

BUSY, ABOUT WHAT?

By Claude A. Ries

And as the King passed by, the son of the prophet cried unto the king and said, Thy servant went out into the midst of the battle and behold a man turned aside and brought a man unto me and said, Keep this man, if by any means he be missing, then shall thy life be for his life . . . and as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone. And the king of Israel said unto him, So shall thy judgment be; thyself hast decided it."

Here we have a charge given a servant to keep a certain man. But the servant became so engrossed in other things that the charge made an easy escape because of the servant's faithfulness.

"And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone." Is not that a picture of countless Christians, called of God to be witnesses but becoming so absorbed in legitimate things that they forget God's charge and needy men and women slip through their fingers and are eventually lost?

While the Chinese ambassador to this country, Wu Ting Fang, was in America, he lectured in many places praising Confucianism as superior to Christianity. After his ambassadorship had closed he spent his last Sunday in New York City. A Christian Chinese pastor in the city, the Reverend Huie Kin, called Mr. Wu at his hotel and asked him to attend church service. Mr. Wu's reply is most significant. He said: "When I was a boy in China, I was acquainted with some Christian people and thought highly of Christianity. I had never identified myself with it, but when I was appointed to America, I decided that I wanted to throw in my lot with Christian people there and made up my mind that I would accept the first invitation that was given me to attend a Christian service." Then after a brief pause, he said, "This is the first invitation I have had."

Were there no Christians in Washington, D. C., during his whole ambassadorship? Certainly. But they were "busy here and there" and Wu Ting Fang "was gone."

Leon Trotsky was in easy reach, yes in frequent contact with many Christians in New York City during his youth but no one witnessed to him about Christ. Busy Christians they all were—but busy about what?

I well remember when the news came of the sinking of that great, supposedly unsinkable ocean liner, the Titanic. In her maiden voyage across the Atlantic she encountered a fog but the Captain ordered full speed ahead. The thermometer began to fall. Not far away the liner California was icebound. The wireless operator on the California sought to warn the "Prayer not only changes, it causes."

Titanic as he ticked out the message: "We are surrounded by ice." But the wireless operator on the Titanic was too busy to be warned. He was sending out messages to New York, arranging parties, receptions and business appointments from the 1500 important people on board. At last knowing that the California was trying to get a message through, he sent out a reply, "Shut up, I am busy. I am working Captain Race."

Within one hour that mighty vessel crashed into an iceberg and hundreds of men and women perished—all because one man was

FAITHFULNESS IN LITTLE THINGS

A young man who afterward became a leader in the city where he lived, wrote in his diary, "I cannot be great, but I can be faithful." In that one sentence he suggested the greatest ideal for any life.

It is faithfulness in little things, in everyday matters, that tells the story. Any one can hold himself up to some big responsibility for a little while; but real fidelity is concerned with the little as well as the big, with uneventful days and ordinary tasks.

Common days, monotonous tasks, everyday clothes, these are the things. Not conspicuous events or unusual experiences, but everyday tasks faithfully done, have most to do with character, achievement and the real worth of life. Good habits are not made on New Year's day, but in the workshop of everyday life.

Some great hour may give us the inspiration; the vision of possibility, or the high resolve may come in some moment of exaltation or in some unusual experience; but the real achievement must be wrought out down on the level of commonplace and everyday living.

Fitness for the larger place and greater service is determined only by faithfulness in little things. The great work of the world is being done by common folks who do their work uncommonly well; and uncommon achievement must be wrought out down on tasks done in an uncommon way.

All honour then to the heroic-souled men and women who, in humble places and in monotonous toil, or positions they would not have chosen, do with faithfulness and pains their daily tasks. That itself is character, and it leads on to greater things and develops a worthiness of life which makes them in truth "the salt of the earth."—Gospel Herald.

DEADLY SELF-WILL

Self-will is a pertinacious adherence to one's own will or wish, especially with disregard to the wishes of others. Self-will can mean our spiritual death. But Christ has delivered us from self-will through His will.

When Lucifer turned from God he turned to his own will and would not obey the Eternal Will. To will otherwise than the Eternal Will of God is to sin.

Adam turned from the will of God to his own will in Paradise.

How careful we must be to have our wills in God's will.

"O will of God, come and melt us into Thyself, so that through the blood of the everlasting covenant God can work through us to will and to do His good pleasure."—Herald of His Coming.

HIGH HAT, LOW BROW

A minister in the pulpit saw a man in a back pew with his hat on. He beckoned to a deacon, who went to the man and asked him if he was aware his hat was on.

"Thank God!" said the man. "I thought that would do it. I have attended this church for six months, and you are the first person who has spoken to me."—Christian Victory.

too busy on superfluous things to take warn-

O Christian, let it not be said of you or me: "And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone."—The Wesleyan Methodist.

LITTLE DAVID

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field, "Spring is here." The only discordant note was that of the Blue Jay in the woods across the valley, with his cry of "Thief, Thief, Thief."

Mrs. Stafford's heart was full and bubbling over with joy and praise to Him who had wrought this wonderful miracle.

Suddenly the peace was shattered by a yell of anger. David had cried out a bad, slangy word. Surprised and shocked, Mrs. Stafford turned to see what was the matter. Ruthie, who had been jumping the rope, had accidentally tripped over a wagon which David was trying to make. The broken piece was clutched grimly in David's upraised hand.

The mother took the angry, frightened child into the house. He didn't want her to know how frightened he really was about his slip in speech so when she asked him about it, he put on a bold front and protested, "All the kids around here say worse things than that."

"Oh, but you mustn't, even if they do," admonished the Mother. "Jesus is watching and He is grieved when you . . ."

Did Jesus come to the farm too?" interrupted the little boy excitedly.

"Of course He did. He is everywhere. You know that."

"We don't have family prayers anymore," accused the boy. "And we don't read the Bible except at Church, so I guess He stayed at the apartment."

Mrs. Stafford dropped her eyes in consternation. It was all too true. The working hours here were so different. They arose before daylight and were so tired by the time the day was ended that they had failed to remember God and His part in family life.

"Surely God understands," thought the mother miserably. "Surely He knows how different things are here." But she got no comfort from the thought. Clearly to her mind came the words from the Book that had been so sadly neglected, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great Salvation?" Hebrews 2:3.

Tenderly she pulled the little boy to her side and said, "I'm afraid we have been very rude to Jesus lately. Let's kneel down and ask Him to come and live in our new home."

It was a very humbled woman who went back to her wash tub. Her mind was busy with plans for rearranging their hours. God had been very kind to bring them to this new home—He must have a greater place in it.

When supper was about finished that evening Mrs. Stafford got the Bible, and, putting it on the table by her husband's plate, said, "I'm afraid we have failed to welcome our best Friend to this new home."

"Jesus has come to the farm, Daddy!" cried little David, "And Mother says He is going to live here all the time with us. Aren't you glad?"

KINDNESS

Normal Christians are easy to live with. If we are hard to live with, even though we are God's children, we are abnormal, and we misrepresent Him. The late Dr. Griffith Thomas is quoted: "An old clergyman once leaned over his pulpit and said to his flock: 'If you are not very kind you are not very holy.' I believe the old man was right. Loving-kindness is a real mark of holiness."