

06.12.1975

Three or four weeks ago, lightning struck a minister's car as he was returning from a game of golf in San Angelo. Electricity ran through the body of his automobile. Both rear tires were blown out. His golf partner who followed him, was unscathed.

No information was available in the San Angelo newspaper about the score of the golf game, nor were there any details on missed putts or backlashed sandtraps. Background of the match was unreported. You couldn't tell by reading the story whether it's been a grudge bout or just a game between a couple of friends out for exercise.

Two issues ago, West Texas Livestock Weekly had an item about a couple of cow handlers who wouldn't stop trading merely because a tornado had been sighted nearby. As you may recall, one of them refused to seek shelter until they'd traded on a pen of cattle.

After reading that, I began to link the two stories together. I was out at a stockyard, weighing some lambs. While they were being unloaded, I began to study the hombres coming in and out of the office. All of the traffic was made up of veteran livestock buyers. At one time or the other, I'd had deals with most of them.

I got to thinking about the minister being struck by lightning. Also, the scene of the cow trade came back. In the Book, you know, the work was done in parables. The Deity worked in signs. Bushes caught fire on the mountains and curtains were split in the temples. To my knowledge, nothing was ever said to indicate that the practice would stop.

My thoughts were interrupted by an oldtime operator around the yards. He was delighted to see me. Lamb sellers nowadays enjoy wide popularity in trade circles and auction rings. In particular, they are welcome to folks who might have such merchandise as a string of heifer calves to sell or any variety of hollow horn species to peddle. The recent boom in the sheep trade has removed many of the personality handicaps that sheep herders were carrying. Dishpan hands are never as rough if the palm has the right color of green in it.

Before he could reach the whispering stage, I spun the tale of the preacher's misfortune and the cow traders' courage. Addressing him by his Christian name, I told him that it'd be a good idea for a lot of old boys who hang around the livestock complex to consider putting a ground chain on the back of their pickups. Gasoline trucks have used them for year. Compared to other insurance, the cost is nominal.

He must have not liked the idea. I could hear his tires skid as he left the front parking lot.

People can sure carry their feelings on a tender front. Try to give good advice and you are rejected. I wasn't trying to interpret the Law. The price of a piece of chain wouldn't hurt anyone.