

Sunday School Lesson

HONESTY

International Sunday School Lesson for August 24, 1947
GOLDEN TEXT: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil."—I Thessalonians 5: 11: 1; 12: 17-22; 14: 5; 23: 10-11; Matthew 5: 37.

While written centuries ago, the words of Solomon, the author of Proverbs, have a striking message for us today. They give a remarkable insight into life and the true value of things, declaring that dishonesty is bad business and that integrity of character is essential to happiness and favor with God and man.

The word "honesty" brings to mind a variety of thoughts to a variety of people. One author suggests that because each person is reared and trained differently from all others, conceptions of moral principles vary and this fact accounts for a large part of the wickedness in the world. For a definition of the word, we go to Webster, who defines "honesty" as the quality of being honest. Going back to the word "honest," just, sincere, honorable, equitable, fair, righteous, chaste, frank or open. Therefore, honesty involves fair play, justice, truth, uprightness, trustworthiness and every other quality of noble character.

To state that dishonesty is the opposite of this is not to go deep enough. Jesus taught that if the spirit of honesty was not in the heart of a man, even though all his known works and deeds were apparently honest, he was a dishonest man. In the parable of the talents, Jesus taught the depth of unfaithfulness when he contrasted the man who had the one talent with him who had two talents. To him who was faithful, his lord said, "Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things" (Matth. 25:23). He who is honest in the little things of life can be trusted to be honest in the larger ones.

Are we as a people losing our sense of moral integrity? Surley, one of the needs of our day is a consciousness of the wrongness of dishonesty. Clifford P. Morehouse declares: "In the Middle Ages most European coinages were so debased as to be virtually worthless. Counterfeits were rampant; coins of silver or gold were panned and mutilated. When the North German merchants came to England to do business in the reign of Edward I, they introduced their own coins, which were of uniform weight and excellence. The merchants were known as 'Easterlings' and their money, came to be known as 'sterling.' Even today one looks at the back of base of silver utensils to see if they are warranted 'sterling.' It is a mark of excellence, a guarantee of integrity.

"We need some kind of 'sterling' mark to guarantee integrity in our human relationship. The currency of business and social intercourse has become so debased that without it one cannot rely upon another's words. The best 'sterling' mark in human relations is the Christian life. A Christian's word should be as good as his bond. Are we always careful to safe-guard that war-

ranty in our own dealings with friends and strangers alike?" Dishonesty can be practiced in every relationship of life. One can even be dishonest with one's self by doing those things which are harmful to mind and body, or living on a plane lower than one's possibilities, doing less than one's best. Dishonest practices in business are rampant. Black market transactions, during and since the war, have been indulged in and patronized by people who should have known better and have made it more difficult for those who were determined to remain honest.

Solomon calls attention to a practice that was in common use in his day and which, in too many instances, still exists—that of cheating by means of dishonest scales. Government inspection makes this a risky operation but there are some business men who still manage to cheat their customers through faulty scales, short cuts and scant measures. A Christian business man cannot afford to take that which belongs to another. He not only hurts himself but he hurts the cause of Christ and the work of the church of which he is a member.

Dishonesty in speech is also a matter to which we must call attention. Solomon speaks of "lying lips" and states that they "are an abomination to the Lord." Spreading false reports and gossip are the pastime of some people, who do not realize that this is sin. A person whose word cannot be relied upon is not appreciated even by people who are like him, or her. Another way to be dishonest in speech is to imply or hint a thing about another without actually saying it or remaining silent when something untrue is said about another and the reputation of the innocent person should be defended.

The fundamental foundation of good character is honesty and to be worthy of complete trust should be the ambition of everyone who wants to be in right relation with God and with his fellowmen.

Search Continues As Hope Fades For 5 Lost in Pacific Crash

Honolulu.—Military authorities last night virtually abandoned all hopes of finding the bodies of George C. Acheson, Jr., political adviser in the Japanese occupation, and four co-passengers and crewmen of an army B-17 that crashed in shark-infested waters killing five others.

The toll of the crash 42 1/4 miles from the island of Oahu was said to be 10 dead or missing and presumed dead. Three of the 13 passengers aboard the converted Flying Fortress survived.

A dozen army, navy and marine search and rescue planes joined a flotilla of seven destroyers, a navy oiler, and a Coast Guard cutter in criss-crossing an area 35 miles wide and 52 miles long. They worked over the boxed-off area west of Oahu on the theory that the bodies may have drifted many miles since the four engine plane ran out of gas and went down 25 minutes flying time from land.

Navy headquarters said there was only an extremely remote possibility that Acheson or any member of the missing passenger list could be alive. But it announced that 12 planes will be kept in the air until darkness and that the surface search will be continued until all possibility of finding the bodies was exhausted.

The plane was flying the Kwajalein to Honolulu leg of a Tokyo to Washington hop carrying Acheson and four high-ranking army and navy officers of the supreme command to the capital for consultation.

Acheson, 50 years old, career diplomat and chairman of the Allied Control Council planned to confer with State Department officials on the pending Japanese peace treaty.

All search and rescue craft were alerted to investigate every piece of debris because the plan was said to be carrying highly confidential state papers.

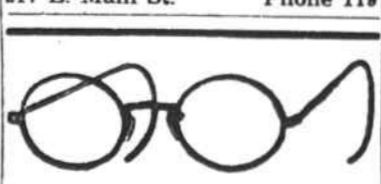
The probable death of Acheson completed the disruption of the Allied Control Council. W. MacMahon Ball, British representative on the council, has resigned. Lt. Gen. Kuzma Derevyanko, a frequent opponent of Allied command policies, is now in Moscow for consultations amid rumors he may not return.

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Waiting Is Gruesome Task For Sixteen Condemned to Die

Raleigh.—Sixteen men without hope sit in their cells on death row in State's Central Prison and wait for time to run out.

Condemned to die in North Carolina's gas chamber, waiting is the last difficult thing the 16 must accomplish.

The condemned are the only convicts in the prison who don't work for their three meals a day.

The day begins in death row at a little after seven in the morning when the guard shoves a breakfast tray into the cell. A fork and a spoon—no knife is allowed for fear of suicide—accompanies the tray.

Breakfast over, the condemned convict makes his bed and does his sweeping. "Heavy" cleaning occurs twice a week when the floor and walls are scrubbed with soap and water by the prisoner.

With cleaning done, the condemned man can read or write a letter to his parents or just sit. Nearly half of the convicts on death row just sit, for only 9 out of the 15 can write. The rest are illiterate.

This gives the literate convicts a little extra work. For they are asked to perform the writing chores for the others.

One illiterate on death row does not bother to dictate a letter home.

"Just write what you'd write your own mother," he tells the other convict in the adjoining cell.

But the condemned have little to write in their letters. There isn't much that goes on in death row except the waiting.

"I just write my wife and tell her I love her," said a prisoner due to die for murder.

The arrival of mail on death row is probably the day's outstanding event. Again the convicts who can read perform a service for the illiterates.

From their cells the condem-

ed can see through barred windows the tops of parked automobiles outside the prison. The flower beds on the lawn, however cannot be seen.

Once a day the men's orders from the prison store are taken. Only three times a week does the condemned man leave his cell.

On Tuesday he goes to the shower at the end of the corridor and after the weekly washing he gets a change of clothing and returns to his cell. A shave under the watchful eye of a guard enables the convict to leave his cell on Thursday. Visitors may talk to the condemned in a large room just outside the death row on Sunday for 30 minutes.

Devotional services are held by the prison chaplain Sunday, but each evening after supper the prisoners hold their own religious services, with each prisoner taking a turn at conducting the simple services. The prisoners do not leave their cells for the services. It comes shortly before the lights go out at 9 p. m.

Public testimonials, in which the condemned confess their sins and ask forgiveness, are common during these impromptu devotionals.

Only a last minute reprieve can save the condemned. Meanwhile the 16 sit in their cells, each 9 by 12 feet in size and furnished with a dog-eared Bible, a bed, a stool, and a lavatory—and just wait.

Outside it is hot and men rush around on matters of business. But on death row it is cool and still. The pallid-faced, condemned sit and wait for death. The faces of the 16 bespeak their hopelessness.

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