

**CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES  
ILLUSTRATED**

Edsel Burleson

*Published by*  
**WORLD LITERATURE PUBLICATIONS**  
Box 3815  
New Delhi 110049

**First Printing in India, 2,000 copies**  
**Art Work, K.L. Verma, Delhi**  
**Printed in 1992**

**Printed by**  
**Print India**  
**New Delhi 110064**

## INTRODUCTION

I first heard of Edsel Burleson back in 1954 while he was preaching for the Lord's church in Hamilton, Alabama, U.S.A. He also had a radio programme during those days that was heard in both Alabama and Mississippi. Knowing him and his wife personally, and keeping up with their work with several congregations over the years, I deeply appreciate them and their efforts to spread the cause of Christ.

The Sixth Avenue Church of Christ in Jasper, Alabama publishes a paper called THE WORDS OF TRUTH and almost every month, among the articles, there is one by Bro. Burleson. We have also included many of these in THE BIBLE TEACHER magazine published here in New Delhi.

I wrote Bro. Burleson where he presently works with the church in Birmingham, Alabama and asked permission to print some of his writings here in India. He sent the materials in this book with his approval to do so. We are very grateful to him for allowing us to do this and we commend his writings to you.

We are calling this book, CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES ILLUSTRATED, because as you read these lessons, I think you will agree that he indeed is illustrating Christian principles and teachings, and that very effectively. It is my prayer, and I am sure that it is also the prayer of Bro. Burleson, that you will not only read these materials but that you will also apply the teachings and principles to your own life so that you might receive the maximum good from them.

J.C.Choate  
Church of Christ  
New Delhi  
Nov. 29, 1991

## CONTENTS

Joshua Explains Salvation by Grace	1
"I'D Rather Do It My Way"	2
You Have the Reputation of Jesus on Your Hands!	3
Are You in Numbers or Acts ?	5
"I Just Can't Stand it Any Longer !"	7
Making, Watching or Wondering ?	8
Discouragement, The Devil's Costliest Tool	10
Lord, Fix the Roof....Quick	11
The Cost of Becoming a Christian	13
May We Never Take Our Religion Lightly	15
Murmuring Displeases the Lord	16
Do You Know Who I am ?	18
Let the Bible Mean What it Says and Say	
What it Means	19
"It's Your Business to Learn Him"	20
Your Faith Greatly Determines Your Child's Faith	21
You Are Being Watched	23
Guilty Until Proven Innocent	24
How Much of the Lord's Time Have You Stolen ?	26
If You've Got Time to Talk about Jesus, I've	
Got Time to Listen	27
Everybody Appreciates Being Appreciated	28
Do You Want the Truth Told ?	30
What Are You Building Brother?	31
He Never Made No Cows Till the Fifth Day	33
Put a Light in the Porthole	34
Rain or Shine—We Go To?	35
Bridge Building or Ditch Digger ?	37
Throwing Mud at Others Only Soils Self	38
Give No Opportunity to the Devil	39
Pick Out a Stranger and Say "Hello"	40

It's All Up To You !	42
Is You Is or Is You Ain't? Who Can Tell ?	43
Crab Grass Will Not Produce Violets	45
You Do and I'll Quit	46
The Time to Obey God is When One Learns the Will of God	47
BLT Should Head the Menu	49
Take Heed, Lest You Get Caught in Your Own "Mouth" Trap !	50
If Another Stalls, Give Him a Gentle Push	52
A Greater Trip Than to Go to the Moon	53
Good Intentions Don't Get Work Done	54
Good Intentions Do Not Save Souls	56
You Can't Live Wrong and Die Right	57
Covetousness Puts One in Forbidden Company	59
Why Not Fill Up Your Oil Can Tonight ?	60
Character is What You Are in the Dark	62
Magnets Won't Attract Rusty Nails	63
"Daddy, Have I Ever Seen a Christian ?"	65
Is Yours a Borrowed Faith ?	66
Did You Ever Tell a Lie ?	68
We Cannot Live By Success Alone ?	69
To Save Souls We Must Cooperate With God	70
Permissive Parents Produce Pitiful Problems	72

## **JOSHUA EXPLAINS SALVATION BY GRACE**

"Grace" means "unmerited favour." It refers to that which is not ours by "right," nor what we justly deserve. Paul said of the church at Ephesus, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." (Ephesians 2:8,9). Many honest people are confused about the matter of grace and works. They think that one eliminates the other—that there is no room for both in God's plan of salvation.

Truly, salvation was provided apart from any works of righteousness which any one of us may have done. God's free gift of salvation does depend upon man's complying with the conditions of obedience for obtaining the gift.

The 6th chapter of Joshua tells us how God gave the city of Jericho to the people of Israel. Note verse 2: "And the Lord said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour." The city was a gift of God. But there were many conditions and the grace of God was not manifested in the deliverance of the city until these conditions were met. Verse 16 informs us that "Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for the Lord hath given you the city." God's specified instructions had been carefully met before he delivered the "gift."

The Hebrew writer later tells us, "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days." (Hebrews 11:30). It was a gift of God received by a people whose faith trusted in God to the full obedience of his commandments.

"By grace are ye saved" (but not grace alone), "through faith" (but not faith only,) "and that not of yourselves" (you

did not devise the plan and conditions of salvation,) "it is the gift of God" (not earned or merited) : "Not of works" (of man's righteousness, but the keeping of God's righteousness), "lest any man should boast."

An old Indian preacher was faced with the problem of illustrating that both the grace of God and the obedience of man had a part in salvation. He placed a bug a bare spot on the ground, surrounded him with leaves and set the leaves on fire. There was no way of escape for the poor bug. When it seemed the bug was going to perish in the fire, the preacher lifted him to safety. "See," he said, "Me hold stick, him climb on, him safe."

Likewise, with our salvation. We can not escape. God's grace has provided the salvation, yet, it is up to us to "climb" on the "extended stick" to be saved from eternal destruction.

## **"I'D RATHER DO IT MY WAY"**

There seems to be an over-abundance of people who insist on having their way in everything. Most of the difficulties between children would be avoided if this attitude could be overcome. The problems in society are often traceable to this disposition. And, with few exceptions, both, being unwilling to "give a little" here and there.

Sometimes, the disposition to argue is the spark that ignites a forest of misunderstandings. The disagreement can be relatively minor, but the plot thickens as each endeavors to defend his position.

Ivan Demetrius and Mischa Petrovitz loved to argue. Standing on a street corner in Moscow, they watched an infantry regiment marching by.

"Do men grow upward or downward?" asked Ivan.

"Why, downward, of course," replied Mischa.

"How do you know, Mischa?" asked Ivan.

"Because," replied Mischa, "once when I outgrew my overcoat, it became too short for me at the bottom."

"No, Mischa," replied Ivan, looking out at the marching soldiers, "men grow upward."

"Why do you say that, Ivan?"

"Because," replied Ivan, "you will see that our brothers marching out there are all even at the bottom, but uneven at the top."

A simple solution to most disagreements is found in Paul's first letter to the church at Corinth. He said, "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things" (I Corinthians 13:4-7).

The problem is world-wide and has been called by someone "plain old unvarnished selfishness."

The poet explained it this way :

"I had a little party this afternoon at three :

Twass very small-three guests in all,

Just I, MYSELF and ME.

Myself ate all the sandwiches, while I drank up the tea.

Twass also I that ate the pie and passed the cake to ME."

Hmmmm.....

## **YOU HAVE THE REPUTATION OF JESUS ON YOUR HANDS !**

There is a tendency for each of us to sell ourselves short when we consider the matter of influence. "Nobody cares what I do," or, "It isn't anyone's business what I do" are

frequently made statements. I must daily realize it is the business of every person whose life touches mine what I do. It is the business of every person whose life touches yours what you do.

Several years ago, Howard Butt told a story of a young lady in Chicago, who worked for a large company with offices in the Loop. One year, when it came time for her annual vacation, she took a trip to the southern part of the United States.

While on her vacations she came in contact with a religious group. Their teaching and manner of life made a great impression on her she began to rearrange her thinking and her life.

As her vacation came to a close, she could hardly wait to return to Chicago and tell her friends and fellow workers about her experience.

The first day back at work she was quite busy the early part of the morning. She had no time to visit until it was time for the morning coffee break.

A number in the office left together to go the coffee shop on the ground floor. Finally, after placing their order with the waitress, she turned to her friends and proudly asked, "Did you know I'm a Christian now?"

One of the number replied, "Oh yes, we heard and don't think we're not watching."

A few days later she wrote to a friend and told of this disturbing experience. In the letter she made this very profound statement: "For the first time I realized that I have the reputation of Jesus Christ on my hands."

Each of us is expected, by the Lord, to have the kind of influence that others would "see Christ in us." Jesus said, "ye are the salt of the earth:" "Ye are the light of the world." (Matthew 5:13,14). Only when we realize that "we have the reputation of Jesus on our hands," will we let our "light so

shine before men, that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven."

God has set before each one special opportunities. Those are pretty much like our fingerprints, no two are the same. The particular swirls and grooves may be very similar but they are never identical. So with our responsibilities, there may be similarity, but opportunities differ. Rather than trying to determine responsibility on the basis of another's action, just remember this formula : ability + opportunity = responsibility.

It is a sobering thought to realize "if I fail to do what I should, it will not be done." Others cannot act for me, they have their own responsibilities. No one can have a good influence for me. I am a representative of the Master. Paul told the Corinth church, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ." (II Corinthians 5:20). I have the reputation of Jesus on my hands.

Someone said it this way :

"My life shall touch a dozen lives before this day is done,  
Leave countless marks for good or ill ere sets the evening

sun,

This is the wish I always wish, the prayer I always pray;  
Lord, may my life help other lives it touches by the way."

## **ARE YOU IN NUMBERS OR ACTS ?**

Many are the exhortations by inspired writers that we be busy in the interest of those that are lost. The marching orders of the Master instruct us to "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ." (Matthew 28:18). If we would be followers of the Master we would be seeking the lost. "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which

was lost." (Luke 19:10).

The burden of the erring also lies upon our shoulders. Paul said, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." (Galatians 6:1). James put it this way, "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." (James 5:19, 20)

It is such a sad situation that so many in the church are "hauling" around the very thing needed to save the lost. It isn't that we do not have the truth, the problem is, we aren't using it.

Edwin McDonald in his book of illustrations tells this amusing and thought-provoking story. One day a truck driver had to stop his truck in the middle of downtown traffic in a large city because a rear wheel was red hot and in danger of catching on fire. He pulled over out of traffic and waited for the wheel to cool off so he could do something about it. Finally he started removing the wheel.

A man standing nearby began to ask questions, "Truck broke down?"

The driver patiently answered, "Yes."

"What's wrong?" he asked.

The truck driver told him that a wheel bearing had burned out.

Next the question was, "What caused it to burn out?"

The truck driver told him that it was because of lack of grease. The man then looked at the side of the truck and saw the sign "Mobil oil Company Lubricant Division." To which he remarked, "Hmmm, you burned out a bearing hauling grease."

Paul asked, "how then shall they call on him in whom

they have not believed ? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard ? and how shall they hear without a preacher ?" (Teacher) (Romans 10:14). Let us never be guilty of just "hauling" around the gospel. It must be taught to produce believers.

Too many church members are in the book of Numbers instead of the book of Acts. They spend more time counting the sheep than they do seeking the lost.

## **"I JUST CAN'T STAND IT ANY LONGER !"**

Someone told the story about a man in rumpled clothing needing a shave, and with bloodshot eyes, who came into a certain preacher's study and announced, "Preacher, I'm going to kill myself. I just can't take it any longer."

The preacher asked the man to sit down, handed him a sheet of paper and a pencil, and said, "Draw a line down the center of the page. Up at the top of the left-hand column write the words, 'Things that are wrong'. At the top of the right-hand column write, 'Things that are not wrong.'"

The man looked puzzled, but did as he was directed. "Now," continued the preacher, "In the first column write 'I have neither food, clothing nor shelter.'"

"But, I have all of these," the man confided.

"Wonderful !" replied the preacher. "Then you can write it in the right hand column. Now, put down in the left column, 'My children are in reform school'."

"That's ridiculous," the man shouted. "My boy and girl are fine youngsters. I will match them against anyone's children."

"That's great, answered the preacher, "Write it down in the right column."

They hadn't gone very far until the man began to smile

at himself at how foolish he had been. Life had not been a long day without some disappointment, but he had forgotten the sunshine while searching the heavens for possible clouds.

Each one has those times in his life when it seems everything has gone in reverse. Too frequently, these situations can cause despondency to the point that one may well decide he doesn't want to live any longer.

The Christian is not promised a life free from heartache and disappointment, but we are promised strength sufficient to withstand. Paul assured the Corinthians, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man : but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." (I Corinthians 10:13). To the Romans he said, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28).

We can praise our Heavenly Father that sorrows and disappointments are not meant to disfigure but to transform us.

## **MAKING, WATCHING OR WONDERING ?**

Someone has said that every congregation is made up of three classes of people. Those who make things happen, those who watch things happen, and those who do not know that anything is happening.

Those who do things and get things done, make things happen. They are the working force. These are the people referred to in Nehemiah 4:6, " and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof : for the people had a mind to work."

Those who watch things happen have assumed the

spectator role and can see every mistake made, or even assume some were made because they were too far removed from the action to know what really happened. Such was the situation with some of the disciples in Matthew 26:6-13. They wondered, "To what purpose is this waste? For this ointment might have been sold for so much, and given to the poor."

Far too many do not know that anything is happening. They see no opportunities for service to God or man. Jesus said, "For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not." (Matthew 25:42,43).

Most could take a lesson from the old tramp, who, early one morning, came into a country town. He stopped in front of the crossroads store, then gave a yell of delight. "Here it is, I have found it," he cried.

"What is it? What is it?" asked the natives, crowding around to see. The old tramp answered joyously, "The Great Soup Stone. Get a kettle, someone get a fire started, someone else get some water! We will all have soup in a jiffy."

One man brought a kettle, another lit a fire. A third brought some water. The tramp tossed in the stone and stirred it mightily. "Now," he carried, "bring an onion, someone, to flavor it. Oh, yes, someone get a bone from the store. Who has a potato? They will all help!"

The townspeople brought the onion and some potatoes, and carrots, and a bone. Pretty soon the tramp announced, "The Great Soup Stone has done it's work. The soup is ready, except the salt, who will bring the salt?" The store-keeper spoke, "This man is a fraud! We have supplied everything for the soup, his stone did nothing. We supplied the meat and fire and water and the vegetables. What did he supply? Only a stone!"

"You are wrong!" smiled the tramp. "You had no soup

before I came. Now you have. I supplied the enthusiasm and willingness to work together to a common end. Educated men call it cooperation. I call it The Great Soup Stone. Let's eat!" And they did.

"Having the church building full of members is like having the woodbox full of wood—it's nice to have but neither will do any good until they catch on fire."

## **DISCOURAGEMENT, THE DEVIL'S COSTLIEST TOOL**

Discouragement affects every phase of our lives. In business, there are many developments that cause one to often wonder, "Why did I ever decide to undertake this task?" In the home, there are those situations that prompt one to say, "How could this ever happen to us?" Yea, in the church, conditions are sometimes seen that have many saying, "Is it really worth it?"

Discouragement is not a respecter of person or of age. The youngster who always comes in second says to himself, "It's no use. I can never be a winner." The adult, seeing efforts fail to produce desired results, decides, "I'll just let someone else do it." The aged, with eyes dimmer and steps slowed, often conclude, "Everywhere I go I'm in the way."

Sometimes these problems seem to pile up on one another. Troubles heap upon troubles. Life is so different from what we had hoped and so many dreams are shattered. Seemingly, all we know is disappointment.

How desperately we need to learn what the great apostle to the Gentiles had learned. He said, "I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound : every where in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ

which strengtheneth me." (Philippians 4:12,13). Truly, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." (Psalms 46:1).

Someone tells of an announcement by the devil that he was going out of business, and would offer all his tools for sale to whomever would pay his price. On the night of the sale, they were all attractively displayed and a bad-looking lot they were. Malice, Hatred, Envy, Jealousy, Sensuality, and Deceit, and all the other implements of evil were spread out, each marked with its price. Apart from the rest, however, lay a harmless looking, wedge-shaped tool, much worn and priced higher than any of them.

Someone asked the devil what it was. "That is Discouragement," was the reply. "Well, why do you price it so high?" "Because," replied the devil, "It is more useful to me than any of the others. I can pry open and get inside a man's conscience with that when I could not get near him with any of the others—and once inside, I can use him whatever way suits me best. It is so worn because I use it with nearly everybody, as very few people yet know it belongs to me."

It hardly needs to be added that the devil's price for discouragement was so high that it was never sold. He still owns it and is using it every day.

## **LORD, FIX THE ROOF....QUICK**

Someone told this story about Brother J.D.Tant. Not long before his death, he went to hold a meeting in a little town in the foothills of the Arkansas Ozarks. He was met at the depot by a grizzled old tobacco-chewing brother who gave him the sad history of the little congregation as they drove out to the brother's home. He said, "Brother Tant, I've been in the harness here for nigh on to forty years, and this church just

ain't made no growth at all." After staying for several days in that little town, brother Tant related publicly what the brother had told him, and then said, "Before God, brethren, I've been looking at the harness of our brother has been in for the last forty years, and the only piece of it that shows any signs of wear at all is the backing strap!"

Isn't sad that this is a picture of many in every congregation. We all put on the harness when we were baptized into Christ. Too few keep the traces taut. The Holy Spirit guided Paul to warn the Ephesian church of this problem when he told them to "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light" (Ephesians 5:14).

God has blessed us with "all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. (Ephesians 1:3). It is amazing that one will use none of his talents, time, money or influence to aid the Lord's cause, and yet expect all the Lord's blessings to continue uninterrupted. Many never give the Lord or the church a thought until some hardship comes and then they expect something done immediately.

An Associated Press dispatch some time ago told of a Georgia deputy sheriff who had a man come to him in need of official advice.

"Boss, I want you to find out who owns the house I live in!"

"To whom do you pay the rent?" the deputy asked.

"Ain't paid none yet."

"How long have you been living there?"

"Nine years."

"Well, then, what's your trouble all of a sudden?"

The man replied, "Boss, the roof has started to leak and if the landlord don't fix it quick, I'm going to move."

When the roof starts to leak it's too late to find out who owns the house. When hardships come it's too late to punch

the emergency button. Stay on praying terms with God, he will keep the roof fixed.

## **THE COST OF BECOMING A CHRISTIAN**

Several years ago this very shocking article appeared in the "Plateau Visitor."

"The examination was just over and my gangmates planned that we go on an outing. I was preparing my suitcase when a letter arrived from my father. I was shocked upon reading that he wanted me to change my family name and not to show my face to any member of the family and to stop going home. The worst part was to consider myself no longer a member of the family. Furthermore, he told me that it would have been better if I had not been born.

"I hurried to the dormitory where my sister was boarding to show her the letter. When I was yet far off I saw my father, who had been visiting her. I approached him and asked why he had written that terrible letter. He did not say anything, but I saw him flushed with anger and his hands were trembling. The next thing I knew he was gone. I tried to call my sister but she never showed her face. When I regained my strength, I went back to the dormitory where I was boarding and phoned my sister. When she recognized my voice she banged down the receiver:

"My allowance was all spent and my letters to my parents were unanswered. Usually, I had received my allowance every first week of the month. This time the second week was already past, but my money had not come, so I decided to go home. Upon nearing our house I heard a peculiar noise and my mother shout "NO!"

"When I was at the door I saw my mother grabbing a gun from my father. I was so terribly scared that I did not have

the courage to enter. After awhile I regained my composure and went back to the dormitory. I could not cry, but felt my body seem to part into pieces.

"After three days I saw my name on the bulletin board to report to the office. There I was told that I had gotten first place in the examination, and was selected as one of the Filipino scholars to go to the States. My papers were ready except the signature and approval of my parents. My teachers wrote them to come, but they never came and did not answer the letters. The principal sent a telegram, but my parents did not reply. My gangmate, who got the second place, then became the representative of the school to go.

"I was awfully discouraged and so I quit my schooling that same year. Later I found out that I was cast out of my family because I had become a member of the church of Christ. Not being able to return to school because of lack of financial support, I was fortunate to find work under a Christian missionary who was our matron in our dormitory where I lived.

"Today I live in another dormitory and work under a missionary who is matron here. Until now there were many things that I did not know how to do, such as preparing certain kinds of foods but I have also learned many things. Presently I am taking Bible subjects and am looking forward to the time that I shall be able to return to school and complete the year I lacked graduating from high school.

"It has been three years since my father cast me out. Although I am happy, yet, that which happened still haunts me every now and then and makes me sad."

## **MAY WE NEVER TAKE OUR RELIGION LIGHTLY**

Children have ways of saying things that are tremendously unique and usually very simple. Sometimes, the explanations they give overlook the real purpose for which a thing was intended. Consider the following essay on anatomy written by a young boy.

"Your head is kind of round and hard, and your brain are in it and your hair on it. Your face is the front of your head where you eat and make faces. Your neck is what keeps your head out of your collar. It's hard to keep clean.

"Your shoulders are sort of shelves where you hook your suspenders on them. Your stummick is something that if you do not eat often enough it hurts, and spinage don't help it none.

"Your spine is a long bone in your back that keeps you from folding up. Your back is always behind you no matter how quick you turn around.

"Your arms you got to have to pitch with, and so you can reach the butter. Your fingers stick out of your hand so you can throw a curve, and add up rithmatick.

"Your legs is what if you have not got two of you cannot get to first base, neither can your sister. Your feet are what you run on. Your toes are what always gets stubbed.

"And that's all there is of you except what's inside and I never saw that."

This portrays, in principle, the idea many church members seem to have of the body of Christ. Rather than a close and abiding relationship with God being understood, with numerous functions to characterize each one, a vague concept of "doing some thing" is held.

Paul said, "When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but, when I became a man, I put away childish things" (I Corinthians 13:11). We must approach our relationship with God in all seriousness and maturity.

Too often, man has accepted the philosophy of the how-to-win friends expert who said, "Always be sincere, whether you mean it or not." May we never take our religion lightly!

## **MURMURING DISPLEASES THE LORD**

Have you ever known anyone who was dissatisfied with everything and almost everybody? Whatever happens to them is never good, they think. Whoever happens to cross their path is certain to become a target for criticism. Truly, "into each life some rain must fall," but it is also true that "every cloud has a silver lining."

This same people will regularly find many things to criticize about the church. Paul warned the Corinthian church to take heed lest they become complainers as Israel had been. He said, "Neither murmurth ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed by the destroyer." (I Corinthians 10:10). The Lord has always been greatly displeased with murmurers. Concerning Israel Moses wrote, "And when the people complained, it displeased the Lord: and the Lord heard it; and his anger was kindled; and the fire of the Lord burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp" (Numbers 11:1).

Murmurings are as arrows shot at God, which will not hurt Him, but will wound us. It is such a destructive thing to constantly complain. The poet summed it up very accurately when he said :

"Sez I to myself,  
As I grumbled and growled,  
I'm sick of the church,  
And then how I scowled.  
The members aren't friendly;  
The sermon's too long;  
In fact, it's my opinion  
The preacher's all wrong.  
I don't like the singing-  
It's all a disgrace,  
And signs of neglect  
Are all over the place.  
I'll just quit going;  
I won't give a dime;  
I can make better use  
Of my money and time."  
"And then sez my conscience,  
'Alas,' sez he,  
'The trouble with you is,  
You're too blind to see  
That the church reflects you,  
Whatever it be.  
Come now, quite your talking,  
And serve cheerfully;  
Stop your fault-finding  
And boast the church strong,  
You'll find yourself happy  
And proud to belong.  
Pray for your brother  
And sing while you work,  
For a church isn't built  
By members who shirt'."

## **DO YOU KNOW WHO I AM ?**

Someone has written this very challenging description of an ever-present problem.

"I have never been guilty of wrong actions, but on my account lives have been lost, trains have been wrecked, ships have been sunk, cities have been burned, governments have failed, battles have been lost, and because of me a few churches have closed their doors.

"I have never struck a blow nore spoken an unkind word, but because of me homes have been broken, friends have grown cold, the laughter of children has ceased, wives have shed bitter tears, brothers and sisters have been forgotten and parents have gone broken hearted to the grave.

"I have intended no evil, but because of me talents have come to naught, courtesy and kindness have failed, and the promise of success as well as happiness has yielded sorrow and disaster.

"I have no sound; just silence. No cause for being myself. I have no offering to make except grief and sorrow. You may not in an instant call me by name, but surely you are personally acquainted with me.

"My name?.....NEGLECT!!!

It is highly unlikely that any single factor more often enters into the careless and indifferent situations of our lives than does neglect. So many times, God warns us of this danger. Through Paul we are urged to "be ready to every good work." (Titus 3:1). He told Timothy to "Neglect not the gift that is in thee." (I Timothy 4:14).

What is the difference between the atheist who supports no church, and the member who will not support the church of the Lord to which he belongs ? What is the difference

between the skeptic who does not believe the Bible and the negligent church member who never reads it?

Too many churches are singing "Standing on the Promises" when they are in reality just sitting on the premises. Someone has said that every church is made up of willing workers, 10% are willing to do the work and other 90% are willing to let them do it.

Too many, have learned that heaven will be a place of rest, are going to be all practiced up for it.

## **LET THE BIBLE MEAN WHAT IT SAYS AND SAY WHAT IT MEANS**

Three-year-old Bobby didn't like the routine of being scrubbed, especially when soap was applied.

"Bobby, don't you want to be nice and clean?" his mother asked.

"Sure," replied Bobby, "but can't you just dust me?"

Bobby's concept of cleansing illustrates the kind of "logic" frequently used in religious thoughts. Paul told the church at Rome, "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." (Romans 6:4). He then added, "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." (vs. 17, 18).

They understood that the cleansing (freedom from sin) occurred when they had been washed.

How many mistakes in religion would be avoided if man would allow the Bible to say what it means and mean what it says! The problems come when men "fit" the teaching of the

Bible into their previously made molds.

Too often, application of scripture is made without any thought as to the speaker, persons spoken to, under what circumstances, etc. The context of any statement is so very vital in order to determine the application.

To fail to carefully consider the circumstances surrounding a passage of scripture can lead one to the same mistake made by little Nellie, a 6 year old, who complained, "Mother, I've got a stomach ache."

"That's because your stomach is empty," the mother replied. "You would feel better if you had something in it."

That afternoon the preacher called, and in conversation remarked that he had been suffering all day with a severe headache.

Little Nellie was alert. "That's because it's empty." she said. "You'd feel better if you had something in it."

## **IT'S YOUR BUSINESS TO LEARN "HIM"**

One of the requirements of a good teacher is wanting to teach. One who has this kind of desire realizes he has information that will benefit those he loves. Love for people will motivate any person to want to help people.

Ethel M. Patterson tells a very touching story which reveals love for people. England's great and good Queen Victoria was being honored by a great celebration while visiting a city. On a corner of one street a large stand was built where a great company of children was assembled to sing for her.

That night after all the excitement was over, the mayor received a telegram. Perhaps he thought it was a compliment about the celebration.

But the message was a simple one coming straight from

a motherly heart :

"The Queen wants to know whether all the children got home safely."

Our Heavenly King is deeply concerned that all his children get home safely. This safe arrival will result from teachers (preachers) who care, setting forth tenderly, yet firmly and truthfully, the gospel in its power and simplicity. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (II Peter 3:9).

There will be those occasions when a special effort must be made to overcome some obstacle but the teacher "who cares" sees the person instead of the obstacle.

One small boy in school always came in dirty clothing, and it was quite noticeable from his odor and appearance that he had little contact with water. The teacher sent home a note after a week or two which read : "Please give Johnny a bath so he will smell nice and clean."

Imagine the teacher's surprise when Johnny appeared as before, bearing a reply to the note which read, "It ain't your business to smell him, it's your business to learn him."

He who teaches the Bible is never a scholar; he is always a student.

The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires.

## **YOUR FAITH GREATLY DETERMINES YOUR CHILD'S FAITH**

As the result of some research it has been determined that there is an overwhelming relationship between the

faithfulness of Christian parents and the faithfulness of their children. Here are the results of that research:

6% of the children remained faithful to Christ where the parents attended Bible study *occasionally*.

53% of the children remained faithful from homes where the parents were *reasonably* faithful, but inactive in the Lord's work.

74% of the children remained faithful where one parent was *active* and *faithful*.

93% of the children remained faithful to Christ from homes where both parents were *active* and *faithful* to the cause of Christ.

How great is the faith you have instilled in your children? Paul declares, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Romans 10:17). Your respect and appreciation for the word of God is the most influential factor in your child's attitude toward it.

Too often, one's confidence in the truth is so shallow that the wayside hearer is descriptive, "then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved." (Luke 8:12).

A small boy, new to Sunday School was greatly pleased with his picture card with its text: "Have faith in God." On the way home the card slipped from his grasp and fluttered out the window of the bus. The little boy cried out, "Stop the bus! Please stop the bus ! I've lost my 'faith in God!"

The good-natured driver stopped the bus and the card was regained amidst the smiles of the other passengers. One older person remarked about the "blessed innocence of childhood", and another more thoughtful person said, "There would be many happier and truer lives today if only we older ones were wise enough to call a halt when we find ourselves rushing ahead on some road where we are in danger of losing faith in God."

One small child quoting the 23rd Psalm said, "The Lord is my shepherd and that's all I want" A greater sermon could not be preached.

## YOU ARE BEING WATCHED

There is no night so dark, nor a wall so thick, but that God is fully aware of all our actions, "The Lord looketh from heaven, He beholdeth all the sons of men." (Psalms 33:13,14). "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." (Proverbs 15:3). He knows every word that we say. (Psalms 139:7).

God is not the only one observing our actions. Even though our associates may not be aware of all our acts or have listened to our words, they are still being influenced by the things we say and do. A wife can convert her husband to the Lord. (I Peter 3:1-4). A husband can convert his wife. (I Corinthians 7:14-16). We are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. (Matthew 5:14-16).

Once a traveler came to a French village. Night was approaching and the people were hurrying through the streets. The traveler noticed that each person was carrying a bronze lamp. To his inquiry about this he received this reply:

"These people are going to church. When the church was built it was decided that each member would bring his own light to light the services. There is no other way to light the church and everyone goes to make it brighter. Each one realizes that if he is not there the church will be darker."

The traveler went to the meeting house, and there he found that on every seat was place to hang the lighted lamps. As more and more of the members came the building became brighter and brighter.

Someone worded it this way poetically:

"There's a gospel according to Matthew  
To Mark, and to Luke, and John too.  
There's another than many are reading-  
The gospel according to you.  
The teaching we read in the Bible  
Are facts we believe to be true.  
You must live them to make them gospel;  
The gospel according to you.

Everyday you are writing a gospel;  
In this life you may never know who  
May be helped or hindered by reading  
The gospel according to you.  
Many read not the words of the Bible  
I will tell you what some of them do-  
They read the book you are writing,  
The gospel according to you.

There's power in the preacher's preaching,  
So you say, and I believe it is true.  
But the things that tell most to others  
Is the gospel according to you.  
God help you through Christ to be faithful,  
And to live all the teaching true,  
So that all may see His Spirit  
In the gospel according to you."

## **GUILTY UNTIL PROVEN INNOCENT**

Several years ago the Minister's Monthly had a story of a stranger who entered a certain dwelling house of a community. The "neighbors" saw him when he entered. They did not see him again until he departed an hour later. Then

curiosity began its work, and the question arose, "What was the stranger's mission? Why did he enter the house?" All with one consent began to speculate, each according to his own practice or profession.

"He went into the house to secure votes," said the politician.

"I do not see it that way," said the trader. "He must have entered to trade and get gain."

"I have it," said the glutton. "He went in to fill his belly."

"My idea is different," said the cold blooded. "He must have entered to do a bodily injury."

"You are wrong," said the sot and the sensualist. "That man went into the house to carouse and commit adultery."

"All of you are in error," said the covetous one. "That man went in to cheat and defraud."

"I think," said the Christian, "that he must have entered to do some work of benevolence."

Isn't it strange how our habits and areas of interest determine our conclusions about situations we encounter? It isn't often that one is given the benefit of the doubt. Most usually, others are "guilty until proven innocent."

Paul told Titus that one's conclusions depend upon his own mental habit. To the pure all things are pure: but to them that are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but both their mind and their conscience are defiled."

(Titus 1:15).

The only way to prevent our condemning others before we have reason is to make sure we have not cultivated a suspicious mind. Running uphill and running down people are both bad for the heart.

A person can save himself from many hard falls by refraining from jumping to conclusions. Yet, that is about the only exercise that some people get.

## HOW MUCH OF THE LORD'S TIME HAVE YOU STOLEN?

There was a story in a Rochester, Taxes, church bulletin about a young man who was working in a large department store being told by his employer that he would be required to work on Sunday. It so happened that the hours assigned to him would have prevented his attending any of the worship services to which he has been accustomed to doing since childhood.

The young man informed his employer that he would not be able to continue his work under those conditions, and his employer told him he would have to go.

A few days later, the young man answered an ad in the paper from a bank which he advertised a vacancy for a teller. In checking the young man's previous employers, the bank president contacted the department store head and inquired as to the boy's record and whether he could recommend him.

The store manager replied. "Why, yes, I'll be glad to recommend him. He will make you a good man . . . I just fired him a few days ago."

"Fired him?" the bank president exclaimed. "Why would you recommend a man who you just recently dismissed from your service?" The store manager explained the circumstances under which the boy was released, and remarked, "I know he will make you a good man for your bank, because if he won't steal the Lord's time, he won't steal your money."

How much of the Lord's time have you stolen? It is such a temptation to take the Lord's Day and use it as our own.

Time is such a valuable possession. Each of us has exactly the same amount. But how differently it is used or misused. Waste of time is the most extravagant and costly of

all expenses. Schiller said, "He who neglects the present moment throws away all he has," The Apostle Paul urged "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time," (Col. 4:5).

Longfellow said, "It takes less time to do a thing right than it does to explain why you did it wrong." Once we lose time it is gone forever and one today is worth a dozen tomorrows.

The man who makes the best use of his time has most to spare.

## **IF YOU'VE GOT TIME TO TALK ABOUT JESUS, I'VE GOT TIME TO LISTEN**

One of the greatest weaknesses with many in the church is becoming so preoccupied with "incidentals" that we forget that we are saved to save. We become so bogged down in doing "church work" that we lose sight of our primary purpose of saving the lost.

It is so easy to do "things" and never accomplish any real results. Someone has told of a motorist in Minnesota who drove into a service station one day and asked for ten gallons of gas. Immediately three station attendants sprang into action. One began wiping off the windshield, another proceeded to check the air pressure in the tires, the third gave his attention to replenishing the water in the radiator. When they were through, the motorist paid his bill and drove off.

A few minutes later, however, he returned with a worried look on his face. "Did any of you put gas in my car?" he asked. The three attendants consulted among themselves. . . . and then admitted very meekly that nobody had.

But not everybody gets "bogged down" with things. Some have good intentions, but, somehow, just never seem

to find the "convenient" time. Many fail to see the numerous doors of opportunity opened to them almost every day. Such ignore the principle of the warning to Ezekiel, "if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand." (Ezekiel 33:8).

Several years ago a preacher went into a bootblack parlor in St. Louis. He asked the boy who was cleaning his shoes "Are you a Christian?"

"I've been here for several months," he said "and you're the first person to speak to me that way."

"Well," that preacher responded, "I'd like to talk to you about the Lord Jesus Christ."

His reply was one that would stir the heart of every Christian: "Mister, if you've got time to talk about Jesus, I've got time to listen."

In that busy bootblack parlor, he told the boy about Jesus Christ, and he listened with rapt attention.

Do you have time to talk about Jesus?

## **EVERYBODY APPRECIATES BEING APPRECIATED**

Psychologists tell us that one of the deepest urges in human nature is the craving to be appreciated. So, to make those whose lives touch yours really happy, tell them often how much you appreciate them and the things they do.

Many Bible examples emphasize lack of appreciation. Adam and Eve enjoyed the abundant blessings of a paradise only to turn against the source of all those blessings. Israel was attended with continual care and guidance for years only to ignore and even come to reject God. And, Jesus "came to his own, and his own receive him not." John 1:11.

Thanks giving to God should be, and is, a regular part of every Christian's life. The showing of appreciation and the expression of thanks should be daily evidenced in our associations with others. Everybody appreciates being appreciated.

Someone has written these remarks of a little boy to his stomach which contains much food for thought:

"What's the matter with you-Ain't I always been your friend?

Ain't I been a pardner to you? All my pennies don't I spend

In getting nice things for you? Don't I give you lots of cake?

Say, stummick, what's the matter, that you had to go and ache?

why, I loaded you with good things yesterday, I gave you more

Potatoes, squash and turkey—Then you'd ever had before.

I gave you nuts and candy, Pumpkin pie and chocolate cake—

And last night when I got to bed, you just had to go and ache!

Say, what's the matter with you? Ain't you satisfied at all?

I gave you all you wanted; You was hard just like a ball; And you couldn't hold another bit of puddin'; yet last night

You ached most awful, stummick, that ain't treatin' me just right!

I've been a friend to you, I have! Why ain't you a friend of mine?

They gave me castor oil last night, 'cause you had made me whine.

I'm awful sick this mornin', and I'm feelin' mighty blue,  
'Cause you just don't appreciate—the things I do for  
you!"

**EVERYBODY APPRECIATES BEING APPRECIATED!**

## **DO YOU WANT THE TRUTH TOLD?**

"By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh." Hebrews 11:4. The things that people see in our lives continues to influence them long after we have gone from this life. Too often, the actions or habits that we scarcely notice are making deep impressions.

Someone told the story of having gone to a funeral parlor to pay respect to the earthly remains of an old acquaintance. Some thoughtful person had placed in her hands a well-worn Bible. It looked fitting and symbolic. One could see how her face used to shine as she would sit for hours and read from its pages. Yes, it was most appropriate.

What if someone put the thing that would seem most appropriate in our hands after we left? Would it be a cigarette—a bottle—fishing pole—car keys—a knob from the television set—hunting rifle—a deck of cards—or a worn Bible or a Bible not worn at all? What would you want put in your hand?

Almost everybody is prone to underestimate the influence upon his associates. There is a degree to which we influence every person whose life touches ours. Paul said, "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself," Romans 14:7

What about your attitude toward the church. . . your attendance. . . your stewardship. . . what are these saying to

your associates? These do show the truth about you and about me.

A certain preacher received in the mail this request, "Will you please tell us all you know about Mr. A., his character, his habits, and his financial responsibility?"

His reply was, "I found his name on the roll of the church when I came here two years ago. Neither he nor his family attend church. They say it is the only time father can sleep mornings. His name is not recorded in our treasurer's book, So I cannot tell anything about his financial responsibility. This is all I know."

somehow the letter got back to Mr. A. Was he ever burned up and did he get that preacher told! Among the things he said was, "Any minister worthy of the name should know that a man's relationship to the church and his financial contributions are of a confidential nature."

So the preacher wrote a second letter. "All I know of the gentleman in question is of confidential nature and he has explicitly requested that I not tell the truth."

Do we want the truth told? It will be one day. Romans 14:12.

## **WHAT ARE YOU BUILDING BROTHER?**

On one occasion when Dwight L. Moody has finished speaking, a man said to him, "Your English is poor. Can you not speak any better?" Moody replied, "I am doing the best I can for the Lord with what I have; how about you?"

What a wonderful improvement the world would see if more folk were on the building force and fewer on the wrecking crew. It is so sad that in the church of our Lord there are too many people finding fault with the efforts of others than are doing the best they can with what they have.

Jesus described a productive building developing a durable structure on a sure foundation in Matthew 7:24-28. A solid foundation does not assure a completed house, there has to be some "building".

It is far better to see the Bible in one's life than just to see it under his arm. We are building when we use the Lord's tools as he instructs. To mis-use the truth puts one on the wrecking crew.

An unknown poet has written:  
I watched them tearing a building down,  
a gang of men in a busy town;  
With a ho-heave-ho and lusty yell,  
They swung a beam-a side wall fell.

I asked the foreman, "Are these man skilled,  
"As the men you'd hire if you had to build?"  
He gave a laugh and said, "No indeed:  
Just common labour is all I need;  
I can easily wreck in a day or two,  
What builders have taken a year to do."

I thought to myself as I went my way,  
Which of these rules have I tried to play?  
Am I a builder who works with care,  
Measuring life by the rule and square?

Am I shaping my deed to well-laid plan,  
Patiently doing the best I can?  
Or am I a wrecker who walks the town,  
Content with labour of tearing down?

We are building today the house we must live in tomorrow. It can be a palace or a hovel, a mansion or a shanty. The workmanship is up to us.

"A good thing to remember

A better thing to do:  
Work on the construction gang  
Not on the wrecking crew."

## **HE NEVER MADE NO COWS TILL THE FIFTH DAY**

The kindergarten teacher asked the children what story they would like to hear. Most of the children agreed that they would like to hear about "How God Made the Beautiful World." So the teacher began and captivated every small child in the room.

"Then God made the lovely sky," she went on, "and for the nighttime He made it dark. And he put the beautiful twinkly stars up in the sky to wink at us and to shine ever so brightly. Then God took some green cheese and made a very beautiful moon and placed it in the nighttime sky with the stars."

At this point one little girl waved her hand so wildly that the teacher asked her what she wanted.

"Well," replied the child, "that part of the story is not true. God made the sun and the moon and the stars on the fourth day and He never made no cows till the fifth day!"

It is sadly amazing how accurately this little story presents the attitude that so many "Bible" teachers evidence. Even from pulpits, basic teachings are so altered as to become only a semblance of truth.

The Bible sets forth the mind of God. "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (II Peter 1:21). It furnishes man fully for his spiritual needs. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (II Timothy 3:16,17). We will be judged by it.

"The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." (John 12:48). And, we must not alter it in any way. "But though we, or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

The student of truth keeps an open Bible and an open mind. Truth is what God says about a thing and there is nothing as safe as following the truth.

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

## **PUT A LIGHT IN THE PORTHOLE**

Many years ago in an Ithaca, New York, church bulletin, there appeared this most interesting story.

During an Atlantic crossing, a severe storm arose and a passenger lay in his bunk, seasick. In the darkness he heard the cry "Man overboard!" as some poor soul was swept from the deck.

The sick man lay there thinking that there was surely no hope for the poor fellow who had fallen, and that he could do nothing to help. But, then, he thought, "I can at least put my lantern in the porthole," which he did.

The man was rescued, and he recounted the story the next day: "I was going down for the third time when someone aboard ship put a lantern in the porthole. It shone on my hand and a sailor in a lifeboat grabbed me and pulled me in."

One small light. It belonged to a sick man. But it enabled a strong sailor to save a life. Was the sailor who pulled the man into the lifeboat more important than the man who put the light in the window? Which of the two could he have done

without?

How often we try to convince ourselves that our limited abilities make us incapable of any accomplishments in the Master's work. "Others can do the job so much better," we say. Or, "They have had so much more experience." The seasick man could have used these excuses and a hundred more. But, he did what he could! And his effort resulted in the saving of a man's life.

Souls are floundering on the sea of life, tossed about by sin, some are going down for the third time, yet, many able-bodied "Christians" make no effort to put the light of the gospel in the porthole for them.

God told Ezekiel, "I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but blood will I require at thine hand." (Ezekiel 33:7,8).

"The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise." (Proverbs 11:30). Why not put a light in the porthole? It could guide someone safely home!

## **RAIN OR SHINE—WE GO TO...?**

Several years ago, Jim Bill McInteer wrote this amusing but most appropriate article to prompt a careful inventory by each of us.

It was 7 a.m. As it did habitually, the alarm sounded, calling Sue and John from their slumber. With customary stumbling, John wove his way to the window to peek through and assess what kind of day it was—for after all, weather is such a determinate factor.

"Why, it snowed!" he shouted.

"Then go back to bed-there's probably a sheet of ice under it, everything will be locked in today" said Sue as she rolled over for that longer snooze.

But, she was to be surprised!

"That's just the way with you women-you think a little snow and ice ought to stop the wheels of progress-we've got to have tough generation or we'll amount to nothing!" John snorted.

"But, honey, I--"

"Don't but me! That paper better be out front when I go to get it. That's what I pay the paper boy that profit of twenty-five cents a week for anyhow.

He's got to learn to go, heat or snow, makes a man out of him."

"But, John, all I said was--"

"Listen Sue, that office better be ready for me when I get there. It's part of the custodian's job. And if that policeman isn't on the corner, I'm going to call the Mayor-it's my tax money he's wasting. Tell you what else too-that waitress better be in the coffee shop, ready to serve me or I'll take my ninetyseven cent breakfast somewhere else. We can't stop the routine of living just because it snowed. America's got to learn character."

"But John-you don't go to the office; it's Sunday!"

After an embarrassing silence, softly heard was-"Move over Sue, only an idiot would be out on a day like this!"

(Is Sunday, to you, a day of unimportant things? Jesus said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Matthew 6:33 EB)

## BRIDGE BUILDING OR DITCH DIGGER?

Each is making life just a little bit "easier" or a little more "difficult" for those who follow. The Apostle Peter said concerning Jesus, "For even hereunto were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:" (I Peter 2:21). Jesus left us instruction and example by which we can know every decision to make and route to take. Life can be so much easier and happier for us because Jesus lived.

Sadly, many make life more difficult for those they influence by digging ditches which become obstacles rather than building bridges to smooth the way.

An unknown poet has written:

An old man going a long highway came at the evening cold and gray. To a chasm vast and deep and wide, the old man crossed in the twilight dim, The sullen stream had no fears for him but he turned when safe on the other side,

And built a bridge to span the tide. "Old man," said a fellow pilgrim near, "You are wasting your time with building here.

You never again will pass this way, your journey will end with the closing day. You have crossed the chasm deep and wide, why build you this bridge at the evening tide?"

The builder lifted his old Gray head.

"Good friend, in the way that I've come," he said, "there followeth after me today,

A youth whose feet must pass this way.

This stream that has been as naught to me to that fair-haired youth might a pitfall, be.

He, too, must cross in the twilight dim.

Good friend, I am building this bridge for him."

Fathers, mothers, husbands, wives, Christians! Why not determine that each day you will build at least one bridge for those who are following you through life? May those whose lives touch ours be able to say, "It is easier to do right because I know him (her)."

There is no lovelier way to thank God for your sight than by giving a helping hand to someone in the dark.

## **THROWING MUD AT OTHERS ONLY SOILS SELF**

Someone has said, "the greatest fault of all faults is the fault of faultfinding." One has to be miserable who was born in the objective case and lives in the kick-a-tive mood. Did you ever notice that knocker is always outside the door?

It is well to remember that mansions in the sky cannot be built out of mud thrown at others. In fact, throwing mud at a good man only soils one's own hands.

Tennyson said, "Soiling another will never make one's self clean."

Most are prone to look for enemies among those of whom one is not very fond. But, the worst enemy a man has is himself. He digs his own pitfalls. He makes his own bed hard to lie in. He makes his own conscience hard to live with.

When a finger of accusation is pointed toward another, there are three fingers pointing back at us. Never can one better his own position at the expense of another.

The critic is a person who has you write it, sing it, play it, paint it, or carve as he would--if he could. If someone belittles you, he is only trying to cut you down to his own size. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could see the sunshine instead of the shadows. Many refuse to enjoy the pleasantness of spring because they are dreading the hotness of summer.

The person who always sweeps before his neighbor's door has never seriously examined his own doorstep. Jesus warned, "consider the beam in your own eye."

(Matthew (7:2-5).

"It is not what in life might *come* to us, but what in life we might *become*, and how in life we might overcome, that will decide our life's *outcome*!"

How wonderful if we would analyze ourselves first before we criticized another.

Someone has said, "Criticism is the disapproval of people, not for having faults, but for having faults different from your own." Before we criticize a man for letting the grass grow under his feet, we should try to find out if his lawn mower is broken.

Let us resolve to think of our own faults the first part of the night when we are awake and of the faults of others the latter part of the night when we are asleep.

## **GIVE NO OPPORTUNITY TO THE DEVIL**

It is unusual for man to do an outstanding job of something he undertakes for the first time. And, when such an exception occurs, all are ready to say "beginners luck". How different has been the success of Satan's efforts!

His very first experience in temptation met with tremendous success. (Gen. 3). Though that effort brought a curse that has remained upon him until this day (verse 15) he hasn't slowed down. The evil and sadness he has brought seem but encouragement to him to bring more.

His trail of destruction is endless. He left Noah in a drunken stupor, Abraham a liar and coward, job childless and penniless, David an adulterer and murderer, Peter a liar, and Judas betrayer and suicide. How has he left you?

Paul's exhortation to the Ephesians, "Neither give place to the devil" (4:27) should be carefully considered by us.

How does one "give place" (opportunity) to the devil? Perhaps, the more simple explanation is this: when one puts himself in circumstances, places, relationships, or conditions favorable for opportunities or advantages for Satan, he is actually handing him an engraved invitation.

His purpose is to destroy souls. He is "seeking whom he may devour." (I Peter 5:8). His craftiness is such that many approaches have the appearance of good. He transforms into an "angel of light." (II Cor. 11:14). He has his angels, apostles, and ministers. (Matt. 25:41; I cor. 11:13,15).

With such a task force at his command and the successful tactics he employs' how much greater care must be taken by us to avoid the "wiles of the devil." (Eph. 6:11).

The "whole armour of God" is the greatest possible weapon, offensively and defensively, we can possibly have. Study his word regularly, diligently, and reverently that you may be so equipped. (Eph. 6:11-17).

The devil never overlooks a single opportunity to tempt a soul. But God has not left us defenseless. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." (James 4:7).

## **PICK OUT A STRANGER AND SAY "HELLO"**

Solomon said, "A man that hath friends must show himself friendly : (Prov. 18:24). The business world had emphasized this principle for a long time. They insist that their employees be neat, clean, friendly, and helpful. They know that increased profit will be the reward. Indeed, courtesy and friendliness pay.

How wonderful if churches would learn this same

lesson. Strangers are often permitted to come to our services, sometimes more than once, without so much as a smile or a handshake. Too frequently, they will be pushed aside in our haste to get to someone we haven't seen in a few hours.

The story is told of a man who entered the church building and sat down near the front with his hat on. Noting the man, one of the ushers spoke to him asking him if he knew he forgot to remove his hat. "Yes," the man replied, "I realize I have my hat on, but I've been coming to this church for two months and you are the first person who has spoken to me."

That reminds me of the preacher who preached to the congregation one Sunday morning on the interesting theme, "Recognition of our Friends in Heaven."

The following week he received a note: "Dear Sir: I would like for you to speak to your congregation on the subject, 'Recognition of Friends on Earth.' I have been coming to your services for several weeks now and no one has spoken to me yet."

The admonition to the Hebrews would be most appropriate: "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." (Heb. 13:2). This anonymous poem, penned by a new member, should challenge us.

I see you at the services but you never say hello.

You're busy all the time with people you already know.

I sit among the members, still I'm a lonely guy;

The new ones sit there with me, while you quickly pass us by.

But you people have asked us in and talked of fellowship;

You could just step across the room but you've never made the trip.

Why can't you no, or say "Hello", or stop and shake my hand,

Then go and join your other friends-now, *that* I'd understand.

I'll be at the next service too, on that you can depend,  
So won't you introduce yourself? I want to be your friend.

## IT'S ALL UP TO YOU !

One of the most frightening warnings of the Master is found in the parable of the "Vine and the Branches". Jesus said, "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." (John 15:2).

An unwillingness to assume tasks, or not getting around to accomplishing those we have accepted, or deciding someone else will do it, these are attitudes far too common among us. The fruit on another branch will not cause the Lord to give approval to us.

Someone has written this thought-provoking rhyme:

An old man sat by the open fire, and dreamed the years away;

While outside in the battle of life, many perished in the toils of day.

He never, never did any good; nor did he ever do any wrong;

He just sat by the open fire; and dreamed the whole day long.

Now, he's left a vacant chair, and they say he's gone up higher;

But, if he still does as he used to do, he's sitting by the fire.

Some folk will rationalize, scrutinize, criticize, deemphasize, ostracize, philosophize, and minimize, in an

effort to place their burdens upon the shoulders of others. James said, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." (James 4:17). Paul wrote to the Galatian Christians: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." (Galatians 6:1, 2).

You are the one who has to decide to bear fruit. An unknow poet has admonished:

You are the fellow who has to decide whether you'll do it, or toss it aside;

You are the fellow who makes up your mind whether you'll lead or linger behind,

Whether to try for the good that's afar, or be contented to stay where you are.

Take it or leave it, there's much to do; just think it over, it's all up to you.

## **IS YOU IS OR IS YOU AIN'T? WHO CAN TELL?**

Our times are finding it ever more increasingly difficult to determine where anybody stands on anything. For years, many politicians have been very careful to find which way the majority leaned before expressing an opinion. Sad, indeed, is the situation when this same hesitancy characterizes some who claim to be Christians, and, even some who pretend to preach the gospel.

Jesus said, "He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." (Matt. 12:30). It is not difficult to determine how to be "with" Jesus if we will allow him to say what he means and mean what he

says. He assured us, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32).

The story is told of a hunter who had raised his rifle and had taken careful aim at a large bear. When he was about to pull the trigger, the bear spoke in a soft, soothing voice: "Isn't it better to talk than to shoot? What do you want? Let us negotiate the matter."

Lowering the rifle, the hunter replied, "I want a fur coat." the bear replied, "Good, that is a negotiable question. I want a full stomach, so let us negotiate a compromise."

They sat down to negotiate and after a time the bear walked away alone. The negotiations had been successful, the bear had a full stomach, and the hunter had a fur coat.

This is Satan's method exactly. He succeeds in getting men to compromise and does so to the destruction of everyone who listens to him.

During the Civil War, it is said that there was a man who was sympathetic to both sides. He lived in a border-line state. Finally, he decided that he would effect a compromise. He put on a mixed uniform, wearing the Confederate grey coat, and the Union blue trousers.

It seems all went well until he became engaged in a hard-fought battle, when the Federals shot him in the coat, and the Confederates shot him in the trousers.

Take a stand on truth and let others know where you stand. Paul said, "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil . . . that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day . . . Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness." (Eph. 6:11,13,14).

## **CRAB GRASS WILL NOT PRODUCE VIOLETS**

Jesus said, "Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you:" (Mark 4:24). In the beginning God established the law that every seed brings forth after it's own kind. This law applies to every kind of seed.

Paul underscored the application of this rule to man's daily living by warning, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." (Galatians 6:7,8).

This beautiful story tells how a little boy learned this wonderful lesson because his echo persisted in answering him every time he said something.

The little boy (let us call him Johnny) went home to his mother and said, "Mother, I was out on the hill by the spring and when I called across the lake there was boy mocking me."

"How do you mean, Johnny?" said his mother.

"I was calling out, 'Ho!' and this boy said, 'Ho!' So I said to him, 'Who are you?' and he answered, 'Who are you?' I said, 'What is your name?' He said, 'What is your name?' And I said to him, "Who don't you show yourself?' He said, 'Show yourself?' And I jumped over the ditch and went into the woods and could not find him so I came back and said, 'If you don't come out and show yourself, I will beat you!' and he said, 'Will beat you!'"

His mother said, "Ah, Johnny! If you had said, 'Your voice is sweet,' he would have said, 'Your voice is sweet.' If you had said, 'I love you,' he would have said, 'I love you.'" Whatever you said to him, he would have said back to you.

You see, it was really just an echo!"

Then his mother said, "Now, Johnny, when you grow up and get to be a man, whatever you say to others they will, by and by, say to you."

An unknown poet put it this way:

We sow a thought and reap an act;

We sow an act and reap a habit;

We sow a habit and reap a character;

We sow a character and reap a destiny.

## **YOU DO AND I'LL QUIT**

"And let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

It seems almost an endless struggle in the church to keep as many people coming into the fellowship as there are going out. The Pennsylvania Dutch slogan, "The hurrier I go, the behinder I get," is so very appropriate, sadly, to most congregations. Seemingly, many folk are ready to "Quit the church" the moment anything conflicts with "their" way.

Someone told of a lady who hired a new maid to work in her home. The first day she noticed something very peculiar about the maid. She worked all day with her hat on. At last, the lady of the house could hold back her curiosity no longer, so she asked, "Why do you always wear your hat?" The maid replied, "Well, I want to be ready to quit any time you say anything that might hurt my feelings."

It is so easy to follow the course of least resistance. To many, the simplest solution to a problem is to walk out. It is the person who keeps on with a task who will be rewarded. Paul told the Galatians, "And let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." (Gal. 6:9).

A preacher asked a man why he had quit attending the services. His reply, "They haven't treated me right over there." The preacher asked, "Then why don't you go home and beat your wife?" His startled answer. "My wife hasn't done anything against me."

"Well," said the preacher, "has the Lord done anything against you."

Someone has written:

When things go wrong as they sometimes will,  
When the road you are trudging seems all up hill,  
When the funds are low and the debts are high,  
And you want to smile, but you have to sigh,  
When care is pressing you down a bit,  
Rest if you must, but don't you quit.

Life is queer with its twists and turns,  
As everyone of us sometimes learns,  
And many a failure turns about  
When he might have won if he had stuck it out;  
Don't give up though the pace seems slow  
You may succeed with another blow.

Success is failure turned inside out  
The silver tint of the clouds of doubt.  
And you never can tell how close you are,  
It may be near when it seems so far;  
So stick to the fight when you are hardest hit  
It's when things seem worst that you **MUST NOT QUIT.**

## **THE TIME TO OBEY GOD IS WHEN ONE LEARNS THE WILL OF GOD**

"We fully intend to get back into the Lord's work as soon

as we retire and to not have so many things competing for our time." "I know I should obey the gospel but there are several things I want to do first." How often that which should have top priority is moved way down the list. When Jesus said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness;" (Matthew 6:33), he was telling us that nothing is of greater importance.

It is so easy to put off obeying the instructions of Jesus when one refuses to allow himself to consider the urgency of so doing. "I will some time." or "I intend to some day," or "Don't worry about. There is plenty of time."

Someone told the story of a girl named Mary, whose aunt had urged her to become a Christian, but the girl delayed making her decision, saying, "I will when I am older."

There came a day when mother was ill, and Mary ordered some beautiful flowers for her. When she returned home, she went to her mother's room but the flowers were not there.

"Didn't the florist sent the flowers I ordered? she asked her aunt. "Yes," she replied, "they are down in the kitchen. As soon as they begin to be withered and dry, I will bring them up to your mother's room."

Mary was shocked, and her eyes flashed as she said, "I want my mother to have these flowers while they are fresh and beautiful. I love her too much to give her what is wilted and faded."

"Oh!" exclaimed her aunt. "You told me that you intended to give your life to Jesus when it was wilted and faded, and so I supposed you would feel that way about this gift to your mother."

To which Mary replied, "You are right, I have not been fair to Jesus. I will give him the best of my life now while I am young and strong and able to serve him. I will give myself today and always."

Solomon insisted, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth,"(Eccl. 12:1). Paul urged the young preacher, Timothy, "Let no man despise thy youth: but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." (I Tim. 4:12). Both are saying that the time to do the Will of God is as soon as one learns the Will of God.

## **BLT SHOULD HEAD THE MENU**

A favorite sandwich of many folk is a BLT. To almost everyone bacon, lettuce, and tomato is an excellent combination for a tasty treat. The BLT we refer to now is also an excellent combination that will produce beautiful results, Believers Laboring Together.

Believers, those who, without reservation, accept the instructions of the Master. Laboring, fulfilling, to the degree each individual is able, the tasks that are his from the Master. Together, each complementing the other by assuming his particular role and realizing his is but a small part of great effort to obey the Master.

Any effort put forth to the glory of God will not return void, but how much greater will be the results when there is togetherness in those efforts. Paul said, "Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon." (I Cor. 3:8-10).

There is always strength in togetherness. Once a woman hired a man to prepare an old barn for use. In the process, he

performed several dangerous tasks. He killed a deadly snake and a poisonous spider, and then he coaxed a huge bull into a stable. One last dute, however, he refused to perform because he claimed it was too dangerous. This task was removing a hornet's nest. Surprised at his fear, the lady asked, "Why?" "You have done everything else I have asked" He replied, "Madam, I ain't afraid of snakes, or bulls, or spiders, but I is terrified of hornets, 'cause they is organized."

Sometimes one considers himself a part of the action because he happens to be around when the task is performed. An elephant and a flea walked side by side across a Bridge. When they reached the other side, the flea said, "Boy, we sure did shake that bridge!" Too many times, we, as the flea, have had very little to do with the end result. May we each determine that when we say "we", we mean "we" did it.

One of the greatest problems in many churches today is willing workers: a few are willing to do the work and the rest are willing to let them do it.

## **TAKE HEED, LEST YOU GET CAUGHT IN YOUR OWN "MOUTH" TRAP!**

It is easy for one to think that if he did not begin some story he would not be held guilty for passing it on. Such is a very false conclusion. If one says just enough to put the mind of another to work in the wrong direction, he is responsible for the rumor which results. "Rumor is like an egg; when it is hatched it has wings."

James said, "For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man and able also to bridle the whole body. Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body. Behold also the ship, which though they be

so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth. Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!" (James 3:2-5).

It is an unusually strong statement for James to make that one who is able to bridle his tongue is a perfect man. He explains that one who is able to control his tongue, is able also to control his whole body. The best way to save face is to keep the lower end of it shut. Someone said, "Dignity is the capacity to hold back on the tongue what never should have been on the mind in the first place.

Wisdom is knowing when to speak your mind, and when to mind your speech. We must beware of half-truths, lest we find ourselves with the wrong half. A lady invited friends to a mushroom steak dinner. When the mushroom can was opened, a light scum was on top. The guests were expected soon, so the lady suggested to her maid, "Give the dog a little, and if he eats it, it is probably alright." The dog liked it and begged for more. So the dinner was completed and served.

After the main course, the maid whispered to her employer, "Ma'am, the dog is dead!" There was only one thing to do. Some time later the guests were reclining after the use of a stomach pump. The lady asked the maid, "Where is the dog now?" "Out in the driveway, Ma'am, where he fell when the car hit him!"

How very careful one should be about information he receives before passing it on. May we never create smoke that will cause someone else to assume there's a fire. Take heed, lest you get caught in your own "mouth trap"!

## **IF ANOTHER STALLS, GIVE HIM A GENTLE PUSH**

You, no matter what your circumstances may be, can be that "something" that will provide those around you with the encouragement they need to bring out the best that is in them. Emerson once wrote: "What I need most is something to make me do what I can." All of us need a little push sometimes to cause us to undertake the tasks which face us.

Someone told this story of an automobile which presents very accurately the situation many of us face. "I was sitting in my car the other day when an old MODEL A stalled nearby. The driver was utterly unable to start the old vehicle and traffic was halted for a block. Horns sounded and angry drivers shouted unpleasant words at the embarrassed man.

"After a time, cars began to move around the unfortunate owner of the old Ford. Finally one driver in the long line of retarded cars drove up behind the stalled car and gave it a push. Soon it began moving under its own power and traffic got underway again."

Haven't you had that happen on occasions when you were not in an automobile? Being unable to muster the energy or the determination to undertake a given challenge, finally, someone says just the right words to get you to move.

This portrays the condition in the lives of many who have not become Christians and of those who have fallen by the wayside. Someone just needs to "give them a gentle push" by speaking words of encouragement which will help them to take the necessary action to meet with the Lord's approval.

Christians are taught to continually be alert to the opportunities to give that encouragement. Paul urged: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault ye which are

spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." Gal. 6:1. James put it this way: "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him ; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." Verses 19 and 20 of Chapter 5.

It is so consoling to know that when you help someone up a hill you are a little nearer the top yourself.

## **A GREATER TRIP THAN TO GO TO THE MOON**

There are many great journeys which we take in the course of a lifetime. Some will visit points of interest in their own country, some will take a trip around the world, some will even go to the moon. However, man makes his greatest and most eventful trip when he comes to himself. The most important destination for man in this life is to come to that "port of self"

The prodigal (Luke 15) had made some interesting and "enjoyable" trips while on his way into that far country. It was not until he "came to himself" (verse 17) that he was able to really see what living was all about. "And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck and kissed him." (Verse 20). This young man possessed the moral backbone which led him back to his father.

Perhaps, few have traveled as far into the far country as had the prodigal. Yet, any journey which has taken us away from God and our service to him is a "far" country and we should be continually taking that "trip around ourselves".

How long has it been since you really checked up on

"you"? A young man walked into a drugstore and asked if he could use the telephone. The druggist gave permission and then heard the boy say: "Hello, Dr. Anderson? Do you want to hire a boy to cut the grass, milk the cow, and run errands for you?" . . . . . "Oh, you already have a boy?" . . . . . "Dr. Anderson, are you completely satisfied with the boy you have?" . . . . . "OK, then. Goodbye, doctor."

As the boy thanked the druggist and started out the door, the druggist called to him, "Just a minute, son. If you are looking for work, I could use a boy like you."

"Thank you, sir," replied the boy, "but I already have a job."

"Didn't I just hear you trying to get a job from Dr. Anderson?"

"No, sir," said the boy. "You see, I am the boy who's working for Dr. Anderson, and I was just checking up on myself."

No road leads one so far from God that God will not willingly and gladly receive him back. And no one has taken life's greatest journey until he arrives at the station of himself.

## **GOOD INTENTIONS DON'T GET WORK DONE**

The writer to the Hebrews said, "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness; for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." (Hebrews 5:12-14).

Inspiration is here stressing the importance of not only doing what we know but also what we could have known. Far too few are doing as well as they know much less trying to increase knowledge.

A young solicitor for a farm journal was canvassing in a farm community trying to get subscribers for his paper. He approached an old farmer who was leaning against a rickety fence in front of a delapidated house, reflectively chewing a wisp of hay which dangled across a chin bristling with a two week's growth of whiskers.

"My paper will be of immense value to you," argued the young salesman. "By reading it, you will be able to learn to farm better, to be more efficient and economical, and you will naturally make more money." The farmer shook his head decisively. "Nope," he said, "tain't no use fer me to read your paper, young feller. I ain't farming now as good as I know how."

How sad that this illustrates the condition of so many in the church, Consider just about any area of the activities of the average congregation and note the number of folk who "ain't doing now as good as they know how."

A dressmaker's apprentice, after being severely reprimanded for having ruined a costly dress of a regular customer, replied, "I did the best I knew. I don't see what she is blaming me for." The dressmaker replied, "I'm not blaming you for doing the best you knew how, but for not knowing any better. You should-you have been here long enough. You meant well, but good intentions are not enough to carry on the dressmaking business."

And may we hasten to add, **GOOD INTENTIONS ARE NOT GOOD ENOUGH TO CARRY ON THE LORD'S BUSINESS!**

## GOOD INTENTIONS DO NOT SAVE SOULS

Mark Brinkerhoff said, "There is no such thing as a born hard-worker, a born salesman, or a born genius. We are all born ignorant, with innate underdeveloped abilities. What we do with these underdeveloped abilities is up to us. You can't afford to merely let things happen. If you want to be successful, you have to *make* things happen."

One of the outstanding features of the book of Acts is the fact that Luke did not record the good intentions of the New Testament church, but he did record many of their good acts. Instead of thinking about what should be done and arguing about the best way to do it, they were motivated to put their thoughts to work. There can be no doubt that this was one of the primary reasons for the growth enjoyed by the early church.

A church that has put its intentions to work has little time for discord among brethren. Unconcern and lukewarmness are unable to get started. Trouble just does not have any place to start. Abilities used will bring more opportunity for service, unused, they soon lose the power to serve.

An aqueduct was built in segovia in A.D. 109. For 1800 years, that aqueduct carried sparkling water to hot and dusty Segovians. About the turn of the century, thoughtful Spaniards decided that the aqueduct should be preserved for posterity and should be relieved of its age-old labor. So, they laid modern pipelines and stopped the flow that for all those years gushed and gurgled in the aqueduct. Soon after this the aqueduct began to fall apart. The blazing sun dried the mortar and made it crumble. Its stones sagged, and fell, soon it lay in ruins. What ages of service could not destroy, idleness rapidly

disintegrated.

"Doing" is continually stressed by the Lord. James declared: "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and *continueth* therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a *doer* of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." James 1:25.

"Two brothers once lived down this way,  
And one was Do and the other SAY,  
If streets were dirty, taxes high,  
Or schools were crowded, SAY would cry:  
'My, what a town.'" But brother DO  
Would set to work and make things new.  
And while DO worked, SAY would cry:  
'He does it wrong - - I know that I  
Could do it right.' So all the day  
Was heard the clank of brother SAY.  
But this one fact from none was hid - -  
SAY always talked. Do always did."

## **YOU CAN'T LIVE WRONG AND DIE RIGHT**

"Detour", "Beware The Dog", "Thin Ice", etc., are signs we often encounter telling us of dangers which could destroy us. In spite of such warnings, many prefer to do "their own thing" convinced that somehow everything is going to turn out alright.

Someone told of a little boy who listened to his Bible class teacher tell the story of the rich man and Lazarus. The teacher then asked the class, "Which would you rather be the rich man or Lazarus?" The little boy very honestly replied, "I would rather be the rich man while I live and Lazarus when I die."

Sadly, this describes what many grownups have decided and are ignoring all the danger signs which would prevent destruction. Paul warned: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." I Cor. 10:12.

The destructive forces come upon us so gradually that sometimes there is no reason, seemingly, to be alarmed or even concerned. Yet, when we feel completely secure, tragedy strikes.

A little girl was playing in the sands along the seashore. She was building a city in the sand. She laid out the streets, built the houses, stores, banks, and wall. Outside the wall she laid out a highway and roads, farms and farm houses. All afternoon she worked building her city. She did not notice that the sun was setting, the clouds were gathering and that the wind was growing chilly. She was too busy with her city. She did not notice that the tide was coming in, the waves mounting higher and higher, until one wave, mightier than the rest, came sweeping in about her, washing away her houses, and her lands, her city and her farms. In terror the child ran back alone and afraid.

We, too, become so involved building our houses, filling our banks, and stocking our stores that we ignore the heavy clouds that often move in creating the storms which sweep us into eternity. "Be not deceived, God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Gal. 6:7.

An old man asked a young friend, who sought advice, "What do you want to do with your life?" He replied, "I intend to go to college, graduate, and set myself up in business." "Fine," said the old man, "What then?" "I want to marry, settle in a community, and be successful businessman." "That is wonderful," said the friend. "What then?" "Then I want to retire and then I suppose I'll die." Then said the wise old man, "What then?" WHAT THEN ?

## **COVETOUSNESS PUTS ONE IN FORBIDDEN COMPANY**

Ours is such a selfish and greedy age that often there is no concern or interest in the needs of our fellowman. Apartment complexes and crowded subdivisions give little incentive even to meet ones neighbor. Many are so concerned with accumulating things that they think only of "me, my wife, my son John, and his wife, us four, and no more."

Jesus warned: "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." Lk. 12:15. Paul warned faithful Christians not to be associated with one who was infected with covetousness. "But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat." I Cor. 5:11

Several years ago there appeared in newspapers an account of Mrs. Emma Buhl DeHart having starved to death with more than \$274,000 in her closet. She lived in a dreary Staten Island, New York, flat. Besides the money found in the closet, there was also some \$200,000 in her bank. And, she owned hundreds of shares of valuable stocks. Her total assets came to about a half million dollars. She ate skimpily, usually arising about noon to go to a nearby dime store for a hotdog or hamburger. She saved boxes and wrapping for fuel for her stove. She did not have money, her money "had her".

Most usually, the very ones who deny they are covetous are the ones most infected. One who is not liberal with what he has deceives himself when he thinks he would be liberal if he had more. He has been so busy pursuing "things" that he

has little interest in the spiritual, If we can solve the problem of covetousness we will have solved the problem of benevolence, evangelism, and attendance.

The attitudes of many are seen in the actions of some North African monkeys. The natives there have a very easy way to capture monkeys. A gourd, with a hole just large enough for a monkey to thrust his hand into it, is filled with nuts and fastened firmly to a branch of some tree at sunset. During the night a monkey will discover the scent of food, and its source, and will put his hand into the gourd to grasp a handful of nuts. But the hole is too small for him to withdraw his clenched fist, and he had not sense enough to let go of his bounty so that he may escape. He pulls and pulls without success and in the morning is quickly and easily taken.

This is the lesson Jesus was teaching when he said: "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul." Mark 8:36.

## **WHY NOT FILL UP YOUR OIL CAN TONIGHT?**

Joe Laird tells of finding a terrapin when he was child in the country. As he began to examine him, the terrapin pulled in his head and closed his shell like a vice. He then picked up a stick and tried to pry open the shell. His uncle saw what was happening and said: "No, that's not the way! You may kill him but you'll never get him open."

He took the terrapin into the house and set him on the hearth. It wasn't but a few minutes until he began to get warm. Then his new-found friend pushed out his head, and then his feet and began crawling. "Terrapins are like that", the uncle said, "and people too. You can't force them into anything. But, if you first warm them up with some real kindness, more

than likely they will do what you want them to do."

Every day will be a better day if it is begun with kindness, continued with kindness, and closed with kindness. Too many folk allow themselves to be poured into the cold, selfish, unfriendly mold of our unhappy world.

In defining kindness, Webster uses such words as: gentleness, goodness, generosity, favor, clemency, mildness, kind manner, sympathetic, kind, gracious, agreeable, kind act, kind feeling, good will. In the Bible we find many references to kindness. "God is of great kindness" (Joel 2:13). "God is slow to anger and of great kindness" (Psa. 177:2). "Remember, O Lord thy tender mercies and thy loving kindness, for they have been of old" (Psa. 25:6). Paul urged the Colossians to "put on kindness" (3";2). Peter said add "brotherly kindness" (II Pet. 1:7).

Perhaps, the greatest remedy for the healing of wounds in society, in the neighborhood, in the home, or in the church is found in Paul's instruction to the church at Ephesus. "And be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." (Eph. 4:32). When we follow this advice, we will find that kindness begets kindness.

It is said that once an old man carried a little can of oil with him everywhere he went; and if he passed through a door that squeaked he poured a little oil on its hinges. If a gate was hard to open he oiled the latch. And thus he passed through life lubricating all hard surfaces and making it easier for those who came after him. People called him eccentric, strange, and cranky; but the old man went steadily on refilling his can of oil when it emptied, and oiling the hard places he found.

Which are you? The man with the oil can? Or, the man that needs oiling? Why not fill up your oil can tonight and have it ready first thing tomorrow?

## **CHARACTER IS WHAT YOU ARE IN THE DARK**

D.L. Moody said, "Character is what you are in the dark. If you take care of your character, your reputation will take care of itself."

Many folk are far more concerned about the impressions they make on men than those they make on God. Reputation is what others think us to be and character is what God knows us to be. What we are in this life determines where we will go when we leave this world.

The Apostle Paul sums up the traits God desires in the lives of his children in Colossians 3:12,13: "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; For bearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." Here, Delicately woven, are the beautiful strands of Christian character.

A poor boy in a Pennsylvania town was struggling for an education. He studied and toiled until he finally got through. Hearing of a vacancy in a Chicago bank, he decided to try for it. His mother objected and his friends laughed at him, telling him there would be many applications in a big city like Chicago and no chance for him. But he went. He met the bank president, who touched a button. The bank's detective stepped in, looked at the boy, and went out. The president said, "Come back in a week."

When he came back, the president said, "There were forty-three applicants we were considering for this position. All have been watched for a week. Only two boys passed the character examination, which touched particularly the points

of extravagance, vice, where evenings are spent, and the Lord's Day. All this is strictly business, and not at all an inquisition into private character. This bank must take an account of these things for its own sake. Of the two, you have the best qualifications, and the place is yours."

Would you be ashamed for your companion, or your parents, or your children, or a prospective employer, or the elders, to see a record of your actions for an entire week? **REMEMBER!** The Father of us all has an accounting, not only of our actions, but our thoughts as well, for every week of our life. "A person's character is like a fence: all the whitewash in the world won't strengthen it."

## **MAGNETS WON'T ATTRACT RUSTY NAILS**

A strong horeshoe magnet may be held over an old rust-eaten, shapeless nail without meeting any response. A bright, ringing nail will leap to the magnet, attract another and through it draw another until several are attached.

Just so, a rusty, unpolished, corroded Christian, cranks, defiled, and selfish, has very little attraction and through him the power of Christ to win the world will not flow.

A Hindu woman was converted to Christianity by hearing the gospel. She suffered much persecution from her husband. One day another Christian asked her, "When your husband is angry and treats you badly, what do you do?" She replied, "I cook his food better; I try to sweep the floors cleaner; I speak mildly, love him tenderly, and show him that when I become a Christian, I became a better wife and a better mother for his children."

The husband could withstand the preaching of others, but he could not withstand the Christian life of his wife. He

soon became a Christian with her.

Several years ago a preacher was in London preaching in Hyde Park when a man in the crowd interrupted him. "We got nothin' agin Jesus of Nazareth," said the interrupter, "but we have something agin you. Christians because you ain't up to sample."

Real Christianity described in the Bible is (1) to grow as Jesus grew (Lk. 2: 52;); (2) to think as Jesus thought (Phil. 2:5); (3) to obey as Jesus obeyed (Heb. 5:8,9); (4) to give as Jesus gave (Matt. 20:28); (5) to love as Jesus loved (John 13:34,35); (6) to forgive as Jesus forgave (Col. 3:13; Lk. 23:34); (7) to pray as Jesus prayed (Matt. 6:9); and (8) to seek the lost as Jesus did (Lk. 19:10).

Mrs. J.F. Moser wrote these thought provoking words:

Would I be called a "Christian,"

If everybody knew

My secret thought and feelings,

And everything I do?

Or could they see the likeness

Of Christ in me each day?

Or could they hear Him speaking

In every word I say?

Would I be called a "Christian,"

If everyone should know

That I am found in places

Where Jesus would not go?

Or could they hear His echo

In every song I sing?

In eating, drinking, dressing,

Could they see Christ my King?

Would I be called a "Christian,"

If judged by what I read?

By all my recreation,  
And every thought and deed?  
Could I be counted Christlike  
As I now work and pray,  
Unselfish, kind, forgiving  
To others every day?

## **“DADDY, HAVE I EVER SEEN A CHRISTIAN?”**

A little boy once asked his dad what a “Christian” was. The dad replied that a Christian is a person who loves and obeys God. He Loves friends and neighbors and expresses his appreciation for other Christians. He even loves his enemies and prays for them that they might be blessed. He prays often and blesses God’s holy name in reverent worship. He is kind, considerate, gentle courteous in speech and in his selfless attitude. He lives a life that is pure and holy and is a Christian through and through. The little boy thought for a moment and then asked another question: “Daddy, have I ever seen one?”

Most of the New Testament is instruction designed to help us know how to live so as to bring honor to God. How sad that so many are “hearers” but not “doers” of the word. For this reason many little boys could very well ask, “Have I ever seen a Christian?” Jesus said, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16).

Someone told of a good brother who was plowing his field when a neighbor came over to talk about insect trouble. The neighbor was very anxious to get his plowing done, but he took time to visit.

After a while the neighbor said, “I hear you are having

a good interest at church." "Fair," the brother replied. "You say that the church is the only one mentioned in the Bible," the neighbor asked. "Yes sir, it is," replied the brother proudly. "You must be very happy to belong to such an important church," suggested the neighbor. "Well, yes, I am," the brother replied.

"Sometime I would like to go with you and learn more about the church," offered the neighbor. "Fine," said the brother, "I'll be glad to take you any time. " "Isn't tonight mid-week meeting night for you folks?" asked the interested friend. "Yes, it is," was the brother's answer, "but I CAN'T go tonight, I've got too much work to do."

The friend said, "Well, I don't reckon your church is any more important than any other. WE don't think one has to belong to the church or attend its services to be saved, and if YOUR work is more important than that of the church I reckon your church isn't very important either."

As the neighbor walked away the brother started his tractor, jerking it into gear, and muttered something about narrow-mindedness. No, he didn't attend the service that night nor has he been able to bring his neighbor with him since.

Nor does his neighbor seem interested in talking religion with him any more.

## **IS YOURS A BORROWED FAITH?**

When Herod heard that the wise men had seen the star in the east and had come to worship the one born king of the Jews, he was greatly troubled. One would think he would have begun a personal search for the king. But, after a few questions to the chief priests and scribes, learning that the prophets had said "in Bethlehem", he was content to let

someone else do his searching for him. "Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also" (Matthew 2:7,8). He was satisfied to "borrow" his faith from someone else.

Herod did not want to appear to be disinterested because all Jerusalem had been aroused. Also, the misunderstanding about the nature of the kingdom of Christ caused Herod to fear for his position of authority. But, he still wanted someone else to "find Jesus" for him.

So many folk are content with a "borrowed" faith. No real, personal faith has been developed but because a father or mother, with deep convictions based on truth, devote themselves to conscientious service to God, a son or daughter will often "go along". Or, a husband or wife manifesting an abiding faith will sometimes have companion who "borrows" just enough faith to get them to the church building. Too many professed Christians "wave" at the Master from a distance rather than enlist and march in the parade.

Vance Havner once wrote: "To some, Christianity is an argument. To many, it is a performance. To too few, it is an experience. It is possible to be a walking encyclopedia of Bible knowledge and know all the answers without knowing Him who is the answer. It is possible to work in a travel office, sell tickets, hand out posters, and talk glibly of foreign lands without ever leaving the old home town."

We must never forget that our accounting to God will be personal and individual. Regardless of the faithfulness of parents, companions, relatives, or dearest friends I will answer to God for myself. I must "find Jesus" for myself. This kind of faith comes through hearing and accepting the Word of God. (Romans 10:17). Then will one be able to say with the Apostle

Paul, "for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day". (II Timothy 1:12).

## **DID YOU EVER TELL A LIE?**

Many sins are immediately recognized and the temptation to commit them can be quickly resisted. Satan would have us steal, kill, or commit adultery and we resist without hesitation, but the problem with lying is another matter. Once David hastily said, "all men are liars" (Psalms 116:11).

There is so much lying and deceit about us that one often has difficulty determining what to believe. Young people proceed so as to deceive their parents. Parents sometimes mislead children by failing to be honest with them. Business men will occasionally make fraudulent deals, or public officials will be guilty of taking bribes. All of these acts fall into the category of deception.

Webster defines lying "to tell or act that which is not true for the purpose of deceiving." One would be in error to tell an untruth unknowingly but would not be guilty of lying. One lies when he knowingly and intentionally perverts truth, holds back facts or in some way alters truth.

Sometimes we give too little thought to the thing we are actually saying and will make a deceptive statement to cover up some other mistake. For example, one will say, "I just don't feel like it," or, "it was just too cold," or, "I just didn't have time," with reference to some task expected. In reality, it is often a matter of indifference. To be truthful, one has lied.

Exaggeration is often used to deceive others into assuming one has been more successful in business, or, has seen more of the world, or, has more financial investments.

A college football coach was questioning a high school prospect who was applying for an athletic scholarship.

"I can run 100 yards with full equipment in less than 10 seconds," the boy said. "I was named outstanding defensive player in five of our games. I scored 18 touchdowns and kicked every extra point. And I was on the honor roll."

The coach was greatly impressed. "Do you have any weaknesses?"

"Well," the young man replied. "I am inclined to lie a bit."

Sin has many tools, but a lie is a handle that fits them all. It is easy to tell one lie, but hard to tell just one.

God hates a lying tongue. (Proverbs 6:17) John said, "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone." (Revelation 21:8).

## **WE CANNOT LIVE BY SUCCESS ALONE**

J. H. Jowett has said, "We live by disappointment as well as by attainment. The cloudless skies make a Sahara. It is the strangely mingled weather with its dullness and cold, searching mists and rain which makes our hillsides and valleys green with pleasant land. So in life, we cannot live by success alone. Success alone would make us hard and dry."

The following information appeared in the "20th Century Christian" several years ago.

When Abraham Lincoln was a young man, he ran for the Legislature in Illinois and was badly swamped.

He next entered business, failed, and spent seventeen years of his life paying up debts of a worthless partner.

He was in love with a beautiful young woman; to whom

he became engaged--then she died.

He then tried to get an appointment to the U.S. Land Office, but failed.

Entering politics again, he ran for Congress and was badly defeated.

In 1856, he was defeated by Douglas.

One failure after another--bad failures--great setbacks. In face of all this, he eventually became one of the country's greatest men!

Yet, how easily many of us become discouraged. If things happen to take a turn we did not anticipate, we are prone to give up quickly. Paul assured the Corinthians, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." (I Corinthians 10:13).

We must accept the fact that "into each life some rain must fall" but realize also that "every cloud has a silver lining". The Roman Christians were told, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28).

## **TO SAVE SOULS WE MUST COOPERATE WITH GOD**

Through the centuries the value of co-operation has repeatedly been recognized. Every great task is made easier when the combined efforts of the participants can be had. The sooner Christians realize the role of each toward the salvation of the lost, the sooner great results will be forthcoming.

Marcus Aurelius, a great Roman statesman and philosopher, and later Emperor, once said: "We have been

born for mutual help, like the feet, like the hands, like the rows of upper and lower teeth. To act in opposition to one another is therefore contrary to nature."

Many would not think of openly opposing on effort of another Christian in the interest of a lost soul, yet, the very failure of one to lend his encouragement is a hindrance.

Paul explained cooperation in I Corinthians 12:14-18. "For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the Body; is it therefore not of the body; And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him."

All goes well as one travels along the highway as long as all four tires are fully inflated. When one tire decides not to "cooperate" the rest are then ineffective. A chain may be used for an important job but if one link decides not to "cooperate" it destroys the work of the others.

The wall of Jerusalem was rebuilt by cooperation. Nehemiah said, "So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work" (4:6).

God can grow trees, raise mountains, populate the world, or fill the space with stars, but he has arranged that in the salvation of souls and the expansion of his kingdom we must cooperate with him to the completion of the task.

"Christ has no hands but our hands

To do His work today;

He has no feet but our feet

To lead men in His way;

He has no tongue but our tongues

To tell men how He died;

He has no help but our help  
To bring them to His side."

## **PERMISSIVE PARENTS PRODUCE PITIFUL PROBLEMS**

As a people, we have been led to conclude that it is unavoidable for the crime rate to increase annually. The home blames the school and the school blames the home. A December, 1975, Gallup Poll of American Adults, shows that parents believe that lack of discipline is the number one problem in the public schools today.

Today's young people are the best educated, most talented, healthiest and wealthiest in the history of the world. At the same time, they are becoming the most tyrannical, destructive and rebellious generation in history.

Our young people face a long, hard, uphill battle in their opposition against evil. Their problems are multiplied when those in leadership roles in our society justify sinful behavior and ridicule those who try to do right.

Dr. Karl Compton, scientist, warned before he died that annihilation would be imminent unless spiritual and moral advances kept up with scientific advances.

Col. James Collins, of Atlanta, arriving back in the United States following his release from a Hanoi POW camp a few years ago observed: "As I look around our nation, I see things that frighten me. I see the moral fiber of our nation being torn apart. I see us turning our backs on things that have made this country great--the family unit, religion, trust of one another and basic honesty."

It doesn't have to be that way. We have not YET reached the point of no return. Others can and have reversed the order

of things and so can we.

In the August 8, 1974 issue of "Gospel Advocate" there appeared an article that was most startling and revealing. It stated that during a recent ten year period that saw crime increase 300% in New York City, it decreased in Tokyo by 10%. Mr. Ed McDowell was sent by the Wall Street Journal to Tokyo to find why. He learned that the year before, Tokyo had 200 murders New York city had 2,000. Tokyo had 435 robberies, New York City had 100,000. His investigation showed they, too, had inadequate housing, dimly lighted streets and alleys.

In Mr. McDowell's explanation of the contrasting results he gave these causes:

1. In Japan, there is a family closeness. Japanese children are almost always home for dinner. Japanese young people are very much concerned about how their behavior may reflect on their families.

2. Japan's schools have two hours every week for moral and ethical education. This education stresses respect for others.

3. The Japanese are workers. Most are too busy for mischief.

4. The law is enforced in Japan. Tokyo police have been called the most modern and best equipped army in the world.

5. Crimes are punished. More than 50% of all reported crimes in Japan are solved, and the preceding year 99.18% of all defendants were found "guilty as charged". Compare with Chicago where only 7% of criminals are indicted and only 3% of these are punished.

Permissiveness is rebellion against God, and rebellion against God leads to being given up to uncleanness, to vile passions, and to a reprobate mind. Romans 1:18-32. Truly, **PERMISSIVE PARENTS PRODUCE PITIFUL PROBLEMS.**