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2700-PLUS SERMON ILLUSTRATIONS -- (A-TOPICS)
Compiled and Arranged Topically by Duane V. Maxey

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ABANDONMENT -- TO CHRIST

0001 -- WILLIAM BORDEN'S CONSECRATION

In 1904 William Borden, heir to the Borden Dairy Estate, graduated from a Chicago high school a millionaire. His parents gave him a trip around the world. Traveling through Asia, the middle East, and Europe gave Borden a burden for the world's hurting people. Writing home, he said, "I'm going to give my life to prepare for the mission field."

When he made this decision, he wrote in the back of his Bible two words: "No Reserves." Turning down high-paying job offers after graduating from Yale University, he entered two more words in his Bible: "No Retreats."

Completing studies at Princeton Seminary, Borden sailed for China to work with Muslims, stopping first at Egypt for some preparation. While there he was stricken with cerebral meningitis and died within a month.

A waste, you say! Not in God's plan. In his Bible underneath the words "No Reserves" and "No Retreats," he had written the words "No Regrets."

* * *

ABASEMENT

0002 -- TAKE THEM DOWN

Oliver Cromwell once visited Yorkminster Cathedral in England, and his attention was drawn to twelve silver statues of the apostles, which stood near the ceiling of one of the cathedral apartments. Looking upon them for a moment, he said, "Who are those fellows standing yonder?" After being informed, he exclaimed, "Take them down...and let them go about doing good." Accordingly, they were melted down and put into his treasury.

Before Oliver Cromwell could use those silver apostles, it was necessary that they be taken down. Likewise, it is sometimes necessary for Christ to take us down spiritually before He can use us. Thus, perhaps often, the essence of His prayer to the Father for His followers is: "Take them down." -- Duane V. Maxey

* * *

ABSENT -- THOSE WHO ARE

0003 -- JUSTICE TOWARD THE ABSENT

Philip Henry used to remind those who spoke evil of people behind their backs of that law, "Thou shalt not curse the deaf." Those that are absent are deaf; they cannot right themselves; therefore say no ill of them. A friend of his, inquiring of him concerning a matter which tended to reflect upon some people, he began to give him an account of the story, but immediately broke off, and checked himself with these words, "But our mind is to speak evil of no man; "and would proceed no further in the story. The week before he died a person requested the loan of a particular book from him. "Truly," said he, "I would lend it to you, but that it takes in the faults of some which should rather be covered with a mantle of love."

* * *

ABSOLUTION

0004 -- ABSOLUTION GRANTED TO A CONNIVING THIEF

A Roman Catholic who had filled up the measure of his iniquities as far as he dared went to the Priest to confess and obtain absolution. He entered the apartment of the priest, and addressed him thus, "Holy father, I have sinned." The priest bade him kneel before the penitential; chair. The penitent was looking about, and saw; the priest's gold watch lying upon the table within his reach; he seized it and put it in his bosom. The priest approached him and requested him to acknowledge the sins for which he wished absolution. "Father," said the rogue, "I have stolen, and what shall I do?" "Restore," said the priest, "the thing you have stolen to its rightful owner." "Do you take it?" said the penitent. " No, I shall not," said the priest; "you must give it to the owner." "But he has refused to take it." "If this be the case you may keep it." The priest granted him full absolution; and the penitent knelt and kissed his hand, received his benediction, crossed himself, and departed with a clear conscience, and a very valuable gold watch into the bargain. -- Arvine

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ABSOLUTION

0005 -- LUTHER WOULD NOT GRANT ABSOLUTION TO THE IMPENITENT

Luther was one day seated in the confessional at Wittenburg. Many of the townspeople came successively and confessed themselves guilty of great excesses: adultery, licentiousness

usury, ill-gotten gains -- such were the crimes acknowledged. He reprimands, corrects, instructs. But what is his astonishment when these individuals reply that they will not abandon their sins! Greatly shocked the pious monk declares that, since they will not promise to change their lives, he cannot absolve them. The unhappy creatures then appeal to their letters of indulgence; they show them, and maintain their virtue. But Luther replies that he has nothing to do with these matters, and adds, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." They cry out and protest; but the doctor is immovable. They must "cease to do evil, and learn to do well, or else there is no absolution. -- D'Aubigne

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ABSTRACT

0006 -- THE FAILURE OF ABSTRACT THEORY IN CONCRETE SITUATIONS

A story in the "Sunshine Magazine" about a professor of psychology illustrates how difficult it is to love others. Although he had no children of his own, whenever he saw a neighbor scolding a child for some wrongdoing, he would say, "You should love your boy, not punish him."

One hot summer afternoon the professor was doing some repair work on a concrete driveway leading to his garage. Tired out after several hours of work, he laid down the towel, wiped the perspiration from his forehead, and started toward the house. Just then out of the corner of his eye he saw a mischievous little boy putting his foot into the fresh cement.

He rushed over, grabbed him, and was about to spank him severely when a neighbor leaned from a window and said, "Watch it, Professor! Don't you remember? You must 'love' the child!" At this, he yelled back furiously, "I do love him in the abstract but not in the concrete!"

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ABUSE -- ABUSIVE REMARKS

0007 -- SILENCE, THE BEST ANSWER

John Wesley one day remarked to Dr. Adam Clarke: "As I was walking through St. Paul's Churchyard, I observed two women standing opposite to one another. One was speaking and gesticulating violently, while the other stood perfectly still and in silence. Just as I came up and was about to pass them, the virago, clenching her fist and stamping her foot at her imperturbable neighbor, exclaimed, "Speak, wretch, that I may have something to say." "Adam," said Wesley, "that was a lesson to me."

* * *

ACCEPTED TIME

0008 -- HE ALMOST MISSED IT

Evangelist Paul Rader has often urged a banker in New York State to receive Christ, but the man would not make the decision. One day the preacher sensed that God wanted him to go immediately and speak to him again. So he took a train to the town where the man worked, hurried to the bank, and found his friend standing in the doorway.

"Rader," he said, "I'm glad to see you! I wrote a telegram begging you to come, but later changed my mind and didn't send it." "That's all right," said the evangelist, "your message came through anyhow by way of heaven."

Under deep conviction of sin, the banker was impressed by Rader's earnestness and his special effort to reach him with the gospel, and within a few minutes he accepted the Lord. In his newfound joy he exclaimed, "Did you ever see the sky so blue or the grass so green!"

"Hallelujah, you're truly converted!" came Rader's response. "It's just like the song says, 'Heaven above is softer blue, earth around is sweeter green, something lives in every hue Christless eyes have never seen.'"

Suddenly the banker gave a strange gasp and fell over dead! He had been saved at the very brink of eternity. What if Paul Rader had delayed or failed to stress the banker's urgent need of turning to the Lord immediately? That man may have been lost.

* * *

ACCEPTED TIME

0009 -- NOW -- NOT NEXT WEEK

Dwight L. Moody, by his own admission, made a mistake on the eighth of October 1871. It was a mistake which he determined never to repeat.

He had been preaching in the city of Chicago. That particular night drew his largest audience yet. His message was "What will you do then with Jesus who is called the Christ?" By the end of the service, he was tired. He concluded his message with a presentation of the gospel and a concluding statement: "Now I give you a week to think that over. And when we come together again, you will have opportunity to respond."

A soloist began to sing. But before the final note, the music was drowned out by clanging bells and wailing sirens screaming through the streets. The great Chicago Fire was blazing. In the ashen aftermath, hundreds were dead and over a hundred thousand were homeless.

Without a doubt, some who heard Moody's message had died in the fire. He reflected remorsefully that he would have given his right arm before he would ever give an audience another week to think over the message of the gospel.

* * *

ACCIDENTS

0010 -- A PROVIDENTIAL BLESSING

One morning a Christian farmer in Rhode Island put two bushels of rye in his wagon and started to the mill to get it ground. On his way to the mill he had to drive over a bridge that had no railings to the side of it. When he reached the middle of this bridge his horse, a quiet, gentle creature, began all at once to back. In spite of all this farmer could do, he kept on backing until the hinder wheels went over the edge of the bridge, and the bag of grain was tipped out and fell into the stream. Then the horse stood still.

Some men came to help the farmer. The wagon was lifted back, and the bag of grain was fished up from the water. Of course it could not be taken to the mill in that state. So the farmer had to take it home and dry it.

He had prayed that morning that God would protect and help him through the day, and he wondered what this accident had happened for. He found out, however, before long. On spreading out the grain to dry he noticed a great many small pieces of glass mingled in with it. If this had been ground up with the grain into the flour it might have caused the death of himself and family, But Jehovah-Jireh was on that bridge. He made the horse back and throw the grain into the water, to save the family from the danger that threatened them. -- Henry T. Williams

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ACTIONS

0011 -- NO MAN LIVETH UNTO HIMSELF

A passenger in a vessel from Joppa cut a hole through the ship's side, and when expostulated with calmly replied, "What matters it to you? The hole I have made is under my own berth." -- Spurgeon

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ACTIVITY

0012 -- BUSY OR IDLE?

It is the devil that meets with us when we are idle. The angels of the Lord appeared to the shepherds while they were keeping watch over their flocks by night. Matthew was called at the receipt of custom. -- McCartney

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ACTIVITY

0013 -- SAVED FROM FREEZING TO DEATH

A man was making his way over the mountains through a terrible snowstorm. He gradually got weaker and weaker, until at last he stumbled and fell. He said to himself, "This is the end. I shall never be found." He was too weak to rise, but as he fell his hand struck the body of another man who had fallen in the same place. This first man was unconscious and the man who had just fallen rose to his knees and, bending over the prostrate form, began to chafe his hands and to rub his face until by and by the man's eyes opened. He had saved another life, but he had also saved himself, for the exercise had kept the life in his own body. And when you have a passion for souls, when you go seeking the lost, when you lift the burdens of others, your own vision of Jesus is clearer, your own hope of eternity is stronger, your own assurance of salvation is greater. -- J. Wilbur Chapman

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ACTIVITY

0014 -- YOU HELP YOURSELF BY HELPING OTHERS

A tourist lately, whilst crossing a mountain height alone, over almost untrodden snow, felt a drowsiness stealing over himself, to yield to which he knew would be fatal. As the night closed in the snowflakes fell thick and fast, and the freezing blast grew apace; he tried to reason with himself, and with his utmost energy to free himself from the sleep of death fastening upon him; but all to no purpose. Just, however, when he was about to succumb, and his weary eyelids were closing never again to open, he stumbled against a heap that lay across his path. It was no stone that his foot struck, although no stone could be colder, or apparently more lifeless.

On examination it proved to be a human body, buried beneath a fresh drift of snow. The next moment the traveler had a brother in his arms; was chaffing his hands and wrists, his chest and brow; breathing upon his cold lips bluely swelling" the warm breath of a living soul; pressing the still, silent heart of his companion to the rapid pulses of his own generous bosom.

And what was the result? The effort to stoop down and assist another had removed the ominous pressure upon his brain and eyes, and imparted to him renewed life and vigor. He was himself again. And the record stands "He saved a brother, and was himself saved."

Is there not here the groundwork of a parable to illustrate the truth, that active Christian work is a necessary and ordained means, not only for benefiting others, but for the sustaining and saving of our own soul and spirit? -- E. Neil

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ADOPTION

0015 -- WHAT GOD WANTS IN RETURN

There was a ripple of excitement all through the orphanage, for a great lady had come to take little Jane home with her. The girl herself was bewildered with the thought. "Do you want to go with me and be my child?" the lady asked in gentle tones. "I don't know," said Jane timidly. "But I'm going to give you beautiful clothes and a lot of things, a room of your own with beautiful bed and table and chairs." After a moment's silence, the little one said anxiously: "But what am I to do for all this?" The lady burst into tears. "Only to love me, and be my child," she said as she folded the little girl in her arms.

God adopts us, protects us, and give us an inheritance in glory. All He asks in return is that we should love Him, and be His children -- Children's Record

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ADULTERY

0016 -- IT WAS HIS MOTHER

The young preacher was shocked to hear the well-known evangelist utter the words, "I have spent some of the happiest moments of my life in the arms of another man's wife. Yes, I have spent some of the happiest moments of my life in the arms of another man's wife." Then, following a pause, the evangelist added, "That woman was my mother."

"I've got to use that!" the young pastor thought to himself. A few weeks later, as he was speaking to a civic group, the phrase leapt into his mind and he exclaimed, "I have spent some of the happiest days of my life in the arms of another man's wife." Then, after another long pause, the young man muttered meekly, "But I can't remember who she was."

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ADULTERY

0017 -- MORALITY WAS DEAD

In Rome for the first five hundred and twenty years of the Republic there had not been a single divorce; but now under the Empire, as it has been put, divorce was a matter of caprice. As Seneca said, "Women were married to be divorced and divorced to be married." In Rome the years were identified by the names of the consuls; but it was said that fashionable ladies identified the years by the names of their husbands. Juvenal quotes an instance of a woman who had eight husbands in five years. Morality was dead.

In Greece immorality had always been quite blatant. Long ago Demosthenes had written: "We keep prostitutes for pleasure; we keep mistresses for the day-to-day needs of the body; we keep wives for the begetting of children and for faithful guardianship of our homes." So long as a man supported his wife and family there was no shame whatsoever in extramarital relationships. -- William Barclay

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ADVERSITY

0018 -- A PLANT ADAPTED TO ADVERSITY

A distinguished botanist, being exiled from his native land, obtained employment as an under-gardener in the service of a nobleman. While he was in this situation, his master received a valuable plant, the nature and habits of which were unknown to him. It was given to the gardener to be taken care of, and he, fancying it to be a tropical plant, put it into the hothouse (for it was winter), and dealt with it as with the others under the glass. But it began to decay. When the strange under-gardener asked permission to examine it, as soon as he looked at it, he said: "This is an Arctic plant, you are killing it by the tropical heat into which you have introduced it." So, he took it outside, and exposed it to the frost, and, to the dismay of the upper-gardener, heaped pieces of ice around the flowerpot; but the result vindicated his wisdom, for straightway it began to recover, and was soon as strong as ever.

Now, such a plant is the Christian's spiritual life in this world. It is not earthly difficulty that is dangerous to it, but ease. Put it into a hothouse; separate it from the wintry blasts of worldly hostility; surround it with luxury; hedge it in from every opposition, and you take the surest means of killing it." -- Rev. W. M. Taylor

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ADVERSITY

0019 -- VISION FROM THE WELL-BOTTOM

Two men were once discussing why it is that you cannot see the stars by day. The stars are still there. The distance is not greater by day than by night. Why, then, cannot these mighty lamps be seen by day? One man maintained that they could be seen if one went far enough down in a well. The other denied the proposition but permitted himself to be lowered into the well. After he had been lowered a certain distance, he was asked if he could see the stars, and said, "No." Still farther down the same question was asked, with the same answer. But when he had been lowered to a great depth then, looking up toward the heavens he said he was able to see the stars.

Go down deep enough into a well, and you can see the stars by day. So to those who are willing to cooperate with God, and to will for themselves the things which he hath willed for them, the deep well of adversity and trouble is a place whence they can see the stars of the spiritual heavens and know that in all, and above all, and through all, is God, and that God is love. -- McCartney

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ADVERSITY -- BLESSINGS IN DISGUISE

0020 -- ADVERSITY CHECKED HIS STRAYING

I remember an officer in a Presbyterian church who had been very successful in his operations but who at length failed in some great business enterprise. He said to his pastor, "I am glad that I failed for I was getting away from God." -- Clarence McCartney

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ADVERSITY -- BLESSINGS IN DISGUISE

0021 -- BEAUTY THROUGH ANGUISH

A traveler in Africa saw one of the large butterflies of the tropics struggling to free itself from the cocoon. He took pity on its struggles and with his knife cut the cords at which it was straining and it came safely and easily out. But all the brilliant coloring was gone! The anguish of the struggle was necessary for that. The beautiful colors of the soul are won in the struggle with and the victory over trial and adversity. -- Clarence McCartney

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ADVERSITY -- BLESSINGS IN DISGUISE

0022 -- LIVINGSTONE'S SON

Like many another good man, David Livingstone was sorely tried in his son. This son, Robert, a restless, uneasy spirit, went out to Africa to join his father but, unable to reach him, found his way to Boston. The Civil War was then raging, and he enlisted in the Federal army. In his nineteenth year he fell on the field of Gettysburg. Before his father knew of his death, he wrote to a friend: "I hope your oldest boy will do well in the distant land to which he has gone. My son is in the Federal army in America, and no comfort. The secret ballast is often applied by a kind hand above, when to outsiders we appear to be sailing gloriously with the wind."

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ADVERSITY -- BLESSINGS IN DISGUISE

0023 -- SAFER IN THE STORM

Jeremy Taylor, author of so many wonderful sayings, strikes the note that I am trying to strike when he says in his inimitable way: "We are safe at sea, safer in the storm God sends us than when we are befriended by the world. Gods storms blow us to the port of repentance and faith." -- Clarence McCartney

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AFFLICTIONS

0024 -- AFFLICTIONS PRUNE US

A.B. Cooper said that one autumn day he went to a chrysanthemum show and observed some wonderful blooms. He inquired of a gardener, "How in the world do you manage to produce such marvelous flowers?"

"Well, sir, we concentrate all the strength of the plant in one or two blooms. If we would allow it to bear all the flowers it could, none would be worth showing. If you want a prize specimen, you must be content with a single chrysanthemum instead of a score."

For the same reason, God sends trials to prune from our lives the useless blooms of self, popularity, and comfort, so that He may perfect in us one exquisite white blossom of holiness.

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AFFLICTIONS

0025 -- ANGELS IN THE CLOUDS

In one of Germany's famous art galleries, a painting called "Cloud Lane" hangs at the end of a long dark hall. It appears at first to be a huge, ugly mass of confused color -- unattractive and foreboding. Upon closer examination, however, you see an innumerable company of angels. Theodore Cuyler writes, "How often the soul that is frightened by a trial sees nothing but a conglomeration of broken expectations. But if he analyzes the situation from a position of faith -- he will soon discover that the cloud is God's wonderful chariot of providence, full of angels of mercy."

* * *

AFFLICTIONS

0026 -- FORTUNE FROM THE FIRE

J. I. Wookey was searching for scrap metal in a pile of rubbish in Lancashire, England when he spotted a leather-bound book. The binding was scorched and smoking, but the pages were in good shape. Wookey grabbed the book and threw it in the back of his car -- where it remained for seven years until Wookey found it as he packed for a move to Canada. A librarian in Toronto told Wookey the book might be valuable, so he sent it to a prestigious New York art dealer. The book proved to be a 300-year-old work by British author Thomas Traherne, which later sold at auction for \$110,000!

When we're in a fiery trial, it's easy for us to be deceived by smoldering circumstances. At such times we may not only fail to see any value in our suffering, we may even be tempted to blame God for it.

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AFFLICTIONS

0027 -- GETTING THE PROPER VIEW OF AFFLICTION

Dr. Glenn Olds, former President of Kent State University, recalled the sight of Mt. Rushmore as he hitch-hiked cross-country in 1941 during his junior year. From 10 miles back, he recognized Washington and Lincoln. But in the middle was a figure that looked like Adolf Hitler. Once close, instead of hair combed over a forehead, the young man saw guy wires, instead of a mustache, he saw scaffolding. The image stuck, and he made a note in his journal.

"What was Adolf Hitler at 10 miles away was Thomas Jefferson under construction," he said. The experience became a parable: "Almost every major problem at a distance looks bad. When you get up close, you can see it's something terribly important under construction.

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AFFLICTIONS

0028 -- IMPROVED AFTER DESTRUCTION

After William Carey was well established in his pioneer missionary work in India, his supporters in England sent a printer to assist him. Soon the two men were turning out portions of the Bible for distribution. Carey had spent many years learning the language so that he could produce the Scriptures in the local dialect. He had also prepared dictionaries and grammars for the use of his successors. One day while Carey was away, a fire broke out and completely destroyed the building, the presses, many Bibles, and the precious manuscripts, dictionaries and grammars. When he returned and was told of the tragic loss, he showed no sign of despair or impatience. Instead, he knelt and thanked God that he still had the strength to do the work over again. He started immediately, not wasting a moment in self-pity. Before his death, he had duplicated and even improved on his earlier achievements.

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AFFLICTIONS

0029 -- LIVING WITH THE THORN

"God uses chronic pain and weakness, along with other afflictions, as his chisel for sculpting our lives. Felt weakness deepens dependence on Christ for strength each day. The weaker we feel, the harder we lean. And the harder we lean, the stronger we grow spiritually, even while our bodies waste away. To live with your 'thorn' uncomplainingly -- that is, sweet, patient, and free in heart to love and help others, even though every day you feel weak -- is true sanctification. It is true healing for the spirit. It is a supreme victory of grace. -- J. I. Packer

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AFFLICTIONS

0030 -- SUFFERING'S REWARD

A young man, a Christian, went to an older believer to ask for prayer. "Will you please pray that I may be more patient?" he asked. The aged saint agreed. They knelt together and the man began to pray, "Lord, send this young man tribulation in the morning; send this young man tribulation in the afternoon; send this young man...." At that point the young Christian blurted out, "No, no, I didn't ask you to pray for tribulation. I wanted you to pray for patience." "Ah," responded the wise Christian, "it's through tribulation that we learn patience."

* * *

AFFLICTIONS

0031 -- THE JOSTLING SORTS US

People are like potatoes. After potatoes have been harvested they have to be spread out and sorted in order to get the maximum market dollar. They are divided according to size -big, medium, and small. It is only after potatoes have been sorted and bagged that they are loaded onto trucks. This is the method that all Idaho potato farmers use -- all but one.

One farmer never bothered to sort the potatoes at all. Yet he seemed to be making the most money. A puzzled neighbor finally asked him, "What is your secret?" He said, "It's simple. I just load up the wagon with potatoes and take the roughest road to town. During the eight-mile trip, the little potatoes always fall to the bottom. The medium potatoes land in the middle, while the big potatoes rise to the top."

That's not only true of potatoes. It is a law of life. Big potatoes rise to the top on rough roads, and tough people rise to the top in rough times. Tough times never last, but tough people do.
-- Robert Schuller

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AFFLICTIONS -- BLESSINGS IN DISGUISE

0032 -- AFFLICTION -- THE SOIL OF GROWTH AND BEAUTY

A little girl walking in a garden noticed a particularly beautiful flower. She admired its beauty and enjoyed its fragrance. "It's so pretty!" she exclaimed. As she gazed on it, her eyes followed the stem down to the soil in which it grew. "This flower is too pretty to be planted in such dirt!" she cried. So she pulled it up by its roots and ran to the water faucet to wash away the soil. It wasn't long until the flower wilted and died.

When the gardener saw what the little girl had done, he exclaimed, "You have destroyed my finest plant!" "I'm sorry, but I didn't like it in that dirt," she said. The gardener replied, "I chose that spot and mixed the soil because I knew that only there could it grow to be a beautiful flower."

Often we murmur because of the circumstances into which God has sovereignly placed us. We fail to realize that He is using our pressures, trials, and difficulties to bring us to a new degree of spiritual beauty.

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AFFLICTIONS -- CHASTISEMENT

0033 -- THE POTTER'S HAMMER

A visitor to the shop of a famous potter was puzzled by one operation which seemed to have little purpose. The workman was beating a lump of clay with a large mallet. It looked as if nothing was happening, and so the one who was taking the tour finally asked, "Sir, why are you doing that?" "Just wait and watch the results; then you'll understand," was the reply. He heeded the advice and soon noted that the top of the mass began to quiver and swell as little bumps formed on its surface. "Now you can see the need for the pounding," said the man. "I could never shape the clay into a worthwhile vessel if these bubbles remained in it, so I must gradually work them out."

The one watching was a Christian and immediately recalled the 18th chapter of Jeremiah. He saw more clearly than ever before why the great Potter must work upon our souls. The discipline of chastening and the trials God sends are necessary to eliminate pride and self-will. This is the only way the Master can form us into beautiful vessels capable of holding the treasures of His grace.

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AFFLICTIONS -- CHASTISEMENTS

0034 -- SOLDIERS NEED DISCIPLINE

General George Patton was a man who believed strongly that a well disciplined soldier would not only win the war, but would reach new heights of achievement. He said that to be a good soldier, a man must have discipline, self respect, pride in his unit and in his country, a high sense of duty and obligation to his comrades and his superiors, and self confidence born of demonstrated ability.

When the great day of battle comes, remember your training, and remember above all that speed and vigor of attack are the sure roads to success. And you must succeed, for to retreat is as cowardly as it is fatal. Americans do not "surrender!" It was the only time throughout World War II that Patton used the word, "surrender" in any of his orders to his troops.

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AFFLICTIONS -- CHASTISEMENTS

0035 -- THE PAIN OF LOVE

A lady visiting the Holy Land came upon a sheepfold located high on a hilltop. Her attention was drawn to one poor sheep lying by the side of the road bleating in pain. Looking more closely, she discovered that its leg was injured. She asked the shepherd how it happened.

"I had to break it myself," he answered sadly. "It was the only way I could keep that wayward creature from straying into unsafe places. From past experience I have found that a sheep will follow me once I have nursed it back to health. Because of the loving relationship that will be established as I care for her, in the future she will come instantly at my beck and call."

The woman replied thoughtfully, "Sometimes we poor human sheep also want our stubborn ways and as a result stray into dangerous paths until the Good Shepherd sends sorrow and pain to arrest us. Coming then into a sweeter and closer communion with our Savior, we at last are conditioned to hear His voice and follow His leading."

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AFFLICTIONS -- FROM GOD

0036 -- GOD'S OBJECTIVE

The Christian Worker's Magazine tells about a young man who decided to grow peaches. He went all out, investing everything he had to develop an orchard. But disaster struck one spring when a heavy frost wiped out most of the peach blossoms. When Sunday came, he wasn't in church. The next week he was absent again. And the same thing was true the following Lord's Day.

His pastor became concerned and went to visit him. The young man exclaimed, "I'm not going to church anymore! Do you think I can worship a God who cares so little for me that He will let a frost kill all my peaches?"

The minister replied, "God loves you better than He does your peaches. He knows that while peaches do better without frosts, it is impossible to grow the best men without frosts. God's objective is to grow men -- not peaches."

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AFFLICTIONS -- FROM GOD

0037 -- ROMANS 8:28 ILLUSTRATED IN TRAGEDY

Professor E. C. Caldwell ended his lecture. "Tomorrow," he said to his class of seminary students, "I will be teaching on Romans 8. So tonight, as you study, pay special attention to verse 28. Notice what this verse truly says, and what it doesn't say." Then he added, "One final word before I dismiss you -- whatever happens in all the years to come, remember: Romans 8:28 will always hold true."

That same day Dr. Caldwell and his wife met with a tragic car-train accident. She was killed instantly and he was crippled permanently. Months later, Professor Caldwell returned to his students, who clearly remembered his last words. The room was hushed as he began his lecture. "Romans 8:28," he said, "still holds true. One day we shall see God's good, even in this."

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AFFLICTIONS -- REFINING INFLUENCE OF

0038 -- DESIGNED FOR A HARSH CLIMATE

Where in the world will you function best for God? The story is told of a distinguished botanist who was exiled from his native land and obtained a job as a gardener in the United States. One cold winter day his employer received a valuable plant. Unfamiliar with the plant and its needs, he placed it in the greenhouse under the glare of the sun. When the plant began to die, the man asked the gardener to look at it. Quickly identifying its origin, he explained, "This is a plant which thrives in cold weather." He immediately took it outside and exposed it to the frost, heaping pieces of ice around the flowerpot. Before long the plant became healthy and flourished again.

Just as some plants can live in harsh conditions, so believers often find themselves facing harsh conditions as they seek to draw others to the Lord.

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AFFLICTIONS -- REFINING INFLUENCE OF

0039 -- LOST WING POWER

A beekeeper once told F.B. Meyer how some of the young bees are nurtured to ensure their healthy development. The queen lays each egg in a six-sided cell which is filled with enough pollen and honey to feed upon until it reaches a certain stage of maturity. The top is then sealed with a capsule of wax. When the occupant has exhausted its supply of nourishment, the time has come for the tiny creature to be released from its confinement. But what wrestling and straining it endures to get through that wax seal. The opening is so narrow that in the agony of exit, the bee rubs off the membrane that encases its wings. Thus, when it finally does emerge, it is able to fly!

The man telling F.B. Meyer the story said that one time a moth got into the hive and devoured the wax capsules. As a result, the young bees crawled out without any effort or trouble, but they couldn't fly. Soon the mature insects, seeing the pitiful, unproductive state of new arrivals, instinctively proceeded to sting them to death.

Meyer drew from this information a spiritual application. He asks, "Are you congratulating yourself on having an easy time in life with no hardships or difficulties to bear? Then beware, lest you lose your 'wing power' like the handicapped bees, and perish miserably in the dust of defeat."

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AFFLICTIONS -- REFINING INFLUENCE OF

0040 -- MULTIPLIED BY ATTEMPTED EXTERMINATION

Did you know that if one of the arms of a starfish is severed, a new one will grow in its place? In fact, if a starfish is cut up, any pieces that contain a part of the central disc will develop into a new starfish.

Some oyster fishermen found that out, much to their dismay, when their oyster beds became infested with starfish. The fishermen cut up the starfish they caught and tossed the pieces back into the water. Rather than destroying them, however, they were actually helping them multiply. What a picture of Christianity. The more it has been opposed and persecuted, the more it has multiplied, just like the starfish.

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AFFLICTIONS -- REFINING INFLUENCE OF

0041 -- PREPARED FOR CHOICE WORK

A vacationer watched with curiosity as a lumberman occasionally jabbed his sharp hook into a log, separating it from the others that were floating down a mountain stream. When asked why he did this, the worker replied, "These may all look alike to you, but a few of them are quite different. The ones I let pass are from trees that grew in a valley where they were always protected from the storms. Their grain is coarse. The ones I've hooked and kept apart from the rest came from high up on the mountains. From the time they were small, they were beaten by strong winds. This toughens the trees and gives them a fine and beautiful grain. We save them for choice work. They're too good to make into plain lumber."

Friend, God often allows some of His dearest saints to be bent by trial or buffeted by the winds of adversity so that they may be strengthened for His service and prepared to fulfill His highest purposes.

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AFFLICTIONS -- REFINING INFLUENCE OF

0042 -- RESTORED BY THE STORM

Jessie Donadio, a 36-year-old Boston woman, became the victim of amnesia. For three months she wandered, but during a severe thunderstorm she suddenly remembered who she was and where she was from. A Cleveland, Ohio, police officer said that the storm jolted her memory back.

How often the storms of life bring us back to our senses! God sends them not to destroy us but to help us. Many people can look back and thank God for the storms that brought them back to Him!

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AFFLICTIONS -- REFINING INFLUENCE OF

0043 -- STEPPING STONES

Years ago a small group of Japanese believers were heckled and abused whenever they assembled to worship the Savior. But the persecutors could not shake the faith of the new converts. Each time the Christians gathered, the mob would throw stones at them, but they still faithfully continued to have their weekly meetings. Eventually the opposition became so great that the outdoor services had to be temporarily abandoned.

Later, when a time of relative peace and tolerance had come to the community, many were won to Christ. Returning to the spot where the believers had frequently been attacked, they began to pick up some of the rocks. Using them as part of the building materials, they constructed a small house of worship, rejoicing that God had worked all things together for good.

Jesus says that His followers will meet with suffering and heartache, but He admonishes them not to be discouraged. Earth's sorrows are meant to be stepping stones in the process of sanctification. Indeed, we "must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). Glorifying in affliction will turn our troubles into spiritual triumphs!

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AFFLICTIONS -- REFINING INFLUENCE OF

0044 -- THE MOMENT OF WITHDRAWAL FROM THE CRUCIBLE

A minister tells of witnessing the purification of a mass of silver, and reflecting on the parallel of the purification of many of God's children: The silver is put into a crucible and watched. The moment the smelter can see his face reflected in it, he withdraws it from the fire. If not withdrawn in that moment, the dross would be burnt into the silver in such a way as never to be extracted and the whole mass would become useless. -- Topical Illustrations

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AFFLICTIONS -- REFINING INFLUENCE OF

0045 -- THE TRIBULUM

In the pictures of the ancient Roman method of threshing grain, one man is always seen stirring up the sheaves while another rides over them in a crude cart equipped with rollers instead of wheels. Sharp stones and rough bits of iron were attached to these cylinders to help separate the husks from the grain. This simple cart was called a tribulum -- from which we get our word "tribulation."

When great affliction comes to us, we often think of ourselves as being torn to pieces under the cruel pressures of adverse circumstances. Yet as no thresher ever yoked up his tribulum for the mere purpose of tearing up his sheaves but to disclose the precious grain, so our loving Savior never puts us under the pressure of sorrow and disappointment needlessly.

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AFFLICTIONS -- THE REFINING INFLUENCE OF

0046 -- SHAPEN DOWN HERE TO FIT UP THERE

An evangelist told the following story in one of his campaigns. He said, "I have a friend who during the depression lost a job, a fortune, a wife, and a home, but tenaciously held to his faith -- the only thing he had left. One day he stopped to watch some men building a stone church. One of them was chiseling a triangular piece of rock. 'What are you going to do with that?' asked my friend. The workman said, 'Do you see that little opening way up there near the spire? Well, I'm shaping this down here so that it will fit up there.'

Tears filled the eyes of the heartbroken man as he walked away. It seemed that God had spoken through the workman to explain the ordeal through which he was passing." Perhaps you have recently suffered a great loss, or maybe you are experiencing physical or emotional pain. The outward man seems to be "perishing." Yet, if you know the Lord as your Savior, you need not despair. All these things are under the loving hand of your heavenly Father, who is using them to prepare you for heaven.

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AGITATION

0047 -- CAN'T MAKE BUTTER WITHOUT IT

Dr. Ritchie used to say in the early days of the voluntary controversy, when he was accused of being an agitator: "Agitation, agitation. You, cannot make butter without agitation." -- Dr. MacFaden

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AIM

0048 -- CONCENTRATE ON ONE POINT

"Mr. A___ often laughs at me," said Professor Henry once in Princeton College Laboratory, "because I have but one idea. He talks about everything, aims to excel in many things, but I have learned that if I ever make a breach. I must play my guns continually upon one point."

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ALTITUDE -- SPIRITUAL

0049 -- LIVING ABOVE

Over the door of a little cabinet maker's shop in London there hangs this sign: "Living Above." It is a notification to his customers that he can be found above his shop if the door is locked. It is a great thing for a worker to be able to say he is living above his work; that his dreams and hopes and real life are above the level of his day's toil. He may have to work amid the clods and clutter, but at least he can live above. No matter how lowly a man's work, his life can be above. -- Moody Monthly

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ALTITUDE -- SPIRITUAL

0050 -- WHY HE CLIMBED HIGHER

Frank W. Boreham passes on a story told by Handley Page, the airman. When Page landed at Kobar, in Arabia, a large rat managed to get into his airplane. When Page was in mid-air he discovered the rat's presence by the sound of gnawing behind him. Alarmed at the thought of the damage which those pitiless teeth might do, the aviator remembered that a rat is unable to survive in high altitudes. He determined to soar, and rose until he found difficulty in breathing. At length he ventured to descend to a lower level and upon landing he discovered that the rat was dead.

We must climb higher spiritually, lest those things which gnaw at the vitals of our relationship with Christ bring about our fall into the abyss of eternal death. -- The Y. C. Companion

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AMBITION -- GOOD

0051 -- AN EXAMPLE OF GOOD AMBITION

A student of Amherst College, soon after entering, put over the door of his dormitory room the letter V. Because of it he endured all sorts of ridicule and withstood questioning. But he paid

no attention to either, nor would he disclose the secret of the letter. When his four years were over, and graduation day came, that student was appointed to deliver the valedictory. Then the mystery of that letter V was revealed. It stood for valedictory. That letter on the door held before him during his four years the ideal that he had set for himself.

Not every boy puts a letter over the door of his college room or over the door of his house. But nevertheless, somewhere, if only in his mind, there is a letter that he pastes there and that holds before him an ideal. Some put up the letter M that stands for money. Others put up F, for fame. Others put up S, which may stand either for self or for service. It is a good idea once in a while to step outside your door and look at the letter you have put there. It may be that when you realize what it is you will want to change it. -- Moody Monthly

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AMBITION -- GOOD

0052 -- J. C. PENNEY'S STATEMENT

J.C. Penney said: "Give me a stock clerk with a goal and I'll show you a man who will make history; show me a man without a goal and I'll show you a stock clerk."

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AMBITION -- LACK OF

0053 -- WHY HE WAS A TRAMP

Margot Asquith tells how she once met a tramp and asked him how he decided which way he would tramp, and his answer was, "I always turn my back to the wind." That was what made him a tramp. He never had the courage to breast the wind and go courageously on in its teeth, or he would have ceased to be a tramp and have become a man. Alas! many people with plenty of money in their pockets are only tramps who always turn their backs to the wind and thus lose the real joy and achievement of life. It was not so with Paul and Barnabas. -- Homiletic Review

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AMBITION -- WORLDLY

0054 -- SUFFOCATED BY LAURELS

Heliogabalus, the Roman emperor, being jealous of the power of the senate, invited the senators to a great feast. When they were overcome with wine, Heliogabalus left the hall. The doors were fastened without; yet the carousal continued. The emperor shouted to them from a glass door in the ceiling that, as they were ever aspiring after fresh laurels, they should now be satisfied. Wreaths and flowers began to rain upon them. The senators cried, "Enough! Enough!" but the rain continued. Terror seized them. They flew to the doors; but they were immovable. Escape was

impossible. The relentless storm continued till all were buried and suffocated beneath the murderous sea of flowers. -- E. Foster

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AMBITION -- WORLDLY

0055 -- THE MISSING STONE

A man dreamed that when he died he was taken by the angels to a beautiful temple. After admiring it for a time, he discovered that one stone was missing. All was finished but just one little stone that was left out. He said to the angel, "What is this stone left out for?" The angel replied, "That was left out for you, but you were waiting to do great things and so this was never finished." He was startled and woke, and resolved that he would become a faithful worker for God in little things. -- D. L. Moody

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AMBITION -- WORLDLY

0056 -- UNHOLY AMBITION MISSES GOD'S PLACE AND PLAN

I remember hearing of a man's dream in which he imagined that when he died he was taken by the angels to a beautiful temple. After admiring it for a time he discovered that one stone was missing. All finished but just one little stone; that was left out. He said to the angel, "What is this stone left out for?" The angel replied, "That was left out for you, but you, wanted to do great things, and so there was no room left for you." He was startled and awoke, and resolved that he would become a worker for God, and that man always worked faithfully after that. -- Moody

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ANGELS

0057 -- CLOUD LANE

In one of the German art galleries a painting called "Cloud Lane" hangs at the end of a long dark hall. At first glance it appears to be a huge, ugly mass of confused color that is unattractive and foreboding. But when you look closer, you see portrayed on the canvas an innumerable company of angels.

How tempted we are to run in despair when clouds of trials and temptations come our way. If we would look closely at our situation through the eyes of faith, we would also see God's angels of mercy coming to our aid.

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ANGELS

0058 -- MINISTERING SPIRITS

The only child of a poor woman one day fell into the fire by accident and was so badly burned that he died after a few hours' suffering. The clergyman, as soon as he knew, went to see the mother, who was known to be dotingly fond of the child. To his great surprise, he found her calm, patient, and resigned. After a little conversation she told him how she had been weeping bitterly as she knelt beside her child's cot, when suddenly he exclaimed, "Mother, don't you see beautiful man who is standing there and waiting for me?" Again and again the child persisted in saying that the beautiful man was waiting for him, and seemed ready, and even anxious, to go to him. And, as a natural consequence, the mother's heart was strangely cheered.

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ANGELS

0059 -- PROTECTED BY ANGELS

John Paton was a missionary in the New Hebrides Islands. One night hostile natives surrounded the mission station, intent on burning out the Patons and killing them. Paton and his wife prayed during that terror-filled night that God would deliver them. When daylight came they were amazed to see their attackers leave. A year later, the chief of the tribe was converted to Christ. Remembering what had happened, Paton asked the chief what had kept him from burning down the house and killing them. The chief replied in surprise, "Who were all those men with you there?" Paton knew no men were present -- but the chief said he was afraid to attack because he had seen hundreds of big men in shining garments with drawn swords circling the mission station.

A modern-day account of angels protecting believers? We can't say for sure, but the Bible teaches that angels minister to believers today just as they did with Jesus and saints of the past.

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ANGER -- OF MAN

0060 -- ANGER IS USED BY OUR FOE

When Sinbad and his sailors landed on one of their tropical islands, they saw high up in the trees coconuts which could quench their thirst and satisfy their hunger. The coconuts were far above the reach of Sinbad and the sailors, but in the branches of the trees were the chattering apes. Sinbad and his men began to throw stones and sticks up at the apes. This enraged the monkeys and they began to seize the coconuts and hurl them down at the men on the ground. That was just what Sinbad and his men wanted. They got the apes angry so that the apes would gather their food for them. That is a good illustration of how by indulgence in anger we play into the hands of our foes.

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ANGER -- OF MAN

0061 -- ANGER KILLED HIM

The 18th-century British physician John Hunter, who was a pioneer in the field of surgery and served as surgeon to King George III, suffered from angina. Discovering that his attacks were often brought on by anger, Hunter lamented, "My life is at the mercy of any scoundrel who chooses to put me in a passion." These words proved prophetic, for at a meeting of the board of St. George's Hospital in London, Hunter got into a heated argument with other board members, walked out, and dropped dead in the next room.

What a sad way for a useful life to end -- but Hunter's story is only one in a long litany of lives marred by anger.

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ANGER -- OF MAN

0062 -- ANGER REGRETTED

I have heard that if a rattlesnake is cornered, it can become so frenzied that it will accidentally bite itself with its deadly fangs. In the same way, when a person harbors resentment and hatred in his heart, he is often hurt by the poison of his own malice. He thinks he is injuring his enemies by displaying his wrath, but the real harm is inflicted deep within his own soul. Anger can also cause us to do and say things we may deeply regret. George W. Martin tells the following true story:

"I remember a fellow who once wrote a nasty letter to his father. Since we worked in the same office, I advised him not to send it because it was written in a fit of temper. But he sealed it and asked me to put it in the mail. Instead, I simply slipped it into my pocket and kept it until the next day. The following morning he arrived at the office looking very worried.

'George,' he said, 'I wish I had never sent that note to my dad yesterday. It hurts me deeply, and I know it will break his heart when he reads it. I'd give 50 dollars to get it back!' Taking the envelope from my pocket, I handed it to him and told him what I had done. He was so overjoyed that he actually wanted to pay me the 50 dollars!"

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ANGER -- OF MAN

0063 -- ANGER REVEALS WHO IS WRONG

A cobbler at Leyden, who used to attend the public disputations held at the Academy, was once asked if he understood Latin. "No," replied the cobbler, "but I know who is wrong in the argument." "How," replied his friend. "Why, by seeing who is angry first."

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ANGER -- OF MAN

0064 -- BURN THAT LETTER WRITTEN IN ANGER

Abraham Lincoln's secretary of war, Edwin Stanton, was angered by an army officer who accused him of favoritism. Stanton complained to Lincoln, who suggested that Stanton write the officer a sharp letter. Stanton did, and showed the strongly worded missive to the President. "What are you going to do with it?" Lincoln inquired.

Surprised, Stanton replied, "Send it."

Lincoln shook his head. "You don't want to send that letter," he said. "Put it in the stove. That's what I do when I have written a letter while I am angry. It's a good letter and you had a good time writing it and feel better. Now, burn it, and write another."

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ANTINOMIANISM

0065 -- CHRISTIANS HOLD TO THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

One of those commonly called Antinomians one day called on Rowland Hill to call him to account for his too severe and legal gospel. "Do you, sir," asked Rowland, "hold the Ten Commandments to be a rule of life to Christians?" "Certainly not," replied the visitor. The minister rang the bell, and on the servant making his appearance he quietly said, "John, show that man to the door, and keep your eye on him until he is beyond the reach of every article of wearing apparel and of other property in the hall!" -- Clerical Anecdotes

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ANXIETY -- FORBIDDEN

0066 -- ALMOST ONE DAY OLD

Today is the first day of the rest of your life. In her book, CELEBRATE JOY!, Velma Seawell Daniels gives a striking new meaning to this familiar phrase. She tells of interviewing a man who had made a trip to Alaska to visit people who live above the Arctic Circle.

"Never ask an Eskimo how old he is," the man said. "If you do, he will say, 'I don't know and I don't care.'" And he doesn't. One of them told me that, and I pressed him a bit further. When I

asked him the second time, he said, "Almost -- that's all." That still wasn't good enough for me, so I asked him "Almost what?" and he said, "Almost one day."

Mrs. Daniels asked him if he could figure out what the Eskimo meant. He answered that he did but only after talking to another man who had lived in the Arctic Circle for about twenty years. "He was a newspaperman who had written a book about the Eskimos and their customs and beliefs. He said the Eskimos believe that when they go to sleep at night they die -- that they are dead to the world. Then, when they wake up in the morning, they have been resurrected and are living a new life. Therefore, no Eskimo is more than one day old. So, that is what the Eskimo meant when he said he was 'almost' a day old. The day wasn't over yet."

"Life above the Arctic Circle is harsh and cruel, and mere survival becomes a major accomplishment," he explained. "But, you never see an Eskimo who seems worried or anxious. They have learned to face one day at a time."

Have you learned how to put worry and anxiety aside and live one day at a time? Yesterday has past. Tomorrow has not arrived, but Today is the first day of the rest of your life.

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ANXIETY -- FORBIDDEN

0067 -- USED CARES

Author Lucretia Hanson noticed a mistake in a caption she was proofreading. Instead of "Used Cars" it read, "Used Cares." Hanson wrote, "It made me stop short and reflect on how many of our cares are used ones, dredged up from past memories. "There are the cares of self-pity: the long illness we had, or the unreasonable way people treated us on a certain occasion.... Then there are the used cares of regrets. If I had only gone on to school or been more careful in the selection of my life mate.

"We think too of the unavoidable cares. The accident for which we were not to blame, the germ that laid us low and left a trail of pain for years, the physical weakness we cannot remedy, the separation from loved ones that grieves us and the refusal of someone to forgive us for a hasty word or action. We have used these cares so long that they have depressed us and left us powerless."

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APOSTASY

0068 -- A RECLAIMED APOSTATE WHO DIED A MARTYR

Urthazanes, a Persian courtier, who apostatized from the Christian faith, saw Simeon, a holy bishop, led past him to martyrdom, and saluted him as he passed, but the bishop frowned upon him. Urthazanes' heart was broken, and he cried, "Ah! how shall I appear before the great God of

heaven, whom I have denied, when Simeon, but a man will not endure to look upon me? If he frown, how will God behold me when I stand before His tribunal!" This led to his reclamation, and he afterwards died a martyr.

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APOSTASY

0069 -- APOSTASY IN BRITAIN

John Wycliffe, John Knox, David Livingstone, Hudson Taylor, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, G. Campbell Morgan -- what a notable list of Christian leaders from Great Britain! They established vital churches, publishing houses, and mission societies. In spite of this godly heritage, a recent edition of the London Times stated, "Britain emerges as one of the most irreligious countries in the Western world from the latest survey by the British Social Attitudes team."

What happened? The emotional scars of two World Wars, the loss of a world empire, and the weakening effects of liberal clergy could all be cited as causes. But there is a deeper, spiritual reason for the decline of any nation. Its citizens lose interest in God. They don't believe He makes any difference in their lives, so they make gods out of their own accomplishments. -- David Burnham

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APOSTASY

0070 -- CHURCH OF GOD GRILL

When I lived in Atlanta, several years ago, I noticed in the Yellow Pages, in the listing of restaurants, an entry for a place called Church of God Grill. The peculiar name aroused my curiosity and I dialed the number. A man answered with a cheery, "Hello! Church of God Grill!" I asked how his restaurant had been given such an unusual name, and he told me: "Well, we had a little mission down here, and we started selling chicken dinners after church on Sunday to help pay the bills. Well, people liked the chicken, and we did such a good business, that eventually we cut back on the church service. After a while we just closed down the church altogether and kept on serving the chicken dinners. We kept the name we started with, and that's Church of God Grill."

This incident is not unlike many churches, denominations, and individuals who over time, have drifted away from their original purpose. -- Charles Paul Conn

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APOSTASY

0071 -- HE BURNED ANYWAY

A blacksmith in King Edward the sixth's time, called Richard Denon, was a zealous professor of religion, and by his Christian instructions was the happy instrument of converting a young man to the faith. Afterwards, in the reign of Queen Mary, this young man was cast into prison for his religion, who, remembering his old friend to whom he always carried a reverent respect for the good that he had received by him, sent to know whether he was not imprisoned also. Finding that he was not, desired to speak with him; and when he came, asked his advice whether he thought it comfortable for him to remain in prison, and whether he would encourage him to burn at a stake for his religion.

The smith answered that his cause was good, and he might with comfort suffer for it; "But, for my part," said he, "I cannot burn." He could not burn for his religion, but by God's judgment, he was burned for his apostasy. Shortly after this, his shop and house caught fire, and while he endeavored to save his goods, he himself was burned. -- Burton

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APOSTASY

0072 -- KARL MARX

At the request of his father, Karl Marx was baptized at 6 years old into the Evangelical Established Church. Marx's adolescent writings exhibited a spirit of Christian devotion and longing for self-sacrifice on behalf of humanity.

Later at the University of Berlin, he fell under the influence of a young lecturer in theology named Bruno Bauer who was developing the idea that the Christian gospels were a record not of history but of human fantasies arising from men's emotional needs and that Jesus had not been an historical person. Marx also enrolled in a course of lectures given by Bauer on the prophet Isaiah. Bauer taught that a new social catastrophe "more tremendous" than that of the advent of Christianity was in making. He would eventually call religion the opiate of the masses.

When Marx wrote his book Das Kapital, he wanted to dedicate it to Charles Darwin. Darwin also was once a theology student and eventually repudiated the Bible and became an agnostic.

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APOSTASY

0073 -- THE DEGENERATION OF SOCIETY

In the town of Delburne, Alberta, there is an old water tower, built in 1926. Now standing empty, the building has been bought by two men who want to turn it into a dining and cocktail lounge. Plans call for a bar to be built on the second floor. Something similar has already happened in various communities: that which was originally designed to provide the water of life has been "converted" into that which is providing resources detrimental to society. Schools were

once thought of as sources of moral and spiritual benefit. In most cases they now are fountains of agnosticism and atheism. Even churches, built to convey to men and women the water of life, are now the providers of everything but the Gospel. There's bingo, and there are dances, and there are clubs. But they no longer function as conveyers of the Gospel.

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APOSTLES

0074 -- WHAT BECAME OF THE APOSTLES

All of the apostles were insulted by the enemies of their Master. They were called to seal their doctrines with their blood and nobly did they bear the trial. According to traditional statements, the following is what became of the apostles:

Matthew suffered martyrdom by being slain with a sword at a distant city of Ethiopia. Mark expired at Alexandria, after being cruelly dragged through the streets of that city. Luke was hanged upon an olive tree in the classic land of Greece. John was put in a caldron of boiling oil, but escaped death in a miraculous manner, and was afterward branded at Patmos. Peter was crucified at Rome with his head downward. James, the Greater, was beheaded at Jerusalem. James, the Less, was thrown from a lofty pinnacle of the temple, and then beaten to death with a fuller's club.

Bartholomew was flayed alive. Andrew was bound to a cross, whence he preached to his persecutors until he died. Thomas was run through the body with a lance at Coromandel in the East Indies. Jude was shot to death with arrows. Matthias was first stoned and then beheaded. Barnabas of the Gentiles was stoned to death at Salonica. Paul, after various tortures and persecutions, was at length beheaded at Rome by the Emperor Nero.

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APPEARANCES -- SOMETIMES REVEALING

0075 -- ANGELS DON'T CHEW TOBACCO

A preacher out west, Mr. H- -- , was a good man, but very rough in his ways and very much given to chewing tobacco. One time he was riding on horseback through the country, when there came a shower. Riding up to a cabin, he hastily hitched his horse and knocked at the door. A sharp-looking old lady answered the summons. The preacher asked for shelter. "I don't take in strangers: I don't know you," replied the old lady suspiciously.

"But you know what the Bible says," said the preacher. "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." "You needn't quote Bible, said the old lady quickly; "no angel would come down from heaven with a quid of tobacco in his mouth as you have!" The door was shut, and the preacher unhitched his horse and made away in the rain. --
Christian Register

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APPEARANCES -- DECEITFUL

0076 -- JUDGING BY APPEARANCES -- A COSTLY MISTAKE

In 1884 a young man died, and after the funeral his grieving parents decided to establish a memorial to him. With that in mind they met with Charles Eliot, president of Harvard University. Eliot received the unpretentious couple into his office and asked what he could do. After they expressed their desire to fund a memorial, Eliot impatiently said, "Perhaps you have in mind a scholarship."

"We were thinking of something more substantial than that... perhaps a building," the woman replied. In a patronizing tone, Eliot brushed aside the idea as being too expensive and the couple departed.

The next year, Eliot learned that this plain pair had gone elsewhere and established a \$26 million memorial named Leland Stanford Junior University, better known today as Stanford!

This is another good example of how wrong it can be to judge people by their appearance.
-- Moody

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APPEARANCES -- DECEITFUL

0077 -- MIRAGE MAGIC

Things are often not as they appear. What you see can fool you. Optical illusions and mirages can cause you to see what is not there, or what is a grossly distorted view of things. Christians should beware of jumping to conclusions too quickly, even after they have seen something. What you see can lead you to believe something about another which is really contrary to the facts. Consider the following stories about mirages:

The American Museum of Natural History once spent \$300,000 and wrecked a ship on an expedition sent out to explore a land which turned out to be nothing more than a mirage. It was because of a "discovery" by Peary, when returning from his 1906 Arctic expedition. Twice Peary had seen "the white summits of a distant land, above the ice horizon." He called this new found land mass Crocker Land, and the excited Museum organized an expedition under Donald MacMillan to explore it.

The ship was wrecked on the trip North, but later MacMillan traveled out on the ice far beyond where Crocker Land should have been. It wasn't there. MacMillan suspected now that Peary had been fooled by a mirage. He returned to the point where Peary had seen the supposed

land. "The day was clear," MacMillan reports, "and there the land was. Our glasses brought it out so clearly that we might have staked our lives on its existence."

That mirages have been responsible for much faulty map making seems incredible, but I came close enough to mapping one to understand how it happens. We were traversing an unexplored part of the Gobi Desert. The temperature stood at 145 degrees F. From a slight rise we saw in the distance a beautiful lake, apparently a half mile in diameter. At the left was a small island, thick with vegetation. A flock of birds were skimming over the surface of the water. "You had better sketch the outlines from here," I said to Major Roberts, our topographer. "I'll go on to the lake."

As I went down the slope the lake became less distinct. The island wavered, then disappeared. The birds proved to be a herd of antelope, all but their heads obscured in the stratum of shimmering heat waves lying on the sand. I drove back to where Roberts was working. The lake appeared again, perfect in every detail. Roberts wouldn't believe it was a mirage until he had gone down to see for himself.

A few days later we were sitting in our tents. One of the men walked out 100 yards. He seemed to be wading into water. First his ankles disappeared, then he was in up to his knees. Actually he was wading into a heated stratum of air lying two feet thick on the burning plain, shimmering so that it was almost opaque.

Most mirages occur when layers of air of different density are super-imposed. Also, somewhere on the earth's surface, perhaps a few miles, a hundred or even a thousand miles away, there must be objects similar to those we see in the mirage. The light waves are bent and refracted irregularly instead of traveling a normal course as they pass from these objects through the layers of air. It is much the same as when you thrust a stick into clear water. The part below the surface appears to be bent, because the water is denser than the air and the light waves are bent as they pass through the unequal media.

The type of mirage that deceived Peary is known as a "looming." It is most frequent upon the water and it makes objects appear to be raised above their natural elevations. The kind seen on deserts and plains, creating phantom lakes, is called "inferior." In the Nubian desert one may travel the whole day apparently encircled by lakes which accurately reflect the mountains round the horizon. Usually the inferior mirage varies with atmospheric conditions but a few are permanent, being identical day after day. In southeastern Arizona, the highway crosses the bed of an ancient lake, now bone dry. Yet motorists driving along it see a broad sweep of sparkling water which recedes before them and then closes in behind them.

Another type of mirage, the "lateral," makes objects appear to be displaced sideways. It is not often seen, but has been known to cause a vessel cruising along a mountainous coast to exhibit the strange spectacle of dividing into two identical craft which sail away in opposite directions.

In the even more startling "superior" mirage, the erect or inverted images of objects are seen suspended above the horizon. A ship actually beyond the bulge of the earth may be seen sailing along the sky, its image usually so clear that the details can be made out with a telescope.

During the Crimean War, the whole British fleet was once seen inverted at considerable height above the horizon. From the lower harbor of New York, the city has been seen projected into the air in duplicate, "standing on its own head," as one observer put it.

In 1869 the city of Paris appeared to distant observers suspended upside down in the sky. In 1900 Parisians saw a second Eiffel Tower inverted on top of the original. A weird case of "superior" mirages is recorded of a ship that was expected to arrive in New York from England during Colonial days. One afternoon after a violent storm she was observed floating in the air, every spar represented so clearly that there was no question of the identity of the vessel. That vision, however, was the last ever seen of her.

During the Franco-Prussian War, a number of scattered and independent observers in northern Sweden and Norway saw mirage armies marching through the air, equipped like the real ones which were fighting a few hundred miles to the south. Mirages have, in fact, played their role in the fortunes of war. In 1916 the British were attacking the Turks on the hot plains of Mesopotamia. G. E. Hubbard, a member of General Maud's force, tells of the incident:

"Our men had reached the Turkish trenches and put the Turks to flight. The enemy provided a splendid target for our artillery. A gunboat was lying in the river and the men on it were watching the proceedings when they were surprised to see our guns stop firing, although the Turks were still within range. It transpired that to the eyes of the gunners, on the desert level, the target had disappeared into a mirage. Fortunately the Turks stopped firing for the same reason." -- Roy Chapman Andrews, Reader's Digest, December 1938

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APPEARANCES -- DECEITFUL

0078 -- SIN, THAT IT APPEAR SIN

It is the Light of the Sun of Righteousness that makes sin appear as it is. Until that great light shines upon sin through His Law, His Word, sin appears as an attractive light. After the Light of the Sun of righteousness shines upon sin, its true blackness appears:

I heard about a man sitting before a fireplace lost in thought. The drapes had been closed and the room was dark except for the flickering light of the dying fire. Finally the flames themselves disappeared, leaving nothing but a heap of gray ashes topped with glowing embers. One burning coal stood out brilliantly from all the rest because it was white hot. The man's gaze was transfixed upon it. Suddenly that brilliant white-hot coal turned completely black. The man was startled. What had caused the instant change? As he looked around, he noticed that the drapes had parted slightly and a shaft of brilliant sunlight had shot into the study and landed directly on the burning coal. The greater light had made the lesser light look black by comparison. -- Masterpiece

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APPETITE

0079 -- APPETITE DETERMINES WHAT ONE ENJOYS

Fenelon imagined a dialogue between Ulysses and Grillus, the man whom Circe had turned into a hog. Ulysses wished to turn Grillus back to manhood, but Grillus would not consent. "But," asked Ulysses, "how can you endure this nastiness and stench?" Grillus replied, "It all depends on the taste. The odor is sweeter to me than of amber, and the filth than the nectar of the gods."

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APPROPRIATENESS

0080 -- AN INAPPROPRIATE TRACT

A good story is told of a lady who, during the Crimean War, was distributing tracts to the occupants of a ward in a hospital, and was excessively shocked to hear one poor fellow laugh at her. She then stopped to reprove the wretched patient. "Why, Mam," said he, "you have given me a tract on the sin of dancing when I have got both my legs shot off!" -- Wit and Wisdom

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APPROVAL

0081 -- MEN'S APPROVAL IS OFTEN NOT THE SAME AS GOD'S APPROVAL

A brilliant young concert pianist was performing for the first time in public. The audience sat enthralled as beautiful music flowed from his disciplined fingers. The people could hardly take their eyes off this young virtuoso. As the final note faded, the audience burst into applause. Everyone was standing -- except one old man up front. The pianist walked off the stage crestfallen.

The stage manager praised the performance, but the young man said, "I was no good, it was a failure." The manager replied, "Look out there, everyone is on his feet except one old man!" "Yes," said the youth dejectedly, "but that one old man is my teacher."

Do we have the same desire for God's approval as that pianist had for his teacher's praise? Our Lord's approving smile is what really matters.

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ARROGANCE

0082 -- ARROGANCE DOES NOT CONTROL GOD'S UNIVERSE

The petty sovereign of a magnificent tribe in North America every morning stalks out of his hovel (bids the sun good morrow, and points out to him with his finger the course he is to take for the day. Is this arrogance more contemptible than ours when we would dictate to God the course of

His providence, and summon Him to our bar for His dealings with us! How ridiculous does man appear when he attempts to argue with his God! -- Spurgeon

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ASSENT

0083 -- GAINING ASSENT IMPROPERLY

A gentleman being at the point of death, a monk from the next convent came to see what he could pick up, and said to the gentleman, "Sir, will you give so and so to our monastery?" The dying man, unable to speak, replied by a nod of the head, whereupon the monk, turning to the gentleman's son, said, "You see, your father makes us this bequest." The son said: "Sir, is it your pleasure that I kick this monk downstairs?" The dying man nodded as before, and the son forthwith drove the monk out of doors. -- Luther

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ASSURANCE

0084 -- ASSURANCE BASED ON FACT, NOT FEELING

In a Gospel meeting a penitent woman was seeking salvation. The evangelist quoted to her anxious soul the assurance of Isaiah 53:6, and led her to simply take God at His Word, and to depend upon Christ for the remission of sin. She went home rejoicing, but the next morning came downstairs with tears in her eyes. Her little boy, who had been with her in the meeting the night before, asked, "Mamma, what is troubling you?" "Oh," was the answer, "last night I felt that I was saved. But now it seems like a dream. I fear I am deceived." "Mamma," said the little lad, "get your Bible and turn to Isaiah 53:6." She did so, and read, "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." "Mamma, is the verse still there?" "Yes, my son." "Then your sins were laid on Jesus," said the wise lad. The mother saw the truth. She took God's Word without regard to her feelings, and then God's peace came to stay. -- James H. McConkey

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ASSURANCE

0085 -- CHRIST KEEPS FROM FALLING

A climber in the Alps had come to a perilous gap in the ice where the only way to get across was to place his foot in the outstretched hand of the guide. Told to do this by the guide, the climber hesitated a moment as he looked into the gloomy depths below. Seeing the hesitation, the guide said, "Have no fear, sir, that hand never yet lost a man." And when any soul truly commits itself into the hands of Jesus Christ, that one is committed to the strong, sure keeping of hands that never yet lost a man. -- Sunday School Times

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ASSURANCE

0086 -- WHAT IS YOUR PERSUASION?

Here is the object of faith's assurance: "I know whom I have believed," says the apostle. I know this Christ who dwells in me, and I live in Him. What else does he say?: "And am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." I don't know that I can illustrate that any better than by this incident.

When I was in a city in Wisconsin, one afternoon a brother came in, and said he had been to see a sick man, and that he asked the sick man if he was a Christian. "I am." "What church do you belong to?" said he. "I belong to the church of Christ." "Yes I know, but what persuasion are you of?" "Well, I am persuaded that neither death, no life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, shall be able to separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

I think that is about the same kind of persuasion that the apostle had in mind here when he said, "I am persuaded that He is able." That is, Jesus is able "to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." -- Albert P. Graves

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ATHEISM

0087 -- A FALSE REASONER IS CONVERTED

Peter Cartwright, the famous circuit rider and Lincoln's opponent for election to Congress, once stayed overnight with a skeptical physician who claimed that the only reality was what the senses discerned. The physician said to him, "Did you ever see religion?" "No." "Did you ever hear religion?" "No." "Did you ever smell religion?" "No." "Did you ever taste religion?" "No." "Did you ever feel religion?" "Yes." "Now then," said the doctor with apparent triumph, "I have proved beyond a doubt by four respectable witnesses that religion is not seen heard smelled or tasted; and but one lone solitary witness, namely feeling, has testified that it is an experimental fact. The weight of evidence is overpowering, sir, and you must give it up."

Cartwright then said to the doctor: "In pretending to relieve pain in the human system, you have been playing the hypocrite and practicing a most wretched fraud on the gullibility of the people." To the doctor's indignant protest, Cartwright said, "Well sir, did you ever see a pain?" "No sir." "Did you ever hear a pain?" "No sir." "Did you ever smell a pain?" "No sir." "Did you ever taste a pain?" "No sir." "Did you ever feel a pain?" "Certainly I did, sir." "Then, said Cartwright, "four respectable witnesses have testified that there is no such thing as pain in a human system."

Taking advantage of the doctor's discomfiture, Cartwright fell on his knees and commenced to pray. In a short time, the great depths of the man's heart were broken up, and after a brief period of anxiety and spiritual agony, he found the Lord with a shout of triumph. His slaves, he sent at his own expense to Liberia; and he himself became a preacher of the gospel with many seals to his ministry. -- McCartney

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ATHEISM

0088 -- AGNOSTICS CONTRADICT THEIR NAME

A keen student of human nature gives this definition of an agnostic: "An agnostic is a man who loudly declares that he knows nothing, and gets mad and abuses you if you tell him that you believe him. He says that he doesn't know anything, but really believes he knows everything."

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ATHEISM

0089 -- AN ATHEIST WHO WAS SLAIN BY GOD

A notorious infidel had a considerable following in a certain town. He was one of the braggart stamp, and seemed to revel in his outpourings of blasphemy against God. One day, in the height of his folly, he challenged God, if such a Being existed, to fight him in a certain wood. The day came, and he went defiantly to the wood, stayed a certain time, and returned home again apparently all right, and no doubt jubilant of his seeming success. But when in the wood there had alighted on his eyelid a tiny midge, which he brushed away, paying no attention to it. At night it swelled up, and blood poisoning setting in, he died. "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." God sent one of His tiniest insects, and the boasting braggart fell before it. -- Faithful Words

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ATHEISM

0090 -- AN EMPTY PLACE IN HIS SOUL

Looking at a picture of the great scholar Bertrand Russell in his later years made me feel sad. Although his face reflected courage, it was grim and showed no sign of joy or hope. He was born into a Christian home and taught to believe in God, but he rejected his training and became an outspoken atheist. His daughter, Katherine Tait, said of him, "Somewhere at the bottom of his heart, in the depths of his soul, there was an empty space that once had been filled by God, and he never found anything else to put in it."

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ATHEISM

0091 -- ATHEISM PROVEN FALSE BY A MEATCHOPPER

Some time ago there appeared in the American Magazine an article by a manufacturer, with the following paragraph: "It takes a girl in our factory about two days to learn to put the seventeen parts of a meat chopper together. It may be that these millions of worlds, all balanced so wonderfully in space just happened; it may be by a billion years of tumbling about they finally arranged themselves. I don't know. I am merely a plain manufacturer of cutlery. But this I do know: that you can shake the seventeen parts of a meat chopper around in a washtub for the next seventeen billion years and you'll never make a meat chopper!"

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ATHEISM

0092 -- ATHEISM PROVEN FALSE BY CREATION

Sir Isaac Newton had among his acquaintances a philosopher who was an atheist. It is well known that the illustrious man, who takes the first rank as a mathematician, natural philosopher, and astronomer, was at the same time a Christian. He had in his study a celestial globe, on which was an excellent representation of the constellations and the stars which compose them. His atheist friend, having come to visit him one day, was struck with the beauty of the globe. He approached it, examined it, and, admiring the work, he turned to Newton and said to him, "Who made it?" "No one!" replied the celebrated philosopher." The atheist understood, and was silent. -- Christian Age

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ATHEISM

0093 -- ATHEISTS ONLY AT NIGHT

St. Cyril speaks of a certain people That chose to worship the sun because he was a day god; for, believing that he was quenched every night in the sea or that he had no influence upon them that light up candles and lived by the light of fire, they were confident they might be atheists all night and live as they desired. -- Jeremy Taylor

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ATHEISM

0094 -- HOW MOODY PREACHED TO THE ATHEISTS

In East London during the visit of Moody and Sankey a hall in the dense working population of that city had been reserved one evening for an address to atheists skeptics and

freethinkers. Bradlaugh, champion of atheism, hearing of this meeting ordered all clubs he had formed to take possession of the hall. They obeyed and one thousand men marched in from all directions. The atheists laughed when Moody asked the men to choose their favorite hymns, for atheists do not sing hymns. Mr. Moody spoke from: "Their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges." He poured in a broad side of telling incidents from his own experience of the deathbeds of Christians and atheists, and let the men be the judges as to who had the best foundation to rest their faith upon. He attacked them in their most vulnerable points their hearts of unbelief.

The sermon ended. Mr. Moody announced a hymn and gave opportunity for all to leave who did not want to stay for the inquiry meeting. Moody was astonished when not one man vacated his seat. After a few words Mr. Moody asked all who would receive Christ to say "I will." One person, the leading club man, shouted "I won't."

Moody said: "Men you have your champion here in the middle of the hall who said 'I won't.' I ask every man here who believes that man is right to rise and say, 'I won't.'" None arose. "Thank God" said Moody. "Now who'll say 'I will?'" The Holy Spirit seemed to have broken loose upon that great crowd and five hundred men sprang to their feet saying, "I will, I will," till the whole atmosphere was changed and the battle was won. -- Alliance Weekly

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ATHEISM

0095 -- INGERSOLL ANGERED AND SILENCED

Shortly after Ingersoll, the noted infidel, was defeated in his race for governorship of Illinois, he was one day proclaiming his infidelity on board a railroad train between Chicago and Peoria. After being for some time offensively voluble, he turned to a gentleman near him, and defiantly demanded, "Tell me one great result that Christianity has ever accomplished." The gentleman, not wishing to open an argument with the boaster, hesitated to answer. The train had stopped and all was silent in the car. Just then, an old lady of eighty who sat just behind the infidel touched his arm with trembling hand, and said, "Sir, I do not know who you are, but I think I can tell you of one great and glorious thing which Christianity has done." "What is it, Madam?" asked Ingersoll. "It has kept Robert G. Ingersoll from being Governor of the State of Illinois."

If a stroke of lightning had flashed through the car the effect could not have been more marked. Ingersoll turned literally pale with rage, and remained silent. -- Sunday School Times

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ATHEISM

0096 -- IT COST INGERSOLL MORE THAN THAT!

Nineteenth-century atheist Robert Ingersoll was famous for his public attacks on religion. He was also politically active, being appointed attorney general of Illinois. Ingersoll became a serious contender for the Democratic nomination for governor, but his determination to trumpet his anti-religious views scuttled his political hopes. Once asked by a reporter how much his extensive library had cost him, Ingersoll looked at the rows of shelves and replied, "These books cost me the governorship of Illinois, and maybe the presidency of the United States as well."

Clearly, Robert Ingersoll's insistence on taking the wrong spiritual path also cost him dearly in other areas of life.

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ATHEISM

0097 -- THE EMPTINESS OF ATHEISM

An Illinois thief stole five hundred dollars worth of shoes, the entire stock of a store, (What year might that have been?) and in addition played a trick on the dealer by leaving all the empty boxes, putting them back just where they belonged. One after another the customers arrived the next day, and the dealer pulled out box after box, only to find that each was empty.

That was a unique theft, but something much like it takes place all the time in the spiritual world. For there are many thieves of faith, writers and speakers who make it their business to destroy belief in God, in Christ, in the Church, in religion. But they always leave the boxes. They always leave the shell of what they have taken, in order to fool people into thinking that they have taken nothing at all. But pull out the boxes, try to get any comfort and strength out of what they have left, and you will see that the theft has been complete. -- Christian Endeavor World

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ATHEISM

0098 -- THE INFIDEL WAS AN HYPOCRITE

An infidel lecturer addressed an audience with great earnestness, denying God and immortality and uttering the most horrid blasphemies. When he was done, a man of middle age arose and said: "My friends I have a word to speak to you tonight. I am not about to refute any of the arguments of the orator. I shall not criticize his style. I shall say nothing of what I believe to be the blasphemies he has uttered, but I shall simply relate to you a fact and after I have done that you shall draw your own conclusions.

Yesterday I walked by the side of yonder river. I saw on its floods a young man in a boat. The boat was unmanageable; it was going fast toward the rapids. He could not use the oars and I saw that he was not capable of bringing the boat to the shore. I saw that young man wring his hands in agony. By and by he gave up the attempt to save his life, knelt down and cried with desperate earnestness, 'O God, save my soul. If my body can not be saved, save my soul!' I heard him confess

he had been a blasphemer. I heard him vow that if his life were spared he would never be such again. I heard him implore the mercy of heaven for Jesus Christ's sake, and earnestly plead that he might be washed in his blood. These arms saved that young man from the flood. I plunged in, brought the boat to shore, and saved his life. That same young man has just now addressed you, and cursed his Maker. What say you to this, sirs?"

The speaker sat down. A shudder ran through the young man himself, and the audience saw that while it was a fine thing to act the bravado against almighty God on dry land, when danger was distant, it was not the same near the edge of the grave. -- Foster's Cyclopedia

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ATHEISM

0099 -- THE SCIENCE OF MY FAITH IS BANKRUPT

Writers H.G. Wells and George Bernard Shaw were brilliant men, yet they rejected the message of Scripture. They placed their trust in their own systems of belief, which were based on human reason. Yet they could not find lasting inner peace, and they slowly lost confidence in what they believed. Wells' final literary work, for example, has been aptly called "a scream of despair." And shortly before Shaw died in 1950, he wrote, "The science to which I pinned my faith is bankrupt. Its counsels, which should have established the millennium, have led directly to the suicide of Europe. I believed them once. In their name I helped to destroy the faith of millions. And now they look at me and witness the great tragedy of an atheist who has lost his faith."

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ATHEISM

0100 -- VOLTAIRE'S VAIN BOASTING AND ERROR

One day Voltaire said to a friend, "It took twelve ignorant fishermen to establish Christianity; I will show the world how one Frenchman can destroy it." Setting to his task, he openly ridiculed Sir Isaac Newton. One day Newton made a prophecy based on Dan. 12:4 and Nahum 2:4 when he said, "Man will some day be able to travel at the tremendous speed of 40 miles an hour." Voltaire replied with, "See what a fool Christianity makes of an otherwise brilliant man, such as Sir Isaac Newton! Doesn't he know that if man traveled 40 miles an hour, he would suffocate and his heart would stop?" Twenty-five years after Voltaire died, his home was purchased by the Geneva Bible Society and became a Bible storage building, and his printing press was used to print an entire edition of the Bible. -- Sunday School Times

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ATONEMENT

0101 -- A PRICE THAT HAD TO BE PAID

"The words of the wise are as goads."

A lady, being visited with a violent disorder, was under the necessity of applying for medical assistance. Her doctor, being a gentleman of great latitude in his religious sentiments, endeavored in the course of his attendance to persuade his patient to adopt his creed, as well as to take his medicines. He frequently insisted, with a considerable degree of dogmatism, that repentance and reformation were all that either God or man could require of us, and that consequently there was no necessity for an atonement by the sufferings of the Son of God.

As this was a doctrine the lady did not believe, she contented herself with following his medical prescriptions, without embracing his creed. On her recovery she forwarded a note to the doctor, desiring the favor of his company to tea when it suited his convenience, and requesting him to make cut his bill. In a short time he made his visit, and the tea-table being removed, she addressed him as follows:

"My long illness has occasioned you a number of journeys; and I suppose, doctor, you have procured my medicines at considerable expense. "The doctor acknowledged that "good drugs were not to be obtained but at a very high price." Upon which she replied, "I am extremely sorry that I have put you to so much labor and expense, and also promise that, on any future indisposition, I will never trouble you again. So you see I both repent and reform." The doctor, immediately shrugging up his shoulders, exclaimed, "That will not do for me." -- Whitecross

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ATONEMENT

0102 -- A SACRIFICIAL BRIDGE TO SAFETY

Years ago a striking incident is said to have occurred in Paris. In a back street of that city a fire broke out at night. It was in a narrow court, and the houses were built with the upper stories overhanging so that the top stories almost touched. In the midst of the night a father sleeping with his children was suddenly awakened by the smoke. In a moment he jumped out of bed, swept away the framework of his window, and the next moment was safe across through the window of the opposite house. But he had forgotten the children. When he saw their terrified faces, without a moment's hesitation he placed his foot against the sill of the house where he was launched his body forward and grasped the window of the burning house, thus making himself a living bridge between the two. One by one his children crawled over his body to the other side, but as the last one was passing his father cried, "Quick! Quick! I can't hold out much longer!" No sooner did the cheer of the crowds announce that the last child was over, than the father's hold relaxed and he fell a lifeless corpse. This is but a faint illustration of that salvation that comes to us poor, helpless sinners through Him Who bridged the chasm, though it cost His precious life.

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ATONEMENT

0103 -- ATONEMENT SHOULD PROMPT COMMITMENT

The fact that Christ has bought us makes us desire to belong to him. See the account of the beautiful mulatto girl put upon the auction block at New Orleans. "\$500, \$700"-(sold)-at \$2,500! The next day the successful bidder called at the home where the girl was a slave; and when she saw him who was now her owner she said sadly, "I am ready to go with you." But the man replied, "I do not want you to go with me. I bought you in order to set you free." When the amazed girl was able to take in the meaning of his words, she said, "Then I will be your servant forever!" So the purchase of Christ binds us to him with the bonds of love.

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ATONEMENT

0104 -- CHRIST DIED IN BARABBAS' PLACE

John McNeill feels that Barabbas gives us the best idea of the atonement of Jesus Christ -- Christ the substitute, dying in Barabbas' place and in our place. This man, Barabbas, has teased the minds and imaginations of mankind through the ages. Whoever and whatever he was, his role in the Passion was important because Christ died for him.

John Osenham has an imaginary picture of Barabbas. At first Barabbas could think of nothing but his freedom; but then, he began to look at the man who died for him. Something about Jesus fascinated him, and he followed Christ to see the end. As he saw Jesus bearing His cross, one thought burned in his mind: "I should have been carrying that cross, not Him. He saved me!"

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ATONEMENT

0105 -- CHRIST'S VICARIOUS DEATH

A single verse written on paper, now yellow with age, hangs on the wall of a nobleman's study in London. It has a remarkable history and has, in two notable instances at least, been blessed of God to conversion. The verse was originally composed by Dr. Valpy, the eminent Greek scholar and author of some standard school books. He was converted late in life and wrote this verse as a confession of faith:

In peace let me resign my breath;
And Thy salvation see;
My sins deserve eternal death,
But Jesus died for me.

On one occasion, Dr. Marsh was visiting the house of Lord Roden where he held a Bible reading with the family. He mentioned Dr. Valpy's conversion by way of illustration in the course

of his remarks, and recited the verse. Lord Roden was particularly struck with the lines, wrote them out, and affixed them to the walls of his study, where they still are. Lord Roden's hospitable mansion was often full of visitors, among whom were many old army officers. One of these was General Taylor, who served with distinction under Wellington at Waterloo. He had not at that time thought much on the subject of religion and preferred to avoid all discussion of it. But soon after the paper was hung up he went into the study to talk with his friend alone, and his eyes rested for a few moments upon the verse. Later in the day, Lord Roden upon entering his study came upon the general standing before the paper and reading it with earnest face. At another visit the host noticed that whenever General Taylor was in the study his eyes rested on the verse.

At length Lord Roden broke the ice by saying, "Why General, you will soon know that verse by heart." "I know it now by heart," replied the general, with emphasis and feeling. A change came over the general's spirit and life. No one who was intimately acquainted with him could doubt its reality. During the following two years he corresponded regularly with Lord Roden about the things which concerned his peace, always concluding his letters by quoting Dr. Valpy's verse. At the end of that time, the physician who attended General Taylor wrote to Lord Roden to say that his friend had departed in peace, and that the last words which fell from his dying lips were those which he had learned to love in his lifetime.

A young relative of the family, an officer who served in the Crimea, also saw it but turned carelessly away. Some months later, Lord Roden received the intelligence that his young acquaintance was suffering from pulmonary disease, and was desirous of seeing him without delay. As he entered the sickroom, the dying man stretched out both hands to welcome him, at the same time repeating Dr. Valpy's simple lines. "They have been God's message," he said, "of peace and comfort to my heart in this illness, when brought to my memory, after days of darkness and distress, by the Holy Ghost, the Comforter." -- C. H. Spurgeon

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ATONEMENT

0106 -- IDENTIFIED WITH A LOST CREATURE

Christ in some way saved us by identifying Himself with us in our suffering and misery. A faint glimpse of this is seen in the following incident: When the king of Greece came over to this country some years ago, one of his attendants had with him a most beautiful dog, which during the voyage fell overboard. The master entreated the captain to stop the ship and rescue the dog. But the captain did not deem the matter of so much importance, and, having the king on board, refused to stop. Quickly addressing the captain he said, "Would you stop the ship if it had been a man?!" "Certainly!" was the reply. Instantly before any had time to hinder, he flung himself into the sea. The ship was stopped, and not only the man but the dog too was saved -- all because the man devoted to the dog identified himself with him in his peril and braved even death itself.

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ATONEMENT

0107 -- JUDGE PAYS A PRISONER'S FINE

Mr. Frank Weaver, at one of the tent meetings, told the following story: Two men, who had been friends and companions in their youth, met in the police court, the one on the magistrate's bench, the other in the prisoner's dock. The case was tried, and the prisoner was found guilty. Would the judge, in consideration of their friendship years before, forbear to pass judgment? No, he must fulfill his duty; justice must be done; the law of the land obeyed.

He gave out the sentence -- fourteen days hard labor, or a fine of 10 pounds. The condemned man had nothing with which to pay, so the prison cell was before him. But as soon as he had pronounced the sentence, the judge rose from the bench, threw aside his magistrate's robes, and, stepping down to the dock, stood beside the prisoner, paid his fine for him, and then said: "Now John, you are coming home with me to supper."

It is just so with the sinner. God cannot overlook sin. Justice must be done, and sentence pronounced, but Christ Himself pays the debt, and the sinner is free. -- H. F. Sayles

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ATONEMENT

0108 -- JUSTIFICATION ONLY THROUGH ATONEMENT

For several generations the Edinburgh review has carried on its cover the Latin epigram, "The Judge is condemned when the guilty is acquitted." The guilty is sometimes acquitted in human courts, but this never happens in the Divine Court. There, if man is justified, or, to put it in plain present-day English, acquitted or found not guilty, it is in strict harmony with the law of right, of justice. How, then, shall mortal man be just with God? Man is a sinner. The penalty upon sin as announced by God is death, eternal death, spiritual death; and God will by no means clear the guilty. The only way whereby God can remain Just, and still become the Justifier of the guilty, is through the atoning death of Jesus Christ.

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ATONEMENT

0109 -- LINCOLN'S SUBSTITUTE

Only the precious blood of Christ can cover our transgressions. In Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania, there is the grave of a Civil War soldier. The stone bears the date of his birth and death, and then these words: "Abraham Lincoln's substitute." In the woe and anguish of the war, realizing that thousands upon thousands were falling in his place on the field of battle, Lincoln chose to honor one particular soldier as his substitute and make him a symbol, as it were, of the fact that the soldiers who perished in battle were dying that others might live. When you and I come to the Cross of Christ, each one of us supplying his own name, can say, "My Substitute!"

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ATONEMENT

0110 -- SPURGEON'S INSIGHT

When C.H. Spurgeon was under the conviction of the Holy Spirit, he had a clear sense of the justice of God, and sin became an intolerable burden. He didn't fear hell as much as he despised the reality of his own wrong-doing. He said, "All the while I had upon my mind a deep concern for the honor of God's name and the integrity of His moral government. I felt that it would not quiet my conscience if I could be forgiven without justice being satisfied. But then came the question: `How can God be just and yet justify me with all my guilt?'" Spurgeon finally came to see that substitutionary atonement was the answer. He said, "I believe that the doctrine of Jesus paying for my sins is one of the surest proofs of the inspiration of Scripture, for who would or could have thought of the just Ruler dying for the unjust rebel?"

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ATONEMENT

0111 -- THAT'S SUBSTITUTION!

"Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering, which is for the people. Leviticus 16:15 To illustrate the principle of substitution, George Sweeting, Chancellor of Moody Bible Institute, told of a series of tornadoes that devastated several communities in eastern Ohio and western Pennsylvania. Nearly 100 lives were lost. Prior to the storm, a man named David Kostka was umpiring a Little League baseball game in Wheatland, Pennsylvania. When he saw the black funnel heading toward the field, he rushed into the stands and grabbed his niece. He pushed her into a nearby ditch and covered her with his body. Then the tornado struck. When the youngster looked up, her uncle was gone. He had given his life in the deadly storm to save her.

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ATONEMENT

0112 -- THE CRUSHED LAMB

In an old German city there is a sight that attracts every traveler as he passes through and brings out a very urgent and curious inquiry from him. Away up on the peaked roofs of one of these old German houses, if you look up you will find a marble statue of a lamb carved and lifted up. A traveler passing through that village two or three years ago inquired of an old resident what it could mean and he said: "There is a curious story connected with it. When the first owner of this house was building it, he was working away up just where you see that object. Suddenly slipping, losing his balance, he fell from the roof and would have been dashed to pieces except from a strange fact. Just at that moment his pet lamb happened to be on the green grass, and he fell with all

his weight upon the lamb. It was crushed, but when he rose, he himself was unharmed and unscratched, with not a bone broken, and not a bruise received. He found his lamb lying there in its blood, crushed beneath the weight of the fallen master. This is the reason why he reared this statue of the lamb that it might be there, a perpetual memorial of the fact that his life had been saved by the intervention of this innocent being." -- Dr. Gordon

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ATONEMENT

0113 -- WEARING THE CLOTHING OF THE CONDEMNED

A Roman servant, knowing that his master was to be put to death, clothed himself in the garments of the latter that he might be taken for him. He was taken and put to death, and his master caused a statue of brass to be erected as a monument of gratitude for the poor servant's fidelity and affection. In what way are we showing our gratitude to Jesus, Who died for us when we were sinners and did not love Him? -- The Treasury

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ATONEMENT

0114 -- WHY HE COULDN'T SEE IT

Old John Newton tells us that the learned Dr. Taylor, one of the greatest Hebraists of his day, said: "Mr. Newton, I want to tell you something. I have collated the Hebrew Scriptures fifteen times, and I have never found the doctrine of the Atonement in the Hebrew Scriptures." "Dr. Taylor," said John Newton, "once upon a time I tried to light my candle with the extinguisher on, and I am not at all surprised that you have not found the doctrine of the Atonement in the Hebrew Scriptures; and not until you find yourself to be a filthy, lost sinner, although you are a Hebraist, you will not find the doctrine of the Atonement in the Hebrew Scriptures." -- George C. Grubb

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ATTAINMENTS

0115 -- ATTAINMENTS GAINED THROUGH BONDAGE

A Austrian lady once said to an English gentleman, "What miserable French you English people speak!" "You must make some allowance for us," replied the gentleman, "we never had the estimable advantage of having our capital occupied by French troops." -- Dr. Wayland

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ATTENTION

0116 -- ATTENTION FROM LISTENING EARS

The poet, Pope, on one occasion said he would address a field of corn. The people wondered what he would say. Then Mr. Pope, taking off his hat, and bowing to the nodding corn, said, "Gentlemen, give us your ears, and we shall never want bread." -- Guthrie

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ATTENTION

0117 -- ATTENTION SOMETIMES GAINED BY ASTONISHMENT

I sat last year about this time on the beach at Mentone by the Mediterranean Sea. the waves were very gently rising and falling, for there was little or no tide and the wind was still. The waves crept up languidly one after another, and I took little heed of them, though they were just at my feet. Suddenly, as if seized with a new passion, the sea sent up one far-reaching billow, which drenched me thoroughly. Quiet as I had been before, you can readily conceive how quickly I was on my feet, and how speedily my daydreaming ended. I observed to a ministering brother at my side, "This shows us how to preach. To wake people up we must astonish them with something they were not looking for." -- Spurgeon

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ATTENTION

0118 -- DON'T LOOK DOWN! LOOK UP!

A traveler, once fording the Susquehanna river on horseback, became so dizzy as to be near losing his seat. Suddenly he received a blow on his chin from a hunter who was his companion, with the words, "Look up!" He did so, and recovered his balance.

It was looking on the turbulent water that endangered his life, and looking up saved it. --
Cyclopedia of Religious Anecdote

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ATTENTION

0119 -- HOCUS FOCUS -- ONE OR TWO LUMPS OF SUGAR IN YOUR NOSE?

Focusing the attention of one's mind on the wrong object can bring one embarrassment, wrong judgment, discouragement, and defeat. How one can be embarrassed by such an hocus focus is illustrated in the following story: A man and his wife were entertaining a gentleman at tea who had a red nose. The focus of the woman's mind was upon the fact of their guest's red nose, for she feared that one of her children might make an embarrassing remark. After the children had been dismissed from their presence, having passed the test quite well, the woman "heaved a sigh of

relief, turned to her tea urn," and asked their guest, "will you have one or two lumps of sugar in your nose!" -- E. St. Johns

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ATTENTION

0120 -- PAYING ATTENTION TO THE TRIVIAL

Jedediah Buxton, the famous peasant who could multiply nine figures by nine in his head, was once taken to see Garrick act. When he went back to his own village he was asked what he thought of the great actor and his doings. "Oh!" he said, he did not know; he had only seen a little man strut about the stage and repeat 7956 words." Here was want of the ability to appreciate what he saw, and the exercise of the reigning faculty to the exclusion of every other. Similarly our hearers, if destitute of the spiritual powers by which the Gospel is discerned, fix their thoughts on our words, tones, gestures, or countenance, and make remarks upon us which, from a spiritual point of view, are utterly absurd. How futile are our endeavors without the Holy Spirit! -- Spurgeon

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ATTITUDES -- OF THE CHRISTIAN

0121 -- ONE MEASURE OF SPIRITUAL MATURITY

One measure of our spiritual maturity is the way we respond to our circumstances when things go wrong. If we go into a depression, doubt God's existence, or strike out at some innocent person, we have some growing up to do.

Explorer Thomas Hearne and his party had just set out on a rigorous expedition in northern Canada to find the mouth of the Coppermine River. A few days after they left, thieves stole most of their supplies. Hearne's response to the apparent misfortune can inspire us all, for he wrote, "The weight of our baggage being lightened, our next day's journey was more swift and pleasant."

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ATTITUDES -- OF THE CHRISTIAN

0122 -- ONE WHO HAD THE RIGHT ATTITUDE ABOUT ADVERSITY

Early in my ministry I met a seriously handicapped man. Worrall had been stricken with rheumatoid arthritis at age 15, and when I met him 30 years later, he was totally paralyzed except for one finger, could barely speak and was totally blind. But he had a string tied to that one mobile finger that could turn on a recorder. He wrote for national magazines, authored books and led a happy and influential life from his bed.

This was possible because after initial prayers brought no healing, he accepted his lot graciously and said, "Well Lord! If this is the size plot in life you've staked out for me, let's you and me together show the world what we can grow on it."

Down the path of humble acceptance, Worrall achieved a happier and more useful life within the limitations of a very restricted circumstance than most people ever will manage with excellent

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ATTRACTION

0123 -- CHRIST, THE GREAT ATTRACTOR

The American Astronomical Society, meeting in Arlington, Virginia are intrigued by evidence of some kind of a "great attractor", an immense gravitational magnet, pulling powerfully at our milky way and at more than a hundred other galaxies. It is causing a dramatic distortion in the all expansion of the universe. It is tugging at galaxies from across more than a hundred million light years of space, pulling them toward a lump of something, something very dense, for which the scientists have no name except "The Great Attractor". Until now accepted theory has been that the universe is expanding. Now there is evidence it is falling inward toward "The Great Attractor." You and I know who "The Great Attractor" is. -- Paul Harvey News

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AVARICE

0124 -- AN INSTRUCTIVE TALE

Once in medieval Rome there stood in one of the squares an image with an outstretched hand. On the forefinger of the image was a golden ring inscribed with the device "Strike Here." Men often stopped to look at the image and read the device on the finger, but they did not know what it meant. However, a learned clerk, often passing the image, was careful to observe the place on the street where the shadow of the finger fell.

Coming one night at midnight, he began to dig in that spot, and soon came upon a secret stairway, leading underground until it brought him into a spacious hall which was lighted by a flaming jewel on the wall. Opposite the flaming jewel there was a statue, a man holding a bow and shaft ready to shoot, and upon the forehead of this image were the words, "That which I am I am. My fatal, aim none can escape."

Midway in the hall there was a table upon which the cloth, the cups, the plates and knives, and all the meats and bread, were gold or studded with precious stones. Around the table, silent, motionless, and sad, were seated knights and ladies and men from every rank of life. But they were turned to stone.

The clerk looked at the scene in amazement and then, stirred by greed, began to gather up the silver and the gold. Whereupon the figures seated about the table suddenly leaped to their feet, the archer shot his arrow, and the clerk lay dead on the floor in the midst of darkness.

The image is the adversary, the tempter whose finger points to the realms of gold. The downward stairs our lusts and passions, the archer is death. the flaming jewel, i.e.. the table heaped with gold and silver is the things of this world, the knights and ladies those whose flesh and bone have been hardened into stone by avarice.

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AVARICE

0125 -- GREED CAN BE FATAL

Tolstoi has a powerful tale of a young Russian who fell heir to his father's small farm. He was no sooner in possession of this land than he began to dream eagerly of how he could add to it. One morning a stranger, evidently a person of power and authority, came to him and told him, as they were standing near the old homestead, that he could have, for nothing, all the land he could walk over in one day -- but at sundown he must be back at the very place from which he started. Pointing to the grave of the young man's father, the stranger said, "This is the point to which you must return."

The youth looked eagerly over the rich fields in the distance and, throwing off his coat and without waiting to say a word to his wife and children, started off across the fields. His first plan was to cover a tract of ground six miles square; but when he had walked the six he decided to make it nine, then twelve, and then fifteen -- which would give him sixty miles to walk before sundown!

By noon he had covered two sides of this square, or thirty miles. But eager to get on and compass the whole distance, he did not stop for food. An hour later he saw an old man drinking at a spring, but in his hunger for land he brushed aside the cup which the old man offered him and rushed on in his eager quest for possession of land.

When he was a few miles from the goal he was worn down with fatigue. A few hundred yards from the line, he saw the sun approaching the horizon and knew that he had but a few minutes left. Hurrying on and ready to faint, he summoned all his energies for one last effort and managed to stagger across the line just as the sun was sinking.

As he crossed the line he saw a cruel, cynical smile on the face of the stranger who had promised him the land, and who was waiting for him there at his father's grave. Just as he crossed the line, the master and possessor, as he thought, of fifteen square miles of rich land, the youth fell dead upon the ground which he had coveted.

The stranger then said to the servants, "I offered him all the land he could cover. Now you see what that is: six feet long by two feet wide; and I thought he would like to have the land close

to his father's grave, rather than to have it anywhere else." With that the stranger, who was Death, vanished, saying as he did so, "I have kept my pledge." "Whose shall those things be?"

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AVARICE

0126 -- THEY DESERVED ONE ANOTHER

One of the old saints, according to the legend, in his journey overtook two travelers. One was a greedy, avaricious, covetous man; the other was of a jealous and envious nature. When they came to the parting of the ways, the saint said he would give them a parting gift. Whichever made a wish first would have, his wish fulfilled, and the other man would get a double portion of what the first had asked for.

The greedy man knew what he wanted; but he was afraid to make his wish, because he wanted a double portion and could not bear the thought of his companion getting twice as much as he had. But the envious man was also unwilling to wish first, because he could not stand the idea of his companion getting twice as much as he would get. So each waited for the other to wish first.

At length the greedy man took his fellow by the throat and said he would choke him to death unless he made his wish. At that the envious man said, "Very well; I will make my wish. I wish to be made blind in one eye." Immediately he lost the sight of his eye, and his companion went blind in both eyes.

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AVOIDING

0127 -- AVOIDING IS SOMETIMES PRUDENT

"David avoided out of his presence twice."-1 Sam. 18:11

At times, the best way to avoid harm and trouble is by making a quick and timely departure: "Does that mule ever kick you?" "No sir," was the reply, "he hasn't yet, but he frequently kicks the place where I recently was." (Adapted from Reader's Digest 2/41) -- Duane V. Maxey

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AVOIDING

0128 -- RUNNING FROM THE FATHER

One day, Fletcher, having offended his father who threatened to correct him, he did not dare to come into his presence but retired into the garden. When he saw him coming toward him, he ran away with all speed. But he was presently struck with deep remorse, and said to himself:

"What! Do I run away from my father? Perhaps I shall live to have a son that will run away from me!" And it was several years before the impression which he then received was worn off. -- Life Of John Fletcher

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AWAKENING

0129 -- AWAKENED BY THE SPIRIT THROUGH A SONG

A thoughtless young woman in Scotland was one day invited by an acquaintance to accompany her to a Moody and Sankey meeting. She declined to go, but on being further pressed, consented and went. She was not impressed by anything she heard in the course of the meeting. Indeed, she thought there was nothing in it," and wondered why they should make so much ado about what seemed so common place.

The last hymn, " Yet There Is Room," was being sung by Mr. Sankey alone. He had reached the last stanza: "Ere night that gate may close, and seal thy doom, Then the last long cry, "No room, no room! No room, no room! Oh, woeful cry, No room!"

These last words of Dr. Bonar's hymn fell upon the ears of the young woman like a sudden thunder clap She left the meeting, but the words went with her. "No room, no room!" still rang in her ears. Conscience awoke at the sound of this warning bell. Nor could she rest until as she trusts, she found rest in the great Redeemer. -- Dr. Pentecost

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THE END