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SUBSISTENT FRUITS

GENEVIEVE BURNELL

*Greetings
from
Mr. and Mrs. R. E. Bishop*

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SUBSISTENT FRUITS

By

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THIS INSTRUCTION
IS NOT A METHOD,
BUT A MESSAGE.

*SUBSISTENT FRUITS

Weeds are pulled out by the gardener's muscular force, trees are pruned by the activity of the horticulturist; but only sun, earth and water can make the garden and fruits grow.

We are not proposing the art or science of cultivating orchards, but we are inviting you into the Lord's garden, there to become acquainted with His spiritual fruits.

The lesson today is from the 7th chapter of the Gospel of St. Matthew, and interprets words from the wonderful Sermon on the Mount. The parabolic illustrations present trees and the fruit as examples of men and their actions. In the lesson Jesus warns against ravening wolves in sheep's clothing, and He tells of trees and their corresponding fruits. Some have

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suggested that our Lord did not use good preaching rules, for He mixed His figures of speech. The Lord, Who is pure truth, never mixed anything. He did converge the figures of speech that we might have a two-fold and hence a clearer perception of the scope of His discourse. There is no arbitrary choice of material in any spiritual instruction, every word used holds enlightenment. The full meaning is derived from the whole content. For example, today is the seventh Sunday after Pentecost, therefore it is significant that our lesson is from the seventh chapter of St. Matthew, and the subject pertains to the seventh gift of the Holy Spirit.

Our Instruction is not a science of numerology, yet the early Christian teachers all recognized a symbolical meaning to be revealed through the scriptural use of all figures. Seven has always been interpreted as a holy number as it symbolizes a union between God and man. The number three is read as the Trinity, the tri-unity. And four represents perfect man and his true world. We read in the Book of

Revelation of the four-square city, the kingdom of Heaven let down on this earth. The divino-human compound is the mystical seven, where divine power is revealed humanly and human action is raised to divine levels.

Our key for today's lesson is the spiritual power symbolized by the number seven. Let us see how this key unlocks our Pentecostal mysteries. This is the seventh Sunday after Pentecost, the season commemorating the spiritual action of the Holy Ghost radiating His seven-fold gifts. The seventh gift is called wisdom. Discerning wisdom is our gift from God by which we are safe from the ravening wolves of deception masking under harmless exteriors, and by which we are able to discern true and authoritative fruition in our world of experience. Only that which is backed by the Word of God and produced by the tree of Life remains in our garden. Fruits from the tree of prevarication are pruned off as empty and dead shadows.

According to Saint Thomas Aquinas, because God is all intelligence, He knows

the nature of both good and evil, even as He would know truth and falsity, entirely free from confusion. In other words, to know evil as falsity would be the cancelling of all evil; to know good as truth would be the confirmation of good. Our sense of evil in the world, says the sage Pantanjali, is due to a confusion between reality and unreality--that is, seeing the real in the unreal and the unreal in the real. Such confusion of mind makes us apprehend privation in the proper good of being as a material lack, and thus falsity becomes a definite problem to contend with.

But the gift of wisdom provides discerning power by which we shall overcome confusion and be able to distinguish instantly and authoritatively, the real from the unreal, the counterfeit; and being thus freed from confusion of mind, the deception under which the counterfeit has been passing for the real is dissolved. We shall have the clear perception of wholeness, for privation will have been weeded out and all that ought not to be shall have been pruned off, like empty

shadows. How can a false tree produce real fruit? The figure of speech presented in the Gospel lesson today shows how impossible it would be. The tree of prevarication produces only lies which have no existence and are seen to have no existence to the rational mind. An evil tree produces evil fruit says our Lord; a good tree brings forth good fruit. Let us not accept the sheep's clothing that disguises the ravening wolves of deception.

Today we are to establish communion with the Spirit of Truth, that the tree of life may bear good fruits in us and the fruition of the Holy Spirit may pervade with living, vital fruits. All the fruits of prevarication, including death, shall be pruned off by divine intelligence functioning in us as the gift of discerning wisdom. Sometimes pruning seems a drastic action, especially to a person who clings to his dead branches, his old worn out opinions and prejudices, but all these things that ought not to be in life are not real, and we must be free from our

entanglement with them. One may feel that he is being deprived of something, but if it is not true this is not deprivation, it is his freedom, freedom from the entanglement of his mind which has become a snare and a trap.

Perhaps we had better give you the words themselves, the words of the Lord in this magnificent Sermon on the Mount. He is drawing to the conclusion of His sermon. He had given the code of the Kingdom of Heaven, and now He is pruning off the things that ought not to be, and He is warning us against adhering to falsity as though it were truth, and becoming entangled in it, caught in it and snared up in it. This way leads us to freedom from the snare of our own mind, and we have offered to us the knowledge that delivers us from the snare. We do not have to break the snare because, when we have found knowledge, we discover there isn't any snare. I am going to quote to you a wonderful sentence I gave to the class not long ago: Reason is the power of the soul to refuse to follow the mind. We are

offering you today this power of reason. The Lord said, Come now, let us reason together, that even though your sins may seem like scarlet, red as crimson, they shall be as white as snow. Why? Because of this discerning wisdom that is not caught in the snare, but is delivered and delivers you from the snare. Discerning wisdom, discerning knowledge.

Let us go back to the words from the gospel:

*Jesus said to his disciples,
Beware...

He gives them warning.

...beware of false prophets who
come to you in the clothing of
sheep...

Come to you disguised.

...come to you in the clothing
of sheep, but inwardly they are
ravening wolves.

What does He mean here? He means the false doctrines into which the mind leads a person, and which come to you in the

*St. Matthew 7:1

guise of something very insignificant and harmless. Too often these insidious doctrines come in sheep's clothing, but the Lord is warning us to make use of what He Himself has given us--discerning knowledge. He has given us the power of the soul called reasoning, that we may stand out against our own minds, for they would lead us into the traps and the snares, which are non-productive but very devastating, very corrupting. We are led by the seeming sheep that appear very harmless and insignificant, into a trap that we find it difficult to free ourselves from. Then He goes on to speak of the tree and the fruit, and twice He uses the expression: By their fruits you shall know them. He is not being simply repetitious. He is using this repetition to emphasize the importance of the fruits.

It is strange how the mind can lead one astray, even on these words. By their fruits you shall know them. Now, there are those whose minds take this sentence and twist it around to represent demonstration. They say, Well, I am not going to

have anything to do with an instruction that does not demonstrate itself at every turn. How can we be sure it is true? The opinions of the mind twisting the victim in his trap! But we are offering you to-day the power of reason that enables you to refuse to follow your mind into the traps of your own false opinions which

*By their fruits you shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, and the evil tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can an evil tree bring forth good fruit.

Now, here a very definite line is established. When you follow your mind as it begins to lead you off the track, you say, I might just as well give up. You look yourself over and you say, Look at all my failures and my mistakes; certainly, I must be the bad tree and what is the use of trying to bring forth any good fruit? Your mind leads you off into its snares and its traps. Do you think that God

*Ibid.

would ever make it inevitable that you should be non-productive?

What is this that we call the evil tree? It is like the shadow without the substance. You know enough not to go to the shadow of a tree to try to secure your fruit. You know enough, but when you look around your world you continually go to the shadows to try to obtain the substance.

You know the old story of the two men who went out into the desert. It was a hot and tiresome journey and they had a donkey between them to carry their load. There was no shade anywhere except the shade that the donkey produced, and these two men got to disputing over who could have the shade of the donkey. They argued, each one wanting the shade for himself. And you know what words sometimes lead to. Well, this led to just the thing that words sometimes lead to, a good old fight over the shadow of a donkey. And when they got through fighting they began to look around for the shadow, and it was gone; it went away with the donkey--

no donkey, no shadow. The shadow was not very productive to them because they had lost the substance.

It is the same way with people in the world, they fight and they quarrel and dispute over shadows. We tell you that you have provided for you a certainty, right in your own soul, the power of reasoning that enables you to refuse to follow your mind when it leads you off into the shadows.

We are not saying that the world is not productive of many wonderful things; it certainly is. But we have to know how to discern truth and carry these things back to truth if we are going to have substance in anything, if it is not to be carried away under the powers of the world.

I wish you could all remember that sentence: Reason is the power of the soul to refuse to follow the mind--to follow your own thoughts and ideas and opinions. We told you a little while ago that, by thinking, we can derive false instruction from true instruction, but by

perception we obtain true instruction from true instruction. When I gave this sentence in the class, I gave an illustration--and it is not too much beside the point to offer this illustration again. It is an example of logic. Logic is the science of reasoning correctly. We have logic provided for us in the axioms and in the syllogisms. Of course, we can get off the track even in logic if our premise is false. But we are offering you here the certain and absolute premise of reasoning, the Logos, the word of God. Logic, logos, they are not too far apart. Here it represents truth, the wonderful endless circle of truth. Of course, you cannot see this small drawing, but I will try to describe it to you. We start from this circle which represents our center of consideration. A person goes out on a tangent and he investigates a particular branch of knowledge in the world. He is perfectly safe to investigate this related idea as long as he comes back to the center as soon as he is finished with the related idea. Then, without any

danger of being caught in a snare, he may follow this investigation. He may then go out on another idea; but he comes back to the center. He can make any number of investigations as long as he returns before going on.

But he falls into an entangling net if he goes out and investigates a related idea and from there he branches off into another to investigate something else, and then he runs over and investigates something else, and so on and on and on; and he is all snared in the tangled fringes of his own thinking because his mind has been leading him, rather than that power of his soul which is true reasoning. He is all ensnared in his own thoughts. How can he get himself out of the tangle?

There is only one way and that is to go back to the original. And just as this holds true in the practice of logic, so it is true in spiritual instruction. We must continually return to the truth, the word, the authority. He carries everything back to the point of truth

which is infallible principle, his security; you may say the axioms if you want to be quite specific about it--the ability to reason.

We are offered as the example today of that seventh gift of the Holy Spirit, the great man from the Old Testament, Solomon, who said in his wonderful wisdom: Remember your Creator in the days of your youth. Go back to your Creator, go back to truth, to the Absolute.

Do not let your mind lead you away; you may have very persuasive invitations not only from the senses, from the ideas and desires and things that belong to the physical. Before you know it, you are a slave to these shadowy branches that have no substance. The answer is always to go back to the truth where you are secure, where you find the Infallible, the Word of God.

We are trying to show you in this message today about the trees and the fruits--that we must not let our minds lead us into a trap of cause and effect. A person will say, What is the use of

trying; I am no good, anyway, I might as well give up; how can I ever produce anything that is of any value? That is self-condemnation, and we tell you that there need be no self-condemnation, not when you are in Christ Jesus, Who frees you from condemnation when you go back to the word of truth. There is now, said Saint Paul, no condemnation in them who are in Christ Jesus. You are not going to find your escape from condemnation out in the byways and hedges, but you will find it in truth, which is the absolute, the absolute goodness and love and mercy and justice, and all that God is--no matter how you may seem to have failed in your productiveness in the world, and feel that you are like the evil tree that cannot bring forth anything but fruits of death. Do you think that there is no hope in this word of God? The word of God is your heaven, yours and yours and yours and yours, everybody's. That is the will of God.

The final test in this lesson that the Lord gives us for today is that those

who do His will shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. That does not mean you must die to enter into it, but you will discover it in His will, which is on earth as it is in heaven.

The perfection you will discover in yourself is that union and communion with the tree of life that the Orientals tell us about in a most descriptive manner. They tell us of the tree of life that has its roots in heaven and its fruits on earth. Of course, that is not the kind of tree you are accustomed to in your garden; you see a tree that you say is right side up. How can you judge what is right side up? Your mind says the tree that stands out there with its roots going down into the ground and its branches in the air and the fruits hanging from the branches, that is the way it should be. But we are telling you of that infallible tree of life that has its roots in heaven, and draws from the spiritual power of truth itself, from the heavenly kingdom. Oh, what is up and what is down? That is a matter of

relativity. Einstein will tell you that all there is to this world anyway, is relativity. It is your own idea of what is up and what is down.

We have to reverse perceptions when we begin to follow the power of the soul called reasoning. All our perceptions of things have to be reversed. The things that would lead us into the world of experience are seen to be empty shadows offering nothing, less than nothing, when we turn around and go back to that perception of renunciation which becomes our strength. That is what is told in all Christian instruction.

We begin in this fortification of the Spirit by renunciation, by renouncing and seeing the nothingness of all that is not truth. It does not mean we have to run away from things, but it means we have the perception of the nothingness of that which is not truth. It becomes a reverse perception, becomes this tree of life that your mind would say is upside down, but it is not. It draws from the infinite source of the Spirit, from infinitude itself; and when we are dependent upon God we draw upon inexhaustible resources of Spirit.

I am not telling you, in this message from the Lord today, that we might as well give up if we are what the mind calls an unfruitful tree, a tree that brings forth evil fruit. Oh, we could list them for you, these fruits of death. These trees bring forth no fruits of the Spirit, and, therefore, they are to be pruned off, as it says, to be thrown into the fire, those that do not bear the fruits of the Spirit.

It is not a matter of external demonstration either. A person would say, What is the use of following instruction that cannot bring prosperity, whose members are not all prosperous and healthy? What are you looking for? Shadows? Or are you seeking first the kingdom of heaven that all these things may be added unto you? When you go after the things, you are after the shadows, and no wonder you come away so empty-handed. You do not have subsistence from shadows. You do not find truth in falsity. You find truth in truth. That which is not produces naught. Why? Because it is

not anything anyway. How can it produce anything? The fruits that are produced on these branches that are dead are called fruits of death. And death is not. There are those who are led away by the trap and the snares of the mind. And I have heard them say such things as these: That which is evil is good for me; I am going to learn something from it; I am better off for it. Do you think that evil is the cause of good? As though evil were ever productive of anything!

You find, even in theology, the mind may lead you astray. By thinking, we can derive false instruction from true instruction. We are offering you today the power of reasoning, by which you refuse to follow your mind, by which you are able to stand always in the center, the word of truth, and are never led astray. And you are able to discern that which is non-productive, the shadows, and you are not led into the trap of the fool's gold that is valueless. You are not deceived by the counterfeits. You know the truth, because the truth is in

you by which you recognize the truth; and you become that tree of life itself, that bears the fruits of the Spirit.

Our judgment is not by the externals, not by the leafy growth of the tree, but by the fruits. Perhaps you remember the lesson taught by the Lord when He was coming into Jerusalem in the morning and He was hungry. Usually when the Lord was hungry He did not make any attempt to procure food, but He made a lesson out of this. As He was coming into Jerusalem He saw a fig tree, and the fig tree had a wonderful growth of leaves on it; it was a beautiful looking fig tree, and it should have had fruit, and He demanded fruit of that tree, and it failed Him. It did not produce its fruit, and yet it had this wonderful growth of leaves--a very flashy tree, but vanity of vanities. And the failure of this tree to respond to the presence of the Lord was the withering of the tree. Prune it? Oh, it needed some pruning, I'll tell you.

We are offered the opportunity to pull out the weeds and we are offered the

opportunity to prune off the things that ought not to be--we are offered this by the power of our reasoning, which is the power of our soul. Are we going to be led astray by our senses and by the whims of our minds and the demands of our minds, or are we going to stand in that fortitude of the Spirit itself, that wonderful, infallible center of truth, which is our strength, which enables us to refuse to follow our minds, no matter how flashy the mind may be?

There is no infallible evil. There is no potentiality to evil. There is no power to evil. But we must free ourselves from the snare about it, believing in it, accepting it for truth and being confused by it, and being all entangled by our minds and looking to evil to produce our good. That is where most of the trouble in the world is, anyway, looking to the false kind of productiveness for our good. I could cite all kinds of illustrations of how people look in the wrong places for their good. There is one place to look for it, one

place to look for your strength, one place to look for your power and your mercy and your healing and your heaven; and we are not proposing anything that is hopeless. Oh, what of this tree we are told of today, the tree that is only to become fuel, to be burned up, what of it? Is there no hope for those who have gone astray and those who, up to this time, have not been able to produce the fruits of the Spirit, and have, instead, produced the fruits of death? Is there no hope?

If you get back to that center, that logos, the logic of truth, the reasoning, you will see that the word of salvation is available in the truth, not in the shadows. And the Lord has provided us with an example, again a figure of speech. We are not confusing our figures, we are letting them merge together to bring forth the full picture. One picture alone could not possibly bring any concept of the mercy and the goodness and the justice of God. But here we have innumerable pictures, and

the illustration that the Lord uses to give the picture of regeneration, the figure of speech of grafting. He speaks of Himself as the vine and that we, as members, are to be grafted on to Him, that we may have His principle of life, His vitality, His strength, His fortitude, His patience--the fruits of the Spirit that are produced because we receive from Him; He is our spiritual strength.

Fruits of the Spirit are not found in the outward clothing of the leafy growth. They are found in the heart. Charity, joy, peace, faith, goodness, benignity, patience--Oh, I can name all twelve--fruits of the Spirit that grow on this tree of life. And we are invited to participate in it, because the Lord Himself has come into the world and performed this magnificent miracle of grafting humanity onto the Divinity, to give you the strength of the Spirit. His humanity has made it available to us, that we might be grafted, even as a bud is grafted into a tree, to live by the

life and the principle of life itself, of truth.

But these branches that cut themselves off from this communion of life, they die because they have produced the fruits of death. And yet there is always the salvation, because it is the will of God that you and you and you and you all over the world shall receive His life and shall participate in these fruits of the Spirit. He has offered Himself, even as man, that we might have this wonderful engrafting in our spiritual nature, and while we still remain ourselves, we live by the life of the Spirit.

We have the strength and the power of reasoning that enters into our souls as power, to demand the subordination of our senses and our minds and our wills to the truth, that we may bring everything back to the absolute oneness of truth, God, the Word made flesh. If the branch cuts itself off, severs itself from the tree, how can it receive its life? It is not God that severs the connection, never, because He loves each one of you as though

you were the only one. As Paul saw in that wonderful revelation, the Lord Himself came into the world to save you as an individual--all mankind, but you as an individual.

Dare we reject this goodness? Dare we follow our minds into the traps? The Lord has warned us against following the mind, like the false prophets. No matter how sheepish they may look, beware of the way your mind leads you. You are given something over and above the mind and that is the wonderful security, the Word of God, into which you are engrafted; and this has been performed for you. Let us not reject it, and let us not lose the sense of communion with it. Let us awaken to it, that we may know truth, this truth that makes us free.

We have a wonderful meditation today. Shall we call it a treatment, or shall we call it a prayer? It is just the same. It is a meditation upon truth, upon what is, and it shows you how this power within your soul enables you to

refuse to follow your mind. It was handed to me this morning, and it is so wonderful that I simply found myself forced to bring it to you today, on a pink piece of paper. It is from Volitional Empire No. 28, page 25, and it is an announcement to you and you and you and you of what you really are, not following your mind, but standing on the logic of the word of God. As God knows you, so you are; not as your mind knows you, but as God knows you.

You are living, personally,
now the perfect life.

Your mind may lead you astray and say, Oh, there is some mistake here. We are telling you how to get back to what is the truth, no longer to follow your mind and what your mind thinks about what you are personally, or what your life is, but to get back to truth.

You are living, personally,
now the perfect life. All
the dreams of your ignorance
cannot change that fact.

No matter what your mind may say to the contrary, no matter what your opinions are, no matter what you think, the truth is this fact, that you are living now the perfect life. There is no other life to live.

You are perfect in mind, perfect in body, perfect in intelligence, perfect in experience, there is not an error, a flaw, a sin, in all there is to you.

You cannot be a bad tree to bring forth no fruit, or evil fruit. There is no error, no flaw, no failure in anyone. And this is the truth regardless of the trap that your mind has set and has led you into. We are offering you the knowledge by which you escape. And you do not have to break the trap, break the snare, because there isn't any snare.

That is the constant fact. You were never born. You will never die. That is a thing which you can see; and you can see it just as well now as to be ground into seeing it by time.

Oh, people say, give me a little time and maybe I will be able to grasp that. Time is not going to be the answer. Time is one of the snares of the mind. Because it is the fact now, you can see it now just as well as you can in what is called the process of time. It is the truth and it means that perception, the perception of truth that can come through at any point because you stand in what you are, and you cannot escape from what you are.

...and you can see this just as well now as to be ground into seeing it by time. We may venture to say to you that time will afford you no assistance in the perception of this truth. Time will not, on the other hand, defeat you, whether it be years or ages.

Why? Because time itself is nothing.
You are personally perfect now.

Nothing can defeat you, because the truth about you is true now. You are perfect in body and in mind. You are personally perfect, physically perfect. There

is not a shadow upon you,
nothing whatever against
you at all. You love the
truth, not for what it will
do for you, but for what it
is and what you are.

Grant, O Lord, that the
healing efficacy of these,
Thy mysteries, may, through
Thy mercy, free us from all
our shadows and bring us to
the practice of what is
right, true and infallible.

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