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Doth he not speak Parables? Ezekiel 20:49.

A certain Farmer not long ago, settled on a new piece of land, which he was in hopes, by his industry and the assistance of his healthy boys, to be able to cultivate to advantage. Unfortunately he was of a morose, tyrannical and selfish disposition; and often irritated his boys, by his austerity; and as they grew older, he used them more like slaves than children. They being hardy, resolute, and not easily subjected to rigorous government, and finding that their father was not their natural parent, but only a father in-law [George III]; and also that he had not so good a title to the farm, as they would have when they came of age, determined with one consent, that if he persisted in his tyranical conduct, they would attempt to oust him and set up for themselves. Accordingly, on a certain day, when the choleric old gentleman, had begun to enforce his unreasonable commands with a cudgel, they manfully returned the blow, and after an obstinate struggle, he was forced to retreat; and with a broken pate, and sore sides, he betook himself muttering and resentful, to his paternal estate on the other side of the water. The lads, being *Thirteen* in number, and of a sanguine, vigorous and enterprizing turn, concluded they could easily manage their joint interest so as very soon to make their fortunes. They had sense enough to know, that as their united efforts had ejected their father in-law, so their united affections and efforts would be necessary for their future establishment and prosperity. They had only a small cultivated spot on their new farm, upon which they had a crop of wheat, of which they had selected for seed, a choice sheaf apiece, larger or smaller in proportion to the age, ability and industry of each brother. As they had no shelter for the preservation of their grain, it was judged necessary that all their sheaves should be compacted together into one shock. But the difficulty was how to compact them so as that the whole should be secure from injury and depredation. At length, with joint contrivance and industry, they formed a kind of covering with straw and other materials, which they placed over their sheaves to keep them together, and to screen them from storms and from birds of prey. But it was soon found to be inadequate to the purpose. So weak and loose was it in its contexture, that it could neither shelter the sheaves from the weather, nor keep them from falling apart. Nay, it evidently sunk down, so that most of the sheaves stuck out above it; and by unnatural pressure against one another, they began to be intertangled, to lose their fine shape and proportion, and threatened the bursting their bands and becoming like a heap of threshed straw. So that the brothers were all convinced that something more effectual must be done, or all their past labour, and fine prospects of future crops, would be lost; and their grain, appearing like a neglected, broken shock, and free plunder for all, should be pillaged away, not only by birds and beasts of prey, but by rapacious farmers around them. But though the case

appeared urgent, it was difficult to find out, or to agree among themselves, what was best to be done. There was a growing uneasiness and anxiety; and especially as blackbirds and vermin had begun to make disorder and waste in many of the sheaves,—some thought it was best for each one to take care of his own bundle separately. Some, through want of spirit and a fraternal affection and generosity, seemed not to care whether any thing was done for mutual advantage. And some were so abject and base, as to wish to go back again to their step father, and ask his pardon, and promise to submit to all his orders and impositions for the future, if he would take their bundles into his custody. But the most of them having cherished their original independent and generous spirit, and being fully persuaded that they had wit and ability enough among themselves, if they would but unitedly exert it, to preserve their own sheaves, without meanly sueing to others for assistance, manfully determined to lay their heads and their hands together, and shew what they could do. Accordingly all but one or two entered into close consultation to strike out some plan for the joint security of their precious grain. The youngest Boy, indeed, having been neglected in his education, and kept low company, was ignorant, wilful and knavish; and ungenerously refused to join with his brothers in any well judg'd, interesting expedient.[1] But this discouraged not the rest. The most active and penetrating among them at length devised the following as the most probable scheme to answer the purpose, viz. That a handful of the tallest, strongest and straitest of the straws, should be culled out of each bundle, the bigness of the handfuls to be determined by the bigness of their respective bundles; and that these handfuls so selected should by proper interwoven threads and constricting bands, be ingeniously formed into a Cap-Sheaf to unite and cover the whole. Every one saw that this, if faithfully executed, was a judicious expedient; that thirteen sheaves well bound, and set close and upright under such a Cap-Sheaf, would help to keep one another up; and would remain safe and well shaped, uninjured by storms, and undiminished by birds of prey; and moreover would comprize and convey the ideas of unity, security and comely proportion. And that no apprehensions, jealousies, or dissensions might be entertained amongst these brothers, it was provided that each one should have the culling of his own bundle for the forming and repairing the Cap-Sheaf, and might aid with his own ingenuity in the construction of it. But tho' common sense could not but acknowledge this; and also, that it was much better to spare a handful of grain for the preservation of the rest, than to risk the loss of the whole for want of such a sheaf, yet several were fearful, and some were obstinate. Some pretended they had as good run the venture of losing all at once, as to have all the best of it pick'd away by little and little. Some feared the Cap-Sheaf would be made so heavy as to settle their sheaves flat to the ground. Others pretended that the Cap-Sheaf being compose of the tallest and strongest of the straws, might be made so stiff and tight, as to compress and pinch the heads of their sheaves too close; or at least, might enclose them so effectually, as to prevent their inspecting and handling them, or taking them out, whenever they should think fit. In short, notwithstanding the union of interest, honor and safety that demanded the united sentiments, exertions and affections of these thirteen brethren, divers of them objected to the proposed measure. So that they who had the most extended views, and felt the warmest emotions of brotherly kindness as well as of self love, dreaded the consequences of disunion.—The subject had been so long in debate, and was so interesting to this rising family, that it engaged the attention of older farmers though at a distance. Those among them who had a sense of honor and humanity, were grieved at the dissentions of these brethren, and wished they might have

wisdom to coalesce, and preserve their precious seed, upon which all their hopes of a succession of encreasing harvests depended. Others that were selfish and unfriendly, endeavoured to blow the coals of strife between these brothers, in hopes they would be obliged to seperate one from another, and become tenants upon their farms, or servants in their families. And particularly their old step father listened with milignant pleasure to every account that was brought him of their quarrels and dangers, and hoped soon to see the time when he should get these rebellious Jacks into his hands again, when he would keep their noses effectually to the grindstone, and make them repent their audacity in resisting his authority. In fine, the most sanguine hopes, that the most benevolent of these brothers, or of their friends, dared to entertain, were, that nine of them would pretty soon be induced to secure their sheaves in the method proposed, and that the rest would see cause after a while to follow their example; except the youngest; and he, they expected, would become a vagabond and a highway-robber, and soon be brought to an inglorious end; and that if any of the scattered straws of his sheaf remained, worth picking up, they would be collected, and tuck'd into some of the other bundles.

1. Rhode Island alone refused to adopt the Impost of 1781 and to send delegates to the Constitutional Convention in 1787.

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