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

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CONTENTS

EARNESTNESS

- 0752 -- An Effectual Cry
- 0753 -- Repeatedly Calling
- 0754 -- No Depression Of Faith

EASTER

- 0755 -- Get The Story Straight
- 0756 -- The Sounding Of The Easter Bells

EMOTION

- 0757 -- Emotion And Christianity

EMPLOYEES (SERVANTS)

- 0758 -- God Properly Places His Servants

EMPTINESS

- 0759 -- The Emptiness Of Life Without God

ENCOURAGEMENT

- 0760 -- A Double Yoke
- 0761 -- A Letter Sent To Heaven
- 0762 -- A Reason To Live
- 0763 -- Annie Sullivan's Impact On Helen Keller
- 0764 -- Be Of Good Cheer
- 0765 -- Encourage Fellow-Workers
- 0766 -- Encouragement Made Him A Business Man
- 0767 -- Good Tidings For A Bankrupt Man!
- 0768 -- Helpfulness
- 0769 -- Ministers Need Encouragement

ENVY

- 0770 -- The Overflow Filled His Church

ERADICATION -- OF CARNALITY

0771 -- Eradication Verse Regulation

0772 -- Kill The Spider!

0773 -- Spared Sin Can Slay A Person

ESCAPE -- NONE FROM HELL

0774 -- An Unanswerable Question

0775 -- Trapped In A "Bake Oven" Elevator

ETERNAL LIFE

0776 -- More Beyond

0777 -- The Eternal Life Of Christ

0778 -- The Happy Ending

ETERNITY

0779 -- Eternity

0780 -- Eternity Endless

ETHICS

0781 -- Lincoln's Business

EVANGELISTS

0782 -- A Graphic Illustration By Moody

0783 -- Rigby's Christian Influence

EVIL -- ACTIVITY

0784 -- A Modern Red Riding Hood

EVILDOERS

0785 -- Trick Or Treat

EXAMPLE -- CHRIST'S

0786 -- Christ, The Supreme Example

0787 -- Keeping The Pattern Close

EXAMPLE -- GOOD

0788 -- Robert E. Lee's Example

0789 -- The Lambs Follow The Sheep

0790 -- When To Return The Favor

EXAMPLE -- INSPIRATION OF

0791 -- A Testimony To Christlikeness

0792 -- It Wasn't Maclaren's Sermon

0793 -- No Misunderstanding How We Live

0794 -- Nobody I Want To Be Like

0795 -- Street Lighting From One Example
0796 -- The Bricks Of Babylon

EXCLUSIVISM

0797 -- Lost Letters

EXCUSES -- FALSE

0798 -- Foolish Excuse
0799 -- He Wanted Recognition, Not Righteous Service
0800 -- Something Wrong With What?
0801 -- The Living Thief

EXPECTATION -- OF THE RIGHTEOUS

0802 -- Expectation Corner

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EARNESTNESS

0752 -- AN EFFECTUAL CRY

I heard of two millers who used to keep the old mill going day and night, and at midnight one miller would go down the stream, pull his boat up two or three yards above the dam, and the other miller would come along the other way. One night, the miller was going down as usual and he fell asleep, and when he awoke it was the water over the dam that woke him. He knew that if he went over, he would be dashed to pieces on the rocks below.

He seized his oars and tried to pull back, but he found that it was too late. But he got hold of a little twig between the rocks. It began to give way, and if that twig had come away he would have been swept over the dam and lost, but there was just enough strength in the root to hold him. So, he sat there in the boat and held on and he cried: "Help! Help! Help!" and he kept crying, until at last the cry of distress was heard by the brother miller. He found out the situation, and got a rope and threw it. The man let go of the twig and laid hold of the rope, and they pulled him out of the jaws of death. His life was saved because it was an honest cry for help.

There is not a man or a woman in this house tonight but that shall be saved if he or she will send the cry up to heaven: "Lord, help me! Lord, remember me! Lord save me or I perish!" "It shall come to pass that whosoever calleth on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Put the promise to the test. -- John MacNeil

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EARNESTNESS

0753 -- REPEATEDLY CALLING

A touching story comes to us from Minnesota. A farmer, living on the edge of one of the many lakes of that state, started to cross it in a small sailboat one evening. The wind changed and a gust over turned the boat when he was in the middle of the lake. The surface of the water was covered with masses of floating ice. The farmer was a good swimmer, and struck out boldly toward that part of the shore where he thought his house stood, but he grew confused in the darkness. He gave up at last, and was sinking in the freezing water, when he heard a sound. It was the voice of his little girl calling him: "Father! Father!"

He listened. The sound of her voice would tell him which way home lay. It put fresh life into him. He thought: "If she would only call once more. But she will be frightened at the dark and cold. She will go in and shut the door." But just then came the cry loud and clear: "Father!" "I turned," said the man afterward in telling the story, "and struck out in the opposite direction. I had been going away from home. I fought my way; the ice broke before me. I reached the shore and home at last. But if my dear little girl had not persisted in calling me, though hearing no reply, I should have died there under the ice."

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EARNESTNESS -- IN PRAYER

0754 -- NO DEPRESSION OF FAITH

On a gloomy day in 1857 a man in New York City by the name of Jeremiah Lanthier scanned the morning newspaper as he rode to his office. He was distressed to read that the depression gripping the nation was causing fear and panic among the people. Factories were stopping production and thousands were unemployed. Although Lanthier was not a big industrialist, but only a clerk, he had one important distinction. He was a man who had great faith in God!

Concerned with the grim economic situation, he sent a note to all his business acquaintances, telling them that each day at noon a prayer meeting would be held in his office. With high hopes he arranged 20 chairs in a circle, but the first day no one came. All alone he prayed fervently that God would bring about a great change in him and in America. The second day he was encouraged, for a few friends joined him. A short time later a similar gathering was started on Wall Street, another on Williams Street, and finally a fourth on Broadway. Then like wildfire the movement spread to all parts of the country. The moral tone of the nation was affected, and there was a great upsurge in the spiritual life of the people. Some historians say that this effort of united prayer and faith was an integral part of the improvement in the economy which soon followed.

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EASTER

0755 -- GET THE STORY STRAIGHT

A group of four year olds were gathered in a Sunday school class in Chattanooga. The teacher looked at the class and asked this question: "Does anyone know what today is?" A little four year old girl held up her hand and said, "Yes, today is Palm Sunday." The teacher exclaimed, "That's fantastic, that's wonderful. Now does anyone know what next Sunday is?" The same little girl held up her hand and said, "Yes, next Sunday is Easter Sunday." Once again the teacher said, "That's fantastic. Now, does anyone know what makes next Sunday Easter?" The same little girl responded and said, "Yes, next Sunday is Easter because Jesus rose from the grave" and before the teacher could congratulate her, she kept on talking and said, "but if he sees his shadow -- he has to go back in for seven weeks." -- Ben Haden

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EASTER

0756 -- THE SOUNDING OF THE EASTER BELLS

During Napoleon's Austrian campaign his army advanced to within six miles of Feldkirch. It looked as though Bonaparte's men would take Feldkirch without resistance. But as Napoleon's army advanced toward their objective in the night, the Christians of Feldkirch gathered in a little church to pray. It was Easter Eve. The next morning at sunrise the bells of the village pealed out across the countryside. Napoleon's army, not realizing it was Easter Sunday, thought that in the night the Austrian army had moved into Feldkirch and that the bells were ringing in jubilation. Napoleon ordered a retreat, and the battle at Feldkirch never took place. The Easter bells caused the enemy to retreat, and peace reigned in the Austrian countryside. -- Selected

A far greater peace than this can be ours through Christ's resurrection. When Jesus rose from the dead, He accomplished more than a temporary retreat by satan. He brought to pass the total defeat of our enemy, the devil. Hallelujah! -- Duane V. Maxey

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EMOTION

0757 -- EMOTION AND CHRISTIANITY

Written to the Editor of The Sun: Sir: In your editorial on the "Glory of the Christian Year," you say the idealism of Christianity still stirs the religious emotions of Christendom. Now, I don't think I know just what that means, but somehow it reminds me that, years ago when I was fast becoming a drunkard, I used to attend services at a church in Newark just to hear a lady sing, and as she sang she must have stirred the religious emotions in me for I always felt very pious and "mine eyes became a very fountain of tears." Could I have remained under that spell, I don't believe I could have done an evil thing; but when I got out on the street again I made for the nearest saloon every time, and spent the next hour or more filling myself with beer which also must have stirred my religious emotions, for I remember on one of these occasions of quarreling with the barkeeper because he did not believe in God.

Whether this illustrates your point or not I don't know, but it shows how a man may have religious emotions and yet not be a Christian. Twenty-three years ago tonight, and some years after attending the church meeting referred to, and after years of hard drinking and evil courses generally, I attended a little Woman's Christian Temperance Union meeting in Newark, and there without any religious emotions, but with an awful sense of my exceeding sinfulness, I surrendered to Jesus Christ, and a Spirit was put within me that has been with me ever since, and I have been as free from my old way of living as though I had never lived at all. "Old things have passed away and behold all things have become new." -- F. M. Palmatier

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EMPLOYEES (SERVANTS)

0758 -- GOD PROPERLY PLACES HIS SERVANTS

God appoints us to places of service best suited to the talents He has given us. We are to develop our abilities and diligently use our God-given opportunities, no matter how small they may seem. If God wants to promote us, He'll do it in His own way and time.

American botanist George Washington Carver (1864-1943) said that he once asked God to tell him about the universe. According to Carver, the Lord replied, "George, the universe is just too big for you to understand. Suppose you let Me take care of that."

Humbled, Carver asked, "Lord, how about a peanut?" The Lord said, "Now, George, that's something your own size. Go to work on it and I'll help you." When Carver was done studying the peanut, he had discovered more than 300 products that could be made with that tiny bit of God's world. -- "Bits & Pieces"

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EMPTINESS

0759 -- THE EMPTINESS OF LIFE WITHOUT GOD

Howard Rutledge, a United States Air Force pilot, was shot down over North Vietnam during the early stages of the war. He spent several miserable years in the hands of his captors before being released at the war's conclusion. In his book "In the Presence of Mine Enemies," he reflects upon the resources from which he drew in those arduous days when life seemed so intolerable. During those longer periods of enforced reflection it became so much easier to separate the important from the trivial, the worthwhile from the waste.

For example, in the past, I usually worked or played hard on Sundays and had no time for church. For years Phyllis (his wife) had encouraged me to join the family at church. She never nagged or scolded -she just kept hoping. But I was too busy, too preoccupied, to spend one or two short hours a week thinking about the really important things.

Now the sights and sounds and smells of death were all around me. My hunger for spiritual food soon outdid my hunger for a steak. Now I wanted to know about that part of me that will never die. Now I wanted to talk about God and Christ and the church. But in Heartbreak (the name POWs gave their prison camp) solitary confinement, there was no pastor, no Sunday School teacher, no Bible, no hymnbook, no community of believers to guide and sustain me. I had completely neglected the spiritual dimension of my life. It took prison to show me how empty life is without God. -- Howard Rutledge

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ENCOURAGEMENT

0760 -- A DOUBLE YOKE

Mark Guy Pearse preached a sermon on Christ's invitation to the weary and heavy-laden. I had finished my sermon when a good man came to me and said "I wish I had known what you were going to preach about. I could have told you something." "Well, my friend," I said, "may I have it still?" "Do you know why His yoke is light, sir?" "Well, because the good Lord helps us to carry it, I suppose." "No, sir," said he, shaking his head, "I think I know better than that. You see, when I was a boy at home, I used to drive the oxen, and the yoke was never made to balance as you said. Father's yokes were always made heavier on one side than the other. Then, you see, we would put a weak bullock in alongside a strong bullock; the light end would come on the weak ox, the heavier end on the stronger one. That's why the yoke is easy and the burden is light, because the Lord's yoke is made after the same pattern, and the heavy end is upon His shoulder." -- Sunday School Times

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ENCOURAGEMENT

0761 -- A LETTER SENT TO HEAVEN

What happens when a 10-year-old girl ties a note to a helium-filled balloon and sends it on its way to heaven? According to Detroit Free Press writer Bob Greene, a grieving Illinois girl named Sarah sent such a letter to her grandfather, who had died before she could have one last visit with him. The letter was addressed to "Grandpa Bernie in Heaven Up High." It represented a little girl's expression of love, and her hope that somehow Grandpa would hear.

Two months passed, and then a letter arrived addressed to Sarah. It began, "Your letter to Grandpa Bernie apparently reached its destination and was read by him. I understand they can't keep material things up there, so it drifted back to Earth. They just keep thoughts, memories, love, and things like that."

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ENCOURAGEMENT

0762 -- A REASON TO LIVE

Helen Keller nostalgically recalls her feelings about that life-changing day when she first met Annie Sullivan.

"I learned a great many new words that day. I do not remember what they were; but I do know that mother, father, sister, teacher were among the words that were to make the world blossom for me, "like Aaron's rod, with flowers." It would have been difficult to find a happier child than I was as I lay in my crib at the close of that eventful day and lived over the joys it had brought me, and for the first time longed for a new day to come."

Jesus can do that for your life. He'll make it blossom. Give you joy. Give you a reason to live -- a longing for a new day to come. The Word that became flesh can incarnate Himself in your life and fill every dark corner with light. -- Helen Keller

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ENCOURAGEMENT

0763 -- ANNIE SULLIVAN'S IMPACT ON HELEN KELLER

A number of years ago, in a mental institution just outside Boston, Mass., a young girl known as "Little Annie" was locked in the dungeon. This institution was one of the more enlightened ones for the treatment of the mentally disturbed. However, the doctors felt that a dungeon was the only place for those who were "hopelessly" insane. In Little Annie's case, they saw no hope for her, so she was confined to a living death in that small cage which received little light and even less hope. About that time, an elderly nurse in the institution was nearing retirement. She felt there was hope for all of God's creatures, so she started taking her lunch into the dungeon and eating outside Little Annie's cage. She felt perhaps she could communicate some love and hope to the little girl.

In many ways, Little Annie was like an animal. On occasions, she would violently attack the person who came into her cage. At other times, she would completely ignore them. When the elderly nurse started visiting her, Little Annie gave no indication that she was even aware of her presence. One day, the elderly nurse brought some brownies to the dungeon and left them outside the cage. Little Annie gave no hint she knew they were there, but when the nurse returned the next day, the brownies were gone.

From that time on, the nurse would bring brownies when she made her Thursday visit. Soon, the doctors in the institution noticed a change was taking place. After a period of time, they decided to move Little Annie upstairs. Finally, the day came when this "hopeless case" was told she could return home. But Little Annie did not wish to leave. The place had meant so much to her she felt she could make a contribution if she stayed and worked with the other patients. The elderly nurse had seen and brought out so much in her life that Little Annie felt she could see and help develop something in others.

Many years later, Queen Victoria of England, while pinning England's highest award on a foreigner, asked Helen Keller, "How do you account for your remarkable accomplishments in life? How do you explain the fact that even though you were both blind and deaf, you were able to accomplish so much?" Without a moment's hesitation, Helen Keller said that had it not been for Anne Sullivan (Little Annie), the name of Helen Keller would have remained unknown.

It's not too well known, but Helen Keller was a normal, healthy baby before some mysterious disease left her almost helpless and hopeless. Anne Sullivan saw Helen Keller as one of God's very special people. She treated Helen as she saw her. She loved her and disciplined her. She played, prayed, pushed, and worked with her until the flickering candle that was her life became a beacon that helped light the pathways and lighten the burdens of people all over the world. Yes, Helen Keller influenced millions after her own life was touched by "Little Annie!"

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ENCOURAGEMENT

0764 -- BE OF GOOD CHEER

When the news of Senator Haynes famous speech in favor of nullification reached the North, a hardy patriot of New England was so depressed by the oration, which he believed unanswerable though false in its spirit and teaching, that he was made ill and finally threw himself upon his bed in an agony of despair. A few days later, his daughter brought to him a paper containing Webster's immortal reply to Haynes. At first he refused to read it or to listen to it, but his daughter sat beside him and began to read. As she proceeded, the man's attention was arrested. At length he straightened himself up in bed, and as he became more deeply aroused broke forth into exclamations of admiration. Finally, as she concluded the reading he shouted: "Bring me my boots I am well again!"

In the midst of life's trials, the Christian sometimes becomes utterly depressed. It seems to him that no ray of hope falls across his pathway, and that the world steadily deteriorates in moral value. He can look for no triumph of righteousness. Then, faith turns his gaze upon the figure of Jesus Christ, and his spiritual imagination enables him to hear the Master's words: "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer I have overcome the world." And remembering the glorious triumph of his Lord, he takes courage again and faces the world with renewed bravery to gain for himself the victory which overcometh the world. -- Rev. G. P. Eckman

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ENCOURAGEMENT

0765 -- ENCOURAGE FELLOW-WORKERS

Yonder was a fire in the large city, and the firemen flung their ladders together and went up in their brave fashion to the topmost story to rescue the people in such peril, and one after another

was rescued by the brave fire laddies. All had been rescued, it seemed. No! Yonder is a white face at that upper window, and they wrapped something about one of the fire laddies and, breasting the fierce flames, he went again to that window and put the robe around the little woman and started down, but they saw him tremble as the fire raged around him, and it seemed that he would fall with his precious burden, but the fire chief called to his men: Cheer him, boys! Cheer him, boys! And they cheered him. Cheer after cheer, and heart came back, and he came down with the precious life saved. Oh, you and I are to give our lives to cheering a needy world! Ponder this beautiful sentence from Isaiah: "They helped every one his neighbor; and every one said to his brother, be of good courage." -- George W. Truett

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ENCOURAGEMENT

0766 -- ENCOURAGEMENT MADE HIM A BUSINESS MAN

Robert Schuller tells a story about a banker who always tossed a coin in the cup of a legless beggar who sat on the street outside the bank. But, unlike most people, the banker would always insist on getting one of the pencils the man had beside him. "You are a merchant," the banker would say, "and I always expect to receive good value from merchants I do business with." One day the legless man was not on the sidewalk. Time passed and the banker forgot about him, until he walked into a public building and there in the concessions stand sat the former beggar. He was obviously the owner of his own small business now. "I have always hoped you might come by someday," the man said. "You are largely responsible for me being here. You kept telling me that I was a 'merchant'. I started thinking of myself that way, instead of a beggar receiving gifts. I started selling pencils -- lots of them. You gave me self-respect, caused me to look at myself differently."

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ENCOURAGEMENT

0767 -- GOOD TIDINGS FOR A BANKRUPT MAN!

Some years ago, in western New York, I preached a couple of weeks. The last night I was in the city I addressed several different classes. Among other things I said: "Perhaps there are some men here who are distressed in their business, or have become bankrupt. If there are any here who are thrown in the conflicts of like into the very maelstrom of suffering and distress, I have a word of comfort for you." The next day, when I reached my next point, I received a long letter, commencing: "My dear sir; I can not let you leave this town without sending you this letter. Last night, when you addressed men who were crushed and in distress, you did not know what words you were speaking to my heart. I did not have the pleasure of your personal acquaintance while here, but I want to tell you that a few months ago I was worth sixty thousand dollars. I sold out my business and invested my money in an oil well, thinking that I would soon double it; but in a few brief months it was all swept away, and my investment was a failure. I came back. I went to church, but they did not take as much notice of me as they did before."

You know that are a good many deacons and women and others who come around, and smile very prettily when they want five dollars. As long as a man has his money he is treated with a good deal of consideration in the church; but if he goes down, there is a cold shoulder and a long face. I hope there are no Christians in this town who would act in that way. Said he, "I went to church and everybody showed me the cold shoulder. I was sad. I went home, and said to my dear wife, ' They don't treat me as kindly, and as warmly as they used to, and I can not go there any more.' I want to tell you, I believe that if it had not been for my dear family altar, my pious wife, and my precious Bible, I would have been a suicide before this. But there I found comfort, and I thank you for the words you spoke to me last night."

I tell you dear friends, there is nothing that is so blessed, and so adapted to man as the great idea; "Fear not, behold I bring you glad tidings of great joy." -- Albert P. Graves

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ENCOURAGEMENT

0768 -- HELPFULNESS

One wintry day Hawthorne, the American author, went home with a heavy heart, having lost his government appointment. He cast himself down, as men generally do under such circumstances, and assumed the very attitude of despondency. His wife soon discovered the cause of his distress. But instead of indulging in irrational hysterics, she kindled a bright fire, brought pen, ink, and paper, and then, lovingly laying her hand on his shoulder, exclaimed, as she gazed cheerfully in his face, "Now you can write your book."

The word wrought like a magic spell. He set to work, forgot his loss, wrote his book, made his reputation, and amassed a fortune. God fearing women, go and do like wise! -- W. J. Acomb

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ENCOURAGEMENT

0769 -- MINISTERS NEED ENCOURAGEMENT

I know of a parsonage to which the death angel came and took to heaven a faithful and beloved undershepherd. The kind members of his flock went to that desolate home, and could not say enough in praise of him whom they did truly love. A volume of his sermons was published and widely circulated. Then the broken-hearted wife said: "Oh, if they had only said one-half to him which they now say to me, how it would have lightened his labor and rejoiced his heart!

I know of another parsonage to which a pastor returned, after a Sabbath of extreme mental fatigue and of intensely loving work for his people. The almost agonizing tone with which he said: "Not one kind word today, and I've done my very best." This sad statement would have met a kind response from every parishioner's heart could all have heard it. "Not one kind word today."

I know a pastor to whom a parishioner said one Sunday evening: "I have been benefited by both sermons today." When his pastor replied: "It always helps me to hear that," this warmhearted man said: "If I always told you when I feel benefited by your sermons, it would be very often." I wish you could have heard the prayer of humble thankfulness which went up to heaven from the family altar in that pastor's study that night. -- M. D. Hoge

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ENVY

0770 -- THE OVERFLOW FILLED HIS CHURCH

F. B. Meyer was pastor of Christ's Church in London at the same time that G. Campbell Morgan was pastor of Westminster Chapel and Charles H. Spurgeon was pastor of the Metropolitan Chapel. Both Morgan and Spurgeon often had much larger audiences than did Meyer. Troubled by envy, Meyer confessed that not until he began praying for his colleagues did he have peace of heart. "When I prayed for their success," said Meyer, "the result was that God filled their churches so full that the overflow filled mine, and it has been full since."

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ERADICATION -- OF CARNALITY

0771 -- ERADICATION VERSE REGULATION

Everybody had heard that the great elephant was loose, and several families whose gardens he had torn up and whose boys he had trampled upon were certain of it. There was great excitement and the town held a meeting to decide what should be done. They did not want to exterminate him; in fact, many of them did not believe that they could exterminate him, for he was a pretty big elephant. Besides, he was useful in his place in India and in story-books.

"Our best plan is to try and regulate him," said an enthusiastic speaker. "Let us build tollgates all along the route we find he is going to take, and make him pay." "Yes, but that leaves him roaming round" shrieked an old woman, "and I don't want my boy killed." "Keep your boy away from him. That's your business. Why, madam, don't you know that an elephant's hide and tusks are valuable for mechanical and surgical purposes and that he is useful in India? Besides, there's the revenue to pay for any boys who are trampled to death."

"That's the plan. Regulate him! Regulate him!" shouted the crowd. So they appointed a great many committees, and drafted constitutions and by-laws, and circulated petitions, and by the time the elephant had killed several more boys and trampled down a number of gardens, they had erected very comfortable tollhouses for the gatekeepers and gates for the elephant.

Then they waited in great satisfaction to see the animal regulated. Slowly, the great feet trampled onward, slowly the great proboscis appeared in view, and, with a sniff of contempt, the

elephant lifted the gate from off its hinges and walked off with it, while the crowd started after him in dismay. "Well!" exclaimed the gatekeeper, catching his breath, "we haven't made much money so far, but the regulatin' plan would have been first-rate, if the elephant hadn't been a 'leettle' stronger than the obstruction." -- Topical Illustrations

Eradication, not regulation, is the answer to sin and sinful things springing forth from the depraved heart of fallen man. This is true in regard to every form of government -- social government, church government, and personal government. No amount of rules and regulations can control the wild elephant of sin -- in a country, state, or city; in a church; or in one's personal conduct. The elephant must be divinely exterminated, for he is always more than a "leettle" stronger than the rules and human restraints which are foolishly enacted to regulate him. -- Duane V. Maxey

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ERADICATION -- OF CARNALITY

0772 -- KILL THE SPIDER!

An old deacon who used to pray every Wednesday night at prayer meeting, always concluded his prayer the same way: "And, Lord, clean all the cobwebs out of my life." Well, it got too much for one fellow in the prayer meeting, and he heard the old deacon one time too often. So when the old man made that prayer, the fellow jumped to his feet and shouted, "Lord, Lord, don't do it! Don't do it! Kill the spider!" Beloved, that's what needs to happen. -- Gospel Herald

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ERADICATION -- OF CARNALITY

0773 -- SPARED SIN CAN SLAY A PERSON

If you have had some encounter with a besetting sin, or evil habit, don't be content to let it go with compromise. God told Saul to destroy the Amalekites. Saul thought he was wiser than God, and let some of them escape. Years passed by, and Saul, lying self-wounded on the field of Gilboa, called to a man, "Stand...upon me, and slay me." "So I stood upon him, and slew him...and I took the crown that was upon his head, and the bracelet that was on his arm." 2 Sam. 9:10 And that man was an Amalekite. That is the natural history of sin when we spare it, and treat it lightly. -- McCartney

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ESCAPE -- NONE FROM HELL

0774 -- AN UNANSWERABLE QUESTION

Many years ago, a Welsh minister, a man of God, beginning his sermon leaned over the pulpit and said with a solemn air: "Friends, I have a question to ask. I cannot answer it. You

cannot answer it. If an angel from heaven were here, he could not answer it. If a devil from hell were here, he could not answer it." Deathlike silence reigned. Every eye was fixed on the speaker. He proceeded: "The question is this: "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" -- C. H. Spurgeon

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ESCAPE -- NONE FROM HELL

0775 -- TRAPPED IN A "BAKE OVEN" ELEVATOR

I read recently about a raging inferno in a business tower. One of the maintenance crew took an elevator up to the level where the fire was burning and he became trapped in that elevator when the electric circuits failed. The elevator turned into an oven for that poor man. The intercom still worked though, and he called for help, but no one reached him in time. His pitiful shrieks of horror could be heard over the intercom as he wailed in agony. Finally, the tortured cries of that man, who was locked in that merciless holocaust chamber, lessened and ceased. Death released him from that awful suffering. But the second death is the lake of fire. None shall ever escape from their suffering in that endless inferno, their agonizing cries shall continue forever! -- Duane V. Maxey

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ETERNAL LIFE

0776 -- MORE BEYOND

If the grave had ended all with the Lord Jesus, there would be utterly nothing beyond death for the children of God. Before Columbus discovered the New World, the coat of arms of Spain bore the motto: "Ne Plus Ultra," which means, "There is nothing beyond." The three mile limit of their shoreline was the limit of their utmost horizon and furthest possibilities. But Columbus envisioned undiscovered world's beyond, and braved the terrors of the then unknown and uncharted sea. With his discoveries, the "Ne" was dropped from the Spanish coat of arms, leaving the "Plus Ultra"-"There Is More Beyond!"

Before the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world and brought life and immortality to light, the grave was the utmost limit of all human hopes and expectations. "Ne Plus Ultra" was the motto of human kind, until Jesus divested death of its sting and turned the radiance of an endless life upon the valley of the shadow of death, so that now there shines from the portals of death the hope-inspiring words: "Plus Ultra"-"THERE IS MORE BEYOND!"

How much more, only the unfolding aeons of an immeasurable eternity can bring before our wondering eyes: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (1 Cor.2:9). -- Walter Knight

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ETERNAL LIFE

0777 -- THE ETERNAL LIFE OF CHRIST

Luther was once found, at a moment of peril and fear, when he had need to grasp unseen strength, sitting in an abstracted mood, tracing on the table with his fingers the words: "Vivit! Vivit!" "He lives! He lives!"

It is our hope for ourselves, and for His truth, and for mankind. Men come and go; leaders, teachers, thinkers, speak and work for a season, and then fall silent and impotent. He abides. They die, but He lives. They are lights kindled, and therefore sooner or later quenched; but He is the true light from which they draw all their brightness, and He shines for evermore. -- Maclaren

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ETERNAL LIFE

0778 -- THE HAPPY ENDING

A little boy was offered the opportunity to select a dog for his birthday present. At the pet store, he was shown a number of puppies. From them he picked one whose tail was wagging furiously. When he was asked why he selected that particular dog, the little boy said, "I wanted the one with the happy ending." If we want to reach out for a life with a happy ending, we have no choice but to accept the living Christ as our Lord and Savior, follow Him daily, and rejoice in the eternal life that awaits us.

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ETERNITY

0779 -- ETERNITY

How long, sometimes, a day appears!
And weeks, how long are they!
Months move as if the years
Would never pass away.
But days and weeks are passing by,
And soon must all be gone,
For day by day the moments fly,
Eternity comes on.
Days, months, and years must have an end;
Eternity has none;
It will always be as long to spend
As when it first begun."

-- J. Wilbur Chapman

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ETERNITY

0780 -- ETERNITY ENDLESS

I was preaching in the Lansing Theatre in London, Nebraska some years ago on the subject of eternity, when one of the professors in the State University stood beside me to say, "Let me give you a definition of eternity," and I said, "Give it to me and I will give it to the audience." He quoted: "Eternity begins where computation ends." I said to him, "Professor, tell me just what that means." He replied, "If you should take a man possessed of the greatest mind that the world has ever known and let him think his way out into the future until his mind would break down, then put your stake there; you would have the beginning of eternity," and alas, alas; it has no end. God save us from being without God and with out hope, not only in this world, but in the world to come. -- J. Wilbur Chapman

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ETHICS

0781 -- LINCOLN'S BUSINESS

One day a stranger called to secure Lincoln's services. "State your case," said Lincoln. A history of the case was given, when Lincoln astonished him by saying, "I cannot serve you, for you are wrong, and the other party is right." "That is none of your business, if I hire and pay you for taking the case," said the man. "Not my business!" exclaimed Lincoln. "My business is never to defend wrong. I never take a case that is manifestly wrong." "Not for any amount of pay?" said the stranger. "Not for all you are worth," replied Lincoln. -- Christian Herald

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EVANGELISTS

0782 -- A GRAPHIC ILLUSTRATION BY MOODY

While D.L. Moody was attending a convention in Indianapolis on mass evangelism, he asked his song leader Ira Sankey to meet him at 6 o'clock one evening at a certain street corner.

When Sankey arrived, Mr. Moody asked him to stand on a box and sing. Once a crowd had gathered, Moody spoke briefly and then invited the people to follow him to the nearby convention hall. Soon the auditorium was filled with spiritually hungry people, and the great evangelist preached the gospel to them. Then the convention delegates began to arrive. Moody stopped preaching and said, "Now we must close, as the brethren of the convention wish to come and

discuss the topic, 'How to reach the masses.'" Moody graphically illustrated the difference between talking about doing something and going out and doing it.

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EVANGELISTS

0783 -- RIGBY'S CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE

In the late 1800's and early 1900's, Alexander Whyte pastored a large church in Edinburgh. During that time, a salesman by the name of Rigby would travel to Edinburgh regularly just to hear him preach. He would often invite other businessmen to accompany him to the services. One Sunday morning he asked a fellow traveler to go to church with him. Reluctantly, the man said yes. When he heard Whyte's message, he was so impressed that he returned with Rigby to the evening meeting. As the preacher spoke, the man trusted Christ as his Savior.

The next morning, as Rigby walked by the home of Pastor Whyte, he felt impressed to stop and tell him how his message had affected the other man's life. When Whyte learned that his caller's name was Rigby, he exclaimed, "You're the man I've wanted to see for years!" He went to his study and returned with a bundle of letters. Alexander Whyte read Rigby some excerpts -- all telling of changed lives. They were men Rigby had brought to hear the gospel. Like the Samaritans who had been led to Jesus by the woman at the well, these men "believed in Him because of the word" of Rigby.

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EVIL -- ACTIVITY

0784 -- A MODERN RED RIDING HOOD

Once upon a time, in a far away country, there lived a little

girl called Red Riding Hood. One day her mother asked her to take a basket of fruit to her grandmother, who had been ill and lived alone in a cottage in the forest. It happened that a wolf was lurking in the bushes and overheard the conversation. He decided to take a short-cut to the grandmother's house and get the goodies for himself.

The wolf killed the grandmother, then dressed in her nightgown and jumped into bed to await the little girl. When she arrived, he made several nasty suggestions and then tried to grab her. But by this time, the child was very frightened and ran screaming from the cottage. A woodcutter, working nearby, heard her cries and rushed to the rescue. He killed the wolf with his ax, thereby saving Red Riding Hood's life. All the townspeople hurried to the scene and proclaimed the woodcutter a hero. But at the inquest, several facts emerged:

*The wolf had never been advised of his rights.

*The woodcutter had made no warning swings before striking the fatal blow.

The Civil Liberties Union stressed the point that, although the act of eating Grandma may have been in bad taste, the wolf was only "doing his thing" and thus didn't deserve the death penalty.

The SDS contended that the killing of the grandmother should be considered self-defense since she was over 30 and, therefore, couldn't be taken seriously because the wolf was trying to make love, not war.

On the basis of these considerations, it was decided there was no valid basis for charges against the wolf. Moreover, the woodcutter was indicted for unaggravated assault with a deadly weapon. Several nights later, the woodcutter's cottage was burned to the ground. One year from the date of "The Incident at Grandma's," her cottage was made a shrine for the wolf who had bled and died there. All the village officials spoke at the dedication, but it was Red Riding Hood who gave the most touching tribute. She said that, while she had been selfishly grateful for the woodcutter's intervention, she realized in retrospect that he had over-reacted. As she knelt and placed a wreath in honor of the brave wolf, there wasn't a dry eye in the whole forest.

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EVILDOERS

0785 -- TRICK OR TREAT

"The modern custom of 'Trick or Treat' began in Ireland hundreds of years ago. A group of farmers went from house to house begging food for the village Halloween festivities in the name of their ancient gods. Good Luck was promised to generous donors, and threats were made against those who would not give." Thus these ancient pagan traditions continue today as youngsters, masquerading as ghosts, skeletons and demons go "trick or treating" -- begging in a sense for food while promising to refrain from evil deeds.

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EXAMPLE -- CHRIST'S

0786 -- CHRIST, THE SUPREME EXAMPLE

We were examining Guido's "Aurora" in the summerhouse of the Rospigliosi Palace. As we sat behind the row of artists busily copying the celebrated painting, we could not help noticing how they differed from each other as well as from the immortal fresco. After a time we called the attention of our guide to the fact that each of the painters had a different color for the horses, and that no two copies were at all alike. With an expressive gesture, he replied: "Don't look at them! Look only at the original!" -- Walter Baxendale

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EXAMPLE -- CHRIST'S

0787 -- KEEPING THE PATTERN CLOSE

When Mitchell Bronk was a schoolboy, he practiced penmanship in copybooks. He described the process like this: "A beautifully engraved pattern of the letters at the top of every page guided us, but each succeeding line we wrote became progressively less attractive. Then the school board purchased new books, designed so that the pattern line at the top could be pushed down the page. Because it was always directly before the pupil and covered what he had written, the improvement in our penmanship was amazing."

So too, if we copy our perfect pattern, we will increasingly walk "as He walked." The good example of other Christians should encourage us, but our primary attention must always be fixed on Christ. If we idolize even the godliest saints, sooner or later we will be disappointed. But not with the Savior.

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EXAMPLE -- GOOD

0788 -- ROBERT E. LEE'S EXAMPLE

One Sunday morning in 1865, a black man entered a fashionable church in Richmond, Virginia. When Communion was served, he walked down the aisle and knelt at the altar. A rustle of resentment swept the congregation. How dare he! After all, believers in that church used the common cup. Suddenly a distinguished layman stood up, stepped forward to the altar, and knelt beside the black man. With Robert E. Lee setting the example, the rest of the congregation soon followed his lead.

Leaders carry a great responsibility and wield considerable influence. Others look to them for direction.

Let's be careful of the example we show.

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EXAMPLE -- GOOD

0789 -- THE LAMBS FOLLOW THE SHEEP

It was a sheep -- not a lamb, that strayed away,
In the parable Jesus told:
A grown-up sheep that had gone astray
From the ninety and nine in the fold.

Out in the meadows, out in the cold,
'Twas a sheep the good Shepherd sought.
Back to the flock and into the fold,
'Twas a sheep the good Shepherd brought.

And why for the sheep, should we earnestly long,
And so earnestly hope and pray?
Because there is danger, if they go wrong,
They will lead the young lambs away.

For the lambs follow the sheep, you know,
Wherever the sheep may stray;
If the sheep go wrong, it will not be long
Till the lambs are as wrong as they.

So with the sheep we earnestly plead,
For the sake of the lambs today.
If the lambs are lost, what a terrible cost,
Some sheep may have to pay!

-- Thomas Spurgeon

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EXAMPLE -- GOOD

0790 -- WHEN TO RETURN THE FAVOR

In his book, *Daily Gems*, D. L. Moody wrote that after the great Chicago fire of 1871 he went to New York to solicit funds for fire victims. When he arrived, he was introduced to a wealthy man who was reported to be very generous. Impressed by the great need in Chicago, he gave Moody a large check. He then directed the evangelist to several other men in the area who also gave liberal contributions. When Mr. Moody was about to leave, he shook his benefactor's hand and said, "If you ever come to Chicago, be sure to call on me. I'll return your favor."

The man responded, "Mr. Moody, don't wait for me to come. Do it to the first man that comes along."

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EXAMPLE -- INSPIRATION OF

0791 -- A TESTIMONY TO CHRISTLIKENESS

A Scottish missionary, home on furlough from her work in India, told this story: She had been teaching a group of children one day, telling them the story of Jesus and bringing out, bit by

bit, incidents showing His character. As she was talking, one child, listening intently, grew excited and then more excited. At last, she was unable to restrain herself and blurted out: "I know him. He lives near us." Was there ever such praise of a human? -- S. D. Gordon

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EXAMPLE -- INSPIRATION OF

0792 -- IT WASN'T MACLAREN'S SERMON

A skeptic promised British preacher Alexander Maclaren (1826-1910) that he would attend his church for four Sundays on which Maclaren would be presenting the main tenets of Christianity. The skeptic listened intently to Maclaren's sermons. After the fourth message he presented himself for church membership, saying he had received Christ as his Savior. Maclaren was delighted and could not resist the impulse to ask which of the four sermons brought him to this decision. The skeptic replied, "Your sermons, sir, were helpful, but they were not what finally persuaded me." He said that after church one Sunday as he was helping an elderly lady on a slippery walk, she looked up into his face and said, "I wonder if you know my Savior, Jesus Christ. He is everything in the world to me. I would like you to know Him too." The skeptic said, "That remark sent me home, where on my knees I found Christ for myself."

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EXAMPLE -- INSPIRATION OF

0793 -- NO MISUNDERSTANDING HOW WE LIVE

I'd rather see a sermon
Than hear one any day;
I'd rather one should walk with me
Than merely show the way;

For the eye's a better pupil
And more willing than the ear;
Good counsel is confusing
But examples always clear.

And best of all the preachers
Are the men who live their creeds;
For to see good put into action
Is what everybody needs.

I can soon learn how to do it
If you let me see it done;
I can watch your hands in action,
But your tongue too fast may run.

And the lectures you deliver
May be very fine and true,
But I'd rather get my lesson
By observing what you do;

For I may misunderstand you
And the high advice you give,
But there's no misunderstanding
How you act and how you live.

-- Edgar Guest

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EXAMPLE -- INSPIRATION OF

0794 -- NOBODY I WANT TO BE LIKE

In a barber shop recently I struck up a conversation with a boy I'd seen there before. After a while I asked, "Who do you want to be like?"

"Mister," he said, "I ain't found nobody I want to be like." And he's not an exception. If you're out there in the battle, you know what I'm talking about. Kids aren't looking for a perfect teacher -- just an honest one, and a growing one. Yet for so many of them, the pedestals are empty.
-- Howard Hendricks

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EXAMPLE -- INSPIRATION OF

0795 -- STREET LIGHTING FROM ONE EXAMPLE

In his book *World Horizons*, Cole D. Robinson illustrates the power of example. He writes, "When Benjamin Franklin decided to interest the people of Philadelphia in street lighting, he hung a beautiful lantern on the end of a long bracket attached to the front of his house. He kept the glass brightly polished and carefully lit the wick each evening at the approach of dusk. Anyone walking on the dark street could see this light from a long way off and came under its warm glow."

What was the result? Cole says, "It wasn't long before Franklin's neighbors began placing lamps outside their homes. Soon the entire city realized the value of street lighting and followed his example with enthusiasm."

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EXAMPLE -- INSPIRATION OF

0796 -- THE BRICKS OF BABYLON

The well-known minister, Andrew Bonar brought home a brick from his travels in the area of ancient Babylon. One Sunday he showed it to his congregation. He said that every brick in the temple from which it was taken bore the name of the king who was reigning at the time the structure was built. Making the application, Bonar said, "We must let everything we do bear the name of our King, the Lord Jesus Christ." Some time later, a woman came to the minister and exclaimed, "Those bricks. Oh, those bricks of Babylon!"

Sensing the implication of her statement, he asked, "Did you find them while sweeping the floors?" "No," she said, "I found them while making the beds. You remember you said that everything we did should bear the name of our Savior. Well, shortly after that, I had to change the beds, a job I thoroughly dislike. So I said, 'I will do this in the name of Jesus and for His glory!'"

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EXCLUSIVISM

0797 -- LOST LETTERS

A small Christian sect of an exclusive temperament was holding a convention. Outside the auditorium there was displayed the motto: "Jesus Only." A strong wind blew the first three letters away, leaving the following message on the sign: "Us Only". Too often this is the spirit shown by Christians of narrow vision. -- Sunday School Times

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EXCUSES -- FALSE

0798 -- FOOLISH EXCUSE

An ungodly man was once exhorted to become a Christian, and his defense was that he could not understand the Bible. Said he, "I can not learn from reading the Bible where the Negro came from, that's why I have never become a Christian." He was then asked whether it was his custom to attend to the most important duties of life first or whether he gave those of less importance first consideration. He replied, "I always put the most important things first, as any intelligent man would do." He was then asked which he regarded as the most important question, where the Negro came from or where he was going? After some hesitancy he said, "Well where I'm going of course." This poor fellow was more concerned about the origin of the color of another man's skin than the salvation of his own soul.

When I see men stumbling over questions which have no bearing upon the subject of their personal salvation, I am reminded of the account of a civil service examination which an old soldier was taking with the view of securing a position as clerk in the pension department. One question was: "How far is the moon from the earth?" His reply was: "I do not know how far the

moon is from the earth, but I know it is not near enough to interfere with my duties as a clerk in the pension department." There are those who climb a mountain on the road to hell without halting, but will stumble over a feather that chances to lie on the pathway to Glory. -- Rev. J. Krauskopf

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EXCUSES -- FALSE

0799 -- HE WANTED RECOGNITION, NOT RIGHTEOUS SERVICE

The wife of a man who had left the church and joined a fraternal order was asked why he was no longer a church member. She replied: "Well, sir, they never gave my husband anything to do at the church, but as soon as he joined the lodge they put a helmet on his head and a sword in his hand, and made him keeper of the royal and ancient arch, and he is there every night." -- H. A. Proctor

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EXCUSES -- FALSE

0800 -- SOMETHING WRONG WITH WHAT?

The story is told of a pastor in a seaside village in the North of Scotland, who edified his flock at the close of the forenoon service by announcing: "There will be no service here this evening, as there is something wrong with the bell rope." -- Sunday Talk

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EXCUSES -- FALSE

0801 -- THE LIVING THIEF

A minister conversed with a man who professed conversion. "Have you united with the church?" he asked him. "No the dying thief never united with the church and he went to heaven," was the answer, "Have you talked to your neighbors about Christ?" "No, the dying thief never did." "Have you given to missions?" "No, the dying thief did not." "Well, my friend," said the minister, "the difference between you two seems to be that he was a dying thief, and you are a living one." -- Otterbein Teacher

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EXPECTATION -- OF THE RIGHTEOUS

0802 -- EXPECTATION CORNER

A little book, long out of print, called "Expectation Corner," tells of a king who prepared a city for some of his poor subjects. Not far away he constructed a large storehouse where everything they needed would be supplied if they would only send him their requests. There was one condition, however: they should constantly be on the lookout for his messengers so that when they came with the gifts in answer to their urgent pleas, the petitioners would always be found waiting and ready to receive them. One faithless subject, not actually expecting to get what he asked for, never watched for their delivery.

One day he was taken to the king's storehouse; and there, to his amazement, he saw scores of packages that had originally been made ready for him. The messengers had come to his door, but because he was not looking for them, the king's gifts never satisfied his needs.

Sometimes God makes us wait for things, simply because we are so unbelieving and insipid in the way we ask for His heavenly favors. Many miss out on desired blessings because they close themselves in the gloomy chambers of doubt. How much better to be stationed in the faith-illuminated section of the garden of prayer called "Expectation Corner".

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THE END