

Old Paths

Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. Jeremiah 6:16

The secret of the LORD is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His covenant. Psalm 25:14

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Straight and Narrow

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A Study From Africa



“And it came to pass on the second sabbath after the first, that he went through the corn fields; and his disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands.” (Luke 6:1)

In this text we see that the disciples of Jesus Christ were faced with the serious situation of hunger that forced them to pluck corn, or grain, in the field on the Sabbath day. It might seem to you, like it did to the Pharisees, that the disciples of Christ transgressed the law by stealing from someone’s corn field. However, such a need had been provided for by the Lord. God had instructed Israel through Moses: “When thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbour, then thou mayest pluck the ears with thine hand; but thou shalt not move a sickle unto thy neighbour’s standing corn.” (Deuteronomy 23:25)

In spite of the emergency situation (hunger), the disciples were careful plucking only the ears of corn that contain grains and using their own hands rubbed off the hulls and removed the chaffs before eating the grain. They refined the corn and determined to eat only the pure grain (chaff free) avoiding any stomach upset. In the light of the Scriptures, we are to desire ONLY the sincere milk of the word. “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.” (1 Peter 2:2) We know that not all grades of milk are good for human consumption.

Brethren, let us take a critical look at this Bible lesson and compare it to our Christian background, then ask ourselves this question, “Have I refined my knowledge of the Scripture by studying the Bible for myself?” Your answer may be yes or no, but the truth

is that many of us believe what our pastors, elders, evangelists, great men of old, etc., have taught us or what we read from many books from our shelves. While God has provided all of these means to be a help, there is also a danger involved. If the person helping is deceived, we will be also. Remember Eve ate and gave to her husband Adam to eat. Afterward he complained “she gave me of the tree, and I did eat” yet the result was death, complaint notwithstanding. (Genesis 3:12) We are to search the Scriptures for ourselves. Jesus said: “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.” (John 5:39)

We are to study the Scriptures for ourselves. “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” (2 Timothy 2:15) There is only one way for us to confirm what we believe about the Gospel. The only way we can know whether we are holding to sound doctrine or not is to follow the example of the Bereans. “These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” (Acts 17:11)

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“It is proper and right to read the Bible; but your duty does not end there; for you are to search its pages for yourselves. The knowledge of God is not to be gained without mental effort, without prayer for wisdom in order that you may separate from the pure grain of truth the chaff with which men and Satan have misrepresented the doctrines of truth. Satan and his confederacy of human agents have endeavored to mix the chaff of error with the wheat of truth. We should diligently seek for the hidden treasure, and seek wisdom from heaven in order to separate human inventions from the divine commands. The Holy Spirit will aid the seeker for great and precious truths which relate to the plan of redemption. I would impress upon all the fact that a casual reading of the Scriptures is not enough. We must search, and this means the doing of all the word implies. As the miner eagerly explores the earth to discover its veins of gold, so you are to explore the word of God for the hidden treasure that Satan has so long sought to hide from man. The Lord says, ‘If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching.’ John 7:17 (R. V.)” (E. G. White - *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 307)

There is a great joy in searching the Scriptures. God gives a special name to those who do: “saints.” “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” (Revelation 14:12)

You will rejoice in doing (eating) the words of God. Jeremiah said: “Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts.” (Jeremiah 15:16) Have you examined your beliefs about the ten commandments of God and the teachings of Jesus Christ concerning that righteous law? Our Saviour taught, “That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 5:20) Are your beliefs based on the traditions of men or according to the Scriptures? Accept the doctrine of Christ, not a church’s doctrine and study with the Chief Shepherd instead of the “I am your pastor” type of teachers. When under-shepherds are necessary, God promises: “And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.” (Jeremiah 3:15)

God loves us so much “that He gave His only begotten Son” to die for us. He does not want us to be deceived, therefore He sends clear warnings to awaken us from our slumber and deceptions.

“Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” (Matthew 7:22, 23)

“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;” (Ephesians 4:14)

“Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines.” (Hebrews 13:9)

God especially warns the pastors and leaders against leading the flock astray. He says: “Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the LORD. Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the LORD. (Jeremiah 23:1, 2 See also Ezekiel 34:17-21.)

To brethren who are pastors, elders, and leaders: please cross check your teachings, beliefs, and practices and weigh them against the standard of the Word. Do not dish out what many have been traditionally teaching, rather feed the flock the pure truth of God’s Word which has been refined seven times. (See Ps. 12:6) “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for *doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.*” (2 Timothy 3:16)

Brethren, what is your “emergency” situation? Is it hunger, poverty, sickness, barrenness, sin, culture, riches or what have you? How do you react to these situations? Do you run to your church or to your pastor to receive a miracle of healing, prophecy, fortune telling, etc.? Jesus said, “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:32) God’s Word is life. “It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” (John 6:63) “But the

anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.” (1 John 2:27)

The disciples escaped the wrath of the Pharisees because Jesus, the Advocate, was in their company. He intervened and pleaded the course of justice for His disciples, proving why they plucked and ate corn on the Sabbath day. Beloved, there is a man named Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the Son of the living God, Who is ready to help your “emergency” situation right now if only you are ready to receive Him for yourself. He says, “Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.” (Jeremiah 33:3) “And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God.” (Zechariah 13:9)

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.” (John 1:1-5) Here we see Jesus as being the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word has life for men. (verse 4) “He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.” (Isaiah 53:3-5)

His burden is light. “For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” (Matthew 11:30) He is caring. “Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.” (1 Peter 5:7) What a wonderful Saviour is Jesus, the Son of the living God!

You might think that the Scriptures given above are not true to your situation. That may be so, yet all of us struggle with sin. “Behold, the LORD’s hand is not

shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness.” (Isaiah 59:1-3)

What is sin? “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.” (1 John 3:4) Which law? The Ten Commandments of God. (Exodus 20:1-17) This is the perfect law of liberty. “The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.” (Psalm 19:7) Why not confess your sins right now for Jesus has promised that “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9)

Now take the next step to “lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.” (James 1:21)

Brethren, remember that despite the hunger, the disciples did not move aimlessly in the cornfield, but were plucking only the corn which had ears, they took time to rub off the husks with their own hands to get the pure grain for food. Therefore, don’t allow your problem to force you to worship God aimlessly. Finally, I am saying to you, “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” (Philippians 2:12) “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” (Philippians 4:13) Shalom!

Pastor Etim Udo Akor

(Pastor Etim Udo Akor writes from Nigeria where he is teaching the three angels’ messages. God has blessed Brother Akor’s ministry, who is working under very difficult and trying circumstances. Most of the brethren in Nigeria are poor, but humble men. As Paul made an appeal for the brethren in Jerusalem (See 1 Corinthians 16), we would like to make an appeal in behalf of the work in Nigeria. For those whom God places a burden to help, they may send funds directly to Pastor Akor by International Money Order to his address at: P. O. Box 380, Abak, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Editor)

THE NEW BIRTH

Jesus told Nicodemus that he must be born again. In response Nicodemus asked if it meant to re-enter his mother's womb and be born. (John 3:3, 4) This is not what Jesus had in mind. Today, many like Nicodemus are wondering "What does this mean?" We see in the next verse what Jesus really meant. He said, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John 3:5)

The focus of this study will be on the meaning of the new birth. Several different passages of Scripture will be examined to make this important foundational principle clear.

As we have seen already, this birth is not a physical birth, but it is a spiritual birth. You cannot tell by looking at someone if they have experienced the new birth, but you should be able to tell by that person's attitudes and character. Jesus referred to this in John 3:8. He compared the new birth with the wind. You cannot see the wind, but you can see the effects of wind. This is how everyone is who is born of the Spirit.

Every person has a body and a spirit. (1 Corinthians 6:20) The body is the part that everyone can see. The spirit cannot be seen. The spirit is the part of a person that communicates with God. In John 4:24, Jesus said, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

According to God's design, the spirit is supposed to be dominant, and the flesh is supposed to be in subjection to the spirit. This is mentioned often throughout the Bible. (See Galatians 2:20, 5:24; and Romans 6:6-14, 8:5-10.) But in too many people, these roles are reversed. The flesh is dominant, and the spirit is in subjection.

Bill Gothard, in his "Basic Youth Seminar," explains the functions of these parts in this way. He says:

"Just as our physical senses are the windows to the physical world, so our spiritual senses are the windows to the spiritual world. If any (of these) senses are dulled, we will not be able to gain the data necessary for proper decisions."

A Christian is supposed to be sensitive to the things in the spiritual world and "dead" to the things in the physical world. In other words, only after we look at

situations from a spiritual perspective can we make wise decisions.

The body and the spirit are both "forces" in our lives that influence the decisions we make. These forces do not originate in the body or in the spirit, but they have their start from somewhere beyond ourselves. Let's take some time to look at each one.

The first of these forces is the Spirit of God. To many people this force is almost nonexistent. (Ephesians 2:1-5) The Spirit of God still works on their heart, but they may not be aware of its presence. To a Christian, however, the Spirit is very real. God uses His Spirit, in the life of a Christian, as a way to communicate to man. This is the only way man can communicate with God. (John 4:24)

The second force is Satan working by our fleshly lusts. Our flesh wants us to live for ourselves. (2 Corinthians 5:15) Before people are born again, they naturally tend to listen to this force. This tendency is called the sinful nature. Men will not always do what is wrong. If given a choice, most people tend to do what they think will benefit them in some way. (Isaiah 53:6) This is not always wrong, but too often it is.

Satan uses this sinful nature to help him destroy the souls of people. He adds to this nature his own lies about God and about life. The Bible says, "when he [Satan] speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." (John 8:44) He says, "If it feels good, why not do it?" But he really does know that it would be better for you if you would not do it. This is the very reason why he wants you to do it.

There are many people who have high standards in their life. They try always to be honest; they always try to do what is right; they have good morals. These are all good things. Satan does not always mind if people have high standards. He can use this to deceive people as well. In Matthew 7:22, 23, Jesus says there will be many on that day who will think they have lived good lives, but God is going to say, "depart from me, ye that work iniquity." These are people who have lived with high standards. They may have even gone to church. But all these good things did not save them. There was still something missing in their life. The new birth!

Galatians 5:16-25 is a comparison of the Spirit and the flesh. "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." (Galatians 5:16) It also lists some of the results of listening to either one. In verses 19-21, there is a list of some of the works of the flesh. "They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." (v. 21) In verses 22 and 23, there is a list of the fruit (work) of the Spirit. This fruit represents the proper attitudes for Christians to have. The Bible says, "against such there is no law." (verse 23)

There are many people who are dead spiritually. When a person is born again, the Spirit of God becomes alive and active in their life. We were all born once physically. Now we need to be born spiritually. Do you see the relationship here? Just as your body needed to come alive through the first birth, now your spirit needs to come alive through the new birth. (Ephesians 2:5)

When a person is born again, the flesh needs to die so the spirit can be born and become alive in his life. This is a must. The reason for this is that these two forces are against each other. (Galatians 5:17) And no man can serve two masters. (Matthew 6:24)

The Bible refers to listening to the flesh as living according to the flesh. This is allowing the flesh to rule your life. In John 8:31-36, Jesus was talking to the Pharisees. He said that if they live by His Word, they will know the truth, and that truth will set them free. "Free from what?" they asked. Then Jesus said, "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." (John 8:34) How many people are there who are slaves of sin? They do not know any other way to live. They are in bondage, and even if they wanted to, they could not get free from this bondage.

Someone has said, "True freedom is not the ability to do what you want, but the power to do what you ought." Romans chapter eight talks about this power that can help you "do what you ought". Verse one says, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." The Spirit referred to here is the Spirit of God. We are to live according to the Spirit of God. Verse fourteen says that those people who are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God. This is what happens when a person is born again, God's Spirit influences their spirit and leads them. This Spirit is that power that can be in your life. The

next few verses say that through this you are adopted into His family "that we may be also glorified together [at the first resurrection]." (verse 17)

Romans 12:1 says, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." What does it mean to be a living sacrifice? Normally, a sacrifice is first killed and then it is put on the altar. If a sacrifice is living, it needs to willfully stay on the altar at all times in order to remain a sacrifice. In other words, it is a sacrifice by its own choice. In this verse our flesh (or sinful nature) is what is to be sacrificed. The flesh is to be put to "death."

It is very important that you understand what it means to put the flesh to death. In Romans chapter seven, the Apostle Paul talked about the struggles he was still having with the flesh even after he became a Christian. Then he gave his conclusion in verse 21. "I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me." (Romans 7:21) Even after the new birth a person still has a sinful nature.

Becoming a Christian does not change the fact that we are human. The drives of the flesh are still there, however, victory or mastery over that nature is possible by the indwelling Spirit of Christ.

Some people have had the idea that when a person is born again, their flesh is dead, and they *cannot* sin anymore. While it is God's plan for His children not to sin, provision has been made for the times when Christians yield to the flesh. The Bible says: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (1 John 2:1)

When a Christian sins he or she needs to repent of this sin and obtain God's forgiveness. In the illustration of a living sacrifice, a Christian who has sinned has gotten off of the altar and has allowed their flesh to come back to "life." When this happens, we need to crawl right back on the altar and sacrifice our flesh once again.

Lloyd Beachy

(Brother Lloyd Beachy writes from his home in Nappanee, Indiana. He is a younger brother of our associate editor Lynnford Beachy.)

The Last Call!

As you have read in the last newsletter, there is a Promise Keepers' gathering in Washington, D.C. on October 4, 1997. We are printing 150,000 fliers to be passed out at this meeting where one million men are expected to show up. You have read in the last newsletter how this movement fits in with the ecumenical movement. Surely you realize the importance of sharing the facts concerning the Image to the Beast, and receiving its mark.

We strongly encourage you to be of any help that you can to reach as many people as possible with the news about the ecumenical movement. The tract that has been prepared deals with these issues, and encourages the men to make a stronger commitment to God in serving Him by keeping all of the ten commandments. If you see that you can be of any help in distributing these fliers make it a priority to be in Washington D.C. on October 4. We ask that you will commit this project to prayer.

Many workers are needed to distribute the literature. We have 150,000 tracts. If fifty people show up, and each one passes out fliers for ten hours straight, they would each have to pass out 3,000 fliers in a ten hour period. That is 300 per hour, five per minute, or one every twelve seconds. As you can see it would be very difficult for fifty people to accomplish such a task. We need far more people to help with the distribution of these fliers than many realize. By God's grace you can be a worker in this field, for many are needed in this effort. The Lord can deliver with few or many, but He has designed that you can have a part in the finishing work. "Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me." (Isaiah 43:10)

Jesus said: "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest." (Matthew 9:37, 38) Let us cooperate with the Lord in finishing His work.

You may not be able to go yourselves, but there may be someone in your church that is willing and able to go, yet they do not have the funds to make such a trip.

If the Lord lays it upon your heart to help another person to go to this event, we encourage you to do so. Please do not think that since this is a meeting for men, that women are not allowed to participate. Several sisters have already made commitments to be there and help to distribute these fliers.

Here are a few of the many letters of request we have received from those who have attended Promise Keepers rallies in cities such as Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, St. Louis, and Chicago.

Praise the Lord! Brethren, I have been privileged to read one of your fliers. Reading it I read with interest the concept of the trinity. I wish to have more, and as much information about this as possible. Do you have any information concerning Michael and Christ being the same being?

Columbus, Ohio

Please pray for me as I begin to fast for 21 days to seek God's guidance for the ministry. Also send me the free book on the last day events, and Bible studies. Thank you in advance to the attention of this letter and request.

Chicago, Illinois

Could you please send me a copy of your book on last day events, or Bible Studies. Thank you.

Lower Burrell, Pennsylvania

We picked up some of your brochures at the recent Promise Keepers event. We would be very interested in a copy of your book on last day events and/or Bible studies. Thank you and God bless you.

Woodbridge, Virginia

Please send us a book on last day events and Bible studies. Thank you very much!

E-mail Correspondence

Not only is it a blessing for these dear men to learn more about the wonderful God that they serve, but it is a rich blessing for those who are able to share in this work. "The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself." (Proverbs 11:25) If we share the truth with others, the Lord will abundantly supply us with more truth to share.

For further details concerning this wonderful witnessing opportunity contact Brother Doug Goslin (614) 763-2242 or e-mail: believe@infinet.com.

Lynnford Beachy

Youth's Corner

Christ Our Righteousness

(WE wish to encourage all who are young, at least in heart, to study these lessons and fill in the blanks with answers from the Bible.)

The Incarnation of Christ

1. What testimony is borne concerning Christ's life?

1 Peter 2:22 (See Note 1)

2. What is true for all other members of the human family? **Romans 3:23**

3. To what extent was Christ tempted? **Hebrews 4:15**

4. In His humanity, of what nature did Christ partake? **Hebrews 2:14-16**

5. How fully did Christ share our common humanity and why? **Hebrews 2:17, 18** (See Note 2)

6. How did John describe the incarnation? **John 1:1, 14**

7. Where did God, in Christ, condemn sin and why? **Romans 8:3, 4** (See Note 3)

8. What was Christ made to be and why? **2 Cor. 5:21**

9. How did Paul sum up the humiliation of Christ? **Philippians 2:5-8**

10. By whose power did Christ live the perfect life? **John 5:19, 30; John 14:10**

11. Through whom may we gain victory? **John 15:5; Philippians 4:13; 1 Corinthians 15:57**

12. What is our privilege? **Ephesians 3:14-19**

Notes:

1. See also 1 John 3:5; 2 Corinthians 12:9; Hebrews 4:16; 2 John 7.

2. In His humanity Christ partook of our sinful, fallen nature. If not, then He was not made like unto His brethren, was not in all points tempted like as we are, did not overcome as we have to overcome, and is not, therefore, the complete and perfect Saviour man needs and must have to be saved. The idea that Christ was born of an immaculate or sinless mother, inherited no tendencies to sin, and for this reason did not sin, removes Him from the realm of a fallen world, and from the very place where help is needed. On His human side, Christ inherited just what every child of Adam inherits, a sinful nature. ... And all this was done to place mankind on vantage-ground, and to demonstrate that *in the same way* every one who is born of the Spirit may gain like victories over sin in his own sinful flesh. (*Bible Readings for the Home Circle*, p. 174 - 1935 Edition)

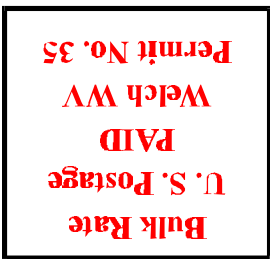
3. Since, Christ took upon Himself the likeness of man in order that He might redeem man, it must have been sinful man that He was made like, for it was sinful man that He came to redeem. (*Christ Our Righteousness*, pp. 27, 28)

October's Trees

I like to see
October's trees
as the leaves play with the breeze.

They seem to float
with so much ease.
And go where e'er the wind doth please.

Heidi Stump



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Don't be a Coward

I won't tell a lie! I won't be such a coward, said a fine little fellow, when he had broken a little statuette of his father's in showing it to his playmates, and they were telling him how he could deceive his father and escape a scolding. He was right. So Charles Mann was right, and was rewarded for it, as the following story will show:

A young offender, whose name was Charlie Mann, smashed a large pane of glass in a chemist's shop, and ran away at first; but he quickly thought: What am I running for? It was an accident; why not turn and tell the truth?

No sooner thought than done. Charlie was a brave boy. He told the whole truth—how the ball with which he was playing slipped out of his hand; how frightened he was, how sorry, too, at the mischief done, and willing to pay if he had the money.

Charlie did not have the money, but he could work, and to work he went at once, in the very shop where he

broke the glass. It took him a long time to pay for the large and expensive pane he had shattered, but when he was done, he had endeared himself so much to the shopkeeper by his fidelity and truthfulness, that he could not hear of his going away, and Charlie became his clerk.

Ah, what a lucky day it was when I broke that window, he used to say.

Charlie, his mother would respond, what a lucky day it was when you were not afraid to tell the truth.

Lying lips are abomination to the Lord: but they that deal truly are his delight. (Selected - *The Youth's Instructor*, June 13, 1895)

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