

Chapter 15

PURE RELIGION

*What is Pure Religion in the "literal-physical language" of man?
How does God explain it in His "spiritual language?"
Who can claim following Pure Religion?*

Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines *Religion* is supernatural constraint, sanction from *religare* to restrain. It is the service and worship of God or the supernatural and commitment or devotion to faith or observance. *Pure* means free from what vitiates, weakens, or pollutes; containing nothing that does not properly belong; and free from moral fault or guilt, marked by chastity.

God through His words in the Holy Bible defines *Pure Religion* as:

James 1:26 "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain. ²⁷Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

Denominations composing Christianity, a religion relying on the Holy Bible as spiritual authority, are one in the interpretation of Pure Religion. It means "loving and caring for orphans and widows who are most materially and emotionally in need." The establishment and maintenance of the following non-profit institutions, aside from individual good works, are the results of this interpretation:

1. Hospitals for the destitute
2. Orphanages
3. Home for unwed mothers
4. Home for the aged
5. Adult training programs
6. Different charitable institutions and organizations

Attending to the material needs, aside from emotional guidance, of the unfortunate people is the perceived culmination of Pure Religion. It is with this human understanding that "ecumenism" or the unity of Christian denominations is hatched under the aegis of love. In reality, however, they cannot be truly united because of variances in other doctrines.

A GLIMPSE OF THE DEEPER MEANING

God is represented by His words (John 1:1) and Jesus Christ is the Word of God (Revelation 19:13). Simply stated, God should be the sole authority to speak for *Himself* through His words! A simple analogy, God speaks through the microphone and the chosen servants should only act as the speaker system. Any sound coming from the speaker system that did not originate from the microphone is the nauseating hiss and hum. The topic will demonstrate how God explains His words. These are some points in the verses that God has to elucidate to understand *Pure Religion* from His point of view:

1. *"If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain."*

What is "not keeping a tight rein on one's tongue" from man's point of view?

From God's point of view on the matter?

How could one's heart deceive him?

2. *"The fatherless"*

Who are the fatherless from God's point of view?

3. *"The widows"*

Who are the widows from the point of view of God?

4. *"Why only visit the fatherless and widows"?*

What does God mean by "visit"?

5. *"To keep himself unspotted from the world."*

What is keeping oneself “unspotted from the world” from man’s point of view?

What is God’s point of view on the matter?

“KEEPING REIN ON ONE’S TONGUE”

Man’s understanding of “keeping rein on one’s tongue” is to speak on a subject, with care and alertness, under appropriate circumstances. To God, speaking on something only He is the sole authority to expound is “not keeping rein on one’s tongue.” Examples: The Scribes or Teachers of the Law during the time of Christ expounded on the word of God and people followed them. Our Lord said, “Blind guides followed by the blind.”

Jesus Christ did not speak except in parables, and He alone should explain His words.

Mark 4:34 “But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples.”

Not one of the apostles opened their mouth to explain the parables. If Peter, Paul or John explained the parables, then they would “not have kept rein on their tongue.” Example: when Jesus said, “Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.” Did any of His apostles volunteer to explain this? But look! The Jews under the leadership of the Scribes and Pharisees “did not keep rein on their tongue,” said:

John 2:20 “Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?”

When Jesus spoke of the parable of the sower (Matthew 13:3-23), did any of the apostles explain the meaning? If they did, then they would have taken His role as the Jews did.

This is what our Lord told His Disciples about “other Christs” in Matthew 24:23¹ who are taking His role explaining His words. God is the author of His words and only He is the authority to explain the great message. Who among the people today “keep rein on their tongue?” The dictate of the intellect and feeling is too tempting “to keep rein on the tongue” on the word of God.

¹ Matthew 24:23 “Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not.”

1 Corinthians 3:18 "Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise."

Jeremiah 17:9 "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"

Proverbs 28:26 "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool..."

GOD IS REPRESENTED BY HIS WORDS

God is a Spirit (John 4:24). Because He cannot directly relate to His chosen, He had to represent Himself through His words (John 1:1). Paul received this revelation when he wrote:

Romans 7:14 "For we know that the law is spiritual..."

Before this, Jesus already told His Apostles:

John 6:63 "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

To show the "Way" and reveal the "life" to His words, God manifested Himself in the flesh.

1 Timothy 3:16 [KJV] "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh..."

This was prophesied and fulfilled in the person of *Jesus Christ*:

Isaiah 7:14 "...a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."

Matthew 1:23 "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us."

Accordingly, God in the person of Jesus Christ explains everything for He is the Word of God. Our Lord did this when He was with His disciples:

Mark 4:34 "But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples."

Long time ago, God revealed this to His chosen that He would express the "letter" of His words in parables.

Psalms 78:2 "I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old."

Ezekiel 20:49 "Then said I, Ah Lord GOD! they say of me, Doth he not speak parables?"

The "letter" of the word represents the *physical* Jesus since He is the "Word of God."² The "letter" needs further elucidation to understand the "spiritual meaning." This is equivalent to the *physical* Jesus needing divine revelation to identify Him.³

Just as the *physical* Jesus was visible, so is the "letter" understandable with the *literal* language of man. The invisible Father represents the "spiritual message" of the word and He could only be perceived with *spiritual* language of God.

Truth therefore is composed of the "letter" and the "spirit" of the word, and this is the equivalent to the often-heard unfathomable God.

The *literal* word varies with time and culture as the *physical* Jesus was impetuously perceived by the people. The *spiritual* word is immutable, representing the immutability of God.⁴ Just as the "letter" and the "spirit" of the word composed the truth, so do we hear Jesus said, "I and my Father are one" (John 10:30).

God, in the person of Jesus Christ, showed His *dual role* as *Father* and only "*begotten Son*". As *Father*, *Jesus* accepted worship before His death and after His resurrection (many verses). This honor exclusively belongs to God.

² Revelation 19:13 "And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God."

³ Matthew 16:15 "He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? ¹⁶ And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. ¹⁷ And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

⁴ Malachi 3:6 "For I am the LORD, I change not..."

Matthew 2:11 "And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh."

Luke 24:51 "And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. ⁵²And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy."

Jesus, as the Father in the flesh, accepted the honorific title of Rabbi, Master, or Teacher.⁵

John 1:38 Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou?

God, in the person of Jesus Christ showed the Way of humility by totally depending on the Father:

John 5:19 "... Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do..."

John 14:28 "...because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I."

God, in the person of Jesus Christ as model, did not accept that He is good:

Luke 18:18 "And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? ¹⁹And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is, God."

God, in the person of Jesus Christ told Magdalene, like her, has God also:

John 20:17 "Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and

⁵ Matthew 23:8 "But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren."

say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God."

Now it is very clear that, indeed, Jesus Christ is the Father in the flesh.

1 John 3:16 "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us..."

Take note of the following in rejecting the foregoing:

John 8:24 (Son Jesus speaking) "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."

Isaiah 52:6 (Father God speaking) "Therefore my people shall know my name: therefore they shall know in that day that I am he that doth speak: behold, it is I."

THE "LETTER MUST DIE"

Just as Jesus died on the cross, so should the "letter" of the word that He represents must also die with Him:

Colossians 2:14 "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross."

The "handwriting of ordinances" refers to the "letter" of the word which, standing alone, cannot represent the truth. This is what Jesus said regarding this:

John 5:31 "If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true."

The "letter" has "to die" as Jesus died in order to "rise again." This refers to the "spiritual" message of the word for it is impossible to follow all the law to the "letter."⁶

James 2:10 "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."

⁶ Galatians 3:10 "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."

Thus:

Romans 7:6 "But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter."

Jesus requires another witness to prove His testimony. He is referring to the Father who should testify to the Truth.

John 5:31 "If I (Jesus = literal word) bear witness of myself, my witness is not true. ³²There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he (Father = spiritual word) witnesseth of me is true."

Therefore, Truth in the word of God requires the "letter" of the word that represents the *physical* Jesus, and the "spirit" of the word representing the Father (or the spiritual Christ). Correspondingly, simply knowing *Physical Jesus* is not enough to recognize Him. It needs to know the identity of the *Spiritual Jesus* (Father) as well.

John 8:19 "...Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also."

Here is the rebuke for not recognizing God by simply looking at the *Physical Jesus*, in spite of what is written about Him "Emmanuel" or "God with us":

John 8:54 "Jesus answered...it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God. ⁵⁵Yet ye have not known him..."

Seeing Christ without His clear identification follows the non-recognition of the Father. Correspondingly, since Jesus represents the "letter" of the word, simply understanding the literal meaning does not follow the clear comprehension of the spiritual message, and this represents the Father. That is how our Lord exposed the religious people in His time. He called them, "Blind guides leading the blind." Jesus said:

Matthew 24:35 "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."

Recognizing the physical Jesus therefore is not enough. We have to identify the spiritual Christ as well. Now John 1:1 presents a much deeper meaning.⁷ So is the following:

Deuteronomy 6:4 "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God⁸ is one LORD."

Mark 12:29 "And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord⁹ our God is one Lord."

Have we carefully noticed this?

Zechariah 13:9 "...and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God."

The *Lord* is Jesus Christ. The *God* is the Father. These two are one in different forms and constitute the Truth, the True God. The "Spirit God, the Father," and "Emmanuel, God with us, the Son," are the *Two Witnesses* to the Truth. This was already revealed in the Old Testament:

Deuteronomy 19:15 "...at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established."

Since God is the Word (John 1:1) and Jesus Christ is the Word of God (Revelation 19:13), "Emmanuel that means God with us," was laid bare to Philip in:

John 14:9 "Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?¹⁰ Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me...?"

THE "SPIRITUAL WORD"

⁷ John 1:1 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

⁸ 1 Corinthians 8:6 "But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things..."

⁹ 1 Corinthians 8:6 "But to us there is but ...one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him."

If the *physical* Jesus is only “half” of His identity, so is the “letter” of the word. The “other half” is His *spiritual* identification, so is the “spiritual” word to complete the Truth.

John 6:63 “It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.”

The Holy Spirit “quickens” or gives life to the “letter” of the word.¹⁰ Thus:

1 Corinthians 2:13 “Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.”

It is not Peter, John, James, Paul, or any other person that “gives life” or reveal the spiritual meaning of the “letter” of the word. It is the Holy Ghost through His revelation by “comparing spiritual things with spiritual.” God guides us in the following:

To whom is this revelation given?

Isaiah 28:9 [KJV] “Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? Them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.”¹¹

Is it “verse by verse” by taking the context of the story?

Isaiah 28:10 “For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little?”

How? And, would many people believe on this?

Isaiah 28:11 “For with stammering lips and another tongue¹² will he speak to this people. ¹²To whom he said,

¹⁰ 1 Corinthians 2:12 “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.”

¹¹ Matthew 11:25 “At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.”

¹² “Spiritual tongue” or “speaking in tongues”

*This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest;
and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear.*"

THE "FATHERLESS"

The general notion is that "fatherless" refers to children whose physical fathers have died. Spiritually speaking however, before a person is "born of water and of Spirit," (John 3:5) he/she is still a Natural Man (1 Corinthians 2:14) who cannot understand "spiritual things." Therefore, a person is still "out of the way of understanding,"¹³ a "spiritual goat" as Jesus told His listeners:

John 8:44 "Ye are of your father the devil...he...abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar..."

Once a person hears and accepted the truth, his/her "spiritual father" dies, and now becomes "fatherless."

"THE "WIDOWS"

Again, the general notion for "widows" refers to women whose husbands have died. Spiritually speaking however, God does not recognize physical gender:

Galatians 3:28 "There is ...neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

To God, all people male and female are "spiritual women."

Isaiah 54:5 "For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts..."

Jeremiah 3:14 "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family..."

However, God refers to His chosen people in the foregoing verses. Before being "born again," people cannot be the "wife" of God. The proof is, people as "wives receive seeds" that are not from God. Allegorically stated in the

¹³ Proverbs 21:16 "The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall *remain in the congregation of the dead.*"

following is the Natural Man, for loving the “letter” of the word, is said to be married to it:

Romans 7:2-4 “For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. ³So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. ⁴Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.”

Romans 7:6 “But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.”

The “spiritual widows” therefore refer to people, both male and female, after the “letter” of the word has died in their life. Then they are ready to “marry Jesus Christ with the newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.” To be remembered is, Jesus is the word of God (John 1:14, Revelation 19:13).

Many people, and the sect they belong, may claim being “married to Christ as Bride.”¹⁴ Unwittingly they are only referring to the *Physical* Jesus whom they inadequately know for declaring, “God is a mystery.” Thus, the need to know the *Spiritual* Christ to avoid His rebuke:

John 8:19 “Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.”

THE “AFFLICTION” OF THE WIDOWS AND FATHERLESS

(Jesus showed the example as model following “pure religion.”)

The “affliction of the widows and fatherless” is their spiritual isolation, the ridicule and persecution of the pseudo believers, as Jesus was subjected to.

¹⁴ Revelation 21:2 “And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”

John 15:20 "Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also."

Jesus Christ warned His Disciples as He does to the real believers today:

John 16:2 "They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. ³And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me."

"Whosoever killeth you" does not necessarily mean physical death, but the hatred of pseudo believers on the truth in them:

1 John 3:15 "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him."

WHY "VISIT" THE FATHERLESS AND WIDOWS ONLY?

James 1:27 "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

What does God expect His chosen to "give in visiting" the "fatherless and widows?" The Natural Man would think of material things and/or comforting words to ease their burden of loneliness and hardship. However, God is speaking in parables, and it is explicit what Jesus told His Disciples:

John 6:63 "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

Pure Religion must represent what God expects from His chosen, where He classifies the people into "sheep" and "goats" in the following parable:

Matthew 25:31-33 "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: ³²And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:

³³And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left."

Matthew 25:35-39 "For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: ³⁶Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. ³⁷Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? ³⁸When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? ³⁹Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?"

Matthew 25:40 "And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Matthew 25:34 "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

Who can explain the word of our Lord but Him alone who speaks in parables?¹⁵ Moreover, let us remember pure religion does not necessarily refer to an organization of men. Rather, God sees it in an individual believer as to how he/she relates to the One True God and His will:

- a. Clear recognition of Him would now make the person speak heavenly language."

John 3:12 "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?"

John 6:63 "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

- b. It also gives the real believer the privilege given to the Disciples, that of Jesus' explanation of His parables:

¹⁵ Mark 4:34 "But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples."

Mark 4:34 "But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples."

Therefore, the "chosen" of God do not take upon themselves the capability to explain the parables.

- c. Finally, the "chosen" see "God in the flesh," Emmanuel that means "God with us," as their model who showed the way to both *Physical* and *Spiritual Life*. Thus, the following:

1. *"For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat."*

- The Natural Man¹⁶ must be thinking of giving food or material things to alleviate hunger or provide physical necessities. This falls under Physical Life. It is good to do these though, in fact, one should do these as a sign of love for "fellowmen." Again, "love of neighbor" should be distinguished from "love of fellowmen." Spiritually speaking, "neighbor" is different from "fellowmen." It is Spiritual Life that is destined to eternal life. Volume 2 will take this up.
- Our Lord revealed to the Spiritual Man,¹⁷ what "hunger" means when our Lord fasted 40 days and 40 nights in the desert. He rebuked Satan for looking at His physical hunger only, saying, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

Therefore in Pure Religion, the "fatherless and the widows" must be hungry of *Truth* that should be shared with them. It is only a "visit" for this spiritual food also comes from God.

2. *"I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink."*

- The Natural Man must be thinking of giving water or material things to relieve thirst or satisfy some physical needs. Again, this falls under Physical Life.

¹⁶ 1 Corinthians 2:14 "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

¹⁷ 1 Corinthians 2:15 "But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. ¹⁶ For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ."

- To the Spiritual Man, this is revealed by our Lord to the Samaritan woman who asked Him for water:

John 4:10 "Jesus...said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water."

"Living water" here refers to the "two witnesses" to the *Truth*.¹⁸

- 1st – Water for the "letter" of the word:

Ephesians 5:26 "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word."

- 2nd – Water for the Holy Ghost:

John 7:37-39 "...Jesus stood...saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.³⁸ He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.³⁹ (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given...)"

3. "I was a stranger, and ye took me in."

- The Natural Man must be thinking of welcoming or helping a person who does not have the money for board and lodging.
- To the Spiritual Man, a "stranger" is revealed in the following:

Ephesians 2:19 "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God."

The "chosen" are gathered in the "household of God." The "fatherless and widows" are the spiritual strangers. Sharing the truth to them is tantamount to welcoming them in the "household of God."

¹⁸ 1 Corinthians 2:12 "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. ¹³ Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual."

4. "Naked, and ye clothed me."

- The Natural Man is thinking of a person who, because of destitution, does not have money to buy clothes. He believes providing for this need is compliance already to what our Lord referred in this parable.
- To the Spiritual Man, nakedness refers to the nakedness of the garment of salvation as when Adam and Eve ate the fruits of the forbidden tree of knowledge of good and evil. God changed their covering of fig leaves¹⁹ with "coats of skin."²⁰

"Fig tree" symbolizes man in Judges 9:10.²¹ Therefore, the "leaves" thereof as "covering for spiritual nakedness" refers to human ways of salvation. Replacement with "coats of skin" indicates the "garment of salvation"²² where shedding of blood is needed. This clearly refers to Jesus' death on the cross, the fulfillment of the testament as required in:

Hebrews 9:16 "For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator."

5. "I was sick, and ye visited me."

- The Natural Man is thinking of a person who has a disease like, blindness, deafness, lameness, or other maladies. Paying a visit to the person in the hospital or at home is compliance already.
- The Spiritual Man, on the other hand, depends solely on our Lord to explain what the kind of sickness is:

Psalms 41:4 "I said, LORD, be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee."

¹⁹ Genesis 3:7 "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons."

²⁰ Genesis 3:21 "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them."

²¹ Judges 9:10 "And the trees said to the fig tree, Come thou, and reign over us."

²² Isaiah 61:10 "I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation..."

Spiritual blindness

Clearly, our Lord, in the parable, does not refer to the sickness of the body, but of the soul because of sins. Written literally, our Lord opened the eyes. However, look how our Lord explained “by demonstration” the meaning of the miracle:

John 9:35-38 “Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? 36He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? 37And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. 38And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.”

John 9:39-41 “And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. 40And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also? 41Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.”

Literally, we have not read about our Lord did what He said; “*they which see might be made blind.*” The Scribes and Pharisees who were not literally blind “did not see” our Lord. Very clearly, our Lord is speaking of sin for the blindness of not recognizing Him. Did not our Lord call the Scribes and Pharisees, “The blind leading the blind?”

Spiritual lameness and deafness

If to the Natural Man, lameness refers to a person who cannot walk on the streets. To the Spiritual Man as in “spiritual blindness,” our Lord does not refer to the sickness of the body since “the flesh profiteth nothing from the word,”²³ but referring to the soul.

“Visiting” the lame therefore means sharing the truth to those who “cannot walk on the Way” or do not know how²⁴ to follow the example shown by Jesus Christ, the model.

²³ John 6:63 “It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.”

²⁴ Referring to spiritual deafness who cannot understand the spiritual message of the word.

6. "I was in prison, and ye came unto me."

- To the Natural Man, this is simply visiting those in the state or federal prisons.
- To the Spiritual Man, as revealed by Jesus Christ, to "visit" or share the truth in the word to those in bondage of human precepts and captives of falsehood and deceptions.

John 8:32 "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

"KEEP ONESELF UNSPOTTED FROM THE WORLD"

In the "language of man," "world" refers to worldliness and the sin of the flesh taken literally in following the Ten Commandments:

Galatians 5:19-21 "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,²⁰ Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,²¹ Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

Jesus recognizes literal obedience to the word as He and the apostles followed it. This He also recognizes in the Scribes and Pharisees as "cleanliness on the outside of the cup and platter."²⁵

The positive notion of worldliness refers to good works and sacrifices of which man takes credit. However, God has this to say:

Ephesians 2:8 "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: ⁹Not of works, lest any man should boast."

²⁵ Matthew 23:26 "Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also."

Matthew 23:28 "Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity."

Therefore “keeping oneself unspotted from the world” is not to tie up with the attractiveness of the “letter” for thinking only of civic activities. Rather, “works”²⁶ that follows faith is the result, or the fruit of pure religion, where God harvests souls and not bodies as expounded earlier.

Matthew 25:35 “For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: ³⁶Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.”

The Natural Man, in following the “letter” of the word, also thinks of sacrifices in serving the Lord. Nevertheless, Jesus said:

Matthew 9:13 “But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

Pure religion in “harvesting souls” is in perfect harmony with what our Lord told His Disciples:

John 6:63 “It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.”

In effect pure religion is evangelism in the strict sense of the word, where *Truth*²⁷ is the essence sharing it with the “fatherless and widows,” as Jesus Christ the chief “cornerstone”²⁸ and the prophets and apostles the “foundation,” practiced it.

Further revelation of “unspotted from the world” is to see everything for the glory of God. After all, is not God omniscient or all knowing? With His permissive will, does He not allow everything to happen including wickedness and evil?²⁹ Is not God glorified with the works of Satan in order to separate and chasten His chosen³⁰ to “harvest only the “elect?”³¹ Thus:

²⁶ James 2:17 “Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.”

²⁷ *Truth* is discussed in Chapter 12.

²⁸ Ephesians 2:19-21 “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; ²⁰ And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone. ²¹ In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.”

²⁹ Isaiah 45:7 “I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.”

Titus 1:15 "Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled."

Now who can claim following *Pure Religion*?

"UPON THIS ROCK I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH"

Matthew 16:18-19

"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Which among the 1001 Christian denominations do not claim the *Church* built by Christ? Leaders of denominations think of names of their organization to describe and portray this distinction. The oldest sect pioneered in claiming this feature, where she claims "catholic" to indicate universality. Who can tell the Church founded by Christ but Himself through His words that represent Him?

A CONVERSATION WITH GOD

We believe we can converse with God as His chosen people in the Old Testament as well as when He was in the "flesh" with His Disciples.

1. We ask, "Lord, why did You say this only to Peter and not to John or James or Virgin Mary?" As if Jesus answers our question with a question, "Who was the first among My Disciples to say he identified Me? This I asked when people who saw and heard Me speak did not recognize Me?"³²

³⁰ God demonstrated how He applied this to Job.

³¹ Revelation 3:5 "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels."

³² Matthew 16:13 "When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? ¹⁴ And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets."

Matthew 16:15 "He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? ¹⁶And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Matthew 16:17 "And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

"Simon Peter recognized Me by divine revelation, and this followed his identification of My Father also.³³ Do you know that Peter by divine revelation 'followed the first of all the commandments with that?' He recognized the One True God of Israel! (Details in Chapter 5: GOD IS INTRODUCING HIMSELF!)

Mark 12:29 "And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord."

1 John 5:20 "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life."

2. We ask, "Lord, what do You mean when You say, 'That thou art Peter'?" We heard some religious leaders say, You mean "big stone or rock." Our Lord the answer to John in:

John 1:42 [KJV] "And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephias, which is by interpretation, A stone."

3. Now we ask Peter to confirm what Jesus said about him. "Simon Peter, do you confirm what Jesus said to John that you are Cephias that means "a stone?" As if Peter is saying, "Yes, I am only "a stone" that makes up the Church."

³³ John 8:19 "Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also."

1 Peter 2:5 "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."

4. We ask God, "Lord, who is the *rock* upon which Your Church is founded?" As if God is saying, "Ever since, I have been known as the rock that means a large stone, to indicate a strong foundation."

2 Samuel 22:32 "For who is God, save the LORD? and who is a rock, save our God?" [Revealed to Samuel]

Psalms 18:31 "For who is God save the LORD? or who is a rock save our God?" [Revealed to David]

Psalms 89:26 "He shall cry unto me, Thou art my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation." [Revealed to David]

Psalms 62:2 "He only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defence; I shall not be greatly moved."

1 Samuel 2:2 "There is none holy as the LORD: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God."

2 Samuel 22:2 "And he said, The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer;"

Psalms 78:35 "And they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their redeemer."

1 Corinthians 10:4 "And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ." [Revealed to Paul]

5. We ask God, "Lord, are we made to understand that You only found your Church on Simon Peter, because he truly recognized You "by the revelation of the Father? As if God is saying, "Have you noticed Martha said the same thing about Me?

John 11:27 "She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world."

As if our Lord is rebuking Peter³⁴ when we are dull of hearing, says, "Don't you know that all my Apostles and Disciples follow Me because, like Simon Peter, they recognized Me by divine revelation? Why are you being influenced by pseudo-believers professing love and keep on praising Me when they do not even know Me?"

"Don't you know that My Church is not the same as the congregation or human organization as false apostles made many people to believe?"

1 Corinthians 3:16 "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"

1 Corinthians 6:19 "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?²⁰ For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

As if our Lord continues speaking, "Have you forgotten what I revealed to Simon Peter?"

1 Peter 2:5 "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."

"How many people know the significance of My being a 'carpenter?' The Natural Man simply knows I am building literal houses. This is "letter" of the word. The "spirit" of the word is I am a 'spiritual carpenter" building spiritual temples as I revealed to Simon Peter."

6. As if our Lord continues speaking, "Since I am the same yesterday and today," you, who have humbled yourselves like Me,³⁵ like Simon Peter, like all My disciples, I continue to be a "spiritual carpenter" making you as "spiritual temples."

³⁴ Matthew 15:15-17 "Then answered Peter and said unto him, Declare unto us this parable. ¹⁶ And Jesus said, Are ye also yet without understanding? ¹⁷ Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught?"

³⁵ Matthew 11:28 "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

"FOLLOW ME"

As if our Lord continues speaking, "Look! How many people believe they follow Me when they do not even know Me as evidenced by openly declaring they do not know My Father.³⁶ What value is their long prayers and worship to Me?

Isaiah 29:13 "Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men: ¹⁴Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid."

Proverbs 28:9 "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination."

"THE GATES OF HELL SHALL NOT PREVAIL AGAINST IT"

Human perception is "miles apart" from God's revelation. To the Natural Man, "gates of hell shall not prevail against it," means corporal and visible expansion of facilities and membership, like, many churches and cathedrals, thousands, millions, and even billion of members. All Christian sects claim these, though in different degrees.

Our Lord pronounces the judgment on the "spiritual aspect" of success through His words.³⁷ This He demonstrated during His time and in the Acts of the Apostles. It is a simple matter for us to compare how the "Church," composed of the chosen few, with the majority of people who also claimed closeness to God. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away," says the Lord. If we cannot see all these thing *today*, this is just put to naught.

³⁶ John 8:19 "Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also."

³⁷ John 12:47 "And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. ⁴⁸ He that rejecteth me, and *receiveth not my words*, hath one that judgeth him: *the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.*"

An Old Testament law on "Tithes and offering" fuels the visible success of Christian sects. It is written, "Christ is the end of the law,"³⁸ but at the same time Jesus said:

Matthew 5:17 "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."

How did the "law on tithes and offering" end with Jesus, but at the same time "fulfilled it?" Nowhere in the four gospels can we read Jesus ever preached the law on Tithes. Details of this will be discussed in Volume 2.

"KEYS OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN"

How easily fooled the Natural Man is with his intellect and senses, thinking of literal keys. If God revealed, that He founded His Church to every real believer,³⁹ therefore He entrusted these "keys" to each of them.

Jesus Christ revealed⁴⁰ these "keys" to Nicodemus, but still a Natural Man then he thought of "going back to his mother's womb."⁴¹

John 3:5 "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

These are the two keys given to Simon Peter and other Disciples who were "converted to little children." These "keys" are also available to anybody who is equally willing to be "converted to a little child."

³⁸ Romans 10:4 "For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

³⁹ Matthew 18:3 "And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 11:25 "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."

All others, from conversion from a "spiritual goat" to a "spiritual sheep" up to spiritual perfection, will follow these.

⁴⁰ John 3:3 "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

⁴¹ John 3:4 "Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?"

- First – To be “born of water”
- Second – To be “born of the Spirit”

“To be born of water,” where “water” refers to the “letter” of the word means to accept everything writing in the Holy Bible.

Ephesians 5:26 “That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.”

“To be born of the Spirit” means to submit to the Holy Spirit’s revelation on the “letter” of the word, as in:

1 Corinthians 2:10 “But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.¹¹ For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.”

1 Corinthians 2:12 “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.¹³ Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.”

As God revealed in previous Chapters, the “keys” are the “Two witnesses to the Truth.” Christ establishes His Church to individual person and He founds it on Truth. This is the *rock* of salvation,⁴² the *rock* of strength, and the *rock* of refuge.⁴³ Who could go to the kingdom of heaven without the Truth?

“BIND ON EARTH SHALL BE BOUND IN HEAVEN”

Matthew 16:19 “...whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”⁴⁴

⁴² Psalms 62:2

⁴³ Psalms 62:7

⁴⁴ John 20:22 “And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: ²³ Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.”

The intellect of the Natural Man again caught him thinking this is on the personal authority of the professing apostle of Christ, together with the people following him. Jesus Christ Himself did not take this power.

*John 12:47 "And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world...
⁴⁸He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."*

It is the *Truth* in the word, "testified by the Two Witnesses, the keys," that the Apostles and the Disciples of Christ, and the real believers in our time are entrusted with, that "binds and looses" a person from spiritual bondage. Jesus Christ expounds on this in:

John 15:3 "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you."

Simon Peter and those who have recognized Jesus "by the revelation of the Father" are full of praises to the word of God:

Psalms 56:10-13 "In God will I praise his word: in the LORD will I praise his word.¹¹ In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me. ¹²Thy vows are upon me, O God: I will render praises unto thee. ¹³For thou hast delivered my soul from death: wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?"

