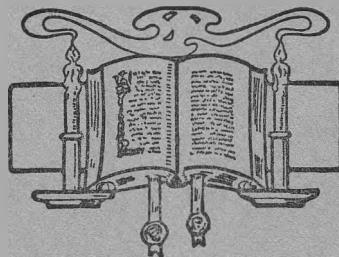


THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE



SERIES SIX STUDY ONE

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The Pearl of Great Price

Pearls are spoken of sufficiently often in Holy Writ to merit consideration of them and of what they represent. Before modern gem cutting was developed pearls were of much greater importance as articles of personal adornment. It is true that Bazaleel was proficient in the "cutting of stones to set them," but this has no reference to the art of cutting them to give them the many symmetrical facets causing them to beautifully reflect and refract light rays iridescently. It refers only to his ability to shape and prepare them for mounting, as they were in the High Priest's breast plate. To have treated these stones as a lapidary would today would have destroyed all the significance God placed in their original form and beauty.

While this is one reason for the prominence of pearls in the days of antiquity there is another and, we think, a far better one; and that is to afford us a basis or means through which God can give us some pointed and forceful truths concerning the things that are jewels, in his estimation. It is in this way that God hides his most precious things for his people, and it is in this way that they are most impressively given to those for whom they are intended. We believe that God planned the pearl in all its features and phases of construction, and also in its beauty, for the specific use we are endeavoring to make of it. We trust that he who created the pearl will bless this treatise to your hearts, so that he might find therein the pearl of great price, a precious jewel of his creating. With this hope as a prayer in our hearts, we submit these thoughts to the family of God; for its blessings are for none until they arrive at this precious relationship with him who is the sum total of all good.

The Bible Use of the Pearl

As a Scriptural basis for considering the pearl, in relation to spiritual matters, we find it presented in one of the parables of our Lord as recorded in Matt. 13: 45,46. It is also used symbolically in the book of Revelation on at least two occasions, and again when God advises us to cast not our pearls before the swine. It is true that, if we possess swine, we must feed and water them; but that does not necessitate casting our pearls before them. The truth, as food and drink, must be given unto all; but so long as they have no appreciation of the most valuable spiritual things, and simply tread them under foot into the mire of materialism, in which they rejoicingly wallow, we are bidden to cast not our pearls before them lest they tread them under foot. Not only do they jeopardize their hopes for eternal life in so doing; but they also turn and rend us, causing us suffering and distress, against which the Lord warns and thus would protect us, so that our paths may all be peace, a condition very essential toward the attainment of the new creature condition. It seems that it is in harmony with this advice that the Lord has led us to issue invitations rather than to send these studies broadcast. In each of these instances the pearl is used to picture something very valuable, either actually so, or else as Babylon's counterfeit of the valuable spiritual thing in God's kingdom arrangement.

Seeming Similarity in Two Parables

Before taking up our consideration of the pearl, we will seek to establish a basis for our presentations by briefly studying with it the companion parable found in the verse just preceding it; Matt. 13:44. We will quote these two parables: "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hid in a field; and which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field." "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman, seeking goodly pearls; who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it." These

two parables seem to teach much the same thing until they are studied in contrast, after which the gulf between them is seen to be abysmal.

An Examination of Differences

The character introduced in the treasure parable is a man, and here the generic word for "man" is used in the Greek, signifying that no particular man is referred to, but any one of the general run of the human race. In the pearl picture a merchantman is brought to our attention, a man of special qualifications in the business of buying and selling. It should be noted that the merchantman was about his business, "seeking goodly pearls," when he came upon this pearl of great price; whereas, the man finding the treasure in the field is not set forth as being upon any particular errand. Another difference to be noted in these two parables is the fact that what the treasure was is not specified, whether it was diamonds, gold ore, gold coins, or other precious material; but in the pearl parable it is stated that the thing of great value was a pearl of great price. The treasure was hid in a field, covered from the sight of man; whereas, the pearl was on the market, being offered for sale in the sight of all. Note also that this valuable pearl remained unpurchased while the merchant went away and sold all that he had and returned to purchase the gem. Furthermore, we see that the wealth that lay hidden in the field was of such a nature that the field had to be purchased; doubtless it was some rich ore deposit, as the Greek word seems to indicate; but in the case of the pearl, nothing other than the gem was acquired. When a deposit of mineral is discovered, the field which contains it must be possessed in order to properly work or develop the find; but wealth as it is found in a pearl needs no development; it merely needs acquisition.

Additionally, it will be noted that the treasure was again hidden in the field, so that no one could know of it until purchased, in order that the purpose of the purchaser might not be thwarted; whereas, in the pearl parable the precious gem was there for any one who would and could pay the purchase price. Note also the fact that the pearl remained unpurchased while the merchantman went and sold all that he had and returned to purchase it. It will be further noted that, to obtain the treasure in the field, the field was purchased, showing that it was not a pot of gold coins or a similar treasure; but was some rich ore deposit, some natural deposit of wealth, as the Greek word here used signifies. In the case of the pearl it is understood that nothing other than the gem was acquired. When a deposit of natural wealth is found in a field, that field must be possessed to properly work or, as we sometimes term it, develop the find. But wealth found in the form of a pearl needs no working or developing, it merely needs acquisition. We shall now endeavor to consider these two parables from the standpoint of these differences with which God has purposely differentiated them with such particularity. When we shall have completed this matter, we hope a clear cut idea will have been given upon the basis of which we can study the pearl of great price and receive therefrom at least some of the things God has placed therein for our enlightenment and rejoicing, as well as for our stabilizing, strengthening, and settling.

Both of these parables pertain to the great subject, the "Kingdom of Heaven." This kingdom of heaven is such a wonderful subject that it takes all things, as God has created them, to bring out all the wonders of that kingdom. It is not our thought that God found that the pearl, after having created it, was so beautifully representative of things pertaining to his kingdom, that he decided to have it represent his kingdom; but it is our thought that he purposely created it to picture the things relative to the implantation of that kingdom into our hearts. We are told that all things are ours; for we are Christ's and Christ is God's. Thus it is seen that all things are made and devoted to furthering our happy relationship with God, in particular, through Christ. This relationship with God, as his new creature sons, is the kingdom of heaven condition.

These two parables will, therefore, be found to teach things pertinent to our new creature relationship with God, if we interpret them properly. We formerly thought that salvation, in its ultimate sense, consisted in receiving the benefits of the ransom sacrifice Jesus gave on our behalf. But when we see that all God's heavenly creatures, even as our Lord Jesus demonstrated in his own case, must be saved from their old creature condition and brought into the new, receiving no direct benefit from the ransom sacrifice, we begin to see what salvation and the kingdom of heaven have for all in the way of blessings.

The Two Salvations

It is these two things that are illustrated in these two parables which seem to be so similar. We used to speak of the two salvations, meaning the salvation of the church and that of the world; but this is all one salvation. The two salvations, if we wish to use that term, are both our own blessing; namely, salvation through the ransom from sin and condemnation, and salvation from self and materialism into the new creature condition. It is these two salvations that we think are pictured in these two parables. Here we have illustrated the ransom and its merits or effects, and also the burnt offering and its results -- the ransom making the new creature condition possible to those who dwell in the field, the earth; and the burnt offering bringing about the new creature condition to all who are willing to, and who do, pay the price of their all to obtain it. Just as the treasure in the field needed developing or working and, therefore, the field was acquired; just so the possibilities within the human race need developing or working and, therefore, the race must be acquired by the ransom sacrifice of himself by Jesus. Jesus did not purchase the race so that they might be restored only to human perfection. He bought them because he saw the possibilities of the new creature condition within them; for God had made them godlike so that his blessing might be theirs. So, we have recently learned, all godlike creatures have the possibility within themselves of becoming godly, becoming new creatures.

Godlikeness and Godliness Pictured

In the pearl parable we see that the merchantman came for the purpose of seeking goodly pearls. Gems, such as pearls and other precious stones, jewels, seem to picture character qualities in God's people. Gems of the precious stone type and pearls are entirely different in almost every way. It is our opinion that the crystalized gems are used by God to picture natural graces, those which we denominate godlike; whereas, the pearl is used to represent new creature graces, the godly quality of heart, when they are studied in contrast. The pearl is, when of the highest quality and value, perfectly round. Pear-shaped and unsymmetrical pearls are much less valuable even when large. The perfect rotundity of the pearl pictures the completeness and perfection of the love of God. It is no larger in one grace than it is in another, even as a sphere is a perfectly symmetrical body. This cannot be said of any other gem.

Like the precious stones, some in their natural shape, and others due to the art of the lapidary, the pearl refracts light, which produces iridescence. It also reflects light. But while this is true of both classes of gems, the reasons for so doing are somewhat different. It may easily be seen how a diamond or a sapphire, with their many symmetrical facets, displays iridescence; but it is not easy to comprehend how a perfectly round sphere of opaque material also makes this display. When we see a natural man, godlike in his morals, each moral organ giving him an inner urge to manifest its particular grace or quality, it is not difficult to comprehend why he acts godlike, displays the various graces of natural love. But when we see a new creature perform, one who not only does not act from an inner urge, but manifests the graces of love wholly independent of such moral organs; and who even to a large degree does so in spite of them, over-riding their natural urge for expression, it requires deeper study to understand.

Trading Versus Trafficing

To open our minds to the difference in these two parables we wish to call attention to the two words used in the Greek text for the words "selleth" and "sold" used in the English. In connection with the treasure parable the Greek word used contains the thought of bartering or trading -- giving one thing for, or paying a full price for, another thing. A peddler may dicker a long time with you, and when he finds he can get no better bargain, he takes your money and gives you the article purchased, and the deal is closed. But the word used in the pearl parable has the idea of travel connected with it, as we see in the word "traffic." To sell in this manner, one must go as a peddler, from one place to another, selling a little here and a little somewhere else, and continue until he has disposed of all his goods.

Selling and Buying

When Jesus saw that there were in mankind possibilities of attaining to a better condition as a result of their having lived in sin, he sold all that he had, and that in one transaction, that he might obtain the

amount necessary to purchase the world of mankind and thus be privileged to work or develop these possibilities. His all as a human being was the ransom merit or value which he had to "sell" to get the price, into a negotiable medium with which to buy the "field." The selling of his all was completed from a contract standpoint, when he gave himself to God at Jordan. God gave him his life rights when he awakened him from the dead on Easter morning. He then possessed his divine life rights, and in addition thereto had his human life rights as an asset. These human life rights were the price or negotiable merit with which he could purchase the world in due time. This purchasing of the world has not yet taken place, and will not take place until this merit, now invested in behalf of the church, will be released from this embargo thereby placed upon it, when it will be paid over to justice for the purchasing of the world of mankind, the "field" of the parable. To substantiate this fact of not being a past purchase we call your attention to the verb tenses of this parable in contrast to those of the pearl parable. The present tense of the word shows that the time of the understanding of this parable, the time when it should speak, will be when it is in process of fulfilment, not yet completed; whereas, the pearl parable speaks after it has been fulfilled.

Since the word, "sold," as used in the pearl parable has the thought of selling in peace-meal and that by traveling, we can see particular significance in the use of this word in this connection. When Jesus came forth from the wilderness, subsequent to his baptism, he began to dispose of his vitality by giving up a little here to heal a sick one, a little there to open blind eyes, and a little somewhere else to perform another miracle; and as he thus traveled about for three and one-half years, he disposed of all his strength and life to the degree that he had only a spark left when he was nailed to the cross. His faithfulness in thus "trafficing" with his life and his powers, demonstrated his love to be as the Father's, and this guaranteed for him the new creature condition. Upon him, who was perfect in the flesh, it was incumbent to demonstrate his new creature love before God could so consider him. Thus he bought this condition by carrying out these principles in his life.

This latter way of selling all he had, is the same kind of sacrificing that it has been our endeavor to set forth in Study Three of Series Three, where we treated the blood of the covenant as it is called to our attention in the cup of the Memorial service, procured by the crushing of the grapes to get the symbolic blood. When we presented what we thought was the proper interpretation of the sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham as a burnt offering, we also therein endeavored to treat this same kind of sacrificing on the part of Jesus and also on that of God.

The "Treasure," -- Undeveloped Possibilities

As the treasure hidden in the field, or more properly translated, "covered" in the field, was not a pot of gold coins, but was, most likely, a deposit of rich mineral of some sort that needed working or developing, and which was not affected by the purchase of the field; just so the possibilities that lie within the human being are not developed by the ransom; but are only acquired by that purchase so that they may, at a later time, be worked or developed to their utmost. But the pearl, when purchased, needed no working or development of any kind. The price which bought it gave to the buyer the perfect and completed gem. So, when Jesus shall have purchased the world of mankind, he will begin to develop them toward the new creature end. First he will give them all the blessings of restitution moral, physical, and mental, so as to thoroughly capacitate them for the reception of the godly things which can be obtained only upon the basis of godlikeness. When they awaken to their privileges along these lines and discover the pearl of great price, they too will sell all that they have and buy that pearl.

These two kinds of selling are again brought to our attention in Eph. 5: 1,2. We are here bidden to become "followers (imitators) of God as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour." It will be noticed that Jesus gave himself in two particulars on our behalf, but as yet in no sense for the world. The word translated "offering" in this verse is from the Greek word, meaning "to bear forward." This, Jesus did at Jordan when he bore forward his all to God who there accepted the offer, but did not receive the offering. But when Jesus ascended to the heavenly courts he again bore his life rights forward to God on our behalf, and they were there received by God to the desired end--our justification. Jesus will again do this on behalf of the world of mankind, the "field" of the parable, when these rights of

his shall be no longer necessary on behalf of the church. The word "sacrifice" here used, has the meaning of "dying," with the specific thought of "heavy breathing;" probably "exhaustion" is the intended thought. At least that is how Jesus gave himself for us as a sacrifice, for he completely exhausted himself for us, due to his love for us--selling his all by traveling about dispensing all that was his throughout the three and one-half years of his earthly sacrificial life. This was his sacrifice as a burnt offering. So here we are informed that it is our particular business to imitate GOD in these two ways, thus walking in love as Jesus walked therein.

The World God so Loved

In the statement that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth into him should not perish but have everlasting life; we would, at first, think reference is made to the parable of the treasure in the field being purchased. But in this parable, let it be noted, that the field is not the desirable nor the desired thing, but is merely purchased because of the treasure therein. Again, Jesus as the ransom price was not the only begotten son of God; for he was not begotten until after he had offered himself, the ransom price, to God at Jordan; and then the Holy Spirit was poured out upon him. After he was born a new creature in the wilderness and came forth, God then offered him up as his burnt offering. The giving of him in this way will be the means through which God will be able to obtain that "third" world he so loves, wherein righteousness shall dwell, and under which conditions all will be privileged to become new creatures.

The Seventh Millennium not The Third World

The Millennial Age is merely the way of entrance into that third world. It will be a world without end, and in it will be found, not only the new creatures who become such from amongst the human family; but also new creatures on every plane of intelligence. This is God's desire and since it is to be realized in that world, God so loved it that he was willing to give the most valuable as well as the greatest possible price. This price was the giving over, into the greatest possible suffering, the son of his love. This was that son who had become related to him through his Holy Spirit of love; hence it was his new creature son, Jesus Christ. The pearl parable is the one which illustrates the statement of GOD SO loving the world; for the pearl represents the new creature condition, and the "selling" of his all by Jesus, represents the way Jesus gave himself up to make the new creature condition possible.

The Hidden Treasure Again Hid

In the parable of the treasure covered in the field it is specifically stated that the man who found it, again hid it before he went and sold all that he had so that it would be there when he would come with the amount necessary to purchase it. The matter of hiding it has been successfully accomplished by our Lord, for it is only now beginning "to leak out" that there are the most valuable possibilities within the human heart; that each and every one has the possibility within himself of becoming godly; becoming a new creature, becoming as God is. Had the Lord not hid this from them by stating the matter in parables and dark sayings, they would have cried unto him and he would have saved them from their sins before their time for being so delivered had arrived, and the valuable lessons which he desired them to learn from their experiences with sin would not have been learned as a basis for eternal safety from self and sin. Matt. 13:13-17.

In contrast to the hidden state of this treasure, we find that the pearl of great price was left on the market. It was there for all who had the price with which to purchase it; for pearls are found for sale only in such markets. It needed no hiding to make it safe for the purchaser, for it was concealed to all who were not in the market for such goods, either through their not having the price with which to buy, or through not being interested in that kind of merchandise. The fact the merchantman was looking for pearls of goodly value is the reason he found this costly one. In due time all will be in the pearl market, and the only thing needed to buy such pearls will be the price whereby they may be obtained. The Holy Spirit in the form given to the church at Pentecost has been preparing them for entrance into the "pearl market;" and the same spirit when poured out upon all flesh, or rather for all flesh, will, by restoring them through restitutionary blessings, prepare them for entering that same "pearl market," and having the price of godlikeness with which to purchase godliness.

- The Man in Contrast to the Merchantman

The statement in the treasure parable to the effect that the purchaser of the field was a man, and that in the generic sense of that word, seems also to be intended as a differentiating statement in contrast to the merchantman of the pearl parable. Jesus, (seeing the possibilities within the race) when he came down from the heavenly courts, was the man in the generic use of that word. While he was the most wonderful man that ever was, in every way; still he was only a perfect man at the time he gave himself over to God to be our redeemer. But when his eyes were opened to real "pearl" quality, he was no longer a man simply in the generic sense; but was a super-man, a new creature; not merely godlike, but godly.

"Came Seeking Godly Pearls"

When Jesus came to earth, we have no Scriptural reason to believe that he knew he was to be man's ransom; neither are we privileged to think that he saw the possibilities of his becoming a new creature or that the world of mankind were to be so blessed. Doubtless Jesus, who had been the direct creator of all God's creations, rejoiced not only in that privilege; but he also must have had a lively interest in their happiness and welfare. We are privileged to so surmise from the statement in Job 38: 7; where the Lord answers Job out of the whirlwind and asks him where he was when he laid the foundations of the earth, stating that at that time the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy. The Lord tells us that he was one of the morning stars, and he surely must have rejoiced at this beginning of a new plane of intelligent creatures.

That he had an especial interest in mankind is gleaned from the statement in Prov.8:31; where, under the name of wisdom, he tells us that he rejoiced in the habitable parts of God's earth; and that his delights were with the sons of men. That his observation was broad is seen in the fact that he saw Satan fall from heaven as lightning; doubtless he was God's agent for casting him from heaven. Seeing man fall into sin and death must also have been a sad thing to witness, especially after he had experienced such great joy at his creation.

But when he saw that Adam was not immediately destroyed, but lived for many centuries in sin, and begat a posterity; he, doubtless, began to reason that God had some purpose in view in permitting beings condemned to death to come into existence, or else why not leave them in oblivion? The statement, "Behold man has become as one of us, to know both good and evil," must have caused the Logos to realize that a very happy and successful future was to be the everlasting blessing of the race.

Then, too, Jesus saw a large amount of godlikeness manifested by many of those condemned to death as is witnessed in the case of the Ancient Worthies. There he saw faithfulness to God and righteousness that he knew could not escape the recognition of God; for he knew that God would not quench the smoldering flax, nor break the bruised reed but would fan that spark of life into full blaze and give the reed every opportunity to become straightened through his, God's, judgment. The Tabernacle services with their sacrifices also led him to believe that a blessing would come to these condemned children of Adam. He saw that there were in the world some capabilities in the direction of righteousness that God was fostering and would some time reward; and he was eager to be used of the Father in any way that circumstances would dictate, regardless of what it might cost him. So, when Jesus came to earth he must have realized that he was being sent upon a mission along this line. He realized that after God's treatment of these capacities, blessed results would follow. To this extent Jesus, when he came to earth, saw the treasure that was hid in the field of the world of mankind. He was so in harmony with God's proceedings in this direction, as he could vaguely sense them, that he gave his all over into death at God's disposal,--sold all that he had. At Jordan he contracted to do this, and on the cross it was consummated. When he shall finally pay this price to justice and thereby acquire the field, he will be privileged to work or develop the capacities that he has found and has again hidden in the field; and we feel certain that this will culminate in the new creature character being mankind's joy, in place of a created disposition with its uncertainty, due to materialism operating purely from an inner urge.

There is one respect in which the pearl differs from all other gems and that is in the fact that it is a developed jewel. It is not mined, but is formed within the oyster, a living organism. We can see,

therefore, that it does not represent a godlike implanted disposition, but must picture a godly character. So it was with Jesus when he came on his mission to earth. He saw that there was to be a development within all of earth's sinners due to the fact that God permitted them to have contact with sin and its results. Doubtless, when the Lord communicated the news to Abraham that he could not give him the promised land at that time for the Amorite dwelled therein and the cup of his iniquity was not yet full, Jesus, as the Logos, was his messenger. And can we imagine this statement regarding the cup of the iniquity of the Amorite not yet being full, going unnoticed by the Logos? Yes, when he came he was seeking goodly pearls, he was seeking to further the interests of the Lord in what he surmised was to result from God permitting man to experience evil.

Jesus had seen Adam sin and become an enemy to divine goodness, although created perfect and godlike. He had also seen Satan transgress and fall from heaven as lightning. He had also seen many angels, all created in godlikeness, leave their first estate and become enemies of God. This must have shaken his confidence in any created disposition and was the basis for causing him to anticipate a further work of grace within the human heart which is set forth in this parable as the goodly pearls he was coming to seek. He had confidence in the ability of his Father to do better than what had appeared in his creatures thus far. So Jesus was anticipating this development of a better heart condition, and when given the opportunity to engage therein he came with this purpose in view.

Jesus Finds the Pearl of Great Price

After Jesus had come to earth and attained the age of thirty years and had presented himself to God to be used as he saw best, his spirit, now thoroughly awakened along this line prompted him to go aside from all else for a while and have close communion with God. To this end he chose the wilderness as a place to meet with God, knowing that he would not be bothered with picnickers, sightseers, or the curious. There, unmolested in every way, Jesus had undisturbed communion with God. As he there communed with God he got an insight into God's purpose with regard to his human creatures, and the part he himself was to play therein. This revealed to him the great character of love which was in the heart of God, and which gave birth to so gracious and beneficent a plan. There for the first time in all his life he saw a "pearl" character, and there he saw the pearl of great price. It so absorbed all the powers of his perfectly constituted godlike disposition that he esteemed it of greater value than all that he was and possessed.

An Exchange of Values that Makes Rich

This most lovable and joy-inspiring spirit of Jehovah thrilled him with such ecstasy of delight therein that he, through the appreciation of its value and the rejoicing in its magnificent beauty, splendor, glory, grandeur, and loveliness sold all that he had. Let us state here that the things of godly beauty cannot be bought by an exchange of corresponding values; for there is nothing of equal value to give in exchange for them--they are priceless, far beyond all that is material in its combined value. They may, however, be acquired; even if not purchased, in the ordinary sense of that term. We are bidden to buy gold tried in the fire, that we may be rich. Does this not show that this buying is not an exchange of corresponding values? for, if we had enough of the purchasing value to become rich by buying gold, we would be rich before making this acquisition. So the buying of this pearl is not a purchase in the ordinary sense.

Jesus acquired the Holy Spirit, the new creature condition, by a certain method, the requirements of which are very exacting upon the old creature; and necessitate such drastic sacrifices of the things he loves and in which he delights, that at some stages it may seem the value of the things sacrificed toward the attainment of the new creature things is a poor bargain--too much given for what is received. It is only when the new creature things are seen and studied in God that their real beauty is seen, and to the end that the value of all else immediately fades into nothingness. It is then that we can gladly give them up to the end that the other things, the things out of God, may be acquired.

How Giving up a Little, Makes Rich

We give up the godlike things of the flesh--the old things--not that we may receive the godly things in exchange; but we give them up because we value them so little in comparison that they become only

a means of conceiving and expressing the graces of the Holy Spirit. To illustrate: Our natural powers are universally subsidized by our spirit, our loves, so as to give them expression. It is the expression of self in which the flesh delights, and is what we, in these studies, call "selfness." But when we see the Father's wonderful spirit, we find so much joy therein, far greater than in the privilege of self-expression, that we "sell out" the old desires and loves, and use the time and the powers of the old body to acquire and express the new creature spirit. This is just what Jesus did after he came forth from the wilderness. In using his time, his powers, and affections, having taken them away from self, he had these values with which he could think upon God, awaken to and apprehend, or comprehend, to his full ability, the spirit of God; and could love these things into his heart, and into his very life and actions. Thus he sold out the old man and used these powers to purchase the new -- the things out of God -- the pearl of great price. In thus selling all that he had, nothing being otherwise expended, he acquired it for himself eternally.

One can become so absorbed with the beauty of godliness that he desires, at the cost of self, the privilege of exercising that spirit of love. If, for instance, you have not fallen so deeply in love with God's wonderful spirit of forgiveness, seeing it in the all-absorbing glory as he has displayed it toward you, that you have almost wished that some one would do you a mean trick so that you could have the privilege of exercising the spirit you love so much, you have not had the joy that is possible in both this godly quality and, therefore, also in God, that is your privilege to experience.

We trust that the Lord has spoken sufficiently clearly to you, through these failing phrases, falteringly spoken, that you understand what it means to sell all you have and buy the pearl of great price. If these words have failed, it may be that God will instruct you more clearly through experiences in your own heart supplementing the endeavors which we hereby make. If God does not so bless you, all the words in the languages of the earth will be utterly incompetent to bring you this realization.

The Pearl of Great Price not Hidden

It will be noted that the pearl of great price was not hidden after its discovery, as was the treasure found in the field. The reason for so stating this parable in contrast to that of the treasure will be seen to be very fitting when we examine into them. The pearl of great price represents the magnificent character of God. When one goes into the "market" in search of "goodly pearls," he is in the frame of mind which realizes that a common disposition acting simply from automaton impulses, is a disgustingly poor thing at best. He wishes a character that is more nearly like that which he realizes must characterize his Creator, and he puts forth a great effort in that direction. Realizing his inability to attain his desires along this line, constitutes him a mourner in Zion. But the Lord has the oil of joy for such mourners, and soon such an one finds the pearl of great price.

In describing the sixth plague of Revelation, Chapter 16, the statement is made that the way of the kings of the east was prepared thereby. This sixth volume seems to be the pearl market; that is, it is the field or market of thought which brings the precious things to our attention. It is only to those who cherish the things of love, as they are treated therein, who finally find the pearl of great price. It is not only the sixth volume that we think is the pearl market, but all the literature that Pastor Russell put forth to the truth friends at that time we are inclined to include therein. It was at this time that the various graces of the spirit were outlined in the "Tower" for Berean study. Some classes rejoiced in these studies to the extent that they studied them over and over. These, in their quest for spiritual things, were in the pearl market. It is to these that God is now bringing the godly things of his spirit. The graces that were studied at that time were only the godlike ones, and were a means of preparing us for the godly ones. In this way the kings of the east had the way prepared for the godly things to come into their hearts.

When one once finds this pearl of great price it is never hidden again; for the Lord has done all in his power to expose this pearl; it is his sole purpose to expose it. But since modesty is a characterizing quality of it, even as the splendor and sheen of the pearl is so displayed; and since man is so absorbingly wrapped up in self and materialism, he will not be capacitated to find this pearl of great price until he becomes "pearl-minded" -- goes into the market for the purpose of buying goodly pearls. So, as this

pearl of great price was hidden to all who were not in the market in search of goodly pearls; even so God will not reveal his character to any who are not in the market for something better than mere god-likeness. Pearls are not natural parts of the oyster, but are foreign developments. Oysters are not born nor hatched with them; they are developed within some of them later in life. Thus the pearl represents the unnaturalness of a godly character. God is unknown simply because "no one has sought out God."

How We Traffic and Buy the Valuable Pearl

The buying of this pearl is not to be thought of as a final action on our part, but as we get rid of self or "traffic" with it, we invest this value -- our time, power, or affection -- in pearl quality. When we have satisfied God with our efforts along this line, he then counts it ours. He does not count it ours for our having given him a corresponding amount for this pearl, but he realizes that we love it above all else; and it is his good pleasure that we possess it; and, since we have devoted to that end all that we have, he gives it to us, making us rich through the investment of our poverty. As this pearl was on the market before all who brought the purchase price, so the character of God, love, is to be possessed by all who see it, desire it, and pay their all for it. It is hid for the simple reason that God wants all who will, to possess it. It is hid from all who are not in the market for goodly pearls. Hence a merchant man is the actor in this parable in contrast to a man (generic) in the treasure parable. When one is not awake to new creature matters, has not been begotten by the word of truth, he is a "man" -- common living material -- as was Adam, the angels, and also our Lord Jesus as the Logos, and up to the time of his baptism. But when he understands merchandising in real values, and is qualified by the truth to look for goodly pearls, then he is no mere man -- material being -- but is a new creature in the making, on his way to obtain real wealth. Is it not a stupendous thought (truth) that we are privileged to possess this pearl of great price even as God possesses it -- that we can acquire it by investing our all to that end, finally possessing the same character that God possesses?

As we mentioned before, we wish here to repeat, and with further detailed observation, the fact that the pearl differs from all other jewels or gems, in that it has the distinction of being developed within the body of a living organism, the oyster. All other jewels were made when God created the earth, and are products of his mighty power in creation. The diamond, for instance, is the product of great heat and immense pressure operating upon common carbon such as we find on the underside of a cook stove lid after having burned soft coal therein. Scientists can, with the aid of electricity and modern machinery, make diamonds; but they are so small, and the cost of manufacture is so expensive that it is not practicable, neither is it commercially feasible.

Gems, made at the time of creation and by creative power, picture the natural graces which are the results of our being created as we are. Divine power acting upon chemical material makes our brains with dispositions which, when expressed through the body, manifest graces which are like those of God himself. But the pearl being a later development, coming after living creatures were brought into existence -- those of the oyster family -- represents an inspired character rather than a created disposition, when studied in contrast to other jewels. An inspired character consists of graces which have come into existence, not by power, but by the presence of the joy of God in the heart of a living, intelligent organism. More than six thousand years expired after God created Adam, a godlike person, before the first of his children manifested any "pearl" qualities of character. It is true that Jesus became of the pearl order almost two thousand years ago, but he was not of Adam's children. It may have been millions of years after the Logos was created that he saw the "pearl of great price" and sold all that he had and purchased it.

First the Natural, Then the Spiritual

Before there can be a pearl there must be the creation of an oyster. And so before there can be a new creature there must be an old one. It is evident that we can have no godly character unless God first brings into being a godlike one. As the pearl is no part of the oyster even though it is created within its body, so the new creature is no part of the old material being in which it is created. As the pearl is a foreign body within the oyster and is an irritation to it which it would like to discharge if it were possible, so the new creature influence and power is entirely foreign to our material being. It is an irritation to it because it places in abeyance all of self and selfness, which is the joy of the material

man; self-expression being as natural to the old creature as are the body reflexes. We saw this illustrated in the statement that Ishmael, who represents the natural godlike man, will always dwell before the face of his brethren, and that his hand will always be against the hand of every man; picturing the eternal readiness of the material man to act rather than to let the new creature do the acting. This is what is meant by the words of St. Paul when he stated that the mind of the flesh is enmity to God, and that to the law of God it is not subject, neither can it be.

The Pearl a Most Modest Gem

The pearl, in contradistinction to all other jewels which have the quality of iridescence, does not refract light into the colors of the rainbow by passing the light through itself, as does the diamond and the sapphire; for it is an opaque body, and refracts by reflecting the light. Being opaque it, of necessity has color in itself. This color of the pearl is white, and seems to call attention to the fact that love, which the pearl pictures, is righteousness in its every phase and aspect. The pearl seems to have light within itself, and it appears to be a white light -- righteousness springing from within. Together with this white lustre it gives off a very subdued iridescence. This is a modest display in contrast to that of the diamond and other gems which refract the light which passes through them. Their iridescence is brilliant, "flashy" -- showy; whereas, that of the pearl is subdued, almost hidden. It takes examination with the purpose of ascertaining this quality in the pearl to appreciate it; but it is the distinguishing, striking, and attracting characteristic in other jewels which have this quality.

To those who are attracted to God from a spiritual standpoint the first and predominant impression is of his righteousness. This is so strongly manifested by God, since justice is the foundation of his throne, and the wisdom from above is first pure, that it is the striking manifestation of love. Love must first and always be pure. But on continuing the study of love, God, and examining into his actions to this end, all the beauty of the various graces of love may be found. Who saw the beauty of love in God, as Series Two calls attention thereto, before that examination of Him to that end was made? This is not displayed in a flashy or showy manner, but is manifested with modesty, ALWAYS. This is a characterizing quality of love, this modesty, this desire to be unseen. Its only desire is to deliver the blessing and bring the joy, and in no wise to detract therefrom by attracting attention to self. The flashy and brilliant displays of other jewels, even cut glass or paste diamonds, when studied in this regard, picture the showy manner in which the natural or material being displays its graces. Righteousness is not the predominant quality, but the display of grace is the thing forced upon the attention. The pearl's iridescent display does not come from within the gem, even though its light seems to be within; but from without by reflection; whereas, the diamond, as well as its paste imitation, and also the cut glass imposter, pass the light through themselves and make it appear that this glorious display is from within themselves. So we see that, in the spiritual consideration, the godlike call attention to themselves; whereas, the godly call attention to God.

We trust that, at this point in the article, we have accomplished what we started out to do; namely, to set forth what the pearl represents as it is presented in this parable. If we are sufficiently persuaded that the pearl is used to represent a begotten character, the implantation of the Holy Spirit within our hearts, then we are prepared to continue to make use of the pearl in a personal application regarding our becoming new creatures. If we can do this we feel certain that the thoughts which it brings forth in our minds will be to the end that we shall be established, strengthened, and settled. We shall now endeavor to study the pearl and things related to it minutely as applying to ourselves as individuals. We have just studied its significance as it applies to the entire new creature arrangement.

THE PEARL A PICTURE OF THE NEW CREATURE

The Beauty of Godliness More Than Skin Deep

We formerly thought that we needed only to freshen up our natural graces to the extent of our ability and God would add that which we lacked, and upon this basis we were to obtain a place in the divine

nature. The godlike disposition is beautiful to possess and to behold in others, and it is impossible for one to differentiate between the godly character and the godlike disposition merely by seeing them in operation. To ascertain whether one has a character or a disposition, one must find out, if possible, just what is uppermost in the heart of the one in question. Everyone who can make the proper confession regarding our Lord Jesus, and how he came into the flesh, is a new creature; for the Lord will not reveal the new creature things to any but those who are his own children; for he casts not his pearls before those who cannot appreciate them but tread them under foot.

The Spiritual Yardstick

We read in 1 John 4:1-3; how to determine the spirit of antichrist. It tells us, "Every spirit that does not confess Jesus, is not from God. And this is the spirit of the antichrist." Also, "Every spirit which confesses Jesus Christ to have come in the flesh is from God." He tells us, "By this you know the spirit of God." Notice, he did not say that we may identify the spirit of God by its manifestation, but by the proper confession regarding Christ. It is this proper confession regarding Christ that guarantees a knowledge of the essential truths which reveal the spirit of God, and which implant that spirit into our hearts; and when we know that one has this knowledge, and that it is the uppermost thing in his life, so much so that he confesses it, then we know that he is a new creature. When we meet one who has nothing else to talk about except that which is based upon this fundamental truth, we know that we have one before us who is in love with the spirit of God.

It matters not what natural disposition such an one manifests when the flesh is irritated and his peace is disturbed. But so soon as such an one regains control of his old man, he will demonstrate his true love for the spirit of God which his confession of Christ has implanted in his heart, by the sorrow he has, and his hatred for the evils of his old nature. His natural actions are not new creature manifestations. His actions, other than those put forth while he has the spirit of the Lord in his mind as an inspiration, are not due to the new creature. Do not expect him to automatically manifest the spirit of God in this body. And never expect that in a divine body you will manifest the new creature spirit as automatically as you manifest the old disposition in this body. When you get the right conception of a new creature you will know that this can never be expected. Action that is automatic is void of virtue. God does not so act, and he does not wish to have others do so. Action without thought is purely mechanical and God is no machine. His begotten new creature sons are just as he is and, therefore, will not do otherwise than he does.

If these simple words -- "Every spirit which confesses Jesus Christ to have come in the flesh, is from God" -- had no deeper meaning than that which appears on the surface, they would be a confusing instead of a guiding statement to his people as to how to recognize such a spirit; for does not every sect of Christendom make this confession? Does not every Bible Student appreciate the ransom sacrifice and its irrefutable logic sufficiently to make that confession intelligently? But are they all from God? Many of them will not even shake hands with us when they meet us on the street. Some will not even recognize any relationship with the members of their family who also confess this as they do. There is an officer in the I.B.S.A. who no longer corresponds with the members of his family who read and believe these studies.

When Jesus Became The Christ

The thought in the expression, "Jesus Christ to have come in the flesh," is the kernel of the matter. Jesus did not become Christ until at age thirty years, when he consecrated himself at Jordan and spent the forty days immediately subsequent thereto in the wilderness, during which time the heavens were opened unto him. Here he was anointed, Christed. That was when God prepared him, sanctified him, and sent him into the world. John 10:36. Here Jesus Christ came in the flesh. Here Jesus became a new creature. Here the Holy Spirit came into the human, fleshy being of Jesus. Jesus was not begotten to the divine nature, but to the new creature condition. If any one sees this matter clearly, he understands what a new creature is. If you understand this new creature matter it is the best evidence that you yourself have been begotten by that same spirit whereby Jesus was begotten after he came into the flesh. No one can see this unless God has revealed it to him, for this spirit is from God, and is not the antichrist spirit.

Any spirit that does not confess this new creature matter clearly, is against the new creature arrangement and is, therefore, of the antichrist spirit; for Christ, being the anointed, and the anointing, being the spirit of God, that which makes us new creatures; one is "against" it when one confesses something instead of this truth; "anti" meaning "instead of" or "against." Now turn to 1 John 5:1 and apply the same reasoning to that statement and you can know who has been begotten by God. It is in this way that we can differentiate, spiritually, between the mundanely created "gem," and the "pearl;" between a godlike disposition and a godly character. Note also that according to the Diaglott, the word "Jesus" should be "Jesus Christ."

The "Oyster" of Spiritual Pearl Making

The mundanely created gem pictures the disposition that is due to earthy material being so impressed by God's creative power, that it manifests godlikeness. The pearl is a gem that has been created within a living organism and is composed of organic material, and it represents the character that has been created within the affections, the heart of an intelligent godlike individual. It is in the various members of the oyster family that this wonderful pearl making process takes place. If we condescend to be pictured by the lowly oyster, it may be that we shall become impressed more vividly as to just how we are to co-operate with the Lord in this matter of "pearl" forming; for it is in the body of the "oyster" that God creates the "pearl."

The oyster is one of the lowliest creatures of the animal kingdom. The word, "animal," comes from the word, "animus," which means, "mind." To be an animal, therefore, necessitates the possession of a mind. The oyster is so far down in the scale of animate creation that it is but little removed from the vegetable kingdom. The lack of brains of an oyster is almost proverbial, when one desires to convey the thought of a deficiency in such organs. Some plants seemingly manifest almost as much so-called, "brain-power" as the oyster does. As the oyster is at the bottom of the ladder in the animal kingdom, so the human family is the lowest of God's creations in intelligence and godlikeness.

Refined(?) Sin Versus Gross Immorality

The oyster is a scavenger of the sea. It lies on the ocean bed, usually near the mouth of a river, and feeds upon the offal that comes its way. Thus it again pictures the human family, for they in their present, fallen state, feed upon the sediment in this ocean of that which is condemned, and in which we dwell. Does not the human race, in general, revel in all the filth of mind and morals that they can possibly find? In some "good society" of the present time, with both sexes present, they vie with one another in telling smutty stories. And such were some of us, in the times past of our lives, the Apostle tells us "oysters." 1 Cor.6:11. Let us not excuse ourselves from such society by stating that we never did such, for we might find ourselves in the class who thank God that they are not like these sinners; for when the sinners were doing these things they were busy thinking how they might foster their vanity in dress and facial appearances, which acts are far more detestible and reprehensible in God's sight. If we were not feeding on one form of social filth we were gormandizing on another, equally as bad. Just stand aside and let the Lord show in this oyster picture what sort of persons we were, and let us look at self instead of at some one else in this matter. Whatever we were, we still are whenever we do not have on the new man.

Selfishness and Selfness Personified

The oyster lies on the bottom of the ocean and, when it is not afraid of some enemy, it opens the two shells of its house of protection, and as the current of water passes through its shell it consumes whatever comes in the way of food. The oyster opens to receive food, but when it comes to contributing anything to another in the way of sustenance, it closes its two shells with surprising power. In this way the oyster pictures our selfishness, and it is a life-size portrait done in colors, making it appear quite natural. The oyster, in which the pearl is formed, fittingly pictures the old creature in which the new creature is found. It requires a shell fish to portray us, the selfish.

How Pearls are Formed

It is while the oyster lies on the bottom of the ocean with its shell, mantel, and gills open to the currents of water, that some little particle may fall into the oyster's body folds or appendages, causing the oyster irritation. Since it has no means whereby to remove the irritating body, it must endure the irritation. But God, who considers even the feelings of an oyster, has given it a way of mitigating this wounding of its feelings. He does this by having the oyster coat the offending object with a slimy substance which hardens and becomes pearl. After this process has continued for a time the sharpness of the irritating member has been dulled. The irritation becomes less and the pearl begins to form and grow.

Irritation the Basis of Our "Pearl" Making

It is in much the same way that we become interested in new creature matters. The irritating thing that causes us to begin the new creature process is nothing other than the will of God coming into our lives, often not by conscious choice, but being placed in our lives by him who knows better what we desire than we do ourselves. We would not invite any irritating condition into our lives, would we? We are usually out getting all that makes up what we think is life with its joys when, without our intelligently inviting it, God lets something enter our lives that is irritating. But some one asks, "is the will of God irritating to us?" thinking that it should be the "sweet will of God," of the poet. We will venture the statement, and hope to prove its truthfulness, that there is no more irritating matter or thing to the natural man than the will of God. When ones entire mental and moral make-ups unite to formulate a set of desires and wishes, and these must all be set aside and entirely squelched to give place to desires and wishes wholly foreign to, and against the ease and well-being of the flesh so that it takes sacrifice and suffering to put that foreign will into operation, one has about as irritating a thing to take into ones life as it is possible to find. The will of God means death to self, and that is the most undesirable thing with which self can be confronted.

To prove that the will of God can be the most irritating thing possible to even a righteous person, let us refer you to the case of our Lord Jesus praying that, if possible, the cup, the will of the Lord for him at that time, should pass from him; nevertheless, he then subjected his will to his Father. To the Christian, Jesus laid down the principle upon which discipleship was possible, in the words: "If any one wish to come after me, let him renounce himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." Since the cross, which is made of two pieces of wood at right angles to each other, is used to represent our wills and God's which are total opposites, the facts that the will of the flesh and that of God are at variance one with the other and that God's will is an irritation to the flesh, may again be seen.

While devoting all of our time and attention to self and its advancement, and endeavoring to insure ease and comfort in our old age, in addition to planning and arranging for the well-being of our dependents while we are here and after we are gone, how many of us have not been arrested in our progress toward success in this selfish way by some irritating matter coming into our lives? It may have been loss of health, of business, of a loved one, of the precious sight of an eye, or of both, or any of a number of things. How undesirable this intrusion was, and how we tried to eliminate it from our lives! But we could no more remove it than could the oyster remove the irritating object from his body, both being utterly helpless in this regard. God who knows the mind of our spirit, deals with us accordingly; but only when he knows we are fully consecrated to him. It was because he knew St. Paul's consecrated attitude toward him that he arrested him on the way to Damascus.

Overcoming Versus Removing Irritation

Since the oyster cannot remove the irritating substance, he begins to produce pearl substance about it, and thus overcomes the irritation. So it is with us. When first we received the sharp irritation of failure, or loss of physical blessings or cherished ideas or ideals, it grieved us sorely; but being innately respectful and reverential toward our Creator, we finally acquiesced thereto, thinking it was for a good purpose. We thus began to overcome the irritation of the circumstance. We naturally had confidence in the orderings and permissions of divine wisdom and love, and as a result the irritation was somewhat lessened. This became our blessed status with the Lord sooner or later, depending upon the length of

time it took us to bring forth the pearl substance of reverence for and reliance upon the Lord.

Does God's Will Ever Cease to Irritate the Flesh?

But regardless of the amount of pearl substance formed about the irritating matter, it is always irritating to the oyster and continues to call forth pearl-making activity on his part as long as it is in his body. When God first arrests our attention by permitting some earthly unpleasantness to come into our lives, it is only a means to further open our minds to an appreciation of the better things of his will concerning us. St. Paul tells us that we should present our bodies living sacrifices so that we might know what is that "good and acceptable and perfect will of God." And when we arrive at that knowledge, the will of God will still be an irritating thing to the old man, the flesh, the natural material being.

The aspect that concerns us most in the study of a subject with so many angles, is the present status of the matter, the wedding supper portion. As the mind of the flesh is enmity to God, so is the mind or will of God adverse and irritating to the flesh. The old creature with his godlikeness dies hard. It is not until we see the good, acceptable, and perfect qualities of God's will concerning us that we heartily espouse it, but the natural man still remains on the job to assert himself whenever he can. The pearl with its beautiful iridescence represents the wonderful will of God in our lives, good, acceptable and perfect. The larger it becomes the less it irritates, and we can more and more sing from the heart, "Sweet will of God, my refuge thou; My safe abiding place." We saw in the prophetic picture of the Ishmael class as they stand related to the Isaac class of the future; that Ishmael's hand was always against the hand of his brother; the Ishmael class will always dwell before the face of the Isaac class. So the material body in which the new creature dwells will forever be against the new creature. To some people this matter of godliness, with its requirements of extinction upon the old man, is a bitter pill. They do not want their efforts at self development put down for nothing other than a means through which to acquire godliness or the Holy Spirit. They desire some credit for their efforts, and so cannot come to God and accept the irritation of becoming new creatures, for it does away with ALL of SELF. Whenever Godliness and its destruction of godlikeness becomes sweet to us, the "pearl" is already of some size.

Natural Powers Devoted to "Pearl Making"

The shell of an oyster is made of pearl substance. It is called "mother of pearl," doubtless, because so many pearls are found attached to the shells that they formerly thought pearls grew out of the shells. The oyster has the pearl-forming ability as a natural exercise of his life powers. His shell is the product of this power of pearl making. His shell is made so as to protect him from outside enemies which are desirous of feeding upon him. As oysters we have used our powers of "pearl-making" almost exclusively for self-protection. The mentality that God gave us, through which we are to conceive God and his love, has been subsidized by the natural man for gaining wealth, and making new inventions to the end that he might live longer, happier, easier, and above all, more securely. These powers, used in harmony with the will of God, work out our eternal happiness as new creatures, the purpose for which they were given by God; but God must irritate us with that will before we awaken to our privileges along that line to form a valuable pearl. David said, "Before I was afflicted, I went astray."

Old and Young Pigeon Godlikeness

When pearl hunters find an oyster shell that is smooth and regular in shape they have little hope of it containing a pearl. But when they find one that is very irregularly formed they suspect it of having a pearl within. This is due to the fact that certain worms endeavor to get at the oyster to eat it, appropriate its substance to their use. Among these are the driller snail which attempts to get inside by drilling through the shell. To withstand this intrusion the shell is fortified at this place and so becomes misshapen. Nevertheless, sometime or other a bit of shell or grain of sand gets into the oyster's body and the pearl-making starts. It is said that the irritating agent, that is, the beginning of many pearls, is a small worm that attacks the oyster and would destroy it if it did not overcome and encase the worm with pearl substance. Even so, the time will have to come in every life when the will of God will mean either its eternal joy, if the irritation is overcome; or eternal destruction if it is not overcome.

God's Will Must be Taken into Our Hearts

As we have stated foregoing, we wish to repeat, with further elucidation, the fact that pearls to be of highest value must be perfect spheres. A pear-shaped pearl is of much less value than a spherical one of the same weight. For the pearl to be perfectly round it must be developed within the mantle of the oyster. The mantle of the oyster is its outer coat-like portion. Within this mantle is its body; on the side opposite to where it is attached to the two shells it has several gills. It is within these ruffle-like gills and the extension of his mantle where the irritation must be experienced by the oyster to make a perfectly round pearl, for there he surrounds the foreign object with pearl-making substance on all sides. The pearl is perfectly developed when so located. It is down there, deep within its body, near its heart, that the oyster is very sensitive, and where the foreign substance irritates him most. As long as the pearl is so located it continues to grow symmetrically and, therefore, round.

If we are to co-operate with God fully in this matter we must receive the will of God not only into our lives, but into our affections. If we let his will irritate us in our pocketbooks, or in our minds alone, or take it as an irritation into our lives in that we serve him to the irritation of our pride or desire for ease, it is not conducive to new creature begetting and growth. It must be taken into our hearts where it will irritate our godlikeness, for that is the only place that the new creature is formed.

Spiritual Shell Making Versus Pearl Making

Our hopes for life eternal formerly were all based upon our godlikeness. This we fostered and developed to the best of our ability. We cherished it as our only basis for appearing before God. Now the Lord sends his will into our hearts with the end in view of showing us that godlikeness is only the foundation to properly receive his spirit; and that with godlikeness alone we will never be new creatures in any sense; and that we must cease from depending upon our labors of developing godlikeness, as our safety in judgment, and receive of his spirit without labor or price. This is hard for a self-energized being to accomplish. And so this old (shell fish) oyster some times asks, "Why start out now to get a new method or philosophy of character development?" This is often very irritating for it to receive.

This shell making, therefore, may be viewed from the standpoint of picturing our development of godlikeness, for it is upon this that we depended for the eternal safety of ourselves and which was to carry us through all the trials into the haven of eternal bliss. But so far as the pearl itself is concerned; the oyster needs the shell so that it can live to produce the gem that has been started within its body; for it dies immediately upon being removed from its shell. Thus we see the oyster has the ability to make both the shell -- godlikeness -- and also the pearl -- godliness. The shell has but little value; tons of them becoming nothing other than chicken feed; but a large spherical pearl adorns a king or a queen. This illustrates the ultimate importance of either developing godlikeness alone, or of using it to the end of acquiring a large degree of godliness in our hearts. The shell of an oyster has the same iridescence as the pearl; but the spherical symmetry is absent.

The oyster with the perfectly shaped shell gives little evidence of containing a pearl. So those of us who have done well in building our protection (natural pearly godlikeness behind which we hope to remain safe when final judgement is meted out) against the "enemy" (the will or mind of God,) give little evidence of having been irritated by God's will involving matters relating to our sanctification. It is the oyster with the distorted shell, built so, against the invasion of an enemy of the oyster, that gives evidence of possessing a pearl. It is so in the spiritual. Those who have not been proof against the invasion of the mind of God, due to their higher idealism regarding spiritual matters, haven't been able to retain such fine dispositions but have been irritated by the admission of the divine will into their hearts. The results are that pearls are growing in their hearts instead of fine-appearing, but practically worthless "shell" beings, polished old creatures. The mourner in Zion, due to his enlarged ideals of righteousness, realizes what a poor excuse he is in the way of godlikeness and, as a result, turns to God to receive his will and way of pearl forming. This results in forming the pearl of great price in his heart.

The "Pearl" Irritating the "Oyster"

We have seen that the object introduced into the body of the oyster at first caused severe irritation even as our material losses or failures at first severely irritated us when the Lord permitted them to enter our lives. We have also discerned that as the pearl substance, thrown about the object, removed much of its irritation, even so our confidence in, reverence and respect for God and his will took much of the irritation out of the seeming calamities permitted by him, and provided opportunity for further precious relationship with him. But when we saw the "good" portion of the will of God that is also "acceptable" as well as "perfect," we began to discern therein the most wonderful expression of love, in all its goodness, toward us that is possible. We saw that it was the pearl quality of God that irritated us, and yet it displayed all the iridescence of love's glory toward us. We then gladly received it and, although it still irritated the flesh, it became a precious and sweet will unto us.

By continuing to love and cherish the will of God, in spite of its unpleasantness to the old flesh with its self-spirit, and keeping it in our hearts and minds continually, it becomes larger--more precious--day by day. This latter process, the irritation of the pearl to the oyster, seems to be the wedding supper blessing; for, is it not now that the will of God appears unto us, revealing all the graces of love to our hearts? Its irritation is almost nil, due to the exceeding richness of the glimpse of glory that the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God has shed abroad in our hearts. Its righteousness and perfect rotundity make it a much desired blessing. Yet, we are as oblivious to the real import of this rich blessing, notwithstanding the joy we have therein, as is the oyster to the value of the pearl that he possesses.

Have you, dear reader, that "will of God, the power of your sanctification," which sanctification is accomplished in no other way than by having revealed to your heart the love of his Holy Spirit in all its varied graces or expressions of goodness, absorbingly present within your heart? and do you love it so dearly that you would not let it go for all else, even though it means the destruction of all that you are, even to the passing away of that which you valued most and which you thought was your passport into heaven? If this is your joyful and blessed portion, then you are growing pearl quality of great value, and God is recording it in his book of memory, and not far in the future he will place that pearl quality in a queenly body and office that awaits you when the marriage of the lamb takes place.

The Pearl, No Part of the Oyster

If we get the force of all the various pictures that God has given us we get a better idea of a new creature. We see that the pearl is separate from and foreign to the oyster; that it is produced through a faculty or power that the oyster possesses; that the pearl represents the will of God manifested to our hearts, and that by keeping its glory within our hearts the growth takes place and is credited to us; and that the larger it becomes in our heart's vision, the greater is our new creature blessing. Spiritual pearl growing consists in getting an enlarged appreciation of the Holy Spirit into our hearts. We see also that the new creature is entirely foreign to our body and nature, which is only an instrument or place for growing new creature quality. Lastly and most wonderfully astounding is the fact that the new creature is the will and the glory of God inseparably identified with our affections. May the Great Pearl Merchant add his blessing to these poorly stated words, which seem to say nothing when we consider the glory and joy they are intended to express. It is our hope that the reader may, to a degree, be impressed with the import, the glory, and blessing they are intended to impart.

To bring closer home to us just what we refer to in this aspect of what the pearl represents, let us state that when love decided that the plan for the permission of evil should be the one to be carried out, God took into his life this will of love, regardless of the sacrifice, suffering, and self-denial that it would mean to him. Every one of his graces has been exercised to their utmost possibilities in bringing this plan into realization, He has not spared himself in the slightest particular. Real love is a sore irritation to our material beings, but to the new creature it is a blessed irritation. Love has cost God all that he has suffered. The more we take the spirit and will of God into our hearts and the longer we keep them there, the sweeter they become; and the more they become our own. God made the oyster to so react toward an irritating substance, and so he becomes the one who really makes the pearl, the oyster being only the agent. So God is the creator of the new creature because he made

it possible for us to so react to his will. When we see the oyster's lack of intelligence to this end we are more ready to claim that God is the sole author and producer of the new creature.

God's Infinite Care Over the "Pearl Makers"

When a pearl seeker of to-day finds a shell that gives evidence of containing a large pearl, he looks through it with the X-ray; and if it is found to contain a large pearl, centrally located and known to be within the body of the oyster, it is carefully handled and placed in a protected part of the ocean bed where it can produce more pearl material to make the pearl larger. Every bit of increase in the size of the large pearls increases their value out of all proportion. When the oyster finally dies, a pearl of great price remains. So God, the great pearl seeker, who seeth into our hearts, tenders us great care and blessings to the end that we may produce to the limit of our ability, the pearl character fostered within our hearts. He values and cares for it for us who are unable to do so.

God's Will Should Irritate the Heart, But Nothing More

When an oyster is developing a pearl within its body, it some times loses it. A storm may so agitate even the bed of the ocean that the oyster is upset. It is then that the oyster closes its shell. With the upsetting of its entire house the pearl is oftentimes removed from its original location and rolls outside of the oyster, sometimes getting between the oyster and its shell. It then irritates the oyster at that point and the shell-making pearl substance fastens it to the shell and finally incorporates it into the shell substance and thus the pearl in time disappears. Jewelers often display such a shell which has what appears to be a pearl growing out of it; but it is, instead, a pearl disappearing into the shell. The lesson we are privileged to draw from this phase of pearl culture seems to be that we must not let storms, that come into our classes, or into our lives, so upset us that we lose the Father's will, which is the source of greatest joy, out of our hearts. Take no offense at anything, regardless of what may happen to you from a brother or sister. If they are really brethren they mean no offense, and if they are not we should exercise toward them some of this "good" spirit with which God is blessing us in his exercise of forgiveness and forbearance toward us, and not let such things cause us loss. We should be so thoroughly convinced regarding new creature matters that no "storm" can make us return to our old sinful ways, and not even to our old ideals of godlikeness as a means of meeting God's approval.

Having discharged the pearl from its body and subsequently receiving the irritation from without, the oyster pictures one of us who has become offended and then so acts that the will of God irritates his conscience. He then seeks to take the irritation out of his conscience by making excuses for himself, and otherwise hardening his conscience against the plainly stated will of God. Such a pearl, destroyed in becoming a part of the shell, contributes nothing to anyone other than perhaps a large button to assist in keeping the robe of righteousness or the garments of praise upon some who take his case as a warning.

Large, Valuable Pearls and Small Ones

A pearl is produced by thin layers of secretion about an irritating body. This hardens into a very thin coating of pearl or nacre. This process is repeated many times to make an average sized pearl. It may be seen, then, that a pearl is pearl material all the way through. No matter how small or large it is, it is but one thing, pearl. The size is the thing that makes it valuable. The larger a pearl, the more beauty it reflects, and it is upon this reflected beauty, to a large extent, that the value depends. The Church, with Jesus as head, will consist of large pearls reflecting much, yea, even all of God's glory; hence they will all be pearls of great price, even as God's own character is a pearl of great price. As there are but few very large pearls, so the pearls representing the Lord Jehovah, the Lord Jesus, and the members of his little flock will be the pearls of great price. Every one who becomes a new creature will possess a character of value, but not so largely reflective of the graces of love. The fact that each gate into the New Jerusalem is a pearl, shows that there is no other way of entering the kingdom condition than by becoming a new creature -- by having the pearl of great price of God's will irritate one to the degree that this old godlike disposition is destroyed and the pearl quality of godliness is developed in that one's heart.

Pearls of Great Price Are Scarce Jewels

Few of us common people have seen a pearl of great price. The many fair sized pearls we see to-day are almost all imitations. If the surface is touched with acid or scratched, the skin coat of lustrous material is removed, revealing a china or glass ball which makes up the body of the imitation. Pearls of great price are so valuable that they find their way to the kingly and queenly strata of earth's society. As these pearls, developed in the lowly oyster which is practically at the bottom of the ladder of the animal kingdom, find their final setting in the jewelry of the kings and queens of earth; so the characters inspired within our hearts, here in the lowest condition to which the lowest intelligent creatures have fallen, are to be the adornment of the kings and queens of the divine plane.

Those who can submit to God, letting him have his way with them to the end that he might show forth in them his exceeding kindness, his rich mercy, his prodigality in lavishing that most costly pearl quality of mercy; and those who are sufficiently dead to have no will, desire for glory of self, no plan or idea of their own that might stand in the way of God displaying his graces of love; these are the modest ones who will reflect the glory of God to others in large measure, even as the pearl modestly reflects and refracts the glories of the sun so beautifully to the observer. Such characters God will make adornments to divine kings and queens.

Harvesting Common Pearls

When pearl hunters have no reason to believe, from outward appearances, that a pearl of any consequence is within an oyster, they crack its shell and remove it therefrom, dumping it into a large vat. This brings about the death of the oyster. When the vat is full, or when all the oysters possessed have been so disposed of, the vat is left in the sun for a few days. The mass of oysters die, putrify, and finally liquify, turning into slime, which ultimately becomes of the consistency of water. When this state is attained, the water is poured off and used as fertilizer for the land. Any pearls that were in the oysters will then be found at the bottom of the vat. These are gathered, washed, and sold. These pearls do not eventuate in the jewelry of kings and queens, but may be purchased in the markets of the common people. Many of them may be found on the jewelry counters of the "Five and Ten" Stores of the land. They are pearls nevertheless, for to their limited capacity they display the same glorious iridescence.

While this is, to some extent, a revolting and nauseating procedure; nevertheless, it pictures the way God has of gathering his "pearls" of lesser value, those which make up the Great Company. Those who have taken the will of God into their lives, and who have co-operated with God to the end that some pearl quality has been accredited upon the basis of this irritation of his will, will not be abandoned by him; but will be carried through to the finish if they will but hold fast to him until their deliverance is accomplished. We previously showed that the first pearl quality was due to their confidence in and respect for God and that for this reason they endured the irritation of his will. This the Great Company does, but goes no farther. They take up his will, and endure it through their faith in God, and that is about all the farther they get in the heavenly way in this life; for they are all their lifetime in bondage, through their fear of sacrificial death. They fear the extinction of self and, therefore, do but little pearl making. They never come in this life to that grand consummation of the will of God for them, wherein it becomes dearer than all else to them. We refer to the wedding supper through which they should become sanctified.

When the work on and in the Church is completed, he will then begin to gather these pearls. He will take his protecting arm from off them and their shell of protection will be broken in the great time of trouble. Separated from this protection they will die, as does the oyster. In the vat of the great time of trouble the sun of persecution will shine hotly upon them, destroying their flesh, so that whatever proper spirit is in them may be saved for some condition of freedom from self in the new age. Their old material body will be destroyed, and with it will go their trust in godlikeness to which they persistently adhered. Any loyalty to God's will that remains will be used in the next age to grace some spiritual body, but it will be to less honor in the great scheme of God. The memory of their lives together with the results of selfness and the experiences it brought them will be fertilizer to bring forth better fruitage in the rest of God's children to whom these conditions and results will be revealed.

Persuaded of Better Things Concerning Us

It is not our idea that God included this phase of the pearl industry as a warning to us, for it appears that we, having tasted these good things of the Lord, would manifest the height of disrespect toward God should we turn away from him now and regard other things as being more important than these. It seems that this is used here to complete the picture and show the salvation of the Great Company. Warnings were alright when we were farther from home, but now we are born new creatures and, with St. Paul, we feel that we are persuaded of better things of one another than such, for we are expecting things that accompany this salvation.

Opportunities For Making Pearl

While pearl making may be used to illustrate new creature building as a whole, we see that it may also be used for more individual and particular experiences. Almost all our earthly experiences are irritating in some way or other, not being ideal. When things come into our lives that irritate us, cause our pride to be wounded, our submission to be over-taxed, or we are sinned(?) against; it is just a worm of evil around which we are privileged to form spiritual nacre, turning it into a pearl of great value to the Great Pearl Seeker. We shall illustrate this as follows:

Suppose that we have been humiliated and, therefore, irritated to a degree. Our natural pride has been wounded. Are we not ready to manifest some of the traits of the evil one? Where there is envy, strife, and confusion, lack of peace, there is also "every evil work," as the Apostle states. Since we cannot remove the irritating circumstance, let us remove the irritation therefrom. If this is properly done by an "oyster" that can make a "pearl shell," it will turn that irritation into a precious jewel. After we have claimed the promise that this is one of the "all-things" that work for our good, we should proceed to get the good therefrom, and this is done by getting before our heart's eyes a vision of God under a similar circumstance, due to his having permitted the reign of sin and evil. When we so vision him and see how magnificently he tolerates the unpleasantness and how lovingly he deports himself thereunder, we will so rejoice in the beauty and grace of his spirit so displayed that our irritation will vanish and we will rejoice in God in that particular to such an extent that we will, to the degree that our flesh will permit, deport ourselves similarly. At least we will thoroughly hate our own disposition and love the righteousness that we see in God as he has reacted toward that, or a similar, irritating circumstance. This is making pearl of great value in the sight of God. This is the philosophy of the Scriptural admonition to "call upon the name of the Lord."

When the Psalmist spoke for us the words: "I will take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord," he was inspired to refer to this very means of gaining salvation. "What," we ask, "is this cup of salvation, if it is not the many trials and sufferings that we undergo?" Jesus drank this cup to the dregs, and bade us all drink of it. When we drink from this bitter cup and at the same time call upon the name of the Lord -- his name having reference to what he is -- we will derive the joy from God that will result in our joyful overcoming. Should this method of overcoming have become somewhat hazy in the mind of the reader, may we suggest that he go immediately to Study Five of Series One and again clear this matter up in his mental vision; for it is so vital to the new creature that he cannot live without it. It will take the "try" out of his life and fill it with victory. It will take all the irritation out of his experiences and turn them into iridescent pearls. This is the joy of all who put their trust in God and call upon his name in deed and in truth.

Buying Pearls of Great Price

When Jesus found that pearl of great price, he sold all that he had and bought it. The pearl of great price that Jesus found was that very magnificent quality of love which he saw in God when he went into the wilderness. He there and then sold all that he was and had so as to have the time and power to absorb the spirit of love into his heart. And thus he acquired it. He acquired it in his heart, but did not relieve God of any of it. God still possessed as much as ever before. It is now our privilege to sell out all that we can and use the powers of mind and heart to invest the time so acquired in getting this quality of love into our hearts. In due time all intelligent beings will be given a vision of this

pearl of great price and they too will make the same profitable investment by selling out all that they are and have in acquiring this pearl of eternal and surpassing joy.

Pearls Must be Worn to Survive

A story is told of a princess who had acquired a rare collection of precious pearls which were the envy of many. Fearing that she might be relieved of her heart's treasure, she hid them away. After a long time she went to her hiding place to bring forth her pearls and let her heart feed upon their beauty; but, to her horror, she found them cracked and warped. Their value had been destroyed. It seems that a certain oiliness of the human skin feeds the pearl just what it needs to keep it in its proper condition. When they are not worn or handled for a long time they dry and crack. Pearl petters are those persons, with oily skin, whose business it is to handle pearls so as to keep them in prime condition. Being made by layers of pearl material deposited one upon another, these layers crack and expose the inner ones to the same drying process, and so the pearl is gradually destroyed.

The Holy Spirit was not made for cold storage. Idleness and love are antipodes, they are opposites which of necessity spring simultaneously into existence, and which cannot exist alone; even as that which is right must always have its counterpart in evil. Whenever we subject the impulses of the Holy Spirit to the disposition of this body, our spirituality immediately begins to diminish. These gems of love which the Lord intended to be worn and displayed cannot be deprived of their usefulness and exercise with impunity. We must bring forth our pearls, not only petting them but wearing them so that others may derive blessings therefrom even as we have received the highest blessing from seeing them worn by Him who is not only altogether lovely, but who is love itself.

The New Creature -- Not a Being, But a Spiritual Entity

The pearl is never a part of the oyster in whose body it is found. It is always foreign to his being. Neither does it become part of any king or queen even though it is worn upon their persons, and becomes a crown jewel which represents them officially--identifies their station. Just so God has pictured our relationship as material beings to the new creature condition which characterizes us as such. We will always have love, the principle that dwells apart from all material urge, so absorbingly centered within our affections that it will forever characterize us even as it does God, who is a divine being, composed of divine material, and yet who IS LOVE. This principle of love which constitutes the new creature's motive power, is personalized by identifying it with our personality. This is done by placing it in a body able to receive it and which is stamped with our characterizing qualities or traits. Since this necessitates a godlike body, the Ishmaelite will dwell there also. That which has been born of flesh is flesh, and that which has been born of spirit is spirit. John 3:6.

It appears, then, that God has emphasized this matter of the separateness of the new creature from the material body in which it exists, be it human or divine, and has given us a clearer vision of what it is by calling this matter to our attention through the medium of the pearl. Let us learn to appreciate his every provision for our complete enlightenment on this all important subject.