into his face we could read that Jesus had possession of the man, and could tell at a glance that a great change had taken place in his heart.

He was a handsome young man, about five feet and ten inches high, high forehead, dark hair and eyes, and about twenty years of age. Tears were streaming down his cheeks. At first his voice seemed choked, and he could hardly speak; but as he kept on his voice grew stronger and stronger. Toward the close he became eloquent. We all could see he was an educated man, and could have listened to him another hour. My eyes seemed not to be my own; even so with the rest. Handkerchiefs were used by the strongest men as he continued to speak.

He said if ever a person had reason to be thankful it was he. He said:

"Although you see me clad in rags, I am a most happy man -- happier than any millionaire or king up on his throne, because God has come to me and my brother and forgiven our sins. He

has made new men out of us. He has taken, or, better said, snatched us off the road that leads to damnation, and placed us in the road that leads to a useful life, and at last to a life everlasting.

"It seems more as if we had just arisen from an awful dream than that it should be something real. No greater sinner than I ever lived. My father and mother lived ten miles from Nashville, on the Gallatin pike, on a small farm. Father and mother were the best parents a boy ever had. It was their desire that we two should have a good education, and they worked hard to help us, never seeming to become weary.

"They sent me to Nashville, to Scott University, to study law. They often spoke of the joy it would be to them to see me rise higher and higher in public life. Four years they sent me to school. Money gave out, and in order that I might finish my studies they mortgaged their farm, and sent me two hundred dollars more.

"A short time after I entered college I fell in with a lot of companions who walked not in the ways of God, and made light of my father's and mother's religion. At first I would not listen to them, but at last I yielded, and from that time I date it that I started on the downward path. I also became a scoffer at religion. I soon started to drink and gamble. I was found in company where no man should be.

"I first went about in my sinful ways shyly, but grew more and more bold in sinning. I have seen one of my companions die of delirium tremens, another killed in a drunken fight, and another commit suicide when he realized that his life was a wreck. I was shunned by everybody, and ashamed to meet my dear old mother and father and ask forgiveness.

"I started the life of a tramp again until last Friday. As about seven of us tramps were sitting about the campfire, another tramp came up to us. We were glad to see him come, as he had something to eat, which we all ate heartily. Why it was, I know not, but I took a special liking to the newcomer.

"As we were talking of different things, each boasting of what he had already done, each trying to outdo the other in telling of shameful acts, this newcomer of ours told us how nicely he had fooled his old mother. With an oath, he said he would never be a preacher.

"He said: 'Wesley Crockett will never be a preacher. That is for people who are soft-minded, and men who are more women than men. But I fooled the old woman. But boys,' he added, 'she was the best woman that ever lived; I have often wished I could do her a favor now and then.' And with his dirty, ragged sleeves he would wipe away tear after tear.

"We were all touched by the word 'mother.' Then one after the other would tell of his good mother; and these hard-hearted men would turn their heads to one side, so that they could not see each other's tears that had gathered in their eyes. This newcomer seemed to be the most tender-hearted, and when I heard him mention his name I began to take a special interest in him.

"I asked him if that was his name -- Wesley Crockett. He said it was. I told him that Crockett was my name; I handed over for a shake, and as we shook hands I thought he was my own



brother. I asked him if he had a brother by the name of Daniel. He said he had. 'He was about five years older than I. But he left home some five or six years ago. My father loved him, and sent him to college, and mortgaged his farm to raise money so he could finish his studies. But Daniel, my brother, broke his heart, and it killed him at last. But he told us before he died, if we saw Daniel, to tell him that his father forgave him. Those were the last words he spoke. And,' he said, lowering his voice, 'as mean as Brother Daniel was to father, I have been to mother.'

"I now realized that this stranger, who was also a tramp, was nobody but my brother. I tried to keep back, but could not. I said, 'I am Daniel,' and cried aloud, 'Brother, brother!' We then fell on each other's necks and wept like children. When we got to ourselves again, and looked around, we were all alone -- the rest had left.

"Brother had studied for the ministry. He said we were like the prodigal son -- we had sinned against Heaven and against father and mother. He told me the story of the prodigal son. When he finished the story he said, 'Let us ask God to forgive these great sins of ours, brother.'

"Then he told me one Bible verse after another, which we applied to ourselves. We stayed on our knees and prayed to God until God left His glorious light of forgiveness of sin shining deep into those black hearts of ours."

Here the speaker broke down and wept like a child. The congregation was deeply moved. As he sat down, an old lady dressed in a thin calico dress came in and sat down in the back part of the church.

The younger brother got up next. He was equally handsome as his brother Daniel. He started to tell us how he had wandered away from God, and how he had sinned against Heaven and parents. He told us of the grandmother he had, and how she sacrificed everything so that he could go to college and study for the ministry. He continued:

"As my brother told you, father mortgaged his farm to raise money in order to let brother finish his education. After he saw how brother was living, and that he had left, not knowing where, it grieved him that he was soon brought to his grave. But his love for Daniel never ceased.

"After father died, mother paid all she could. The farm was sold by the man who had the mortgage, and we were turned out into the world. But dear old mother never lost faith in God. She said to me, 'God leadeth us at times in mysterious ways, but at the end all will be well.'

"It was her and father's, and my own, desire that I should go to college and study for the ministry. I gave myself to Him in my early youth, and now I make another vow to go out and preach the Gospel of the blessed Savior to the lost sinner.

"We moved to Nashville. One day mother told me to write to the president of the college and tell him how I was situated, and what I wanted to study for, and ask him if there was any way that a poor boy could go to college and study. I received an answer that I could earn my education by doing all manner of work about the college, but that I must board somewhere else.

"When I read the letter to mother she said, 'The Lord has opened a way already. We will move into yonder log house, near the college, and I will take in washing and sewing, and you can take your meals and sleep at home.' So I went to college. The boys would make all manner of fun at my patched pants. But I could tell them I was proud of those patches, because mother made them.

"One time a gold medal was to be awarded to the best orator in college. I took part. Mother helped me all she could. When the judges decided who was to get the medal, to my astonishment it was presented to me. But I thought it belonged to mother, and not to me, so I walked down the aisle to the last seat, where mother sat, and put it about her neck, saying, 'Mother, you earned this; you shall have it.'

"Yes, I loved my mother and she loved me. But in an hour of great temptation I fell. I had disgraced myself, and did not feel worthy of the high calling for which I was studying, and was wondering how I could face the Christian mother. Others who fell with me were making preparations to run away that very evening. I was not myself any longer, and I went with them.

"We then roamed from one place to another. We took to eating whatever we could find or lay our hands on. My heart grew harder and harder. That tender love for mother was gone, and I became a mocker and scoffer at religion.

"One day a wonderfully strong feeling came over me. Something seemed to drive me away from my companions. I wanted to be alone. I thought of my dear old mother, and something told me that mother was praying for me. So I broke away from the boys and roamed and tramped about until I met Brother Daniel.

"He told you what happened then. When we arose from our knees I said, 'Dan, let's hunt mother, if she is living. I want to see her.' We went to the old log house where mother and I had lived. We asked the nearest neighbor if he knew where we could find mother. He told a most pitiful story. He told us that from the time I ran away mother never gave her boys up as lost. She had said, 'As a shepherd I will seek for my boys.' They tried to persuade her not to go, as she was old and feeble, and had no money to travel with. But she said she must go.

So she started out on foot, and has walked many and many a weary mile, and slept many nights under the clear heavens when there was no house near by, no kind people to offer her shelter. But she came back now and then, and asked if her boys had not come back, or if the neighbors had heard anything of them. She has not given up yet, they tell me. She believes God will bring back her boys."

The man cried aloud, and begged as I never before heard anybody:

"Oh, is there anybody here today who knows where mother is? Tell her Mrs. Crockett's own two boys are saved -- that her prodigal sons have returned."

Just then the little woman who had come into church dressed in a thin calico dress, and had taken the last seat as the first brother finished speaking, cried out, "God answers prayers." The younger brother said out loud; "Dan, it's mother." "Mother, Mother!" they both cried.

They ran to meet her; then they fell on each other's necks and wept -- the boys dressed in rags, the mother poorly clad, but rejoicing because God answers prayers.

I never saw such a sight in all my life. Men who you would think could not cry wept like little children. And such feelings! I never saw any thing so touching. Many who had come for fun were now down on their knees pleading with God to have mercy on them.

Oh, I wish I could tell it so that you could all understand it as I saw it.

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## 02 -- MRS. JOHN S. INSKIP AND HER BROTHER

From Chapter 17 OF hdm0131:

LIFE OF REV. JOHN S. INSKIP

By William McDonald and John E. Searles

One of the most thrilling incidents connected with this meeting, was the discovery of Mrs. Inskip's brother -- Mr. Charles Foster. He had emigrated from Maryland some seventeen years before, where he had been an efficient and influential member of the church; went to California, became deeply engaged in business, held on to his trust in Christ for a considerable time; but his fortune became reversed; then, like many others, he sought to drown his troubles and disappointments in that sea where no calm ever comes. He fell into such a wretched state of mind that he determined that his wife, children, and friends whom he had left behind, should never know of his fate. He consequently discontinued any further correspondence with them. After many years, his friends hearing nothing from him, reckoned him among the dead. But on going to California, Mrs. Inskip indulged a faint hope that she might obtain some information respecting him, if, indeed, he were dead. Affection clings to the slenderest thread of hope.

How strange! At Sacramento, all unconscious of the fact, she was within five miles of the little cabin, where, like a hermit, he lived alone. One can scarcely imagine the surprise of this lone man when he read in the newspaper that Rev. John S. Inskip and lady, his own dear sister and her husband, were coming to California to hold a series of special meetings, and within five miles of his lonely abode. He at once made up his mind to attend the meeting at Sacramento, and see them; but he would not make himself known. Accordingly he came on Sunday morning, and took his seat where he could see his sister. Mr. Inskip preached that morning a wonderful sermon. The heart of the listener was greatly moved. All his previous life, like a vision, passed before his mind, -- wife and children seemed calling to him from the dear home he had left years before, and the sight of a darling sister renewed in his soul (though ossified by misfortune and the isolation of years) the tender yearnings of a naturally noble heart for the love of by-gone days -- days that seemed to grow green again, and freshen into life once more.

The service closed. He lingered; but still resolved to remain unknown to them, and finally turned away. But just as he was leaving the tabernacle, Mrs. Inskip commenced to sing, "My all to Christ I've given," etc. He halted to listen for a moment longer to the sweet, familiar voice, that brought back a thousand fond recollections of other days. Then he said to himself, "I must take one

more look; it will be the last time on earth that I shall see her!" He turned back, -- he looked; his resolution broke down; he could not leave. He stepped upon the platform, extended his hand to Mr. Inskip, saying, "Don't you know me?" Mr. Inskip, observing him, replied, "I do not." He rejoined, "Don't you know your brother-in-law?" Mr. Inskip exclaimed, "Is it possible! Charles, is it you?" Then calling to his wife, "Martha, here is a gentleman who wishes to speak with you." As she came upon the platform, he said, "This is the gentleman who wishes to see you, -- do you know him?" She looked -- hesitated a moment, and then exclaimed, "Why, it's my brother Charles!" She flew into his arms, and, embracing each other, they wept for joy.

Words are inadequate to portray the deeply affecting scene. He was to her like a brother raised from the dead. Many wept with her, partaking of the tender excitement and joy of this unexpected meeting. Mr. Foster attended several of the services, and was happily reclaimed and restored to the love and favor of God. He returned home in a few weeks. Many of his old friends who had reckoned him among the dead, came to see him. But the excitement was too severe for his nervous system. He lived but three weeks after his return, dying in the triumphs of faith, rejoicing that he was permitted to take his flight to the heavenly mansions from his old home.

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### 03 -- TWO BROTHERS

From Chapter 9 of hdm0437:

#### THE ELDER BROTHER

By Thaddeus Constantine Reade

[Let me urge the reader of this file to read the entire book, "The Elder Brother" -- the whole of which is a moving story.]

Those were wondrous days for Brighton -- true Pentecostal days, when the people were baptized with the Holy Ghost and with power. Through the instrumentality of Hedges, "The Prodigal" was led to see the presence and nature of inbred sin and to seek and obtain the blessing of perfect love, and then these great Bible doctrines, Pardon, Regeneration and Sanctification, were preached in the upper part of the city by Henry Ludwig, with a learning and eloquence that led multitudes into the experience, and in the lower part of the city the same doctrines were preached to the working men by "The Prodigal," with scarcely less of eloquence and with convincing logic of hard facts that were known by bitter experience to all his hearers, and there, too, multitudes were regenerated and sanctified to God. I cannot take time to follow in detail the developments and happy results of this great and glorious revival in Brighton -- the book of the recording angel and the unfolding years of eternity alone can tell the good that was done. But I must not close the story until I have told of the happy death of "The Prodigal."

It seemed that his dissipated life had undermined his constitution. For months before he was converted he had only been able to do enough work to pay for his miserable board and lodgings and meet the expenses of the meanest drinks and the poorest tobacco. He was still in the prime of life, but sin had robbed him of character and hope and health and was hurrying him on headlong to death. After he was converted and had given up his wicked habits, his health seemed to improve, but it was only for a little while. He had a work to do and God lent him strength to do

it, but strong drink had attacked every vital organ and his whole body was full of disease. He spoke with a strange force and eloquence, when he had scarcely strength to stand upon his feet. His fame spread throughout the whole city and to adjoining cities, but it was only the transient gleam of a meteor that was soon to be hidden in the night of death. The great mission church was built and paid for, but on the very day it was to have been dedicated and "The Prodigal" was to have preached his first sermon in it, he was carried a corpse from its altar and laid away among the countless dead, to await the resurrection call. One evening, just before he died, he sent for Hedges, and said: "Brother, you have been a loyal friend, a mighty helper to me, and now before I die I want to ask one last favor. Offer one more of your good, honest, earnest prayers by my bedside; make it mostly thanksgiving, for God is so wondrous good; then sit by my pillow while I preach a sermon and tell you a secret." Hedges prayed and he said he had never been so awed before, with a consciousness that unseen beings were all about him. The angels had come to the dingy room and were waiting to bear "The Prodigal" home. When the prayer was over "The Prodigal" began. "You remember the night when I was converted. What a night it was. The power of God shook the whole congregation. Well, you remember that on that occasion Mr. Ludwig preached on a parable of the prodigal son. It was a good sermon, a great sermon, full of burning words and attended with a holy unction, but after all it seems to me the general impression created by the sermon was an erroneous one. I have heard many sermons from that parable and the general effect of them all was the same, and, as I believe, radically wrong. I wish I could live to preach a sermon on that parable. I would like to tell my experience as a prodigal and portray the sad and lasting results of my sinful life. I think it might not only deter some from following in the paths of sin, but it might show the vast merit and the infinite advantage of doing right from one's youth. You see, Hedges, the effect of all the popular sermons on this parable is to excite sympathy for the prodigal. We pity the prodigal. We are told that he was a young man of many noble and generous impulses; that he was large-hearted, easily persuaded, and, in fact, that his sins were those of a hot-headed, impulsive youth, and having repented and having been restored, the evil of his course was all cured and that henceforth he was the favorite son in the family. And then these sermons almost always close with some bitter reflections on the elder brother and he is held up to ridicule and contempt. I would like to tell the people that so far as the evidence goes, the younger son had no more generous impulses, no larger heart, no more temptations than the elder. They were both sharing alike the father's bounty and the father's love, but being tempted, as we all are, the elder brother resisted and the younger gave way. Reversing their ages, it is only another example of the effects of wrong and right choosing like that in the case of Cain and Abel. Abel was the obedient, Cain the disobedient son, the prodigal. I would like to tell them, and hold myself up before them as an object lesson, that when the prodigal does at last return, barely alive and almost starved, he brings all the natural effects of his sins with him, and though he may be forgiven and even sanctified, many of those effects of sin will remain with him till death. Look at me today. I am saved and the wondrous grace of God has purged all sin from my soul, yet I have the eyes, the nose, the cheeks of a drunkard; the lungs, the liver, the stomach, the brain of a drunkard; I have the body of a libertine, and here I am dying thirty years before my time because I was a prodigal son. But this is not all. My sins, like all other sins, have had their effect on others, and while I am pardoned and saved, many whom I have led astray may be lost forever.

"Ah, Hedges, this is the hardest part of it all. I count not my sufferings anything. I could die a thousand deaths if I could but undo the effects of my sins. I can scarcely see how I can be happy in Heaven when those whom I have led into the downward path are languishing in hell." The poor

fellow's eyes filled with tears and his utterance was choked. "Oh, God," he gasped, "pity a poor dying man and, so far as possible, counteract the effects of my wicked life. Now," continued The Prodigal, "think how much nobler, how much better the life of the elder brother who continued obedient. He escaped all these sad effects of sin, but instead has built up a noble character, which can only be acquired by years of right living. He has the fruits of righteousness in health, wealth and a good name, and all that makes life desirable. The life of the elder brother has tended to make the world better. He has inspired the people with honesty, piety and a love of justice. The elder brothers of the land are the strong pillars that hold society together; the prodigals make jails and prisons and alms houses necessary. The elder brothers sustain agriculture, commerce and the schools and the churches; the prodigals support the saloons, the brothels and the gambling houses. Oh that the people would see that while it is right to work for the reclaiming of prodigals, it is far more important to labor to prevent them from becoming prodigals. The most important thing is to fill the earth with elder brothers. Extol the character of the obedient and show the people that 'all that the Father hath is theirs.' And let it be perfectly understood that all the time spent in sinning is doubly lost; it is lost as far as all privileges of good are concerned, and it is lost because the evil that is done can never be recalled. The prodigals may come home. God grant they may all come home and be saved in Heaven, but so far as this world is concerned, their wrecked and shattered lives can be of little use. To show you that all I have said is true and to make the truth doubly impressive by an illustration in point, I will tell you my secret." Hedges had been deeply interested in the new and yet thoroughly sensible and practical comments of his dying friend on the parable of the prodigal son, but bent forward with double interest now to learn the secret of the man whose character seemed so marvelous and yet was such a mystery.

"You have known me as 'The Prodigal'," said the dying man, "for that was the name I assumed when I was converted, but previous to that time I was living here under another assumed name, as I have lived in a dozen other cities under as many different names. I have been a wanderer, a very vagabond, for the last twelve years, homeless, friendless and miserable, until that night when Jesus found me and saved me. But I have a name, the name which my father gave me, and which through all those sad, sinful years I never spoke above a whisper -- a name which will surprise you and many others in this city. My name is Ludwig -- James Ludwig -- the long lost brother of the pastor of the First M. E. Church of Brighton. I am the prodigal; he is 'The Elder Brother'." "What," cried Hedges, springing to his feet, "are you James Ludwig? are you the erring brother of my beloved pastor? Can it be possible? But I must hasten to tell him, for he sought you long and with tears, and to find you even here will lift an awful burden from his soul." "No, no," said the dying man, "do not go now, but sit down a moment till I tell you my wish. For a few days past it has seemed to me that I had a kind of fore-knowledge; some coming events have seemed as plain and definite to me as anything in the past. You know the awful attack I had yesterday; that dreadful convulsion that almost took my life. Well, I knew for more than a day beforehand that it was coming and that by the hardest I should get through with it. But tomorrow, between 10 and 11 o'clock, I shall have another convulsion of the same kind, attended with a dreadful hemorrhage -- I see the blood running down my pillow and in that convulsion I shall die. Now, I want you to bring my brother here at 8 o'clock tomorrow morning. I want him to see me alive and talk with me of a few things that happened in our early life before I became so bad. We had a happy, innocent boyhood together, but I must not speak of the dark days since I left the college with the mark of Cain branded in my soul. God has kindly forgiven and blotted out my sin and by His help I shall never refer to it again. Now, Hedges, you dear, blessed brother, you may go, but observe closely

what I have said and leave me alone till the appointed hour. God has promised me a restful night and I shall spend all my waking moments in communing with Him and getting ready for the final hour. My soul is at peace and I am happy in the fact that very soon father and mother will welcome their prodigal boy into the home above."

The next morning at 8 o'clock the door of the sick room opened and Henry Ludwig entered. He was breathless with haste; he was shaking with excitement: he hurried to the bed where the sick man lay, and instantly recognized him, threw his arms about his neck and sobbed, "Oh, James, my brother, my long-lost brother." Then for a little while not a word was spoken, but the brothers wept in each other's arms. Hedges had followed to the door, but felt that he had no right to intrude on a meeting so solemn and so sad. He closed the door gently and waited, wondering whether the prediction of "The Prodigal" would prove true. An hour passed and then Hedges heard the voice of Henry Ludwig reading the twenty-third psalm and offering prayer. Hedges fell upon his knees by the door. He could not hear the words of the prayer, but he felt that he was waiting in the outer court while these two men were talking to God in the Holy of Holies. When the prayer ended he heard James say "Amen," and he, too, said "Amen," and arose from his knees. Almost immediately after this he heard a deep groan and a hurried and confused noise. He rushed into the room and found poor James in the midst of another convulsion and Henry supporting him in his arms. The muscles of the dying man became rigid, his face became black and his teeth ground together. This lasted for a few moments and then there seemed to be a little relaxation and the dying man gasped, "Good-bye, The Prodigal -- has -- reached -- home." Then followed another convulsion and in the midst of it the blood came streaming from his mouth and as the paroxysm relaxed his spirit departed to be with God.

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#### 04 -- A FATHER AND HIS DAUGHTER

A Selection From hdm2320

"THREE GREAT HEARTS" by Mrs. Lieut-Col. Carpenter

Wonderful scenes of Salvation were witnessed at the old railway arch. One of Barker's workmates, whom he had led to God, had to bear a great sorrow as a result of his sin. During his drinking days his daughter had left home in the North of England, and he had no knowledge of her whereabouts. He feared she had gone astray. Barker comforted him, telling him to commit the matter to God. He knew where the child was, and He could restore her to her home. Thus encouraged, the father prayed and looked to God for an answer. He was a clever man, with a presence and voice that could arrest and hold the attention of even a Bethnal Green crowd. One evening Barker asked this comrade to relate part of his life-story. The man described the scene in his home some years before, when, through his sin, his daughter had gone away, and also the heartache and remorse he had suffered in consequence. The old father cried out, 'Oh, what would I not give, what sacrifice would I not make, if I could only find my child!'

From the back of the Hall, a clear, pained voice rang out, 'Father, father, I'm here! I'm here!' and, heedless of the hundreds of people, the long-lost daughter ran up the aisle to the platform and threw her arms about her father's neck. 'Father, forgive me!' she cried.

'Maggie, forgive me!' faltered the father. There was perfect silence, and a wave of intense emotion swept through the Hall. Then Barker, rising to the occasion, called on the Soldiers to kneel and the congregation to pray, while he led the father and daughter to the Mercy-seat, and there pointed the girl to her father's Saviour. Father and daughter became good Soldiers of the Corps.

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## 09 -- THE SAD RESULTS OF SANCTIFIED SOPHISTRY

"The Holy Ghost in you won't fight the Holy Ghost in me." -- This was his philosophy, and one that I heard him repeat more than once. But, while his statement was an obvious truism, his inference from that statement was a sophistry -- a seemingly plausible, but fallacious conclusion. He expanded the truism to include too much.

He knew he was right with God. He knew he was sanctified wholly, but he extended this inward knowledge of his being right spiritually to include being right on many other things as well -- and as a result he felt that anyone who opposed him on those many other was fighting God, simply because they disagreed with him.

Once, during a Church business meeting, after I had voiced an opinion differing from his own opinion, he later "took me to the woodshed" when we were alone together. I told him, "Bro. \_\_\_\_\_, not everyone who opposes you on a thing is your enemy." But, he seemed unable to accept this.

So positive was his inward assurance that he had the Holy Ghost, so much had God blessed and used him in the salvation and sanctification of souls, so often had he actually been right regarding numbers of things, that -- probably without his realizing it -- he began to assume to himself a certain sense of infallibility -- to the point that he became convinced that virtually ALL WHO DISAGREED WITH HIM AND ALL WHO OPPOSED HIM DID NOT HAVE THE HOLY GHOST!

Again, THE TRUISM in his philosophy: "The Holy Ghost in you won't fight the Holy Ghost in me." -- very true indeed.

But, THE SOPHISTRY and FALLACY in his philosophy: "I have the Holy Ghost -- therefore, IF YOU OPPOSE ME IN A MATTER YOU DON'T HAVE THE HOLY GHOST, BECAUSE THE HOLY GHOST IN YOU (IF YOU HAD HIM) WOULD NOT FIGHT THE HOLY GHOST IN ME."

He was an older man -- a mighty man of God -- but, I fear he had unconsciously begun to fit the description of Solomon in Ecclesiastes 4:13 of "an old and foolish king, who will no more be admonished."



His basic doctrines were not SPURIOUS, but his basic conclusion was SPECIOUS, which word means: -- "Having the ring of truth or plausibility but actually fallacious" (American Heritage Dictionary). He included way too much in the application of his TRUISM!

It was very true that GOD IN OTHERS would not fight GOD IN HIM -- but, being right with God does not mean one is infallible, unable to err, and that all one states is ex cathedra -- the final, incontrovertible word on the matter.

It is wonderful that God bestows within the heart of his genuinely sanctified saints an inward knowledge of their RIGHTNESS! -- but, THAT RIGHTNESS IS A RIGHTNESS WITH GOD -- NOT AN INFALLIBLE RIGHTNESS ABOUT ALL THINGS!

Thus far, I have referred to only one man -- a man who I believe really did have the Holy Ghost -- a man who really was right on many things -- but, A MAN WHO STRETCHED A TRUISM IN HIS THINKING INTO A SOPHISTRY, A SPECIOUS ERROR, AND A FAULTY FALLACY -- to the point that he could brook no opposition on matters where he should have been humble and reasonable enough to listen to differing opinions without branding those who voiced them as THOSE WHO COULD NOT POSSIBLY HAVE THE HOLY GHOST! But, unfortunately, this great Soldier of the Cross was only one of many who have fallen into the same sort of fallacious reasoning.

His most prominent point of intolerance toward others generally stemmed from one particular thing related to the experience of Holiness -- but, what that point was is not important to the subject of this little article. More importantly, perhaps, is the fact that the sophistry drawn from his truism was expanded beyond that initial point to being applied toward those who disagreed and opposed him on many other things as well. Had his sophistry been applied only toward those who questioned the initial focus of his preaching emphasis, it had been less hurtful to the body of Christ -- but, as is usually the case, when a man becomes inwardly persuaded of his infallibility on any one point, it generally leavens the whole lump of his thinking to the point where he concludes that he is indisputably right on numbers of other things also. Then, after this sad leavening of his mind, his sophistries, his fallacies, his specious conclusions, lead him to brand as enemies of God and of the Church many others who are every bit as sanctified wholly as himself (and perhaps more so) -- and, often such an one as he will feel duty-bound to expel those who disagree with him from the membership -- or, make them feel so unwanted that they will gladly leave.

The initial focus and particular emphasis of a Holiness Leader who stretches this truism into the sophistry described matters not. There are numbers of legitimate things relative to the experience and life of holiness which can become the point at which a godly leader begins to "go to seed." Knowing he is right with God begins to be expanded into the sophistry that he is right about nearly all else. "God," he declares, "showed me this, and therefore if you oppose me you are opposing God!" -- and the further conclusion: -- "Since by opposing me you are opposing God, you could not possibly be right with God"!

Preacher -- when you tell someone (or think), "The Holy Ghost in you will not fight the Holy Ghost in me," WHILE VOICING OR THINKING THIS TRUISM, BE WISE ENOUGH,

AND HUMBLE ENOUGH, TO ADMIT THAT IT IS A SOPHISTRY IF YOU DRAW FROM THAT TRUISM THE CONCLUSION THAT: -- ALL WHO OPPOSE YOU ARE THEREFORE THE ENEMIES OF GOD AND COULD NOT POSSIBLY HAVE THE HOLY GHOST!

I titled part of this little article "... Sanctified Sophistry" -- and, I did so because I believe that the reasoning described in this article has been, and still is, the sophistry, the specious and fallacious reasoning, of many genuinely sanctified leaders in the Church.

Do I hear someone object?:-- "I don't think a man or woman who is really sanctified could be guilty of such egotistical sophistries."

I beg to differ. THERE IS STILL A TON OF HUMANITY LEFT IN SANCTIFIED SAINTS! -- and, one's ego is not destroyed by the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. Further, a sanctified person's ego can become too enlarged humanly, even though the person is not carnal. No, GOD in one saint will not fight with GOD in another. But, the very fallible humanity in one saint often disagrees with the very fallible humanity in another equally sanctified child of God. Sometimes, one IS right and the other wrong; sometimes both are partly right and partly wrong; and -- sometimes both are wrong.

The Bible predicts that in the last days Satan "shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people," (Daniel 12:7) -- and, as I see it, one of the devil's most effective wedges in dividing the saints these days is the sad propensity in the minds of some very sanctified leaders to conclude that all who disagree with them and who oppose them in any way must not have the Holy Ghost, and therefore should be purged from their congregations.

Toward the end of World War II, those with a great amount of scientific knowledge split the atom -- a marvel that such a tiny particle of matter could be divided -- but that achievement unleashed the man-caused, potential threat of the world-wide disintegration of all matter.

Now, those with a great amount of spiritual knowledge are splitting and re-splitting smaller and smaller portions of the Church of God -- and one marvels that they think that such tiny flocks should be split any further! -- but, still they insist that it IS necessary and persist in their splitting -- having sawed huge timbers into blocks, split the blocks into chunks, the chunks into kindling, the kindling into splinters, and the splinters into toothpicks!

Sadly, it now appears that some holiness leaders are so convinced of the sophistry described in this article that so long as there are those in their congregations who disagree with them on any matters they will not hesitate to split their Church down to "me, my wife, my daughter Sue, my son John, -- us four, and no more" in the attempt to rid their presence of all that they mistakenly perceive to be a threat to the purity of their little close-knit cloister.

How foreign and strange are such sophistic thoughts and practices to the prayer of Christ in John 17:22-23 -- "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me.."

Ironically, those given to "sophistry" are, according to one meaning of the word, "sophisticated" -- sophistry and sophistication being closely related. A fallacious, sophistic line of reasoning leads one to become sophisticated -- and my American Heritage Dictionary defines the verb "sophisticate" thus: "1. To cause to become less natural.. and more worldly. 2. To make impure; adulterate."

Sophistic thinking leads worldly people into a snobbish, high-brow, high-minded type of sophistication and disdain for those whom they deem to be beneath them. This type of sophistication is roundly condemned by sanctified sophisticates. But, the fact is that when a sanctified person or leader begins to think sophistically, and begins to think more highly than he should of his own rightness and his own views on matters -- that sophistication, unless detected and forsaken can eventually "make impure and adulterate" the purity of his own heart.

Proud, worldly sophistication can be easily detected and is universally condemned by God's true people as unholy and foreign to heart holiness. But, while the sophistic reasoning of holiness folks takes an opposite direction, it is still specious, fallacious, very dangerous, and can adulterate their Christian experience and make them impure within -- even while some such spiritual sophisticates battle to remove from their ranks those whom they mistakenly deem to be "more worldly" than they ought to be.

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#### 10 -- A ZEAL HE WILL NOT OWN

The above title is taken from the last line of the following two verses of Frederick William Faber's hymn, "There's A Wideness In God's Mercy":

"There's a wideness in God's mercy,  
Like the wideness of the sea;  
There's a kindness in His justice,  
Which is more than liberty.

"But we make His love too narrow  
By false limits of our own;  
And we magnify His strictness  
With a zeal He will not own."

Research the term in the Bible, and one will find that God's Word is balanced in what it has to say about zeal. There are two sides of this coin. On the top side, there are good and holy aspects of zeal -- and somewhat the majority of the verses in the Bible on the subject relate to these good and holy kinds of zeal. But, there is also a flip-side to this subject, and on that bottom side of the coin there are forms of zeal that are bad and foreign to God, each of which can be labeled as "a zeal He will not own." This article deals with these undesirable forms of zeal which are rooted in carnality and not spirituality, and which stem from vehement humanity rather than from virtuous deity.

"A Zeal God Will Not Own Is:

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## 01 -- A Carnally DISPLAYED Zeal

In 2 Kings 10:16, the furious-driving Jehu said, "Come with me, and see my zeal for the Lord. So they made him ride in his chariot."

Yes, God did use the vehement Jehu, but I doubt that He necessarily endorsed every aspect of this vehement man's zeal. He seems to fit the picture well of a preacher whose "furious driving" down the highway at speeds far beyond the posted speed-limit is excused as legitimate because "the King's business" has "required haste." When the fleeing David made this statement to Ahimilech the priest, he was fabricating and not factual -- he was telling what he probably considered to be a little "white lie" -- unless, of course, the "king" to whom David referred was "King Jehovah". Regardless of the exact specifics regarding David's statement, some modern-day Jehus who habitually flaunt the Law of the Road are probably "fibbing to themselves" about its necessity and their innocence in so doing.

But, I have digressed a bit. Back to Jehu in the above verse. "Come.. see my zeal," he said to Jehonadab the son of Rechab. But, this was more than an invitation to see a show; it was an insistence that Jehonadab view the display, for Jehu "made him ride in his chariot."

You may disagree with my interpretation here, but such a forced display of Jehu's zeal does seem to be very similar, if not identical, with the zeal of the scribes and Pharisees of whom Jesus said in Matthew 23:5, "But all their works they do for to be seen of men..." In Jehu's case, there seems to have been a mingled motive in his zealous deeds -- in part, a determination to obey Jehovah, and in part, a carnal desire, and even insistence, that others see his zeal.

Whether my assessment of Jehu here is correct or not, it is a fact that when zeal is performed "according to the flesh.. with eyeservice, as menpleasers" (Col. 3:22), then it is nothing more than a carnal display, and constitutes "a zeal He (God) will not own."

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## 02 -- A Mercilessly DESTRUCTIVE Zeal

Both Sauls -- King Saul and Saul of Tarsus -- manifested a destructive form of zeal.

Long after the covenant made by Joshua with the Gibeonites, King "Saul sought to slay them in his zeal to the children of Israel and Judah" (2 Sam. 21:2). Joshua's oath was to his own hurt, and not God's first will in the matter. However, Psalm 15:4 makes it clear that he who dwells in God's Holy Hill will be, "He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not." Cleverly obtained or not, hurtful or not, a covenant had been made, and God expected Israel to keep their word. 1 John 2:5 tells us: "whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected..." But, running rough-shod over the top of a sworn oath, and in violation of both God's Law and

God's Love, King Saul wanted to slay the Gibeonites -- with a destructive zeal -- one which I aver, "God did not own."

Also, In 1 Samuel 14 we read of how during a war with the Philistines King Saul spoke a curse and death sentence upon whoever took a bite of food during the conflict. This unwise dictum weakened the warriors and did more harm than good. After Jonathan tasted a bit of honey to gain strength the carnally zealous Saul said to his own son: "thou shalt surely die, Jonathan" (1 Sam. 14:44). Had not the people rescued him, Saul would have slain his own son for tasting a bit of honey during the battle.

In this instance of carnally destructive zeal, King Saul fits the character of a Church Leader who demands a total fast, and who also demands that ALL participate -- regardless of all sound wisdom to the contrary. All MUST totally fast -- even diabetics, and those physically weakened from other causes. No matter that his dictum will weaken his spiritual warriors; no matter that some are physically unable to go along with his declaration -- all MUST take part -- or suffer his verbal denunciation and excoriation from the pulpit! Sadly, King Saul was not the last leader of God's people to make such unwise demands or to exhibit such a merciless spirit when all did not obey the declaration.

The apostle Paul, relative to himself as the unregenerate Saul of Tarsus, wrote in Philippians 3:6 -- "Concerning zeal, persecuting the church..." Acts 9:1-2 tells of his final outburst of destructive zeal: "And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem." You know, "the rest of the story."

With a holy, constructive zeal that God did own, the dramatically converted Saul, who had "persecuted [the Church] in times past" began to BUILD "the faith which once he DESTROYED" (Gal. 1:23). The Old Testament Saul began his career humbly and ended it hurtfully. The New Testament Saul began his career hurtfully and ended it humbly and holily. As Saul of Tarsus he zealously "fought a bad fight against the Church," but as the apostle Paul, with a greater and far better zeal he "fought a good fight.. finished [his] course, [and] kept the faith" (2 Tim. 4:7).

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### 03 -- A Spiritually DARKENED Zeal

In Romans 10:2, the apostle Paul wrote of his countrymen: "For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge." In the next chapter, Rom. 11:10, we see that unbelieving Israel's "zeal" without "knowledge" was because their spiritual "eyes" had been "darkened". They knew the Law, but they knew not the God of the Law. They were, therefore, capable of executing "the letter" of the Law (when they so chose to do), but they were blind to, and foreign to, the Spirit of the Law -- the Spirit of Christ.

By personal experience, Paul knew of what he spoke. Before his own marvelous illumination and transformation, he fit the description of those mentioned by Jesus in John 16:2 --

"They shall put you out of the synagogues..." and "whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service."

The pre-conversion Saul, had a "zeal of God, but not according to knowledge." He knew the Law, but he didn't know Christ. He zealously sought to "purge God's floor" by putting folks out of the synagogue and by striking them dead!

Unfortunately, some today, who have "a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge" also try to purge Christ's floor for Him via dictums and excommunications of those who choose not to bow to their demands. Their leadership smacks too much of an iron-fisted rulership, and a behavior too similar to that of Diotrophes -- of whom St. John wrote:

"I wrote unto the church: but Diotrophes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not... prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church."

Even if one's "zeal, not according to knowledge" does not actually kill, or cast folks out of the assembly -- it is culpable enough, and fits the description enough, if such darkened zeal does no more than sadden the heart of godly saints to the point where, in grief, they feel unwelcome and therefore compelled to depart.

Christ is always displeased when a mistaken and merciless zeal has "made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad" (Ezekiel 13:22). But, yet today, such is often the case when those who think they are doing God a service are actually doing Him a disservice with "a zeal not according to knowledge" that needlessly drives folks out of the Church.

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#### 04 -- A Congregation-DIVIDING Zeal

Acts 21:19-20 -- "And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among THE GENTILES by his ministry. And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many THOUSANDS OF JEWS there are which believe; and they are all ZEALOUS OF THE LAW."

Sadly, it was a mistake undiscerned by James and many of the Jerusalem Church when they made a difference between "the Gentiles" and "Jews" in Christ's Body. In fact, Christ's death had "made both ONE, and [had] broken down the middle wall of partition between" Jews and Gentiles in the Church (Eph 2:14).

Peter was the first apostle to whom Christ revealed the ONENESS of Gentiles with Jews in the Church, but it was Paul who was first and foremost in making the fact of this UNITY widely known and read.

The Judaizing suggestions seen in Acts 21:19-21 above not only made a difference between Jews and Gentiles in the Church, but those words also seem to suggest that there were two different levels of godliness -- the lower of level of those believing Gentiles, who through their ignorance of the Law were allowed more lenience, and the higher level of those believing Jews who were "all zealous of the Law."

Let me make this point here:-- While it may be very true that some in the congregation live on a higher plane -- in the sanctified life, and others live on a lower level -- in the carnal state -- he is a foolish pastor who constantly emphasizes this division and who let's it be known that he considers those who are zealous in obeying the Church Manual to be the elevated elite, while he considers those who are not obligated members to be, of necessity, living on a lower plane.

Another persuasion seen in the Judaizers' remarks in Acts 21:19-20 seems to be that while there were "a FEW Gentiles" who believed, there were "MANY THOUSANDS OF JEWS" who believed. Further, those in this vast, Jewish majority were "all zealous of the Law." Therefore, as they reasoned, the majority MUST BE RIGHT, and therefore Paul should bow to "majority rule," kow-tow to their wishes, and give token obedience to their customs by visiting the Temple.

Whether or not Paul SHOULD have bowed to their wishes, I leave up to the judgment of the reader, but on this point I shall conclude with the following observations:

(a) A Congregation-Dividing Zeal -- is one that makes distinctions in the Body of Christ which are contrary to the clear statements in the New Testament inspired by Him who hath made "both" -- and ALL -- "ONE" in Christ Jesus.

(b) A Congregation-Dividing Zeal -- is one that constantly lets it be known that the elevated elite are members who vociferously advocate Rigid Regulation, and all others fall into a lower plane, no matter how sanctified they are, and no matter how close their walk with God.

(c) A Congregation-Dividing Zeal -- is one that thinks that the majority is always right, and therefore "must rule." As a result of Paul's missionary work, the time soon came that the "many thousands of Jews" who believed in Christ were vastly outnumbered by the "many millions of Gentiles" who believed on Him. But majority and might do not of themselves make "right"! Yes, in a democratically run Church organization often the majority does rule -- but, history and facts prove that "the majority is not always right"! -- even when that majority consists of the greatest number voting in a conservative holiness conference! A leadership that will allow no dissent and that will brook no disagreement is, too often, a leadership that does not listen to reason when a wise and unifying moderation is in order.

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## 05 -- A GIFTS ABOVE GRACE Zeal

1 Corinthians 14:12 -- "Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church."

A zeal that exalts the seeking of any of God's gifts above the seeking after and obtaining His Perfect Love -- is "a zeal God does not own." This was the mistaken zeal of some in the Corinthian Church. They were very zealous in seeking the gift of tongues and other gifts while being very negligent in failing to seek after and obtain Divine Charity, or the grace of God's Love made perfect in the experience of Heart Purity.

Paul's counsel to them in 1 Cor 12:31--13:1 was: -- "But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet show I unto you a more excellent way. Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal."

But, the zeal that emphasizes Gifts above Grace is not only the mistake of many in the Charismatic Movement, it is also the mistake of multitudes in the Holiness Movement.

In Romans 12:6 we see that all of God's children have "gifts differing according to the grace that is given" them. Both as natural endowments of God, and as special gifts bestowed upon them when receiving God's Spirit, all of God's children have God-given gifts. And, God ordains that these gifts be used for the advancement of His Kingdom and for Christ's glory.

But -- It is a mistake to exalt ANY of God's gifts above his grace. The most gifted are not always the most gracious, and therefore are not always the most qualified to lead God's flock. One with the God-given gift of a keen intellect may thereby be enabled to obtain a Doctorate of Divinity, but he may be far less qualified to lead a church than a sanctified saint with a 3rd Grade education! Doctor So-and-So may have far less grace than his less mentally gifted and less educated counterpart; he may also have far less common-sense and spiritual discernment, and thus he may not be the man God needs to lead a given church, whereas the humble, Grade-School drop-out may be the one God chooses!

There was a time when Early American Methodism "set the New World on fire" with uneducated, but sanctified Circuit Riders. But, after Asbury's passing when Methodist leaders began to emphasize education and began to exalt those who were mentally gifted and degreed, the humble, old itinerants were replaced with highly-educated young theologues who had a head-full of book knowledge and a heart-full of pride in their academic achievements. And, these "gifted" but "graceless" preachers soon stuck a dagger into the heart of spiritual life in the Methodist Church! Dr. Highbrow was exalted to the pulpit and eventually made Bishop, while those with far less education but much more grace were disdained, excoriated, shunned, and often shoved out the door!

Unfortunately, this same scenario has been repeated during past decades in the ranks of those Holiness Denominations that originally formed when their early message was largely shunned by Methodism. Gifted intellects, gifted pulpiteers, gifted singers, gifted teachers, and gifted business minds have been exalted to high positions with great ecclesiastical power. At the same time a prospective candidate's grace has either been left out of the equation or little weight given thereto when weighing a person's qualification for leadership in the group. In many cases, it all adds up to "A Gifts Above Grace Zeal" that God cannot, does not, own.

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## IN CONCLUSION

In Galatians 4:17-18, St. Paul twice mentions being zealously affected: -- "They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them. But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you."

The former type of zeal was doubtless a form of zeal that "God did not own" -- a zeal that sought to divide the saints and to exclude some of them from Paul's ministry. The latter type of zeal was a zeal that God could own -- a zeal that "affected always in a good thing" -- a zeal that included Paul in their fellowship, not only when he was among them, but also when he was absent from them and his enemies were there trying to "put him down."

Forms of zeal that God owns are ALL and ALWAYS "in a good thing" -- not carnally dividing the flock, and never equivocal. Those affected by such zeal are those who are careful in seeking to discern "a good thing" from "a bad thing" relative to God's Work. Also, they are those who exclude none for selfish or self-promoting purposes, and finally, they are those who are brothers and sisters to all of the children of God -- whether they are present, or absent.

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THE END