

CHAPTER VII

THE TRULY WISE TEACHER

James 3:13-18

Introduction

"Why insist this is directed towards the teacher?" the typical student asks. "The teacher has not been mentioned since verse one." The question seems proper and perhaps a real criticism until one makes a more careful examination of the usage of "wise and understanding" of verse 13.

The term "wise man" was often used, and its usage was primarily a reference to the teachers and to the teaching philosophers of the day. Paul was a debtor to the "wise" (philosophers) of his day. (Rom. 1:14). He parallels the "wise" to the scribe and the disputer of this world in I Cor. 1:20. The religious teachers of whom Jesus spoke were called the "wise and understanding." (Luke 10:21). This is not meant to imply that the teaching applies only to teachers, but rather *particularly* to teachers. After designating the teachers in verse one, James digresses somewhat in his discourse on the tongue in that all that he said applies to every person as well as to teachers; but the fact remains, teachers still have the greatest temptation with the tongue. The teacher, remember, is not only the one who appears before a class of pupils, but anyone who takes upon themselves the responsibility of giving advice to others, of admonishing, instructing, correcting; whether in private or in a formal classroom situation.

Thus the term "wise and understanding" includes many people. Where even a small group are gathered about in general conversation, there will be some, if not several, who speak as those having wisdom, experience, and understanding. Certainly it would include mothers and fathers, executives and "straw" bosses, the men on the street corner and the women over the back-yard fence.

There is no hint of belittling the necessity for the "wise and understanding" (as some might imply from the Luke 10:21 passage). There is a proper manner of working, and of showing wisdom and of a meek demeanor even as we carry out the Lord's instruction to admonish one another, and to bear one another up. There

must always be those who reprove and rebuke, as well as those who instruct; but always with the spirit of leaders who show others the Christlike spirit rather than drivers who impel others into a Christlike mould.

After a very dramatic demonstration of the foolish teacher's action (mainly through the misuse of the tongue), James prefers not to leave the subject in a negative tone. Now, he briefly describes a proper and Christlike spirit for the teacher. In this, James is insistent that Christianity must show itself by its works. "By their fruits ye shall know them." (Matt. 7:20). The spirit inside a person must bring forth fruits visible to all and known by others about him.

There are two kinds of inconsistency that James notes more than once. One is found in the comparison of deeds and words. Our lives are to be consistent, with our "yeas" consistently "yea," and our "nays" consistently "nay." The instability demonstrated by wavering actions and double-speaking words has occupied a sizable portion of the epistle. Consistency of deeds and consistency of words are real gems in James' "Chain of Jewels."

The second kind of consistency comes from comparing the inner man with the outer man. A man with the Christian character of a meek wisdom must be consistent with a good life and contention on the outside. The mind of wisdom of the inner man will determine the kind of action of the outer man. It is with this second kind of consistency James deals in 3:13-18.

In order to show the proper relationship between Christian wisdom on the inside and Christian action on the outside, James defines wisdom in terms of outer relationship with others. The fruit is the only criteria by which inner wisdom can really be measured. As we pray for wisdom from above, may God grant that we have enough of that wisdom to read this section of James with all care and heart-surrendered application.

WISDOM DEMONSTRATED 3:13

Text 3:13

3:13 Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by his good life his works in meekness of wisdom.

Queries

234. Why the question in v. 13?
 235. To what group of people does the question probably refer? (see Matt. 23:34).
 236. To what group of people does the coupled expression "wise and understanding" refer in Deuteronomy 1:13?
 237. Do you think the expression here must be limited to just teachers and judges?
 238. Does the verb "show" describe more a manner of conduct or a manner of speech? Why?
 239. Could the verb "show" include the speech? How so?
 240. What are some synonyms of meekness?
 241. Is wisdom ever brazen, or lacking in meekness?

Paraphrases

- A. 3:13. Let him who comprehends the spiritual truths and who is able to give good advice show the spirit of Christ by the life he lives with his courteous and considerate relation with others.
- B.*3:13. If you are wise, live a life of steady goodness, so that only good deeds will pour forth. And if you don't brag about them, then you will be truly wise!

Summary

The man who is truly respected for his inner qualities will have that respect because of his outer deeds.

Comment

The "expert" deserves and gets our respectful ear. We recognize his understanding; his ability to accomplish; his thorough knowledge. Without even using the term "teacher," nor thinking of a teaching situation, we stop speaking and listen when he speaks. We are willing to let him show us how, for it is no shame . . . "He is an expert!"

It is of such an expert James is speaking. He has already called

this man a teacher (3:1), and now he calls him a "wise" man, a man of "understanding." The question that introduces the man creates an atmosphere of self-examination . . . and perhaps even doubt. It is natural to want to read more before being too bold in answering the question!

The sense of the verb "let him show" is that of demonstration. It implies conduct as a means of proof rather than the ready advice from his lips. The word "conversation" used in the King James might be very misleading. James is not saying, "Let him show by his talk," but rather, "let him show by his manner of life." "Conversatio" is a Latin expression for manner of life and meant just that in older English, but today it generally means talk rather than manner of life. Thus, "let him show by his meanderings and turnings in life."

The manner of life could certainly include one's talk as well as his walk. It would include all of one's dealings with circumstances and with people. A word spoken is just as much a deed as a gift given or as an object stolen, but the manner of life includes even more. It implies a complication of deeds done and words spoken over a long period of time. This shows direction and purpose, or a wandering in a wilderness. Manner of life is not a word, but a testimony. It is not a step, but a walk.

With one step as a measuring device, David could have been completely condemned (as Nathan so vividly demonstrated). But when viewing his manner of life, his meanderings and wanderings through life as a whole, God said of him. . . "a man after my own heart." We are here admonished to live such a life as to have an overall excellence. This is the "good" life, a life of nobility.

Such a life is not quickly patched up. It is not proved by a single deed, nor demonstrated in a single week. It is the kind of life that will cause a husband to respect his wife, or a wife her husband, after living together for twenty-years! It is expected of all Christians, and would cause any Christian to be respected by the community that knows him. This is the living demonstration of true wisdom.

"Meekness" implies the right attitude. As far as showing respect for others, meekness is more important than being right. Thus the wise man will couple meekness with his good life. If the Christian's spirit is that of the meekness of Christ, then he will not be rough when he uses the sword of the Spirit of God on the tender hearts of his neighbors. He will not be egotistical in calling for

repentance, but rather have the attitude of being a fellow sinner who has found grace in Christ Jesus. "I'm a sinner bound to a body of death. I once cried out 'who can deliver me?', but now I know . . . I have found Jesus Christ. Don't you need Him too?" This is much more appealing to most people than the unkind, even egotistical, attitude: "God will send you sinners to hell if you don't repent." ("And I don't blame Him one bit!" is implied).

The meek attitude is just the opposite of the unyielding spirit with which we are often tempted.

It would seem that the Christian, who once was a sinner and who turned to Jesus for help because of the error of his ways, would always be ready to admit error. But not so! The meekness that is ready to be entreated is so often absent in the very persons doing the entreating! How amazing it is that Christianity has advanced as far as it has, with the arrogant and unyielding attitudes with which Christians often approach their neighbors, and even one another.

Not that we should yield right and Godliness. Far from it! But to yield "our rights" is another matter. Should we sue simply because we have the legal right? Should we repeatedly remind a repentant person of his sins simply because he really was guilty? Should we bear bad news as if we rejoiced in it? Or would it not be better if we had the grace to turn the other cheek as Jesus taught us to do? Can the ungracious expect grace, or the unrepentant expect forgiveness?

God, give us this wisdom. We need it.

THE SOURCE OF FACTION

Text 3:14-16

- 3:14 But if ye have bitter jealousy and faction in your heart, glory not and lie not against the truth.
15. This wisdom is not a wisdom that cometh down from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.
16. For where jealousy and faction are, there is confusion and every vile deed.

Queries

242. A person who has bitter jealousy or faction in his heart is not wise. How does v.14 prove he is not wise?

243. Is there a good kind of jealousy in opposition to "bitter" jealousy? If so, what?
244. What quality must jealousy have, to make it a "bitter" jealousy?
245. What would tempt teachers in the church, or leaders in any organization, to develop a bitter jealousy?
246. To what does the word "heart" refer here?
247. Bitter jealousy and faction in the heart implies here that one is lying against the truth. Against *what* truth? (State the truth if you can).
248. How could the possession of jealousy and faction be said to be "glorying"?
249. To what wisdom does v.15 refer?
250. Compare v.15 with 1:17.
251. Earthly wisdom, or wisdom from the earth, would point to what quality of the wisdom?
252. How could this wisdom be said to be "sensual?"
253. What does the devil have to do with it?
254. v. 15 should refer to demons, rather than the devil. . can you distinguish between the two?
255. Can you find any link between jealousy and confusion? If so, what?
256. What is the ordinary sense of "vile deeds?"
257. What must the "vile deeds" here be according to the context?
258. Is there ever confusion in the wisdom from above? (Think carefully . . . what of disagreements over the meaning of Scriptures? What of the confused denominational world in Christianity?)

Paraphrases

- A. 3:14 But if your life is filled with harshness and self-interest that make you divisive in your heart, then cease puffing yourself up and listen carefully to God's truth.
15. Your application of knowledge has been to satisfy the appetites of your flesh, and has much in common with the demons.
16. For where your kind of self-interest and trouble-making

spirit exist, there is also confusion and every good-for-nothing evil deed.

- B.*3:14 And by all means don't brag about being wise and good if you are bitter and jealous and selfish; that is the worst sort of lie.
15. For jealousy and selfishness are not God's kind of wisdom. Such things are earthly, unspiritual, inspired by the devil, and come from hell itself.
16. For wherever there is jealousy or selfish ambition, there will be disorder and every other kind of evil.

Summary

If your self-interest has filled you with jealousy and strife, then you have caused confusion and all kinds of evil deeds.

Comment

There are a number of characteristics in this section that are the opposite of the wisdom from above. Perhaps these as given will help us determine between true wisdom and sham wisdom; and more clearly see the difference between wisdom from above and satanic wisdom.

"Jealousy," here linked with bitterness or harshness, has the evil sense of being filled with envy. This is self-love extended to the point of wishing deprivation of another. "I wish I had his Cadillac and he had a wart on his nose instead!"

This is the opposite to God's revealed wisdom. Instead of becoming a master through serving others, this wisdom seeks to become a master by making others the servants. Instead of spiritual growth through the Christian quality of being a "giver," this wisdom seeks to get gain by being a "getter." Instead of loving the brethren, loving your neighbor and loving your enemy in accord with the wisdom from above, this wisdom seeks expression through loving one's self above all else. This bitter jealousy is harsh zeal directed toward the hurt of other people.

God's kind of jealousy is not to be confused with this bitter jealousy. God is a jealous God for our benefit. This bitter jealousy comes from self-interest and self-love. Jealousy is used both ways in

the Scripture. In the good sense Paul says of his friends, "I rejoiced yet more because of your jealousy for me." (II Cor. 7:7). Of his own spirit he said, "I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy . . ." (II Cor. 11:2). This jealousy of Paul for their welfare made him risk his life for their benefit. How different this is from the evil sense of being jealous . . . where we often bite and devour one another to gain benefit for ourselves. How often our cravings for sensual joys cause us to trample over the hearts and feelings of others. It is this kind of bitter jealousy that will make a man use all his talents to take another man's wife for his own, with no thought for the home that is destroyed, nor the man that is robbed. It is this kind of bitter jealousy that will keep church temperature boiling over and continually feed the flames of strife and division.

This bitter jealousy is also tied to faction. This green-eyed monster makes a man rob another spiritually (and sometimes materially). It hurts to be robbed . . . whether one is robbed of reputation, or of credit for a job well done, or of his good name, or of even the spirit of peace that should exist between Christians. The ones who are hurt usually retaliate, and strife results. Even if the animosity caused by jealousy does not break out into strife, the faction is there, simmering and boiling, ready at any moment to burst forth.

It is toward the root of the trouble that James speaks. The fruit of strife is only a symptom of the cause. The jealousy and faction within the heart is the true cause. The unethical desire to promote one's self is the ungodly wisdom. This is the "faction in your heart."

"Self-glory" is perhaps a single expression that would summarize the whole spirit spoken against. Love of self, seeking for self, promotion of one's self, feeding the self's appetites and revelling in one's own sensuous pleasures is bitter jealousy in action. No wonder the Holy Spirit says through James, "glory not." the negative side of self-glory is to glory not in the welfare of others, and to glory not in the Lord God and His revelation. The admonition to "glory not" obviously means to "glory not in yourself."

"To God be the glory, great things He hath done," the hymnal says. "I glory not save in the cross of Christ," Paul says. As Christians we rejoice and glory in the welfare of others and in the love of Jesus. How foreign to this is the self-glory "against the truth!" The truth probably refers to the Gospel truth, the revealed truth, or the truth just spoken through James.

James in verse 15 refers to the ultimate source of this wisdom.

There is no good in this wisdom, else it would be from above in its goodness. The evil in this wisdom pin-points its source; earthly, sensual, and devilish.

It is earthly in that it is opposed to heavenly wisdom. It is related to the "wisdom which is of this world" (I Cor. 1:20), and the "earthly things" of Phil. 3:19. Its benefits are earthly, in that they are apparent only in relation to things of this earth. They are dying benefits that are both short-lived and deceptive. They are deceptive for they are not true benefits, but apparent benefits that immediately vanish with possession. Earthly wisdom promotes a jealousy that is ever seeking, and never satisfied. It is a lust that cannot be satisfied, a hunger that cannot be fed.

It is sensual for it has as its goal the satisfaction of sensual appetites. The desire for sex, for comfort, for food, for clothing and shelter are all sensuous. Although bodily needs are essential for life on this earth, life on this earth is far more than satisfying these bodily needs. We should not live to eat, but rather eat to live. The life that has as its primary aim the satisfaction of physical pleasures is sensuous, and it is this same sensuous nature that is so closely related to bitter jealousy, and is in itself not a wisdom from above.

It is devilish (or rather, demoniacal) because it is in harmony with the evil spirits who are in service of Satan. To use knowledge for such selfish ends makes one related, at least in action, to the world of demons. The wisdom that brings forth such an action is itself demonical.

A careful study of this section seems to overwhelm one with an awareness that there is no neutral ground spiritually. Every man is in service of either God or the devil. There is not a "no man's land" where a man can be safe from both the sword of the Spirit and the fiery darts of the evil one. "He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth." (Matt. 12:30).

The spirit that fills a man with smugness and satisfaction while he rests his body and revels in sensuous satisfactions at home on the Lord's day when the saints are assembled together, is the same spirit that will fill a man with bitter jealousy over his wife's devotion to the Lord and continual involvement with the things of God. There is no "neutral" wisdom. Even such non-spiritual knowledge as mathematics and science can be used to puff up oneself against godliness. The lukewarm man finds himself distasteful to God, and he also finds full devotion to God distasteful to himself. He prefers that

all others be "lukewarm" even as he is, and he is propelled into active participation in the warfare when those very close and dear to him become fully dedicated in the Lord's service. His true position is then made known, for he places himself on the side *against those in the Lord's service!*

James clearly states the results of jealousy and faction within the heart. Confusion and vile action are the natural ends. Disturbance, disorder, and unruliness, become the order of the day when such a one comes face to face with a demand for full devotion and service to the Lord. Every action that is opposed to the good is evident, and such torturous self-destruction can be set loose even within the church itself.

WISDOM FROM ABOVE

Text 3:17-18

3:17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without variance, without hypocrisy.

18. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for them that make peace.

Queries

259. What is the source of this wisdom from above? (see 1:17)
260. Why do you think the text gives special emphasis to the fact that the purity of this wisdom comes before the peace?
261. How much peace could one have without the purity of wisdom from above?
262. Do you think it would be wise to compromise doctrine for the sake of peace? Why so or why not?
263. How many characteristics does this wisdom from above have? (count them).
264. Compare this number with the number of fruits of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22 ff, and the number of Christian graces listed in II Peter 1:5-9.
265. Do you think the purity is first above just peace, or above all the other qualities listed?

266. What does the word "pure" mean?
267. Define each of the qualities counted in question 263.
268. Is the fruit of righteousness of v. 18 a part of the description of the wisdom, or is it another thought? How can you tell?
269. Verse 18 is an enlargement of one of the qualities of wisdom. Which one?
270. Why all this emphasis upon peace if purity is really the most important?
271. Does v. 18 indicate that the fruit of righteousness may be sown in something other than peace? How could the fruit of righteousness be sown in strife?
272. How can one "make peace?"
273. How does this section of Scripture apply especially to the elders of the church?

Paraphrases

- A. 3:17 The good wisdom from God is first of all faultless, but a man who has it also seeks peace through kindness and is quick to be corrected. Like God, he shows mercy and the fruits of the Spirit are evident in his life; which is constant and unchanging, and true to the core.
 18. And he is able to witness righteousness in peace, because he is a man who seeks peace.

- B.*3:17 But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure and full of quiet gentleness. Then it is peace-loving and courteous. It allows discussion and is willing to yield to others; it is full of mercy and good deeds. It is whole-hearted and straightforward and sincere.
 18. And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of goodness.

Summary

God's wisdom in the Christian must seek purity, and this is followed with the Christian graces and fruits with a sincere desire for peace.

"The wisdom that is from above" is contrasted with the wisdom that is "earthly, sensual and devilish." This true wisdom that is a gift from God (James 1:5), and that always "cometh down from the Father of lights," (James 1:17), is here described with seven characteristics.

It is interesting to note that there are seven fruits of the spirit (Gal. 5:22ff), that there are seven Christian graces (II Peter 1:5-9), and now seven qualities of the wisdom from above are noted. Some commentators see in this tendency to group items in numbers of seven within the Bible (days of the week, etc) as making or revealing a particularly holy or perfect quality to the number. This is nowhere stated or even implied. We might also note that there are nine special spiritual gifts listed in I Cor. 13:4-7. Likewise, others feel there is something especially holy about the number three. There are three parts to man (so they say); body, mind, soul; or body, soul and spirit. There are the Father, Christ and the Holy Spirit. But why should three be chosen instead of two, we may ask. There is the outer man and there is the inner man. There is God and there is the devil. There is good and there is evil. There is worldliness and spirituality. There is a fleshly nature and a spiritual nature. There is light and there is darkness.

Since the Bible itself does not call any particular number as being more holy or complete than the other numbers, it might be the more reasonable conclusion to put no particular significance to the number seven, (or two or three, for that matter)! To do so would be to ignore the fact that the Bible is its own best commentary. It is poor hermeneutics to seek and find meanings not intended by the original author, or not clear within the text.

This wisdom from above is clearly the one that James recommends, even though it is understood from this text without being specifically stated. Original meanings of the author are not always specifically stated. They may be implied by statements, or (more commonly) implied by the context. The more forceful expression seems to be as James has here accomplished: to be content with the explanation and to leave the admonition to the reader. And now let us look at the seven qualities of wisdom from above:

(1) It is first "pure". Purity has the significance of being without contamination. To be unmixed with evil qualities is to be Godlike.

The clean, or holy, moral inward attitude, is that Christlike perfection toward which the Christian aims. Wisdom, too, can have this quality. Such wisdom would be unmixed with worldly, sensuous, or devilish wisdom. It would take into account all knowledge from God, and discount knowledge contrary to God's revelation. It would be motivated by God's kind of selfless love rather than man's kind of self-love. It would be wisdom that "seeks not its own, is not puffed up."

What about this wisdom is to be pure? *All* about it! Whether motivation that drives it, or knowledge that feeds it, or its very source. Its motivation is to be God's kind of love (agape). Its knowledge is just as obviously to be that revealed knowledge from God. Partial knowledge that comes from man's limited vision is often put in contrast with revealed knowledge. Descriptive sciences can never be as complete nor flawless as that knowledge that is revealed by the author of all that is. Although the Bible may contradict science (man's description of what he thinks he sees), God's revelation never contradicts existence! There is no disharmony between what God said and what God did in creation. Man's eyes, ears, and test tubes are entirely inadequate to discover all, and even correctly interpret what they do discover, of the things that God made. Wisdom that is pure, is wisdom built upon knowledge of revelation. Knowledge of science, no matter how thorough, would be entirely inadequate for such wisdom. This is the reason that Bible training is more important for a wise life than training in the liberal arts and sciences.

The peace is desirable, but never to be desired above purity. To be quick to receive correction is also admirable and a part of Godly wisdom; but never must this correction contaminate the purity of the saint or of his life. Wisdom from above is *first* pure! Purity is never to be sacrificed, even if all the other qualities must be sacrificed in its place!

(2) Wisdom from above is "peacable." The desire for harmony and unity leaves no room for pleasure in division. Contention is to be avoided where it is possible with the preservation of purity. The peace of Christ is to "arbitrate your hearts" (Col. 3:15) and to be the determining factor in all issues that do not tamper with the purity.

The Christian warfare is directed not against members of our own army. Soldiers fight and die side by side facing a common enemy.

When the saints of God turn upon one another to "bite and devour" one another they act completely out of harmony with God's wisdom and throw the camp of God into bitter confusion. The devil, though in the end to be destroyed, does win temporary battles and overthrow pockets of Christian soldiers that have not the wisdom to seek peace within their own camps.

After stating that wisdom is first in importance of the characteristics of Godly wisdom, peace is listed secondly. Whether or not the order after the word "purity" is with a meaningful purpose may not be determined, but certainly few will deny the damage caused because peace is not sought. Like bantam roosters in their arrogance of self-love, those who love not peace spend their time looking for a fight. With chips on their shoulders they peck from brother to brother until they find someone who will take up the challenge. Then after weeks of furious activity and a flurry of feathers, the victor cries, "I won, I won" in the midst of the shambled wreckage of a destroyed church. The sweet taste of victory of personal pride is swallowed up by a greater victory, for the devil won the battle!

(3) Godly wisdom is gentle, or reasonable and gracious. The gentle spirit does not demand that which would bring harm or hurt to his neighbor, even if ones' own right must be forfeited. Gentleness speaks of the manner in which one saint touches the heart and life of another person, whereas peace speaks of the inner desire for harmony. The two are related.

Paul speaks of this desire not to bring hurt as the "gentleness of Christ", in II Cor. 10:1. It is this gentle spirit that brings one to turn the other cheek rather than retaliating. This is true whether our activity had to do with other saints, or with non-Christians. "Tough but O, so gentle" should be the make-up of the child of the King. Tough when it comes to purity of doctrine and life, but gentle when it comes to bringing hurt to others. Our desire should be to hang on to Christ like a bulldog, but to love our neighbor like a kitten; but at all cost, hang on to Christ.

(4) "Easy to be entreated" is also descriptive of him who has Godly wisdom. This is the characteristic of being compliant, or obedient. Easily to be persuaded (except away from matters of purity), the Christian is himself a teachable person. Far from being dogmatic and unyielding, he is ready to learn, even from his pupils.

The wise man says, "Let us sit together and learn from the Word of God." While the foolish (worldly wise) person says, "I'm right,

and you're wrong. There's no purpose in looking it up in the Word of God. I've read it many times!" It is good human relations to admit the possibility of error rather than being absolute in one's knowledge and decision in all matters. The man who knows so much he is unwilling to learn more is losing knowledge. If one is not willing to grow in knowledge and understanding, then he will lose that which he has, as well as lose those whom he would teach.

One of the dangers in dealing constantly with those who are being taught is to grow stale and lose the learning spirit. The positive arrogance of a teacher who is no longer easily entreated will spoil his personal work. The person who spends a lifetime in the classroom situation needs the earnest prayers of his fellow Christians lest in the midst of teaching he find a rut and lose his learning spirit. (And cannot this also happen in the arm chair of the living room?)

(5) The truly wise man is "full of mercy and good fruits". The mercy and compassion of Jesus are the subject of much Biblical teaching. We cannot expect forgiveness unless we, too, have the forgiving spirit. The merciful are blessed of God to the extent they shall find mercy.

Deeds of charity toward the poor and the sick are often associated with this "mercy." (See James 2:13; Luke 10:37). The poor in spirit and the sick in heart could also be included in this love of those in need; mercy is associated with both compassion and forgiveness. Christians have a wonderful opportunity to express mercy when others who have treated them in an evil or harsh fashion come for repentance and forgiveness. The unmerciful may demand an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, but the merciful spirit of the saint is to forgive even "seventy times seven." And is not this the mercy we seek through Christ?

Being filled with good fruits immediately reminds one of the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23. These fruits of the Spirit are all spiritual qualities within the saint that can be observed by others around him. Immediately after stating these fruits of the Spirit Paul says "If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk." Gal. 5:25.

Thus the good fruits, even if they allude to the fruit of the Spirit, have to do with the effects of being filled with Godly wisdom. The produce, or effects, is the meaning of fruits. The deeds and acts that are manifest to others are good, rather than evil.

Note that mercy and good fruits are to *fill* the saint of God. "Full

of" has the idea that the person's life and character are overflowing constantly with the particular quality mentioned. The idea expressed is to have full measure (metaphorically, of course, for the author is referring to spiritual qualities rather than measurable material substance). A person may be filled with evil things, thus having a full measure of hypocrisy (Matt. 28:38), or of envy, murder, strife, deceit, and malignity (Rom. 1:29); or adultery as in II Peter 2:14. For a person to have a full measure of these evil things might imply that there is no room left for a measure of the finer virtues, and the fruits of the Spirit are crowned from the life.

In the same way, to be full of mercy and good fruits might imply there is no room left for a measure of evil fruits. The best way to overcome evil is to so fill one's life with the finer things that there is no room for the evil. Thus one who fills his life with mercy finds that he has in the process overcome the temptations to bitter jealousy and strife. And one who has filled his life with good fruits has found that in the process the evil things have been crowded out. The idle hours are usually hours of temptation for the Christian.

(6) Without variance, or without doubtfulness in action, is the opposite from the doubleminded man described in 1:8 who is unstable in all his ways. The Godly wise person has no discord for he has no uncertainty or partiality that would lead him to vacillate. His action is consistent for he has but one mind; the mind of Christ. The teacher who is not consistently noble and righteous in both his attitude and his deeds, will soon lose the respect of his pupils. The teacher who has variance is one who is cut apart or divided in two. This division within himself gives him an unstable character and vacillating deeds.

(7) "Too many Christians are just play acting," is the way a Jamaica preacher states the quality of hypocrisy. It is a very good expression for the original word refers to the acting of the stage-player (from a word meaning "to answer", because stage-actors answer one another in dialogue). The word is sometimes translated "without dissimulation in II Cor. 6:6; I Peter 1:22; Rom. 12:9; (R.V.), or translated "unfeigned" (A.V.).

This discrepancy between what a person says and what he thinks; or between evil intentions and pretended good deeds, is soon discovered; or if not discovered, it is sensed. Hidden purposes and selfish motives are often covered up with a display of Christlike purposes and pseudo affections. This is a quality naturally hated

by all men, for it has the significance of sweet-tasting poison, or a skin-deep loveliness deliberately used to cover up a horrible ugliness.

In other people we admire the quality of honesty, and are ready to take at face value one whom we believe to be open and "above board". But in our own selves we must fight the temptation to gloss over petty and selfish motives with a pretended righteousness rather than changing the motives themselves. Love of self coupled with a desire to be thought righteous leads to such a temptation.

And the desire to be thought righteous may come from noble or innoble tendencies. One may desire the righteous reputation for political, personal, or monetary reasons; or he may have the desire for a Christian reputation out of a sense of obligation and recognition of right. In other words, his desire for a noble "front" may spring from a conscience that is partially satisfied in the reputation alone. The saint should understand, however, that this partial satisfaction of the conscience is also a partial deadening of the conscience; and that in this "play acting" method of overcoming his awareness of a continued attitude of selfishness he is quenching the Spirit within him, and becoming habitual and automatic in the devil's fine art of "deceit."

One may reason, "I will not be deceitful. I hate hypocrisy, so I will lay bare my divisive and bitterly jealous heart." Then, proud of his lack of hypocrisy, he bowls his way through the hearts and lives of others about him, laying waste the church of the living God and sowing seeds of division in his arrogance. This action may overcome the hypocrisy, but does not overcome the sin. There is no peace, for the seed has been sown in anger and bitterness, and anger and bitterness are reaped at harvest-time. "And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for them that make peace," James 3:18.

"If any of you lacketh wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." Thank you, Lord, for showing the way in James 3:13-18!

THIRTEEN THREE-POINT SERMON STARTERS

WISDOM DEMONSTRATED 3:13

Introduction: We are here for the purpose of demonstrating wisdom and understanding in the ways of God.

1. How we show it. (By His good life)
2. What we show. (His works)
3. The Spirit of showing it. (In meekness of wisdom)

THE GOOD LIFE 3:13

1. Is confirmed by Divine wisdom and spiritual understanding.
2. Consists of working the will of God.
3. Must be shown in meekness of wisdom.

THE DIVISIVE HEART 3:14

1. Has bitter jealousy and faction within.
2. Glories in itself.
3. Lies to self against the truth of God.

HOW TO OVERCOME JEALOUSY 3:14-17

1. Recognize the results of jealousy, confusion and every vile deed.
2. Lie not against the truth of God, but be a sincere learner.
3. Glory not in self, but in God and joys of others.

GODLY WISDOM VS. EARTHLY WISDOM 3:13-15

1. From above (1:17) vs. from the earth.
2. A meek testimony vs. a sensual purpose.
3. Captains: Father of Lights (1:17) vs. the devil.

PARTNERS 3:13-15

1. Factious wisdom with earthly, sensual, and devilish. v. 15.
2. Bitter jealousy with self-glory and lying. v. 14.
3. Godly wisdom with Godly works and meek spirit. v. 13.

WISDOM NOT FROM ABOVE 3:15

1. Is Earthly.
2. Is Sensual.
3. Is Devilish.

FACTION

1. Springs from bitter jealousy.
2. Lives in an atmosphere of confusion.
3. Results in every kind of vile deed.

THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM 3:17

1. Fear of God. (Psa. 111:10) (From above)
2. Harkening to God. (Prov. 1:7) (From above)
3. Pure above all else (First pure)

THE RAINBOW OF WISDOM 3:17

Introduction:

First pure: Colors and beauty gone without purity.

1. *Then* Peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated.
2. *Full of* mercy, good fruits.
3. *Without* variance, hypocrisy.

PURITY OF DOCTRINE AND LIFE 3:17

1. Is commanded by God. (From above)
2. Is the product of Godly wisdom. (Wisdom)
3. Is the most important aspect of Godly wisdom. (First)

WITHIN AND WITHOUT GODLY WISDOM 3:17

1. Separated by walls of purity.
2. Within: Full of mercy and good fruits.
3. Without: Variance and hypocrisy.

THE RIGHT CLIMATE FOR GROWING RIGHTEOUSNESS

3:18

1. Seed sown by a peaceable person. (Who makes peace)
2. Seed sown in an atmosphere of peace.
3. Harvest of fruit: Righteousness.