

All Rights Reserved By HDM For This Digital Publication  
Copyright 1993 -- 2002 Holiness Data Ministry

Duplication of this CD by any means is forbidden, and  
copies of individual files must be made in accordance with  
the restrictions stated in the B4UCopy.txt file on this CD.

**OVER THE DOORSTEP**  
**By Clifford B. Strang**

Beacon Hill Press  
2923 Troost Avenue  
Kansas City, Missouri

First Printing, 1947

By The Same Author:  
Meeting Life Situations

Printed Book: No Copyright

\* \* \* \* \*

Digital Edition 11/04/2002  
By Holiness Data Ministry

\* \* \* \* \*

**CONTENTS**

Book Jacket Text  
Introduction

- 01 -- Over The Doorstep Is Half The Journey
- 02 -- He Prayed As He Swayed
- 03 -- Shaking Hands With The Preacher
- 04 -- A Godly Neighbor
- 05 -- The Worth Of A Man
- 06 -- A Dynamic Influence
- 07 -- The Office He Never Used
- 08 -- The Pattern In The Mount
- 09 -- I Am Always Son To Him
- 10 -- The Most Lovable Character
- 11 -- A Pastor's Friend
- 12 -- Daddy Is It "A"?
- 13 -- Too Late With Love

- 14 -- Stealing His Groceries
- 15 -- Saying Good-By To God
- 16 -- Sin The Deceiver
- 17 -- The Price Of Lust
- 18 -- Sticking In With The Boss
- 19 -- He Stole To Buy Drink
- 20 -- Sitting In Judgment
- 21 -- Does Pain Exist?
- 22 -- Unsuccessful Repentance
- 23 -- Timely Advice
- 24 -- A Dogmatic Modernist
- 25 -- The Boy Who Baked A Cake
- 26 -- The Kind-Eyed Banker
- 27 -- A Catholic Who Believed In Prayer
- 28 -- A Man From Whom Boys Ran
- 29 -- A Praying Sinner
- 30 -- The Man Who Wouldn't Help
- 31 -- A Baseball Pitcher Fails
- 32 -- Facing A Murderer
- 33 -- Afraid Of His Job
- 34 -- An Epistle From A Hebrew
- 35 -- His Name Wasn't Job
- 36 -- An Angel In White
- 37 -- A Fifty Thousand Dollar Handshake

\* \* \* \* \*

## BOOK JACKET TEXT

### Meet The Author

Clifford B. Strang became a Christian in his youth and at once aligned himself with the church as an active member. For several years before he entered the ministry he filled positions of responsibility with industrial firms where he had unusual promise of advancement.

Turning aside from these prospects at an age in life when most men have served their apprenticeship if such there be -- in the ministry, he entered the full-time ministry by accepting a small pastorate. In this field of endeavor he has made rapid progress to the pulpit of one of the largest churches of his denomination, the church at Bethany, Oklahoma. the seat of Bethany-Peniel College.

He is a graduate of Mount Union College of Alliance, Ohio, with A.B. degree, and of Boston University with M.A. and S.T.B. degrees. Bethany-Peniel College conferred upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity in recognition of his outstanding ability and successful work in the ministry. He is a close student of human nature, a great lover of people, and his messages are filled with many human interest stories gathered from his own experience with people. His friends

and members of his congregation would call him a "life situation" preacher -- a preacher of the practical gospel.

\* \* \*

### Over The Doorstep By C. B. Strang

The intriguing title of this volume is an indication of the unusual material that makes up its content. The author, who likes people, understands human nature, and is keenly observant, writes of his contacts with men and women who have helped him and those whose tragedies have warned him of the danger of evil.

These thirty-seven incidents are told in a chatty, informal style. They are not "preachy," yet each one has a definite message. They pulsate with the throb of human love and aspiration, hope and defeat.

For young people they are an inspiration as well as interesting reading.

For Preachers they provide a treasury of illustration and anecdote.

For any Christian they serve to stimulate a desire for personal evangelism, for they are replete with accounts of individual soul winning.

\* \* \* \* \*

### INTRODUCTION

To know the author of this book, Dr. C. B. Strang, is a rare privilege. To be associated with him in an official capacity or to be with him socially, or better still to converse with him as one friend with another is to have your mind stimulated, your spirit lifted, your soul enriched. I repeat, it is a rare privilege to know such a person and to be counted as his friend. There are too many morose, discouraged, cynical, fault-finding individuals. They leave you depressed and disheartened.

The title of this book intrigued me. Over the Doorstep! What beauties are there. What breathtaking sights! What thrilling sounds! What interesting people! What opportunities! What occasions for gratitude for the everyday blessings of life.

Our eyes are so often blind and our ears muted to the things that we have come to take for granted. The dignity and grandeur of a tree, the unspeakable charm of a wild flower, the thrill of a whippoorwill, the whistle of a wren. And in the still more important area of human relationships -- the barren, frustrated, bewildered, soul hungry, beaten lives that brush against you. Buried in the human heart are aspirations and seeds of achievement waiting to be encouraged. Just a bit of sympathetic understanding will "put the light in someone's sky." Dr. Strang is among that small group that sees, hears, sympathizes, understands, helps.

He writes of his experiences; of men and women who have helped him and whom he has endeavored to help. What a chronicle of human nature. What a cross section of life.

Reading the manuscript had for me a healing effect. It seemed good to be alive, to have a few staunch friends, to have an opportunity to rub shoulders with my fellows, to live and stroll along the highway of life and be a "friend of man."

P. H. Lunn

\* \* \* \* \*

## 01 -- OVER THE DOORSTEP IS HALF THE JOURNEY

I really never had a formal introduction to him. I saw him for the first time as I entered a large union revival meeting. He was sitting on the platform holding his Bible.

I had been taken to the meeting that night by a young man of my own age. He came calling me as I was finishing my evening meal. At first, I refused to go with him. Then he told me that he had been converted; that he was sorry for some of the things that had stood between us. He then asked me to forgive him. That was too much for me. Two boyish hands met in the darkening evening, and before long I was on my way to the meeting with him. He was a boy with whom I had sat on a bench at the union Sunday school. He had never had the advantage of even a complete grade school education. But he had enough sense to try to win someone else when he found Christ.

They were singing as we entered the great tabernacle that evening. I had never seen or heard anything like it. My church going had largely been to an "upper room" where sincere but very intolerant persons met to carry on their "meeting" without music or a preacher. Now I found myself in a great song service where thousands were singing.

Later, the preacher arose to preach. I do not remember his text. I know little of his outline. But I do recall one illustration he gave. It was certainly directed toward me. He told about a large vessel which had safely made a voyage from New York City to Liverpool, but, alas! after making it across the Atlantic it sank in the harbor. I remember the application he made. He said the vessel represented a young man in the audience who had had the advantage of Christian training. He had been reared by godly parents. He had been safeguarded by prayer, and had been brought very near to the harbor of heaven, but in spite of all this he would go down near the very door of heaven and be lost without Christ.

I knew the preacher was talking about me, but I could not figure out who had given him his information.

The evangelist then made the call to "hit the sawdust trail." Then it was that I felt a tap on my shoulder and heard a voice in my ear asking me to go. It was my companion urging me. But God was urging too. I yielded myself and took that first step toward God. An old Arab proverb says: "Over the doorstep is half the journey." I found it so that night. It was a long way to the front, but the first step was the important one. I reached up and took hold of that evangelist's hand -- the

man who had first reached me for Christ. Looking me squarely in the face he said: "God bless you, my boy." The sermon and his blessing were his contributions.

Shortly I found myself kneeling in the straw. A group of godly men were praying for me. It didn't take very long for me to confess that I was a deep-dyed sinner. God for Christ's sake forgave me and I arose to my feet a new man in Christ Jesus.

By the time I had prayed through the evangelist was gone. I have never seen him since. I have met only a few persons on my travels who have ever heard of him. I want to meet him in heaven. His contribution to me can never be estimated.

It was a great interdenominational meeting where I heard the message through which the Spirit spoke to my soul. The human agency was an itinerant evangelist. God moves in mysterious ways His wonders to perform.

It was not by accident that I was first brought to Christ. One never knows what he is doing by what he may consider a casual contact. One of my favorite bits of philosophy is this: "We are always doing better than we know." I owe an evangelist an eternal debt of gratitude.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 02 -- HE PRAYED AS HE SWAYED

I saw him the first time about forty years ago, when I sat as a little boy on the front seat of the old schoolhouse. He was the Sunday-school superintendent of a little union Sunday school.

He stood praying, and as he prayed he swayed. About the time it appeared that he would fall on his face he would catch himself and commence a backward movement which seemed destined to land him on the floor. But it never did.

It was all so interesting that I never thought of closing my eyes. But the most interesting part was not his swaying, nor was it the words he was saying. I can still remember some of them, and I caught the idea that he was praying for us boys and girls. But the shine on his face was remarkable. It was lighted up with what I learned years later was the glory of God. It appeared that he was talking to God, and in a very animated way. It was fascinating. I never took my eyes off him all the time he prayed. It had a strange effect upon me.

After the prayer he taught a class of little boys who were seated on rude benches in a corner. I was one of them. I can't say that his class was very orderly. In fact, it was just the opposite. It was composed of perhaps a dozen squirming, wriggling youngsters. They were the trial of the teacher's life. Many times, no doubt, he felt like quitting. A listener near his class might have heard him say something like this:

"Shelby, I want you to stop talking while I am speaking. Lewis, I want you to quit making spitballs during the lesson. I shall have to tell your father if you don't. Joe, you never seem to hear

what I am saying. I wish you would pay more attention. Clifford, you are the worst wriggler I have ever seen. Can't you sit still for even one minute?"

But the boys didn't behave any better. But I sure am glad the old gentleman had patience with them. He didn't know that he was teaching the present editor of a great church paper. He had no idea he was correcting a future president of a large college. He did not know that he was talking to an inattentive lad who would be instrumental in getting another boy in that class saved. He did not know that he was teaching the writer; but he was.

I did not appreciate him very much at the time he was my teacher. Nor did I appreciate him as I should have as I became a young man. But an increased estimation of value has come with the years. I look back upon him now as one of the greatest influences for good in my whole life. I lived to see other superintendents take charge of that school. I have had many other teachers of various kinds, but I have had none who has influenced my life as he did.

He loved to sing. He put life and spirit into his song leading. His special songs were inspirational. He taught us to sing congregational songs. At Christmas-time he took weeks to train us for our Christmas "entertainment."

He sent to various publishing houses for books on Sunday-school work. We received the benefit of his investment. He loved to give chalk talks. I can still remember some of the sketches he traced on the blackboard.

Years of training have gone by for me. I am now responsible for the training of children. But I scarcely know one thing we do for our boys and girls today that the good superintendent and teacher did not do for us then. Maybe he was ahead of the times. But I rather think that all he did for us was occasioned by the genuine interest he had in us.

I have heard many great preachers and have been influenced by them, but when I try to think of any person who has made an outstanding contribution to my life, I think of my first Sunday-school superintendent.

\* \* \* \* \*

### 03 -- SHAKING HANDS WITH THE PREACHER

I met him only once, and I shall never meet him again. I never learned his name. I would not know it if I heard it called. I would not know him if I were to meet him on the street. I know nothing whatsoever about him, and, yet, I am in his debt to such an extent that I shall never clear myself.

It happened this way. I knelt in the straw one night in a great revival meeting. It is true that some had not tarried for prayer after shaking hands with the popular evangelist. I would not have stopped for prayer either, except that a friend of my father's placed his hand on my shoulder and said, "Clifford, my boy, no one was ever saved by merely shaking hands with the preacher."

"I know I wasn't," I said. I was almost in tears as I said it, so heavy was my heart. "Kneel right here," said my friend.

I was wonderfully converted that night. I knew that my name was written in the Lamb's Book of Life, and that the pardon was written on my heart. The Spirit bore witness with my spirit that I was born again.

As I rose to my feet a personal worker approached me with a card in his hand. He wrote down my name and address.

"What is your church preference?" he inquired.

"I have none," I replied.

"What is the name of the church in your town?"

I had to confess that we had no church in our little village.

"But what is the nearest church to your home?" he persisted.

I couldn't think of the name of the nearest church. I was not the heathen that this might indicate. I was not lacking in training or in going to "the meeting," as my parents called it. This meant a seven-mile walk each Sunday, rain or shine. It meant going to an upper room and sitting outside "the circle." It meant that there was not one thing of interest provided for a young person, who must sit for over two hours in a most uninteresting service. Those who attended were good and most sincere, but there was little to command the attention of youth. No, at this time I knew little about an organized church, and absolutely nothing about any denomination. So I was at a loss to answer the query relative to the nearest church.

Just then a man approached a little closer. He had heard all the questions and the attempted answers. He was another worker. He is the man to whom I am everlastingly obligated.

"There is a little church at Terrace, and that is right near you," he said to me.

"Well, we will make it the Terrace church," said my questioner, and he wrote it on the card. I forgot that incident for two or three days.

"Son," said my mother, "there is a gentleman in the front room who wants to see you."

My caller said, "I am the pastor of the church at Terrace. I have your card expressing your preference for our church, and I want you to join."

I attended that church the following Sunday. I thought I was in heaven. The singing was wonderful and the sermon was the best I had ever heard. The next Sunday I joined.

I have been a member of the denomination represented by this church for over 32 years. It has been the church of my choice all that time. The church has meant much to me. I have been a pastor in it for over twenty years. I have ministered in it, but it has ministered to me.

How did it all happen? An accident? No! God worked it all out for me. Wasn't it wonderful that he had that man posted to hear those questions that night? One of the first things I'll do when I get to heaven is to ask the Lord who that man is. If there is any way in eternity to repay him, I'm surely going to work at the job.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### 04 -- A GODLY NEIGHBOR

I have known him as long as I have known any person living, and I have always had a wholesome respect for him. At first I was a little afraid of him. So were others my age as well as some who were a great deal older. There was a reason! We feared him because he was right and we were wrong. His very presence was a rebuke to sin. But he did not let it go at that. He fearlessly and openly denounced wrongdoing whenever and wherever he saw it.

I remember the day when he and his wife and two boys about my own age drove into the yard next door. This advent was to have a great bearing on my life, although I did not know it then.

When I became old enough to understand something about religion I learned that he had been converted from a sinful life. That is why he was so opposed to sin and so happy over salvation.

He became a teacher in our union Sunday school. Later on he was elected as its superintendent. Still later we heard that he preached sometimes.

After I had been converted the pastor who came to call on me told me that our neighbor was a member of his church. That settled it for me. I said: "If he is a member of your church I want to be, too." And I joined largely because of our godly neighbor. Just think of the difference it would have made if my neighbor had not lived right. I never would have joined his church, and, perhaps, might never have united with any church.

After my conversion I went along about as happily as anyone could. I enjoyed my regenerated experience for about a year, and then I refused to walk in the light. I rebelled against obedience, and shortly I was backslidden. Then followed a year which I wish I could erase, but like Pilate, I can only say, "What is written is written." Then one evening I came in from work to find a strange quietness pervading our home. Shortly, my oldest sister whispered to me: "The doctor says Mother isn't going to get better."

I was upstairs like a shot and kneeling beside her bed. It was worse than I thought it could be. She tarried for three or four days and left us. She had extracted a promise from each of us that we would meet her in heaven. I meant to keep mine.

The next Sunday evening as I stood in the kitchen of our home I said to my brother, "I am going to church tonight and go to the altar. Will you come with me?"

I shall never forget his sad expression as he said: "Go, by all means, and I wish I could go with you, but I can't."

The pastor was away that night and who should be preaching but the man who had been our next-door neighbor. We had moved a short distance, but still attended the same church.

He preached only to me that night. I couldn't wait until he finished to get to the altar. There I confessed my backsliding and poured out my poor broken heart. The neighbor preacher knelt beside me with the open Bible.

"Read this," said he.

I read, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9).

The preacher said to me, "God has made a bargain with you. He says He will forgive if you will confess. His part is to forgive; yours to confess. Do you believe that He would be just as quick to perform His part as you are to do yours?"

"Yes," I replied, "I believe He would."

"Then, who just got saved?" he asked.

I knew in a moment it was I. I arose to my feet a saved young man.

As my father and I walked home that night it seemed that my feet scarcely touched the ground. Though sad by bereavement, I was happy in the Lord. I was through with backsliding. It is a hard way to go.

The neighbor friend proved to be a great encourager of young Christians. He encouraged me to pray and testify. He helped get me established.

No wonder I love and respect him. He is one of the greatest men I have ever known.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 05 -- THE WORTH OF A MAN

I thought I did not like him when I first met him. He called me "Mr. Strang," and I did not like that, for I was only in my teens. His attempts to be extra nice only made me think less of him. Of course I was backslidden at the time and I wasn't liking any preacher very much. Later on I was to learn how foolish I was, for he had a heart of gold.

Yes, he was the new pastor of our church, but I was not attending and I did not want him to get very friendly. Soon a catastrophe happened that seemed to blot out the light of life. He was very kind to our whole family at that time. He ministered to the family and gave such a helpful message at my mother's funeral. Within a week of that time I was back in church, and within three months was not only saved but actively at work.

It was then that I learned the worth of the man. I knew by experience that it was not easy to be a Christian, but I had learned in the hard way how awful it was to be a backslider. I knew someone would need to help me and he proved to be the man. His sermons were practical and uplifting. His personal interest and advice were more so. His house was always open to the young people. Sometimes a young person was invited for a meal. The bill of fare might be meager, but his wife knew how to make it seem like a banquet feast. I have often wondered how they managed on the pittance they received. But those times of visiting in their home resulted in strength and courage.

He organized a young people's society. It was one of the very first in our movement. Never shall I forget those first meetings. He was always there to give guidance and direction. He sent for copies of a "Theological Compend," and taught us from this text. He was my first teacher of theology, and without a doubt my best.

Each summer, during the time of his pastorate, he put us to work. We bought a large gospel tent and we went to nearby towns and held meetings. Sometimes we engaged evangelists; at others, he did the preaching. My first attempt to lead the singing took place in one of these meetings. Groups of young people brought the special songs each evening. Others took up the offering. There was something for each one to do.

Unruly youngsters tore our tent. Many persons sneered at our efforts, but our leader encouraged us to keep on. Eternity alone will reveal the good done in those meetings. In helping others we ourselves were greatly helped. It always works that way. We hardly had time to backslide; we had found something so much better than worldly pursuits.

During the fall and winter we were encouraged to attend a mission in the city. Many times we walked both ways, a distance of about seven miles. The pastor and his wife were often with us and we counted it a pleasure to carry one of their babies.

As I look back it seems to me that he was the ideal pastor. Not the ideal in that he did not make mistakes, although we all thought he was perfect. He was ideal in that he took the right interest in the boys and girls. He was really a shepherd of the flock. We felt that he belonged to us. We were not afraid of him. He had a direct way of dealing with us. We felt good in his presence.

Many years have gone by since he was my pastor, but I have never allowed him to get outside the circle of my friendship and fellowship. I have driven hundreds of miles to be with him and always felt repaid for having gone. We are still "Cliff and Marie" to him, and that is the way we always want to be.

It seems that we are so busy today in many of our churches running a program that we cannot see the need of the struggling young man or woman. We save some but we lose more, and perhaps it is because we are not enough like Rev. L. W. Miller. He will always be recorded in my mind as the finest pastor a young man ever had.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 06 -- A DYNAMIC INFLUENCE

I met him for the first time about twenty-eight years ago. It was the spring before I was married, but the engagement was announced. He offered to perform the marriage ceremony without a fee, and he was on my side, because he saw no more point in waiting than I did. That is one reason why I liked him from the start.

He was engaged in saving a college out in Illinois that had got so far in debt it seemed as if the church would lose it. I didn't understand much about it at the time, but hearing his speech made me want to give a \$50.00 liberty bond. The whole church felt the same way. There was something about his appeal that was irresistible, and that coupled with his magnetic personality had us all convinced that we must do our best. I felt when he looked at me that he could read me through and through, and I was uneasy until the bond was delivered.

It wasn't long until he was around again saving a Publishing House in Missouri. Through his efforts they were both finally established.

But it was his preaching that thrilled me. He was the most dynamic person I had ever met. Through the Scriptures I had a pretty fair acquaintance with the prophets of old. But here was Moses and Joshua and John the Baptist all in one. I felt that I knew the apostles, but here were the sons of Zebedee, Peter, and Paul all flaming in one personality. When he said, "Thus saith the Lord," I knew it could be no other way.

My wife used to say to me, "Why can't you be more like he is?"

I wanted to, but knew I could never measure up to such a standard. I suppose I am not the only one who has suffered by such a comparison. In those days I had no idea of becoming a minister. But he made me want to be. I think he had a great deal to do with my call. When the call finally became clear enough so that I could understand it I accepted it.

Then I had an ambition that I hoped some day might be realized. I struggled through the course of study on the long way to ordination. I studied on the trains and streetcars. I even walked the highways with an open book in my hands. My wife helped me at home. After a time the course was completed.

At that time I was serving my apprenticeship with a little struggling church. It was located above a Chinese laundry in Butler, Pennsylvania. There were only a handful of members, but most of them were very good. They put up with me while I practiced preaching at them. Strangely enough, God honored it, and very satisfying, indeed, were the results. But to be ordained as a

minister! What a goal, and what a thought! If it was to be, there was one man that I wanted to do it. And sure enough he did.

I shall never forget that service in Warren, Ohio, a number of years ago. The charge was to the group, but I knew it was to me. The questions concerned each of the class, but I was sure that general superintendent could read the answers in my own heart. Had I not known I was divinely called I would have run from the scene that day. We were all impressed with his own sterling character on that occasion. Some of the words he said will never be forgotten by us.

I have admired him as he has presided in a district or general assembly. I have been helped by his talks to preachers. I have seen him stand as a bulwark of strength when some issue threatened the church. I have watched him perform the Herculean task of raising \$100,000.00 to save the church in a crisis. We have all seen the wisdom of his program for the whole church.

We have entertained him in our home, and there he was always more than a gentleman.

God in His wisdom gave to the Kingdom a man who was known and loved by many, Dr. R. T. Williams.

Recently He called him home. His loss is felt by thousands who were not members of his church. But while he has gone from this world his influence will linger for generations.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 07 -- THE OFFICE HE NEVER USED

I met him the first time on the Columbus Camp Meeting grounds. I was permitted to hear him preach there several times. He preached not only to my head but also to my heart. I thought he was the most able illustrator I had ever heard. He made me want to be a better Christian and a better preacher.

A few days later he was in my home and also preached in my church. He stayed all night with us and we were permitted to talk at length to him about our longings and aspirations.

Should I leave my present pastorate and go on to college? No, he didn't think so. He thought any man with a wife and two children would have a difficult time to work his way through college. But I had a little money, would that be enough? No, it wasn't nearly enough. Perhaps I would start and then be disappointed in the hardness of it and then quit. That wouldn't do! He thought if I could move to some college town and take some work that perhaps in time I could complete my college work.

He told me if I could get a Master's degree by the time I was forty that I would be doing well. Of course I was a little disappointed in his advice. I wanted to go to school right then. But he said my family was an important item, and I should not run away from my pastorate, for it was important too.

As he was a college president, I thought he would advise me to come right to college. But I lived to see the day when I thought he was correct.

The next move I made was to a college town. I didn't go there because it was. In fact, I was there almost a year before I became aware that the town had a college in it. On his advice I enrolled as a special student. He was a constant source of encouragement to me.

Although I had been out of school for sixteen years he insisted that I could master the work. Often he wrote and told me he would attend my graduation exercises. I was a long way from graduating when he commenced writing that. But strange to say, I at last entered my final year in college.

That summer I visited him in New England. A new administration building was under construction.

"Don't let anyone show you anything about that," he phoned me. "I want to do that myself."

The next morning he took my wife and me through the almost completed building.

"This will be my office," he pointed out. "The students will come in through that door next September, and after I interview them they will go out that door."

He was thrilled with the new building, and so were we.

He was never permitted to use it. September found him ill in a Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, hospital.

"You must come at once if you want to see him," a friend phoned me.

My church was ninety miles away. It couldn't be that he was only three hours from death! He had been in my home a week before. He looked the picture of good health.

Another phone call only confirmed the sad news given by the first. And yet there must be time for me to preach Sunday evening before going. I tried to preach that night, but couldn't do it. Finally I dismissed the audience, and my wife and I hastened to Pittsburgh.

He breathed his last as we stepped into that hospital. It was almost too much to bear. It seemed that there was very little in the future to live for without him. He had been the greatest influence in my life for Christian education. He represented to me everything that culture, education, and Christianity could give a man. He was one of the best friends a young man ever had.

I graduated from college nine months later. It was one of the happiest, yet saddest days I have ever lived. My thoughts were constantly of my departed friend.

Two years later I did get that Master's degree that he had so confidently predicted should be mine. But he lay silently sleeping a dozen miles away.

Whenever I think of a person who has profoundly influenced me, and changed the whole direction of my life, I think of my departed friend and brother, Dr. Floyd W. Nease. My prayer is that I may become more like he was, and that I may wield a corresponding influence.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 08 -- THE PATTERN IN THE MOUNT

He was short in stature but mighty in mind and soul. He made a lasting impression for good upon my life.

I saw him for the first time when I entered his classroom at college. He was a philosopher and logician. He was more than seventy years of age when I first met him. He had served a long time in China as a missionary. He was now back at his alma mater as a teacher.

He often said that only an old man should teach philosophy because age enabled one to attain a philosophy for his own life. This permitted one to give a transcript of his own experience.

I have often heard him tell his conversion experience to his class. As a young man, he knelt at the altar in a Methodist church. After confessing his sins and pleading for forgiveness the evangelist said to him: "Taylor, you must believe you have something you don't have, and immediately you believe you have it you will have it."

According to my old professor, it surely worked. He jumped to his feet a new man. I shall never forget how with radiant face he would say, "And that, ladies and gentlemen, sent me to Boston for preparation for the ministry; it sent me to China as a missionary, and it has brought me back to college as a professor. And it has been working for over fifty years."

He did a great work in China during the Boxer Rebellion. I have heard him tell of a native pastor by the name of Ch'en. He reached his charge just two months before the Boxers came. When he arrived the members advised him to flee. He replied: "I am the shepherd of this church. When all my members are safe, then I will seek safety." He delayed too long. As he was leaving the village the Boxers overtook him. They took all his goods. They beheaded his youngest son before his eyes.

The youngest daughter flew to her mother's arms, crying, "Oh, Mamma, what shall we do?" "We will go to heaven together," answered that brave woman.

They butchered the mother and daughter as they were locked in each other's arms.

One son, Wei-ping, was not with them that day. He, too, was a preacher. After the war he refused to accept an indemnity. When the bishop of the Methodist church asked him where he wished to go to preach he replied: "I would like to go and preach to those people who murdered my father and mother and sister and brother." That was all he asked and it was granted.

Such was the character of the converts of my professor.

Before he left he adopted a Chinese boy as his own son. Then his health broke down and he was forced to return home. On his way home he received this message from his boy: "I'm sorry you have broken down. I hope you will soon be better, and I hope you soon will be able to come back. But if you can't come back, remember I'm here, and I will do my best for Jesus Christ. Your loving son, Pao Hsin."

No wonder my old professor exultantly said: "Each night as I lie down to rest I thank God that he gave me that Chinese boy. As I lie down to sleep he is just getting up to go to work, and as he lies down to sleep I get up to go to work, and for twenty-four hours each day my Chinese boy and I are trying to do our best for Christ."

That is only one of the many investments he left in China.

Just before my graduation from college, and while I was attending my last class session, there came a knock on the door. There he stood with a book in his hand. "Strang," he said, "I just wanted you to have my book, "Some By-Products of Missions." He also handed me a photograph of himself. I have them before me now.

He bade me Godspeed and I felt his blessing on me as I left that institution. I shall never forget him, and I shall always appreciate the contribution he made to my life.

Not long ago I received this newspaper clipping: "Death has closed the colorful and exemplary career of Dr. Isaac Taylor Headland, one of the most outstanding alumni and teachers in the history of Mount Union College."

A flood of memories swept over me. I owe him much. But I firmly believe that death cannot end a life such as his. He lives on in the lives of those whom he helped here. And he lives on in heaven, where I hope to see him one day.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 09 -- I AM ALWAYS SON TO HIM

I saw him for the first time at one of the great gatherings of the church. He was making a speech in the interest of foreign missions. I thought he was a fine missionary himself. He impressed me as a man who was scrupulously honest. He appeared to have the light of battle in his eye and the love of God in his heart.

I never dreamed then that I would become his pastor, an honor which I have had now for several years. I have learned to know him intimately, and I have never been inclined to change my first opinion of him. I have known him in what might be called his old age. Life has not soured him; it has sweetened him more and more. He has not become old in spirit. He has not become tedious and boring. In fact, he is just the opposite.

He has been a great teacher of young people. For many years he occupied the position as head of a theological department. He was never ordained as a minister, but he was, and is yet, a mighty preacher of the gospel

At a time when many men would be seeking ease and comfort he is pouring his whole energy into his work. Until very recently he went out on tours and preaching missions. His strength will not permit that now. But he is kept extremely busy and he is very useful. He has the largest Sunday-school class in my church. It is no uncommon occurrence for him to have over seventy present. He takes no credit for this, but ascribes it all to the work of the members of the class.

Recently I made the statement that the energy of the Sunday school is not confined to the pastor, superintendent, or teacher of the class. It must find full expression in the pupils. He says his class has caught the vision, and they are doing the work. Of course we all know from whom they caught the vision and who has inspired them to work. His class is now raising \$60.00 each month for foreign missions.

It is inspiring to preach to him. He is one of my biggest boosters. I have never seen him asleep in church. He always sits on the front seat and encourages me. While I know that the sermon is very often below par, he always has something nice to say about it.

Recently I met him on the street. One of his friends had just gone to heaven. He said to me: "Wasn't God good to Brother Fanning to take him as He did? I want to go quickly when I go."

More recently I met him again. He commented on the day and reminded me that spring soon would be here to be followed by summer. And then I reminded him that summer would be followed by winter. "Not for me," he laughingly replied. "I won't be here next winter." When I protested that we wanted him for a long time yet, he said, "Why, the first thing I know you will want me to stay for the next general session of the church."

When I told him that was just exactly what I did want he informed me that he had been a delegate to every general session the church had ever held.

"Yes," I said, "and I want you for a delegate to the next one."

It wouldn't surprise me if he would make it.

He is absolutely unafraid of death, and he looks forward to it as the greatest adventure of his life. But he is not sitting down and folding his hands while waiting for it. He is working while waiting. He is eighty-four years young. But he is in church each Sunday, and rarely misses the prayer meetings. If he is not there I know he is ill. He is an inspiration to young and old. His testimony has a ring to it which lifts the students of our college church over many a hard place.

He is alert enough to be the district treasurer of a division of the church. The reports and funds are always in perfect order.

I am always "son" to him, and he is "Uncle Charlie" to me.

Earth has been made a brighter, better place because of his sojourn here. Many now rise up to call him "blessed." Heaven will be a more desirable place when he is finally translated.

It has been one of the greatest pleasures of my life to know Dr. Charles A. McConnell.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 10 -- THE MOST LOVABLE CHARACTER

I don't know that I ever had an introduction to him. I didn't seem to need one. In fact, I don't remember ever seeing anyone introduced to him. He seemed to know everyone. There was nothing strange about him. Instinctively everyone thought he knew him all his life.

He not only remembered faces but he could call more persons by name than any other man I have ever met. He seemed to belong to everyone. Even sinners liked to be counted as his friend. Yet he was one of the most fearless preachers I have ever heard.

I remember when I was a little boy hearing my father read from one of his books. He was relating how that while he was struggling with sinful principles he got so angry that he chewed a mule's ear. That made a deep impression on me. I did not know what he meant by that, but I was sure if he wished to be rid of it that it must be the thing to do. I wanted to meet the author of that book. Little did I know that in years to come he would preach in one of my churches and stay in my home. I did not know that he would live to know my children and become one of their favorites.

I remember the first time I heard him preach. It was in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. A group of us young people went in from Terrace to a meeting he was conducting. That was one of the greatest nights of my life.

I was to hear him many times after that, but I never did hear him without a consuming interest. He was the greatest Bible preacher I have ever heard. He knew more Scripture than any man I have heard preach. He was the most unique and at the same time the most able illustrator that I have ever seen in the pulpit.

I have read all his books. He had a knack of writing that is possessed by few men. Thousands of volumes of his books have been sold to persons of all denominations. It seems that they have a right to live always.

He became one of the most famous men in his church. He overcame tremendous handicaps. To begin with he was handicapped morally, physically, mentally, and spiritually. God undertook for him in each of these and he helped himself. God touched his soul and saved him.

God certainly healed him. He helped himself mentally. He was always a student. They did not want to give him a minister's license when he first applied. But he preached without it. What a mistake it would have been to continually fail to recognize his genius!

Some have thought of him as an ignorant man. So he was at the beginning of his ministry. But he did not remain ignorant. Far from it! He developed into one of the best educated men in his church. True, he did not have the schooling that some men have received. But he educated himself. He drew most of his knowledge from the most wonderful textbook in the world. He knew his Bible. He knew the doctrines of his church, and no man could confuse him about them. He knew men. He was one of the shrewdest men I have ever known when it came to reading character. Humbugs could not fool him. He could spot hypocrisy a mile. Opportunities could not take advantage of him. He was a highly educated man with the kind of education that few men obtain.

He was kindly in spirit. He loved everyone. Little children knew in a minute they had a friend in him. He was generous to a fault. He helped more young men through school than anyone will ever know.

He preached the length and breadth of the land. Thousands were brought to Christ through his ministry. He made money through his work, but he gave most of it away in a good cause.

Words fail to describe him. Time and space are inadequate to picture him. He was the biggest booster in the church. He was unique. There will never be another like him. I knew him over a period of more than thirty-five years, and I can truthfully say that Uncle Bud Robinson was one of the most lovable characters I have ever met.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 11 -- A PASTOR'S FRIEND

I saw him for the first time as he was leading the singing in a Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, church. He was a young man then, and so vigorously and enthusiastically worked at his task that he inspired others to join heartily in song. There was something about that church that was helpful to worship and singing. Great men had preached from the pulpit down through the years. As a young man, I had heard the best preachers in our country preach there.

I did not know in those days that I would become the pastor of that church years later. I did not know as I took my examinations for the licensed minister's course in the pastor's study that one day I would be preparing sermons in it myself. But it happened, and many years after I had seen the young man lead the singing, I made the pleasing discovery that I had become his pastor.

He was the song leader in the church, and while many years had gone by, he did it just as effectively as when I had first seen him.

I discovered also that he was the church treasurer and that he was a very efficient one, keeping a careful record of all receipts and disbursements.

He had a very important position with a great steel company, but while his duties demanded his presence and his energies, never did I know him to stay away from church because of his secular employment. He attended the church rain or shine. No day was too cold for him to be there, and the weather never became so hot as to keep him at home. During revival services he

never missed a night. HIS was always the first hand up to indicate that he would give to any worthy project of the church.

He was a Sunday-school superintendent and his heart was in it. Many times on Sunday afternoons I have traveled miles with him in his car to visit some delinquent member who lived out in the country.

He was a member of the church board and as such I never knew him to be anything but cooperative. When discouraging things came, and there were many of them, he always looked on the bright side. He was a pastor's friend and did his very best to stand by.

His home was always open for a pastoral visit. Many times I have gone there when I felt discouraged, but after talking with him and his equally exceptional wife, the burden seemed to lift and life seemed more worth while.

One evening after the Sunday service he asked us to gather around the altar and pray for him. He was not feeling well. I shall never forget that prayer meeting around the altar. God came upon him in a mighty way, and of course we supposed that God had touched his body and was going to make him well.

But such did not seem the case, for a few short days afterward he was in the hospital. There a noted doctor performed what we believed to be a successful operation.

He seemed to be getting along very well, but after about a week in the hospital he suddenly took a turn for the worse, and in a day or two the sad news came to us that he couldn't live. Hastening to his bedside I found him dying. The shock seemed to be almost too great to stand but in an hour or two he was gone.

It was not necessary for him to die to prove his worth to the church and to the city. Men and women had discovered that worth many years before.

Today he lies sleeping in the silent city of the dead not far from the church that witnessed his faithfulness and activity. I have often thought when I come to die that I would like my last resting place to be next to his.

His whole life represents to me that of a faithful lay member of the church.

So much of the success of our work lies with our ministry, but in looking at this we often forget the impossibility of carrying on our work without the help of such laymen as the friend I lost, M. C. Rollins. He was one of the finest Christian men it was ever my pleasure to meet.

May God bless our laymen everywhere and may they know that when they are sincere and faithful they are deeply appreciated by their friends, the pastors.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 12 -- DADDY, IS IT "A"?

I knew him when he was strong and hearty. He pastored a church of which I later on became pastor. I knew something of the burdens that he carried in that particular church -- burdens that were to take a great toll from him later on.

Several years later I became his pastor. Shortly after I arrived at my new field of labor it was suggested that I go to see him. I was more than surprised to see the change in him. He was in a wheel chair and was almost helpless. To see such a physical change in a man was shocking to say the least. He had suffered a stroke which had almost incapacitated him. He had great difficulty in talking, and occasionally he was compelled to write some of his words out to make them understandable. His wife and sister could understand him readily and it was a bit embarrassing to me because I couldn't, and it was also embarrassing to him.

As time went on his speech difficulty became so pronounced that we could not understand him at all. Then he had to communicate with us entirely by writing.

Later there came a time when he could not write. And yet he tried so hard to talk, but what he tried to say was just absolutely unintelligible. In an attempt to help him his wife would run down through the alphabet and find the letter he was trying to say. Conversation was rather slow, but nevertheless, he was determined to carry it on.

But still later not a sound he made was intelligible and then it became most difficult indeed to communicate with him. He tried so hard to talk but he could scarcely make a sound. His wife would say, "Daddy, is it A?" and when he would shake his head then she would say, "is it B?" and then another shake of his head, "is it C?" Perhaps the word he wanted to say would commence with "C" and he would nod in the affirmative. Then down through the alphabet she would run again to get the next letter. Working patiently this way she would spell out the word he wanted to say, and finally they would be arranged into a sentence. I shall never forget the grateful looks and the beautiful smile he would bestow upon us when we finally succeeded in learning what he was trying to say to us. It appeared that it was all worth the effort.

As time went on he was confined to his bed, and while there he could not communicate to us in any way. But he continued to smile and perhaps that was the best means of communication after all.

After many months there came the message one day that he had been transported to the land where speech would never be denied him. He was taken to that land where he could join in a song with Moses and the Lamb evermore. It was both sorrowful and glorious.

To me he represents an outstanding case of one who could have patience and endurance in extreme suffering. I do not know that I have ever seen a man suffer more and take it so uncomplainingly. The testimony of both his wife and sister was that they had never heard him complain. I do not know that I ever saw a stronger man brought down to such weakness. There are some individuals who have never had very good health, and they have apparently learned how to

suffer. But to see a great strong man brought down to a position of suffering and weakness is something else. And yet he suffered it all for the glory of God.

I'm wondering how many of us would go through such suffering and such denial without complaint.

Yes, we had prayed many times for his healing. I am a great believer in divine healing. I have seen God heal some almost impossible cases. On the other hand, I have seen many who have had to suffer. I cannot understand the workings of God, and I am not called upon to explain them all. But it does seem to me that the greater miracle is not the miracle of healing but the miracle of patience, endurance, and suffering.

His wife and sister were sufferers along with him. Perhaps his suffering affected them more than it did him, although they were uncomplaining about it too. But whenever I think of one who suffered and was perfected by suffering, I always think of my good friend and brother, Rev. R. J. Kiefer. If ever I am called on to suffer I trust that I may exemplify the same beautiful spirit that he had and do it all for Jesus' sake.

\* \* \* \* \*

### 13 -- TOO LATE WITH LOVE

I knew the man of whom I write over a period of more than forty years. I was reared in the same community with him. I attended the same church, and sat in the same Sunday-school class with him more than once. I have eaten at his table many times. I only say this to say that I knew him very intimately indeed.

One day I received a long distance telephone call informing me that his wife had died suddenly. After preaching in my church on the Sunday morning that I received the message, we went by car to a city one hundred miles away. We stopped at a home a mile or two away from the home of sorrow, and there we were told that this man was taking the death of his wife in such a way that they were afraid that it was affecting his mind. We went on to the home where his wife lay cold in death.

I shall never forget as we approached the home that I saw him outside the gate. As my car neared the homestead he started to run to it, and before I could even get out of it I heard him wail: "Oh, Cliff, I did love her, I did love her."

I did not understand the meaning of these words when he first said them. I took him by the hand and extended my sympathy to him. We cried a bit together. And then we went into the house where she lay in death.

I shall never forget the scene around that casket. He threw himself down beside it and in words that seemed to echo throughout the house he wailed again, "Oh, I did love you, I did love you." It was a scene full of sorrow and bitterness.

I prayed as I was on my knees by that cold form, and scalding tears ran down my face. It was then that I believed I knew the meaning of the words of the man in sorrow. He was voicing out to his companion who had been called to the great beyond the fact that he did love her. He was thinking of the many, many times that he might have told her so while she lived.

There isn't any doubt in my mind that he did love her, but there were many times when it looked as if he didn't. There were more times when he should have told her that he loved her and didn't. He was remembering on his knees by her casket these times, and now as if to make reparation for the past he is crying out in agony of soul, "I did love you, I did love you."

This incident reminds me that the man that I knew so well was too late in voicing his love. Love is something that should be voiced in life. When death comes it is entirely too late to voice it. All the sorrow we can manifest will avail us little.

This sad occurrence brings to my mind the story of Jock of Aberdeen. Jock, a wayward young man, in spite of his mother's protest, went by ship to Australia to seek his fortune. For many long years he did not write to her and neither knew whether the other was alive or dead. Contrary to how things usually turn out, Jock at last struck it rich in Australia, and decided to return home. After having once made up his mind he could hardly wait to get home. Arriving in port he went out to look for his mother at the old homestead, only to find it closed. A kind neighbor volunteered to show him where his mother was but told him that he would have to wait until the next day as the dusk of evening was then falling. The next day they went along the highway for some distance and finally turned off. When they came to a silent city, the neighbor went up to a mound and pointing down to it he said to Jock, "Jock, there is where your mother is." Jock threw himself across her grave and cried out in anguish of soul, "Oh, Mother, I did love you." But the protestation of his love came too late. She had been neglected for years and now her deaf ears could not hear him.

I hope someday that I may be able to forget the scene of my friend crying at the casket of his wife. But it all came too near home to me to expect that soon. Whenever I meet a man today who is not as kind to his loved one as he might be Or who shows evidences of being careless about manifestations of his love, I am always reminded of the person whom I met whose love was voiced too late.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 14 -- STEALING HIS GROCERIES

He knew his Bible but he did not know God. What a strange statement to make, but it is nevertheless true of a man who was a member of a church that I pastored many years ago.

He would sit intently listening to me preach on Sunday, with his Bible in his hands. It made no difference to which scripture I referred, he could turn to it immediately. In fact, he did not need to turn to it in his Bible, he could turn to it in his mind. He seemed to have the whole Bible memorized. I do not believe I have ever met another man who knew his Bible like he did.

He had no use for Moffatt or the American Revised version, and if ever I read from them he just sat there sadly shaking his head. He loved the King James version and he must have known at least three quarters of the Bible by heart. Let me so much as get one word out of place and he would corner me immediately after the service and remind me that I had either not quoted correctly or I had not read accurately.

He was a teacher of a Sunday-school class, and he was a good one. He was not a preacher, but worked in one of the great factories near where I pastored. He told me that he had several patents to his credit. I had no reason whatsoever to doubt that he was looked up to by his employer.

Yes, he was a smart man, and he knew his Bible, but he did not know God. I am sure of this statement because I know that he did not get along in his home. His wife didn't think he had religion, and his children had little respect for him. This might not seem conclusive, but let me give you another reason why I believe he was not a Christian.

After having lived in our community for a long time, and having purchased his groceries at one store over a long period of time, he suddenly moved out of the neighborhood owing the groceryman about four hundred dollars. After some months of trying to locate him the groceryman came to me offering a complaint about him. He told me that he had found him but the man who was a member of my church had no inclination whatsoever to pay.

Now I come back to my former statement, he knew his Bible but he was not a Christian; he did not know God. Christians either pay their bills or they make a desperate effort to do so. Certainly, they are not careless concerning them. But this man was careless, and evasive. Therefore, I do not believe that we can put him in the category of the Christian.

He represents to me one of the biggest paradoxes of my life. A man who seemed to be fervent in spirit, and not only knew God's Word, but had a love for it. And yet he was just absolutely dishonest.

It all leads me to say that a knowledge of God's Word is not enough. It only brings condemnation upon the individual to know God's Word and not obey it. The man of whom I speak will have to meet his misdeeds at the judgment. He will be judged out of the very Book that he knew so well. While reading and memorizing the written Word he left out the living Word from his heart. How sad that is!

No, I do not say there are many like him. I am not in a search for hypocrites in a church. Praise God there are many hundreds of honest men for every one who is dishonest. There are some who do not know their Bible as well as the man of whom I write, but they know enough of Bible to get hold of one promise, and plant their feet squarely upon it, and believe in it with all their hearts. Because of this they have had their hearts and lives transformed.

Memorizing verses in the Bible is a wonderful thing, but obedience to the commands of the Book is much better.

I met a man who knew almost the entire Book, and yet broke one of the Ten Commandments in that he was guilty of stealing his groceries.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 15 -- SAYING GOOD-BYE TO GOD

I remember a night when a young man decided to say good-bye to God. He said the good-bye most effectively, and very definitely.

In the early days of my Christian experience our young people's society bought a tent, and conducted meetings at different locations on a radius of several miles from our church. Sometimes our pastor did the preaching, and at other times we hired evangelists. Sometimes members of our young people's society led the singing. Almost all of them sang in the choir. Others were ushers; some took up the offering. There was a definite work for each to do.

Eternity alone will reveal the good that was done in these summer meetings. In the first place, they helped all of us young people. They helped us to get nearer God and to receive better Christian experiences. In the second place, we succeeded in winning some souls to God. And in the third place, we set a pattern of activity that some other young people's societies followed later on.

During one of these meetings one of our young men was desperately convicted of sin. He tried for nights to fight it off, only to find that he was more and more convicted. I remember the preacher who was doing the speaking on a certain night. He well knew how to put in the gospel plow very deep. After his altar call on this particular night there was some response, but the young man of whom I write stubbornly held back and would not go to the altar.

A group of us young people were walking to the streetcar after the meeting. As we stood waiting for our car the young man came by. As he saw us he looked over at us and said, "Well, I settled it tonight." Some of us stepped forward to offer our congratulations on the fact that he had settled it, but we drew back when we got closer, for there was a look on his face that indicated that he had settled it otherwise than we had first thought. What he meant was that he had settled that he would not become a Christian. He settled it in such a way that he had told God that he wouldn't be a Christian that night nor would he ever be one.

Such a decision is an awful one, but nevertheless, that is just exactly what this young man did. He said good-bye to God definitely and emphatically.

I kept in touch with him for many years after his fatal decision that night. Never again did I see him under conviction. I have seen him go to church and sit under the closest preaching and smile and laugh and sneer. From that night on I never knew him to make one move toward God. He had settled it.

One night I saw him light a cigarette in the vestibule of our little church following an evangelistic message and an invitation to the altar.

Yes, I believe that one can say good-bye to God. I do not believe that God says good-bye to an individual. But I do believe that many an individual has said good-bye to God in such a definite manner that he never gets back to God again. He can say good-bye to God and harden his heart in such a way that God cannot get near him. He can say adieu to God in such a way that his ear becomes leadened and he does not hear God calling him. I believe that the last voice that a man ever hears calling to him with regard to salvation is the voice of God. It is never God's fault if an individual does not yield.

In all my experience I have never met another individual whom I thought had crossed the deadline. But somewhere in these United States there is a man about my own age who, in my opinion, has definitely crossed that line from which there is no return. He walked away from God one night settling that he would never, never, never, touch Him again. Talk about the effect on his character when he did that! The effect was terrific.

I write about him now in order to warn other young men and older ones too that it is a dangerous thing to say "no" to God. It is a wonderful thing to give one's heart to God in full surrender; it is the best thing that one can ever do.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 16 -- SIN THE DECEIVER

When I First knew him he was one of the finest Christian boys I ever met. He had been converted early in life but, nevertheless, from a life of sin. But his conversion was genuine and I never saw a young man who enjoyed the benefits of salvation more than he.

I was a few years older than he and he just sort of adopted me as his elder brother. Many times I was invited to his home. His mother was always happy to have me come, for she thought I had a good influence on her son. As a result, I ate many meals with them. Sometimes I would stay all night with him. Those times were always occasions of reading God's Word together and praying. We enjoyed reading and praying together so much.

We were both in the young people's society back in those days and I remember on one occasion especially, when he was to lead a meeting, he couldn't decide what he would read from the Bible. I remember how we got on our knees together and asked God to give him a message. I do not remember now the chapter that God seemed to indicate that he was to read, but I do know that he made a happy selection. I know that he gave a wonderful talk in young people's society on that particular night, a talk given with shining eyes and glowing face.

We traveled along together for quite a long time in those days. We were both unmarried, and we saw much of each other. But in the course of time I married, and that sort of took me away from him.

Shortly after I was married he started to slip a bit. I was concerned over it, and occasionally talked to him. But definitely he was running with the wrong crowd, and it was not

long before he was entirely backslidden. What a blow that was to me and to the others who loved him. And what an awful shock it was to his own mother.

As time went on we drifted farther and farther apart. He did not come to church at all. The next thing I knew he was not only smoking but drinking. He had married and had had trouble in the home and had separated from his wife.

Years went by and then to my consternation I was told that he was picked up one night on the street in a drunken condition. When placed in the cell of the police station he took his belt and put it around his neck and fastened it to some support in the cell. It was only the fact that the belt broke that prevented him from taking his own life.

The above incident seemed to have a sobering effect upon him, and for some time he went straight. He applied himself to his trade, and he was very proficient at it. Many remarked concerning the change there was in him. But it didn't last long. He went back to his old habits.

Becoming ill he was taken to a hospital and seemed to be getting along all right. But when the nurse was absent from the room on one occasion he broke his drinking glass and slashed his wrists with it. They found him dead.

I cannot tell you the effect that had upon me. To think the boy I loved had died by his own hand. I had eaten with him, I had slept with him, I had prayed with him, and many times had walked to the house of God with him.

I am conscious of a keen personal loss even as I write this, years later. I am thinking now of the times when I have heard him pray. I never heard a young man who could pray heaven and earth together like he could. I have seen him at times in prayer when he became so earnest and interested that he would rise to his feet from his knees and stand with hands upraised to heaven. To think that a young man who got so very near heaven finally and eternally missed his way. It is one of the saddest things that has ever come to my own life.

In my present position I am dealing with young men each day. They are students of a fine college. Often as I look over the student body I am saying to myself, "I remember a young man who was just as fine as anyone here. But he missed the way, and died a suicide."

Sin is an awful thing, and I hate it. It will take the best and make the worst out of it. A lovely young man whom I knew intimately died by his own hand because he was deceived by it.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 17 -- THE PRICE OF LUST

I met him first when I was working in the physical testing laboratory in a great steel works. As he approached the place where I was working I could hear his profanity. In fact he became known to me as one of the most profane men I had ever met. He could scarcely say a dozen words

without taking the name of God in vain. While I was not a Christian I remember how I shuddered to hear his utter lack of respect for God.

Later on our positions were somewhat reversed, and I was called upon to go to his place of business to do work. There I found him no different from what I found him years ago. He was still a profane, wicked man. While he was very profane in mind he seemed to be very well physically. As I remember him in those early days he was what might be called a physical giant. But how quickly physical health can disappear when one violates the body.

One day a young man who was studying and preparing himself to become a doctor asked me to go with him to visit this man. I went with him and in so doing I received one of the greatest shocks in my life. He was only a shadow of his former self. Words cannot describe his physical condition. I did not know until we had left the home that evening just what his real condition was. On the way home my doctor friend told me what had happened to him. He was suffering from locomotor ataxia, a disease which is caused by engaging in awful sin. My friend told me that he was in the last stages of it and in his opinion he had not long to live.

Sure enough, the opinion of my friend was verified and in a few short weeks the man whom I had known as a physical giant and as a profane man had passed away. I attended his funeral, and while there I had a feeling of sadness and revulsion. I looked at his beautiful home, and saw again his pleasant wife and fine children. I could not help thinking that here was a man who had many blessings of life given him, but who, like Esau of old, sold it all for a morsel of pottage. He jeopardized all that he was worth to dabble in sin. He lost everything that he held dear including his own life. He found out like many thousands of others have that sin does not pay.

When I think of his life I think of it as being given for the price of lust.

I think of the night that I talked to him when I accompanied my friend to his bedside. There were evidences that night of repentance, and of sorrow, but it was a sorrow and repentance that came too late. After a man has taken all that is worth while and squandered it away in sin and lust, he cannot expect to recover it again. Yes, it would be possible for God to forgive a man who did those awful things, but the fact remains that he paid with his life for his sinfulness.

I am wondering if some of the young men and women, as well as older ones, who might read these lines might not profit by them. I trust that they might wave the red lantern of danger across the pathway of any who might be inclined to lust and wickedness.

I talked to a noted doctor in our city a few days ago who advised me that he had treated scores of men and women for diseases similar to the one that my former friend had. He insists that they come to him from all walks of life.

I am inclined to learn something from the misspent life of the man who died with a dreadful disease. When cheap temptation comes I am impelled to scorn it because I know something of the penalty attached to it. "The wages of sin is death."

\* \* \* \* \*

## 18 -- STICKING IN WITH THE BOSS

I cannot have respect for a double-crosser. I one time met a man, in fact worked with him, who would double-cross his fellow workmen, and carry tales relative to them to his employer and theirs, in order that he might better establish himself with the boss.

Now there was a reason why he needed to strengthen himself with the boss. Most of the men with whom he worked had had some technical training, and knew how to do their work very well indeed. He was absolutely devoid of any sort of background of training which would give him a fitness for his position. So the only thing he knew to do was to undermine his fellow employees and to endeavor to build himself up. That is one of the most despicable things any man could do.

I have known him to make long distance calls from some far-off city into headquarters informing the boss that there wasn't need for as many men at a certain plant as had been sent there. He would suggest that one or two might be taken from there and be used somewhere else. This built him up with the boss as one who was in favor of reduced expenditures. Perhaps a man would be dismissed permanently on account of one telephone call like this.

I have known him to find a piece of defective material and I have seen him carry that defective material a couple of hundred miles to headquarters, and there show it to the boss, and pass it off as the careless work of one of his fellow employees. He would tell the boss that if it hadn't been for him and his finding it that it would have been in a shipment of goods going halfway round the world. This would build himself up and tear the other fellow down.

When you think that the man who was in charge of these particular projects was just the kind of a man to solicit that kind of information you can readily see that it made it quite hard on the other employees. I have known that boss to send this particular man out on expeditions in which he would spy not only on employees but on manufacturers. That is getting pretty low indeed.

And yet over the world today there must be a lot of "yes men." I have seen them in all walks of life. I have even seen them in the ministry. Not ever having been one, it is a bit difficult for me to have patience with them yet today.

We will call the name of the subject of this article "Slim." He was very lean and slim, and as subtle as Cassius of old. I never see undermining and double crossing to any extent today that I do not think of Slim.

Internationally we have seen the despicableness of a man by the name of Quisling who attempted to sell his entire nation to the Germans. His name has become synonymous with all that is despicable and low down.

Yes, it is a nice thing to be in with the boss if one can get in with him by doing his work honestly and well. It is a fine thing to be on good terms with the boss, providing that can be obtained by being companionable and understanding. But I wonder what one thinks of himself as

he faces himself in the glass if he has been guilty of tearing down another man in order to build himself up?

Generally speaking I have found bosses to be big men. As a rule they do not want men such as I have described above working for them. The thing that recommends the church to me is the small amount of such proceedings going on within denominations.

Slim became one of the most unpopular men I have ever known. The men with whom he worked were not Christians. They were capable of expressing all the degrees of hatred that may be found in the human heart. I often wondered how Slim could take it. He ate alone. He walked the street alone. He had no companion nor did he deserve one because he was the man who sneakingly kept in with the boss.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 19 -- HE STOLE TO BUY DRINK

Any man who wilt steal from a church has just about reached the lowest strata of human society. And yet I knew a man who did that. I knew him very well indeed. I knew that he stole from a gospel tent. It was like this.

One summer we were holding revival meetings in a tent near the little town in which I then lived. One evening we found to our surprise that our little portable organ was missing from the tent. We were filled with consternation for that was our only source of melody. We held our services that night without music.

The next day we learned what had happened to our organ. A man in the village who was so thirsty for whiskey that he would steal almost anything had come into the tent and taken it. That organ must have weighed about one hundred pounds, but in spite of that he carried it a distance of about five miles to a neighboring town and there he pawned it to get money with which he bought liquor. We succeeded in locating it and getting it back again. But what would you think of a man who was so low that he would steal an organ from a church in order to satisfy the carnal cravings for drink?

Doesn't that show the awful hold that liquor gets upon a man? Perhaps he deserved our sympathy as well as our criticism.

When he was not drinking he was a fine man with a good trade. I have seen him work skillfully all day long.

He had many sterling qualities among which was a big heart. He would share his last dime with anybody. But when the craving for drink took hold of him there was no telling what he might do.

He had a splendid father and mother, and came from a fine family, but he was a slave to a terrible habit. They tried in every way to shield him in some of his wrongdoings, but in spite of all

their carefulness, periodically something like this would advertise him unfavorably in the neighborhood.

How foolish for any young man or woman to put anything to his lips that will develop a habit within him that will so master him that he becomes a disgrace to his family and to his community. But that is the potential in every glass of beer or liquor. It seems smart to some to imbibe. They are afraid that they will be looked down upon by others of the group if they do not take the friendly glass. But looking back over my life I can't think of one individual who took the social glass that stopped there.

It is Alexander Maclaren who says that it is easier to find a man who has never done a thing at all than to find a man who has done a thing once and has not done it twice. Once always calls for twice, and much always calls for more.

There is only one source of safety with regard to the drink habit and that is to leave it entirely alone. The warning against it must be taken seriously, and it must be taken in time.

I remember the man of whom I write when he was just a very young man, with a clear eye and a steady hand. If one had gone to him then and said that he would one day become a drunkard, I imagine that he would have flared up and denied the prophecy. But he took the social glass, and then found out that he had started down the hill and could not reverse his direction.

It seems to me that anyone that is cursed by the habit of drinking has only one source of help, and that is found in Jesus Christ. There is nothing else that can act as a cure. But thanks be to God, for the gift of His Son in this world. For by and through that Son we may have victory over every sin in the catalogue.

Yes, I knew a man who stole in order to buy a drink. But I know members of that same family who had been cursed by the same habit who were gloriously delivered through the grace of our Lord and Master. "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve."

\* \* \* \* \*

## 20 -- SITTING IN JUDGMENT

I met a very pleasing gentleman on the train one day. By very skillful questioning he found out that I was a preacher and without telling me who he was he found out many things about my church.

After the conversation had been going on for some time, I pinned him down, and extricated the fact from him that he was the president of a very fine college. No, he was not ashamed of it. He was just withholding that fact until he had found out all he could from me.

He invited me to accompany him to the diner. I did so and we both enjoyed our meal together. So interested were we in our conversation that it was necessary for the waiter to come by

and put a little placard on the table indicating that there were other passengers also on the train who might wish to be served dinner. We took the hint and retired back to the parlor car.

He rode with me to my destination, which happened to be Oklahoma City. He was on his way to Texas to give some lectures.

Now there isn't anything strange about meeting a gentleman on the train who wants to talk about the church. I have met many such. However, I must hasten to add that I have seldom met a more charming, affable gentleman than my companion of that ride. But the reason I write about him at all is this. He found out much from me about my church, but he had drawn some conclusions, which were very definite, about our denomination before he ever met with me. And, I am happy to record that they were very fine conclusions. I had had nothing to do with them. But I will tell you who had influenced him. It was one of our preacher boys who attended his college. All unknown to that preacher boy the president of that school had been watching his life. He had been watching to see if his actions measured up to the high standards that his church claimed. He had been watching his scholarship and I am very happy to tell that the president of the school was delighted.

Now that seems to me to be most important. A president of a school watches a student in his school and makes his deductions relative to a whole denomination. And there is nothing peculiar about that. I presume that many men have judged a denomination by the actions of one man.

I read the other day that Roger Babson, the great financial prognosticator, judged the whole Japanese nation by a Japanese servant whom he employed. Because of the conduct of that one Japanese manservant Roger Babson came right out on a limb and prophesied that the war in the Pacific would end shortly and that the boys would be home in a few short months. Now that seems to be presumptuous but Mr. Babson did not think so.

He said that his Japanese manservant was an expert at preparing meals for any definite number of persons, but if at the last moment Mr. Babson informed him that there was one extra guest, it threw him into confusion. In other words his blueprint had gone wrong.

Mr. Babson went on to say that the blueprint of the Japanese nation had been harmed and that they did not know what to do. Therefore, because they only knew how to follow set plans and blueprints, and that inasmuch as these had been marred by our aggressiveness, the whole Japanese nation was in confusion. By now we know that Mr. Babson was entirely correct.

The president of a school judged a church by one student. Because of that he was glad to talk to another preacher from that church on the train.

It is just possible that some man either in high or low estate is watching each of us. It behooves us to be at our best for the Master. We all want our particular church to find favor in the minds of men. We are the only ones who can make it do so. Each has some measure of responsibility in connection with this.

I met a man who would listen to me tell about the achievements of the past of my church, and of the program for its future, because he had been influenced by a student in school. I left the gentleman of the train ride feeling that he could go out and be a booster of our denomination as well as his own.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 21 -- DOES PAIN EXIST?

The gentleman who sat across the table from me at dinner seemed both cultured and refined. We thought it worth while to exchange introductions. Of course I told him I was a preacher and he advised me that he was a lecturer. The conversation promised to be interesting and it was.

Like a good many other members of his sect he was glad to advertise it and to tell me what they believed and why.

I commanded his attention immediately when I told him that I had seen the beautiful temple erected in honor of Mother Eddy in Boston, Massachusetts. I informed him that I had gone through it and had seen what she called her scripture on the wall. He was a strong defender of her and of his faith.

Early in our conversation he denied the existence of pain and suffering. He told me that these merely existed in the imagination of man, and had no place in his religion. So I thought I would test him out.

Being of a practical turn of mind I said to him, "Suppose now that you should spill your cup of coffee on your arm there. Do you mean to say that you would deny the existence of pain?"

Hesitatingly, he admitted that for a short time he would feel discomfort, but in a little while his mind would triumph over matter to such an extent that he would not feel it at all.

Looking at him I said, "You cannot get rid of reality by merely denying it. If pain exists it exists, and your saying that it has no place in your religion does not take it away. And even if for only a little while you felt it then there must be such a thing as pain."

Well, he guessed that perhaps there was pain, but if pain did exist it was possible for the mind to triumph over it.

"Now," I said to him, "you say that your wife is visiting in the East. Coincidentally, my wife is visiting in the East also. But suppose while we are eating at this table someone should rush in with a telegram for me informing me that my wife had died, what do you suppose my feeling would be?"

Before he could reply I asked him, "But supposing it was your wife who had died and the Western Union boy rushed in with a telegram for you telling you that your wife had met with a fatal accident in the East, do you suppose that that would cause you anguish and mental suffering?"

Well, he said that by this time tomorrow he would be over anything like that. Yes, it would affect him for a little while but he could get the victory over it through his religion.

"Then," said I, "there is such a thing as suffering after all. The body may suffer pain and so may the mind and soul. It is one thing to say that it doesn't exist when you think in terms of general principles, but when it comes right home to you, you do admit it."

Then I said to him, "If you want me to agree with any part of your religion you must be fair enough to make admission to some of its weaknesses. You have just been telling me that it is the greatest religion in the world. But I have tried to point out some of the fallacies of it. Now I do not doubt that there is a lot of good in your religion, but the only way that you will get me to accept the good is to be logical and not evasive."

Now I know as well as the reader of these lines that I did not convert that Christian Science lecturer. But I believe that I made him think along some other lines. Perhaps he had heard every argument that I advanced many times before. Be that as it may, he did not know the correct answers to the questions I asked him.

There is a lot of fallacy in the world today but thank God there is a lot of truth. The religion of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ recognizes suffering. Sometimes it is God's plan to remove our suffering and at other times it is His plan to give us grace to bear it.

I am convinced that there is no value in closing our eyes to the actual and factual, but there is wonderful blessing in taking it all to Jesus and having Him share it all with us.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 22 -- UNSUCCESSFUL REPENTANCE

She came crying down the aisle one Sunday morning at the conclusion of the service. I had just received seventeen boys and girls into membership. These boys and girls had been converted in combined services of the Sunday school and morning worship on Sunday morning. Some of them had come from very sinful homes. After visiting each one of their parents and getting permission in each case we decided to take them into church membership.

There had been a little difference of opinion as to whether boys and girls should be taken into the church at the age of ten or eleven. In this particular church they were not in favor of receiving them until they were sixteen years of age. But God had wonderfully converted this group of boys and girls, and I thought that they should be made members of the church. The boys and girls in each case had shown a desire to unite.

After thinking and praying about the matter for some time I decided that I would receive them into membership. I shall never forget how God came on the scene the Sunday morning we received them. God seemed to put His approval on the idea of church membership for saved boys and girls. Any in the audience who might have been opposed to taking boys and girls into the

church seemed to forget their idea that morning, and while the service was going on they were quite broken up and seemed to give assent to the procedure of the pastor.

But now the service had concluded and one of the dear sisters of the church, a very dear friend of mine, was so impressed with the service that she came down to tell me about it. With tears streaming down her eyes she said, "Oh, Brother Strang, I have been opposed to taking boys and girls into the church at such an early age. But God showed me my mistake today. If I had not opposed it perhaps all my own children might have been saved and in the church today. What can I do?"

As a matter of fact, there was nothing that this dear lady could do about it. There is such a thing as an unsuccessful repentance. She had taken a position many years before which had resulted in her own children being denied membership in that particular church. There was nothing then that could be done about it. I hasten to add that they were all fine young men and women when I was pastor. I never met children who loved their mother and father more than they. They seemed to have a great deal of appreciation for me too, but they were not members of the church.

It seems to me that the inalienable right for each saved boy or girl is that he should become a member of the church and live his life out through the church. It seems to me that in this day we have a greater opportunity to round up the boys and girls than ever before and bring them into the church. Personally, I know no better way, and almost no other way to carry on the work of the church than to get the boys and girls saved and into its membership. This is a sure and certain way to build up any church.

Of course some boys and girls will backslide if taken into membership. The question comes then, "What can be done about them?" Well, as a matter of fact, adults backslide too, sometimes, after uniting with the church. What can be done about them? In each case the thing that can be done is to go to them and to pray with them and try to win them back to the Lord again. It is safe to say it will always be easier to win boys and girls back to the Lord after they have backslidden than it will be to win back adults.

It is not enough to get boys and girls into membership. But after receiving them we are to put arms of love around them and do all we can to keep them in the church. This is the method I am sure Christ would wish us to employ with the boys and girls today. All around about us there are unsaved boys and girls who do not attend Sunday school or church. It is our business to get them in and to get them saved and get them into church membership.

I shall never forget the dear sister coming down the aisle weeping. Her heart was broken, because she had seen the mistake of former years. No finer Christian lady ever lived than she, but like a great many other persons she had lost her children to God and to the church. Weeping about a mistake that was made twenty years before would do little or no good. With many, it is not too late to correct this mistake. This is the day and this is the time that we should be alert to the fact that boys and girls can be reached and can be brought into fellowship with Christ, and can have a place in the church.

There is no greater error than to say that the boys and girls of today are the church of tomorrow. They are the church of today!

Let us be sure that we are not placed in the position of the good sister in the East who cried after it was too late because her children were not saved and in the church.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 23 -- TIMELY ADVICE

A retired Presbyterian elder came to see me one morning. He was past eighty years of age and that he had lived not only long but well was written all over his countenance.

He had attended my church the evening before, and was very much impressed with the service. In fact, he had come to pay a pledge of one dollar that he had made that evening. He complimented the evangelist's preaching. He had some fine things to say about the music and singing. He even had a compliment for the pastor. He said he would be glad sometime to return to my church.

After about a fifteen-minute chat he declared that he would have to be on his way. "Before you go," said I, "give me a little bit of advice. Surely, a man who has lived as long as you have, and who has been in the ministry as long as you, could give a young preacher a word of advice that would be helpful."

He looked at me rather keenly with a humorous smile playing around his mouth. Then he said, "You don't need to be told anything new. You don't need any advice. You only need to put into practice that which you already know."

At first, I was inclined to be a little disappointed with what he had said. But as I thought about it quickly I decided that my preacher friend had not let me down.

Looking at him I said, "I believe after all that is the best bit of advice that you could have given me."

We shook hands together and he was gone. I never met him again in this life. It was only a few short days later that he passed on to his eternal reward. I felt that I had lost a very good friend and one who had given me one of the finest bits of advice I had ever received.

I pass that bit of advice along to you. We don't need to be told anything more than we now know. We only need to do the things that we know to do. There is some sound philosophy there.

There are many folks in the world today who call themselves truth seekers. They are ever on the hunt for something new. This has its advantages, and we should all be employed in getting the very best out of all the good literature we can read. There isn't any doubt that many of us could spend more time reading the Bible.

I heard about a preacher who preached from one text until some of the members complained about it. They asked him if he didn't know some other text and if there were not some other sermons he could preach. He replied that he would preach no other sermon until they obeyed the one that he had already preached. Perhaps he made no mistake in sticking to his text.

The Bible declares that if we know to do good and do it not that it is sin. Perhaps there is a danger that some folks will miss heaven because of their sins of omission. I am not afraid to face God on the basis of my character. From the experience standpoint I believe that I could meet with His approval. But when I think in terms of works then I become a bit fearful of the judgment. For it is a fact that we will not only be judged by what we are, but we will be judged by the things that we have done, or have allowed to remain undone.

Have you ever noticed in the Bible that when God came to communicate with a man, He usually came to give him a message for someone else? He didn't come to tell him something new. He only came to tell him what he ought to do himself and to tell others what they knew to do. God's ancient indictment against the Israelites was that they had known but would not do as good as they knew to do. They knew it was wrong to worship idols, but they did it anyhow.

God's indictment against those who will hold the tithe is that they deliberately rob Him. There are some folks today going to hear preaching relative to prophecy and delighting themselves in it. They have itching ears with regard to it. Much of the preaching relative to prophecy is very farfetched. But perhaps what they should be doing is preaching and practicing the teaching with regard to tithing. New things are very fine but there are no substitutes for old.

The Presbyterian elder was entirely correct, I didn't need to be advised about anything new, I needed only to practice the things that I already knew.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 24 -- A DOGMATIC MODERNIST

The most dogmatic person I have ever met was one of my teachers. He was a teacher who did not believe the Bible. He did not believe in the atonement of Jesus Christ. He believed the terms "born again," "regeneration," and "glorification" were but figures of speech. It was no use to argue with him; he was a dogmatic modernist.

I remember one day in class he was talking about the existence of God. He told the class that he could prove God's existence by the fact that there was something innate in man which was good. He logically argued that if there was something good in man, there must be a source of goodness. If then there was a source of goodness that source of goodness was found in God.

I listened to that argument and could find nothing wrong with it. But after a moment of reflection I raised my hand, and said, "I would like to ask a question."

He gave his consent to my question and I said, "Granted that there is something innately good in man, is there not something that is innately wicked in man? If the innate goodness in man can be traced to God, can the innate wickedness of man be traced to a source of evil or Satan?"

"Oh no, no," he exclaimed, "there is no devil."

Now I am sure my logic in the second place was just as good as his logic in the first. But he wouldn't admit it.

He told us that all evil was just lesser good, and insisted that there was no devil.

As far as I am concerned I am going to believe in the devil as long as I can see so many of his footprints around about me. While there is wickedness in the world I am going to believe in Satan. I hold no particular brief for him. I don't like Satan any better than anybody else does. I only offer the above bit of logic to prove that the most dogmatic persons in the world are not the fundamentalists but the modernists.

I could give many illustrations of this particular teacher's dogmatism. But why go on?

I am only led to say that if a modernist will take a dogmatic position from which he cannot be moved, would it not be a good idea for those of us who believe the entire Bible to become dogmatic too? We don't gain anything by acquiescing to the desires and wishes of those around and about us. The Bible says that the redeemed of the Lord are to say so. And I believe that those who accept the doctrines of the Bible should not hesitate to declare that they believe them.

It seems to me that all that stands between us and the infidelity of the world is the Bible. We have just defeated the armies of Hitler in Europe. But while we silenced his guns we have not defeated Nazism. Nazism with its disbelief in God and the Bible is spreading in this direction. The only effective weapon against it is the Word of God. It is high time that those who believe in it took it up as a weapon against everything that would try to defeat it.

The gentleman of whom I write was kind and scholarly. But what has a teacher to offer a class if he does not offer them his own faith in God and His Word? He was dogmatic, but what good is dogmatism if it is misplaced? And yet there is a dogmatism that is commendable. It is that dogmatism that takes hold of the promises of God and believes in them and in the Promiser. I know a dogmatic modernist who will one day have to face his record; a record of hurting the faith of young men and women by telling them that the Bible is not the Word of God.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 25 -- THE BOY WHO BAKED A CAKE

I have known him since he was a boy of about ten years of age, and I have watched his progress and success down through the years. He was always a good obedient boy, and as far back as I knew him he was a good Christian. I do not believe he ever caused his parents one moment of anxiety or trouble.

I remember how he used to help his mother with the many tasks of the home. I can recall once when she went away, and my wife went away at the same time, that he, his father, and I decided to have the evening meal together. He said he would make strawberry shortcake if I would make a pie. His strawberry shortcake was a grand success, but I can't say that much for the pie I made. But we had a great time laughing over it, and we succeeded in having a pretty fine meal for which he was largely responsible.

I was his pastor during a period of about seven years. About the time that I went East to become the pastor of a Lynn, Massachusetts, church he was ready for college. He wrote and asked what I thought about his coming to a college near there. He didn't have very much money, but he had a lot of ambition, and a lot of initiative. I advised him to come.

I remember in those early days how he used to come over to Lynn and how much encouragement he needed then. He used to say to me, "Brother Strang, I believe

I am discouraged." I always replied, "No, Preston, you are not discouraged; stay right in there."

It is to his credit that he did stay right in there. He became one of the most dependable boys who ever attended that particular school. He was always up with his class, but at the same time he had more odd jobs to do than any other boy in school. He always did his work well, and so was in demand. He actually succeeded in working his entire way through college, and believe it or not, he made enough money to send some home, when there was a need there. He always kept his own insurance policies paid up, and generally looked after his own needs.

By that time it had become very apparent that there was something outstanding about him. He was a credit to the school he attended and they were quite liberal in their praise of him.

He worked his way through college; then he decided he would like to be a doctor. Where other young men might have become discouraged, not Preston. He attacked the problems concerning the becoming a doctor, just as he had the problems in connection with graduating from college. He not only tried but he succeeded, and recently became a full-fledged doctor.

I'm quite proud of him. I am glad that I had a small part to play in his success. His mother and father were two of the finest folks who ever lived. They certainly had good religion. They were the biggest-hearted folks I think I have ever met. Many times have I sat at their table and enjoyed a fine meal. No doubt, they had much to do with the success of Preston. I know that he was influenced with their religious piety, and their fidelity to God and the church. They could offer him no money but they gave him a good name, and that is something better than gold.

I have had to do with hundreds, and perhaps thousands of young persons in different schools, and when I think of a student who is outstanding and made his own way I can think of no one who has done a finer piece of work than Preston. His endeavors and success read like something out of a book of fiction. But it is all true, that a certain young man made his way entirely

through school, paying for every cent of his schooling. He clothed himself during that period, and actually saved money. And while doing that he did not neglect his studies in the least.

I do not say that every boy or girl can do that. I only hold him up as a mark for anyone who is inclined to be a little bit careless to think about. Whenever I come across a student who tells me how much work he has, and what he cannot do, I am inclined to relate to him the story of Preston.

He was one of the most unassuming boys I have ever met, and one of the finest young men I have ever contacted. I saw him a short while ago, and he was the same Preston I knew many years ago. He loved God and loved the work, and only desired to serve humanity. I predict that he will go far doing that.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 26 -- THE KIND-EYED BANKER

I met a man one day who gave me a great deal of encouragement just when I needed it most.

I was trying to negotiate a church loan. I had applied to most of the banks in town and had been refused. But one evening as I sat looking over the newspaper I saw an advertisement of a bank in town. Down in the corner of the ad I read, "Come in and talk your financial problems over with us."

The next morning at nine o'clock I was down at the president's office. I introduced myself to him and then he asked me what he could do for me. I told him that I was there in response to his invitation. He looked rather surprised at that and said that he did not remember sending for me. I then produced the newspaper of the previous evening and called his attention to his ad. He smiled broadly, and I had made a friend.

I talked at length with him over my church financial problem. I assured him that we were far from being bankrupt. I had a list of the receipts for the past several Sundays. I showed him something about our expenditures. I told him that we were financially sound and all that we needed was a loan to pay off pressing obligations and we could maintain ourselves nicely.

It was a warm June day. That had something to do with my successful conversation with him, for I told him that a day or two before I had raised one hundred and fifty dollars to pay an old coal bill which was long delinquent. He looked at me in consternation and said, "Any man who can raise money to pay a coal bill this kind of weather must have something to him."

He had his secretary call a few of his associates into his office, and he told the story of my raising the money to pay the coal bill. They all seemed to be very much impressed by it.

Then the president looked at me and said, "I am going to help you." That sentence gave me more encouragement than any I had had during the several weeks that I had been in town.

He told me that banking laws would not permit his own bank to lend money on an uncompleted building, but that he had some financial connections. He informed me that the president of a certain Building and Loan Company in town was an associate in his bank. Then he called that gentleman into his office, and informed him of just what I wanted, and recommended me to him, and to his bank. Then both of them suggested that I make application to this particular Building and Loan, and that I go down on the evening of the next board meeting and present the application to the board in person.

I felt that I was steering a safe course now. With the president of the strongest bank in town back of me, and with the president of the Building and Loan Association on my side, I did not see how I could fail. Nor did I fail. That same week I visited with the directors of that bank, and presented my application to them at their board meeting. After presenting the application I left the bank.

The next morning I called the secretary of the Building and Loan Association and he told me that they had unanimously approved the loan. How happy I was!

It all came about because a banker said to me, "I am going to help you."

There is something to Mr. Dale Carnegie's idea of winning friends and influencing people. We ought never to be engaged in this for selfish ends and purposes. But when making friends and influencing people will assist in the work of the Kingdom on this earth, how alert we should be in trying to do it.

Many men would not be as opposed to the kingdom of Jesus Christ as we think they are if they understood better what we are trying to do in that kingdom. A president of a bank is just another individual like you or me. He has much the same problems in life to contend with as we have. If by our sincerity we can make an impression on him, very often he will be the first to help us. I have found that it always pays to deal with the man higher up. He is usually more approachable and far more sympathetic.

Often when I think of encouragement I think of my banker friend, who at a time when I needed it offered it gladly and freely.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 27 -- A CATHOLIC WHO BELIEVED IN PRAYER

The man I am going to write about now really inspired me to write this book.

Our general superintendent was presiding at a Kansas assembly and I was the night speaker. One evening as we went into the hotel dining room the hostess told us that she did not have an available table, unless one of the gentlemen sitting in the rear would share his table with us. She asked us if we minded that, and when we said we didn't, she immediately went back to the gentleman and asked him if he cared if we sat at his table. He replied that he would be very glad to have us, so we ate our evening meal together.

He was a salesman for a great cash register company, and incidentally, had transacted a great deal of business with our Publishing House. I introduced my general superintendent to him and immediately we commenced a very fine conversation.

We discussed his business, and the business conditions of the world. Then our conversation naturally drifted to the war which was then going on.

He had some friends and loved ones who were then in action in the Philippines. He was telling us about his view of the activities there, and then he struck a religious note.

He said, "I believe this war has done more to teach us the value of prayer than anything else that has ever happened in the world. I am in contact with a Catholic chaplain in the Philippines who has seen men fighting and also dying. He writes me that he has seen the most remarkable answers to prayer. They have not all been prayers for safety, but they have been prayers of faith in Almighty God. He has seen boys die that have expressed their faith in God, and who have believed that their peace was made with Him before they passed to the other world."

Then looking at us he asked, "What is your idea of the value of prayer?"

Of course we voiced our faith in prayer. My superintendent sounded a personal note with regard to it, and said that he not only believed in the value of prayer but he liked to put it this way, "I believe in a God who answers prayer. The value is not really in an action of prayer, or a system of prayer, but it is in a divine Person, who sees our needs and supplies our need in answer to our prayer."

Yes, the gentleman with whom we were engaged in conversation was a Roman Catholic. He knew the value of prayer in his own life, he told us. His every act and attitude radiated a quiet confidence in himself and in God. I left the table that evening feeling that I was a better man for having come in contact with him, and believing that the world was not quite such a wicked place as some folks seem to think it is. Yes, there is a lot of wickedness in the world, and there are many wicked men. But it is always refreshing to come across a good man. We often do this in unexpected ways and in unexpected places.

My superintendent and I did not try to make a Protestant out of our Roman Catholic friend. But we hoped as we left him that we had made him a better Roman Catholic, and we believed we were better Protestants for having met him.

Thinking about the gentleman later on and the impact his quiet conversation had made on my life, I commenced to think of the influence that many persons had made upon me. I commenced to think that I was a part of all persons whom I had met. I was brought face to face with the realization that they had influenced me for good or evil, and that I had no doubt influenced them the same way.

Let me conclude this little incident by saying that I believe that prayer changes things, and as I heard a good friend of mine put it not long ago, "Prayer changes everything."

\* \* \* \* \*

## 28 -- A MAN FROM WHOM BOYS RAN

Imagine an individual so depraved that little boys would run from him. Mothers would call their children away in fear as they saw him approaching. And yet I knew him when I was a boy. Many times I have run down the country road to get away from him.

Sometimes when we were in a group we would become rather daring and shout derisive remarks at him. His first name was Joe. I never heard anyone call him "Mister" in all my life. It seemed as if he did not merit that title.

Sometimes when we were in a group we would get up enough courage to cry out to him, "Joe, Joe, broke his toe riding on a buffalo."

That seemed to enrage him more than anything else, and he would start after us. I know now, and I knew then, that we should never shout at him, and while no boy would ever dare to do it while he was alone, sometimes in a group he would have more courage.

He was a great burly, fierce-looking man. It seemed to me when I was a boy that he was an old man. But when I first knew him he couldn't have been more than forty years of age. But sin and drink had left their marks upon him and he appeared to us to be an old man.

I never knew his wife, as she had died long before I can remember. Sometimes he lived alone, and at other times some of his children went to live with him. But it was one of the most unhappy homes that I have ever known anything at all about.

The drink habit got him, and I really believe he was drunk more than he was sober. I scarcely knew him to do a day's work in all his life. All he seemed to care for was to get drunk and curse and carouse and be just as mean as he possibly could. Almost every day we could see him coming past our home. He usually took the whole road to walk in as he came staggering and cursing.

What a home they must have had! His grandson who lived with him most of the time attended the same school I did. Often he used to tell me how his grandfather would beat him. He had the marks upon his body to show that it was true. I often pitied the young boy. The mistreatment at the hands of his grandfather discouraged him. It probably unsettled his mind to some extent, for one night he slipped out into the field and pointed a gun to his brain and killed himself.

As I recall it, all the other members of the home were drinkers and had records of dishonesty.

It is all a picture of how sin can wreck a home, and wreck lives. In it all we see the power of an influence; a wicked influence emanating from one man to such an extent that he died in sin, and all of his family was affected. No doubt the influence of his evil life yet remains in the world.

What an awful commentary it is on a man's life when little children run from him. But children who knew him in those days instinctively had a fear of him. I remember when my mother would send me to the store that I would say to her on leaving, "what shall I do if I see old Joe?"

The only thing I knew to do was to run past him just as fast as I could. Often he made a rush for me, but he never quite succeeded in catching hold of me.

The evil of that man's life influenced a whole community. While he was perhaps the worst man in the community and his every influence was evil, there were good and holy men in our community who were making their lives tell for Christ. What a contrast!

We are all writing a transcript of our own lives. Perhaps after every reader of these lines has passed on, someone will be writing a record of our lives and commenting on them. We are either making the world better or worse.

When I think of "Old Joe" today, instinctively, the childhood fear comes up within me again, and I must settle myself to defeat it. Such are the fears that bad men create in children. Every man owes it to every child to be good and to let his influence go out for good in this world.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 29 -- A PRAYING SINNER

Did you ever meet a praying sinner? There are many of them in the land today. I am not going to say that all their praying is futile, I am only going to remark that the prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

I once worked with a man whom we called Dange. In many respects Dange was a very fine fellow. He was very liberal and big-hearted. He would do a favor for anyone he possibly could. All the fellows who worked with him liked him very much.

But Dange had some very bad habits. He would go out each evening and seldom came back to the hotel unless he was intoxicated. He smoked and cursed, and I have every reason to believe he was quite immoral.

Sometimes when he would come back to the hotel in the evening I would remonstrate with him. He would always say something like this, "Strang, old boy, I'm all right. I know I go out and get drunk. But I never harm anyone but myself. And, Strang, I want you to know something. No matter how drunk I am when I return in the evening, I always kneel down by my bed and pray before I get in. Now don't you think I'm a pretty good fellow after all?"

Yes, in some ways he was a good fellow. I would rather have had him pray in his drunken state than not to pray. But I have often wondered as to how much good it actually did him. And yet he had rationalized at that point until he came to the place where it looked as if he actually believed he was all right just because he prayed at night before he got into bed.

Do you know any others like him in the world today? Don't you suppose that there are many who are trying to use prayer as a sort of escape mechanism? They pray knowing that they have done wrong and because they pray they believe that everything is all right.

But doesn't it take something more than prayer to make a man a Christian? Doesn't it take faith and obedience? I wonder how long one could have the ability to repent if he continued in sin every day. I believe as long as one has a genuine ability to repent that God will hear him, and answer his prayer. But one cannot sin and walk away from it as if he were through with it. Sin leaves its mark upon a man's mind and upon his character. Sin has a deadening and hardening effect upon the soul. It is doubtful if one could commit the same sin many times and offer God a sincere repentance for it.

It is not necessary for one to continue in sin. God has made a provision to take man out of the sin business.

Yes, Dange prayed every night but Dange went every night deliberately and sinned. He knew that it was wrong to do the things that he was doing, but he didn't make a worthwhile effort to quit them.

Yes, I know that he was very weak in character. Sin had helped to do that to him. But yet God is in the business of not only forgiving man of his sins but coming into his heart and into his life and giving him strength. He comes in to live His life out through us to make us strong and to help us to do what we ought to do. The gospel of Jesus Christ is a gospel that gives a man a hold of a hand that is higher and an hand that is stronger. That is what Dange needed more than he needed anything else. He needed the source of strength outside of himself.

I haven't seen him for years, but I have thought of Dange very, very often. If he is living today he is still going through the same motions, perhaps. I used to tell him that he could be delivered from those things that held him down, but the sad thing was he didn't want to be delivered. He wanted to go on and do the things in which he was engaging.

Until such a time as a man wants to quit doing wrong and sincerely and genuinely wants to do right, there is no hope for salvation for him. But to all those who will come to Jesus and ask Him for help and strength He will gladly give it.

Yes, I once knew a man who was a deliberate sinner and a weakling in prayer.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 30 -- THE MAN WHO WOULDN'T HELP

I called on a man one day who discouraged me more than any other man I have ever met.

I was the pastor of a church in Alliance, Ohio. I inherited a ten-thousand-dollar church debt. Four thousand dollars of that amount was scattered over town in building accounts. I was

making a desperate effort to pay off the indebtedness. Finally, I contacted a bank which agreed to lend us the major part of that amount. I was elated at the prospect of getting our bills paid, and I conceived the idea of asking each creditor to discount his bill so that we could pay the entire amount off.

I went to Mr. I. G. Tollerton, a millionaire lumber dealer of the city. We owed him about seven hundred dollars, so I asked him to discount his bill twenty per cent.

To my surprise and consternation he flatly refused to give me a penny of it. He was the first man to whom I had gone, and I was sure that he would give us a sizable donation to start our project. But instead of that he cut me off without a penny.

I had been carrying a heavy load before I went to him, but as I left him that day I was so discouraged that I almost gave up making any attempt to pay off the obligation. But he called to me as I went out the door and offered me a word of encouragement. "You can do it," he said. But I didn't believe him.

But when I went up the street I determined that I would give it a whirl anyhow. After a few days of working I had almost reached my objective. I had contacted all our creditors, and each had agreed to make a sizable donation with the exception of a man who had done the plumbing in the church. He, like Mr. Tollerton, had refused to give us anything.

But with all my money in sight with the exception of the last one hundred dollars, I went back to Mr. Tollerton.

I said to him, "Mr. Tollerton, I left your office the other day the most discouraged man you ever saw. But I have visited all our creditors in town and with only one exception they have all agreed to discount their bills, so that we can pay the entire amount off with the exception of one hundred dollars. I have returned to you to ask you in spite of your discouraging remarks the other day to help us."

I have never seen a more pleased expression go over the countenance of a man.

"Who didn't help you?" he wanted to know. I named the man who wouldn't give us any money, and Mr. Tollerton reached for his phone. Dialing the man's number he said to him, "Jack, I'm going to give this preacher seventy-five dollars, and I want you to come across with the last twenty-five."

I do not know what Jack replied exactly but I know that Mr. Tollerton looked over at me and said, "I am going to give you the check that I told Jack I would give you, and you go up to him and he will give you the other twenty-five dollars."

The great task was completed. Mr. Tollerton looked over at me and beamed on me.

"I knew you could do it," said he. "It takes a man to do a job like you did."

I left his office that day walking on air. He told me later that he was putting me to the test that first day. He wanted to help me when I was there the first time but he didn't want to make it too easy for me. That is the way that big men have of testing men that they are not sure of. I shall never forget the test, nor the lesson learned.

Mr. Tollerton became one of the best friends I had in town. He donated material for repairing of the church. He praised me and my church to anyone who would listen to him. It was with genuine regret that I left him in that city a little over four years later.

It occurs to me that God likewise puts us to the test. God cannot use weaklings in His business. When we show determination and courage we make a place for ourselves, and God makes a place for us.

I met a man who discouraged me but it resulted in my doing one of the finest bits of work of my ministry.

\* \* \* \* \*

### 31 -- A BASEBALL PITCHER FAILS

I saw him play baseball when he was a mere lad. He was a pitcher and they said that he was one of the best ones ever produced in that locality. Certainly on the day in which I saw him pitch he had the knack of throwing the ball in such a way that the opposing batter could do little with it.

To my surprise, when I started to high school in an adjacent city he was one of my classmates. He seemed to be a very apt pupil and had little difficulty in mastering his studies. He had nothing but disdain for those who could not keep pace with him.

While at high school he became the star pitcher of the high school nine. His fame went through the high school, and this only seemed to add to his spirit of superiority.

After graduation from high school I lost track of him for a number of years. Picking up the local paper one day I read that he had been signed by the New York Yankees and bade fair to become one of their star pitchers.

Not many days later I saw that he had pitched his first game in the American League and that he had won it by pitching masterful ball. A few days later he pitched again, and again won his game. The newspapers then commenced to publicize him, saying that he would become one of the star pitchers of all time.

Suddenly he faded out of the picture entirely. It took me a number of years to find out what had happened to him. One day I was talking to one of our mutual friends and he told me the story. He told me that the young man had everything that it took to become a famous ball player. He had a natural ability and that coupled with the fact that he had the brains to study opposing batsmen would have resulted in his continuing as an outstanding baseball player.

However, he had one great defect, and this proved his undoing. It was the old defect that showed up in the classroom in high school. It was the defect of egotism. He had a superiority complex. This was so pronounced that he could not get along with any of the men on the team. He held himself above them, nor would he even associate with them. As a result of this they made it so hot for him that the manager of the team was forced to let him go.

No, he did not lose his position because he did not have the natural ability to produce. He lost it because he was an egotist.

I am wondering if we might not learn something from his failure. While it is true that we are born with certain inherent characteristics, it is also true that certain characteristics and tendencies may be acquired. It is also true that whether inherent or acquired these characteristics that would cause us to fail may be brought under subjection. In fact, they may be eradicated from our heart and life. And we can be made to become something better than we are.

It is a dangerous thing to want to play to the gallery. It is sad when one wants to be the whole show and does not want to cooperate.

I would not comment on him at all if this were an isolated case which concerned only my high school friend. But egotism and the superiority complex may be found almost anywhere. In fact, I have found them in students and in ministers, as well as in those who are in business and have professions.

Truly, the saddest words of tongue or pen are: "What might have been." There are those who can accept criticism easier than they take praise. Genuine wholehearted praise, as a rule, is a good thing to hand out. But there are many who can take criticism easier than they can take praise. Evil is the root that causes egoism to spring forth into a full-fledged tree. Evil traits may be removed by and through the power of God operative in our lives.

Christ will help us rid our lives of egoism.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 32 -- FACING A MURDERER

I came face to face with a murderer one day. It was like this. We were having a revival meeting in my church, and preceding the meeting each night we had a prayer service down in the basement of the church. One evening I had gone down to the church before anyone else came, and because it was a cold night I happened to look into the furnace room. As I was standing inside the darkened furnace room I heard a footstep coming across the floor toward me. I could barely make out the figure of a man approaching. But he came right on and up to me and spoke.

He said, "You do not remember me, do you?"

I replied that I was not aware of ever having met him.

He then informed me that three years before, in fact, the very first night I had ever preached in that particular church, he had come down to the altar for prayer. We had prayed with him and he left the altar, and I did not see him again. But now he informed me that he was the young man who had been the seeker. I inquired as to where he had been all these years. He replied that he had been in the penitentiary in Moundsville, West Virginia.

To my surprise and in answer to my questions he informed me that he had been placed there because of murder. He then outlined his story to me.

The evening he came to the altar in our church was the first night he had been out of the hospital in a long time. He had been sent there because he had been wounded in a fracas. One of his wife's relatives had stabbed him and as a consequence he had to go to the hospital. He told me that he had attempted to get the victory over the feeling he had in his heart because of this altercation, and in the attempt to do so he had come to the altar that Sunday evening.

But shortly after that he was informed that his unfaithful wife, the man she had gone off with, and her father and mother might be found in Wheeling, West Virginia. Forgetting prayer and forgetting God he went to that city. He walked into a room where they were all four sitting. Drawing his six-shooter he leveled it at his unfaithful wife and killed her. Then he killed the man with whom she had run off. Then he killed her father and her mother.

That was the story he told me when I was alone in the basement of a church in a darkening furnace room. My blood ran cold within me. I cannot describe accurately the state of my feelings.

Then in a matter-of-fact tone the murderer went on. He had been arrested and held for murder. He was found guilty in the first degree and placed in Moundsville Penitentiary. He was placed there in the death cell to await the day of execution by hanging. But while waiting his fate his lawyers succeeded in getting a new trial, and at the new trial he was acquitted. His lawyers somehow or other convinced the judge and jury that four worthless persons guilty of gross immorality had but received their just desserts. Perhaps they might have indicated that this young man killed in self defense. At any rate he was acquitted.

One of the first places he made for was the town in which I pastored, and the first place he came to was the church, and the first person he saw was myself. And now I had him on my hands in the basement room of our church. Yes, I came face to face with a murderer.

Perhaps you have never had an experience like that and you don't know just exactly what it means. There I was touching the hand that had pulled the trigger that had killed four persons, and sent them out into eternity. I was hoping that he might be friendly with me. It didn't take me very long to ascertain that he was, and that he had come back to me for help.

He wanted to know what he might do to make some reparation for the misdeed of the past. He came to the altar that night again and we prayed, but he went out into the night without finding God.

It must be an awful thing to go through life with the blood of four persons on one's hands. What kind of rationalization would one need to exercise in order to satisfy his mind that he had done right? What would he need to do in order to make it possible for him to live with himself?

What a mess some men can get their lives in! It would take all the grace of a good God to extricate them.

I have never seen him again since that night, but I have often thought of him, and sometimes I pray for a murderer whom I met.

\* \* \* \* \*

### 33 -- AFRAID OF HIS JOB

Did you ever meet a man who was afraid of his job? I mean by that that he lived in daily fear that he would lose his job. I mean that he was afraid that somebody would be preferred before him for his job, and therefore because he was chief of staff he did every thing he could to get rid of those who in his opinion might be considered for his position.

Well, I knew a man like that one time. It was my sad misfortune to work with him for a number of years. While working with him I made the discovery that the surest way to lose one's position was to do his work very well. If ever a man were sent out by this man's superior and he came back with a fine piece of work which called attention to the man over him in the work, it meant the disfavor of the man of whom I write. I saw more than one fine fellow get the skids put under him and lose his job, merely because he was well educated and knew his field.

In fact, I lost my position with that firm because I had done my work well. I remember that I was called into this man's office one day, and there an accusation was made against me.

He accused me of being against an institution that meant a lot to him. I did not know to what he referred. He was very evasive about it all for some time, but on my insistence he finally told me that I had abused the secret order of which he was a member.

Then cunningly he asked me if I had read a certain letter issued by the department in which an employee of this particular firm might voice a protest if he thought he were the object of discrimination. I couldn't see through it for some time, but after a while it got into my thinking that he was wanting me to accuse him of discriminating against me. He intended to use that against me. He told me that he had in his possession a letter addressed to him with an affidavit that I had said things against this organization.

I told him that I would have nothing to do with the proposition, that I had never said what he accused me of, and that I did not believe that he had such an affidavit.

Not many days later I received a letter from the head of the department telling me that on a certain date my services would be discontinued. I knew what had happened. I had been put on the bottom of the efficiency list by the man of whom I write. When someone was to be released

because of the lack of funds the men higher up would merely turn to this gentleman and ask for the efficiency list, and inasmuch as he handled that himself, my name would be at the bottom, and therefore, I was the one to be released. Well that is just exactly what happened.

On the day when my time expired I went to him, and I said, "I want to see that affidavit."

He refused to show it to me. Then I said, "John, you have no affidavit, and you never had one. You thought you would get me to walk into a trap which you set for me and make me appear as non-cooperative and a dissenter. Failing to do that you have done something else, but I see through your scheme."

Of course I did see through his scheme, but that didn't keep me from losing my position. I sure enough lost it. I lost it because that man felt that I was qualified to do his work. I lost it because he decided that he would get rid of me for I was a threat to his job.

I have seen that thing work in many organizations. But it doesn't make for efficiency, and certainly not for progress. I have known pastors who did not want certain intelligent and educated men on their church board, because they were afraid that they would show them up. I have heard, but I scarcely believe, that there are pastors that will not employ certain evangelists because they are afraid the evangelists might get their position.

There are organizations that prefer to employ "Yes Men." But those organizations do not have a prominent place in industry or progress today. Abraham Lincoln took men into his cabinet who were his enemies, merely because he appreciated their ability.

When an organization loses its appreciation for positiveness and initiative it is already on the skids.

Then man of whom I write has long ago passed out of the picture. All his selfishness and jealousies availed him nothing. Thus it will be with anyone who uses the same tactics. Life is too short to cut the head off someone else just to keep him from getting ahead.

Yes, I was well acquainted with the man who was afraid of his job.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### 34 -- AN EPISTLE FROM A HEBREW

He was just a little fat Hebrew, but he was one of the finest men I have ever met. He was the superintendent of a large plant in an eastern city. Many times in the days that have gone by I visited his plant and transacted business with him. His first name was Julius, and no one ever thought of calling him anything else but that. Under a rather unpromising exterior there beat a heart of gold.

Many times we had arguments over his product. Of course he always saw the matter from the point of view of his firm; sometimes I saw it from the point of view of my company. There

were times when I had to reject his product; then he would fly off and try his best to get me to accept it over the top of my protest. All these matters usually adjusted themselves satisfactorily.

Sometimes when he thought that he had offended me he would want to do favors for me which I felt that I could not and did not accept. There were many things in those days that I could have had just by a nod of my head. There were many favors that would have been granted me if I had turned my head and had not seen things that were going on. But Julius knew that those kind of things would not be done by me. I insisted on meeting him on the high level of fair business, and I usually found him meeting me there.

But I didn't really see down into the bottom of that big heart of his until I left my company to give my time exclusively to the ministry. I shook hands with him one day in the plant and a tear trickled down his cheek as I told him good-bye for the last time.

A few days later I received a letter from him written in his own hand. His eyes were in bad condition, which resulted in his writing assuming the pattern of a scrawl. But laboriously he had stayed at it, until he had written me a letter of sizable proportion. It is of that letter that I wish to write.

Yes, he was a Hebrew, but he had a great deal of appreciation for a Gentile's religion. I have his letter in my file and I would not want to part with it. In it he made a little review of the three years of association we had had together. In it he had many things to say about my conduct, and concerning my character. But that is not the most important content of the letter. He had some fine things to say about the religion of Jesus Christ. Coming from a Jew I was tremendously surprised. He was not what might be called an orthodox Jew, although he was a strong adherent to the Jewish faith. But he had an insight into the religion of Christ that surprised me. And he had an appreciation for it that simply swept me off my feet.

Now I am not going to say that he made his entire evaluation of the Gentile religion because of his contact with me. I only hope that I made a slight contribution to his thinking relative to our faith. But no doubt he had had other contacts and had been doing a lot of thinking about our faith. I only know that I have a letter from him that is prized highly by me, coming from a Jew to a Gentile.

There are so many things that the Gentiles have received from the Jews. They have given us our concept of Jehovah God. It is from them that we have received our Bible. It is the Jewish literature that has given us the background for most of our hymns. The temple or church idea comes from the Jews. The Jewish synagogue has given us the suggestion of our Sunday school and young people's societies. The Jews were the first to commence world-wide evangelization, and we have merely taken over where they left off.

No doubt, it was in the mind of God to use the Jewish nation as the vehicle to carry the message of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth. They were and are admirably fitted psychologically for such a mission. They did carry the message of the Messiah over Palestine, and there the vehicle broke down.

When Paul turned to the Gentiles, that turning meant more than offering them the gospel; the Gentiles were in turn to take that gospel and become the missionary vehicle to carry it to others.

There are so many things in our religion that have come from the Jews; therefore, there are many similarities. Someday Jesus will be revealed to them as Messiah and Saviour.

But Julius had a great deal of appreciation for Christ. He told me so in his letter; he congratulated me on my decision to leave employment in a great railway system and become a preacher of the gospel.

Julius is dead these many years, but I shall always appreciate his epistle, and I shall always look upon him as one of the most understanding Jews I have ever met.

\* \* \* \* \*

### 35 -- HIS NAME WASN'T JOB

They say that patience is a virtue. I believe that to be a true statement. But I am going to tell you about the most impatient man I ever met. One day my good friend, Earl Stillion, and I were holding a meeting in an eastern city. It was back in the early days of my ministry and it gives me a thrill yet today when I think about those early meetings. It was the first meeting in which Rev. Stillion had ever assisted me. He lived to help me in ten others. Just a few short months ago he went on to heaven. It was one of the worst blows I ever had in all my ministerial career. But back in those days when we were young together, no obstacles seemed to be too great for us to tackle. But I must get on with my story.

I was driving a Model-T Ford in those days. It was one of those kind that needed to be cranked. On the day of which I write the sun had refused to come out and there was a steady pour of rain. The old Ford seemed to have its own ideas of what constituted good conduct on its part on a day like that.

I remember we pulled up to the curb in the city. When we did so the engine of the Ford almost stopped. Then when the throttle was pulled down, with a mighty roar, it would sound as if it were about ready to take off into the clouds. Then it would slow down again and seem as if it were going to stall, only to start up louder then ever.

Earl and I had a little errand to perform, and were sitting in my car discussing just how we were going to perform it. If we stopped that motor it would mean cranking the old Ford again, and it seemed doubtful if it would ever start if it were once stopped altogether. So there we sat with the Ford slowing down and starting up louder than ever.

Just as we were in the middle of our discussion there burst forth from the doorway of a nearby building a man gesticulating wildly. Glaring at us he demanded that we take that thing out of there and do it now. He said we couldn't leave it in front of his office another minute for if we did he would call the police. He snapped his fingers, he swore and cursed something awful.

Earl and I did not know what to make of such conduct, so we just sat and looked at him. The more we looked the louder he became, and I really thought that he had gone insane. It took us a long time to ascertain that what he really wanted us to do was to get out of there right away.

At first, we were inclined to ignore him, but we thought we'd better please the old man for it looked like any minute he might fall apart. So finally I backed up my car and went on my way.

As we pulled away from the curb Earl said to me, "Strang, I believe that is the most impatient man I have ever seen."

I agreed with him. Never since have I seen a man who seemed to fly all apart over such a small action as parking a Ford near the curb in front of his office.

But we were glad we didn't tell the old man off that day, for little did we know that in a day or two we would be standing in his office as witnesses.

The police picked up a young man for disturbing our meeting, and we were notified to appear at the Alderman's office to testify against him. The Alderman turned out to be no one else but the impatient man we had met a few days before.

After the charge was read the Alderman demanded that we file charges against the young man. When we refused to sign charges against him the Alderman again flew into a rage. He informed us that if we didn't sign charges against him he would do it himself. We told him that that would be all right with us and left his office. We left him storming. And again Stillion looked at me and said, "Strang, I still believe he is the most impatient man I ever met." And I agreed with him.

I wonder if there is anything worth getting so wrought up over? Yet it doesn't take very much to disturb some of us. Someone has said that we are no bigger than the things that throw us off balance. I suppose that is true.

When I am tempted to become impatient if I can only think of the old Alderman it helps beyond measure. I don't want anyone going around saying about me, that I am the most impatient man he has ever met.

\* \* \* \* \*

### 36 -- AN ANGEL IN WHITE

A number of years ago my wife was a patient in a Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, hospital. A very efficient nurse took care of her. She confided in us some of the things concerning her fiancée and her life plans.

One day I said to her, "Miss Snyder, what will you and Allen do after he becomes a doctor?"

She replied, "We intend to get married and then go back to the hills of West Virginia, where I was once a district nurse. No doubt, Allen could make more money in this great city, but we have decided to devote our lives and services to the underprivileged of that area."

I said to her: "Miss Snyder, you have found the better way; the way of sacrificing of self."

Miss Snyder represents to me one of the most self-sacrificing young persons I have ever met. In these days when men and women are doing their best to make money, she and Allen decided to sacrifice their opportunities for money-making to help others. What a wonderful outlook on life they had! It seems to me we could transform the whole world if we had a few more "Miss Snyders" in it.

There are young persons today who are expecting the world to hand them success on a golden platter.

I do not read the Column of Dorothy Dix very often, but recently I read it on the insistence of my wife. It was entirely worth while to read her remarks relative to paying the price for things that we need. She said that all the worthwhile things in life only come at a certain price. Too many folks, said she, want the good things of life without paying for them. All the good things of life according to Dorothy Dix come with a high price tag on them. There are many who want the benefits and results which come from self-sacrifice without actually doing the sacrificing, but it cannot be that way.

There are preachers today waiting for someone to give them a place to preach. Well, there might be something to that point of view, but the world is hungry for the gospel and there are thousands of places to preach if one actually wanted to do it.

Doctors are needed in the world today. There are young doctors waiting for their fathers or rich relatives to set them up in business, but while they wait millions in the world suffer who could be benefited by their skill.

A number of years ago I went into a dentist's office in a thriving eastern town. He was so discouraged that he wanted to quit. He wasn't making a living, he said, so what was the use. I suggested to him that he shouldn't think merely in terms of money, and if he actually wanted to be a benefit to the persons of his community, there must be thousands of them who needed the very skill that he could give them. Of course he had to live, but he wasn't interested in helping in the community, he was only there to make money.

There are hundreds of teachers in the United States today waiting for some school board to give them a position. Perhaps that is an overstatement right now in this immediate postwar period, but before the war that certainly was exactly true. But while they waited for a fine position to be handed to them there were thousands of persons in the world who were ignorant, and needed to be taught.

What those who could serve need is to have the servant's complex. The world waits to be served today; but while the harvest is white the laborers are few.

Of course the evangelist needs to be concerned about his slate, for it represents his meal ticket to him, but if a man really wanted to evangelize, the world might be his parish.

I have said all of that to say that there is a great contrast between the conduct of most young folks and that of Miss Snyder, who would give herself in service to the underprivileged.

An article in a recent magazine informs us that the Catholic church has recently realized its opportunity for spreading the gospel. Through a world-wide movement known as the Catholic Action, the church has for the first time urged the participation of the laity in spreading the gospel. In a famous encyclical the late Pope Pius XI decreed that it was the duty of Catholics not only to be ministered unto but to minister unto others.

The Catholic church has greatly benefited from this new insight into the duty of the lay members of the church. The Reverend Norman Vincent Peel commenting on this says that it is high time that we Protestants adopt similar tactics.

It is high time that many young folks as well as older ones exercise that servant's complex and do as Miss Snyder did in giving her life in service for others.

\* \* \* \* \*

### 37 -- A FIFTY-THOUSAND-DOLLAR HANDSHAKE

I met a man one time who believed that Jesus meant it when He said, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."

The man I knew lost approximately fifty thousand dollars because another man had asked him to invest it in a project that he believed was for the extension of the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

In some way or other the man who asked him to invest, and had secured the money, failed to return it. It was deliberate on his part.

The man who lost that money was a member of my church. I was his pastor for almost four years. In all that time I never heard him once criticize the man who had taken it away from him.

I do know that on one occasion he went up to the man who had taken his money and taking him by the hand he said, "God bless you."

That is what I call having good religion. It is always refreshing to meet a man who has more religion than oneself. I liked to be in the company of this particular man, because I believe he exemplified the teaching of Jesus Christ.

Theoretically we all believe in it, and testimonially we practice it, but practically, not too many do that kind of thing.

Perhaps the greatest tests of life are those which have to do with the pocketbook. Our love can always be measured by the action that love will take. It is useless for us to say that we love God if we do not invest in His kingdom.

But I wonder how many men could say good-bye to fifty thousand dollars, a large sum indeed, and one that this individual could in no wise afford to lose, and yet love the man who was instrumental in deceiving him out of it?

The loss of that fifty thousand dollars made a poor man out of a man who one time had quite a sum of money. But while he lost his money he didn't lose his religion. In fact, it appeared that from the standpoint of wealth that God doubled up on him and gave him more of His grace than ever before.

Now there are plenty of us who don't mind the other man losing his money, and we look with favor on the conduct of him in the loss of that money, but what if it had happened to you?

It was the love of money and the influence and prestige that money gave him that caused the rich young ruler to turn his back on Jesus Christ and go back to his possessions. It is the love of money that men have, or expect to have, that causes them to act likewise today. Nothing but the love of Jesus Christ in our hearts can cause us to take the spoiling of our goods joyfully.

It must be very difficult to have had and lost. It must be difficult to have owned a large mansion, then to come down to living in an ordinary house. It probably is a wonderful thing to have a large bank balance, and to be the owner of many good stocks and bonds. But what a feeling to have had all those things, then to have lost them. But that is what my friend did, and if it ever made any difference in his life none of his closest friends ever noticed it.

Now most of the readers of this book will never experience the feeling of losing fifty thousand dollars at one time. Your losses will be on a smaller scale. You have already experienced some, and what has been your attitude in regard to them? Some have experienced the loss of position, and others the loss of prestige. Some have seen someone else take their place on the church board, or on the school board. Some have seen another pastor preferred before them. Some mothers have seen another mother's little boy or girl get the place in the dialogue or the privilege of giving the reading. You have seen the honors in the school given to another young man or woman rather than to yourself, or to your son or daughter. These are the losses we experience in our realm. How do they affect us?

Yet I knew a man who lost Fifty thousand dollars, and he had enough of the grace of God in his heart to pray for and shake hands with the man who swindled him out of it.

\* \* \* \* \*

THE END