

## A Henhouse Parable

Once upon a time there was a Papa Rooster and a Mama Hen, and they had a little baby chick. "This chick is never going to scratch for a living like I did," declared Papa Rooster. "We shall see that he has everything he needs to grow up and be a fine Chicken."

And they did. They worked their beaks off trying to provide things for their little chick. He wore the finest, shiniest feathers in the whole barnyard. They taught him the finest manners and allowed him to associate with only the best chickens. "I want" is all the baby chick ever needed to say, and his want was immediately provided. The other chicks were envious that he had parents who took such pride in meeting his every wish!

In chicken school, he was always the leader. He led in reading, writing and arithmetic; played in chicken football and basketball and held the first chair in the school crowing chorus. He was valedictorian and voted most likely to make tracks. He went on to Barnfowl University and continued his education. He met a cute little chick co-ed and was wed in an elaborate barnyard affair that had the henhouse talking for weeks afterward. His career seemed assured and future bright, but one morning a tragedy struck. He disappeared and was never seen again. The last anyone ever saw of him was when he was tucked under the arm of a hungry looking hobo, who was headed for a campfire down by the railroad tracks. Alas for the little chick! His parents did everything for him except the one thing he absolutely needed: *they never taught him how to save his life!*

Moral: Are you bringing your children to Bible classes and to worship where they will learn to save their souls? If not, they may not have a chance. The world is a very hungry hobo..... (Bulletin Digest, 7/30/95)

### Narrow Bridge By Stephen P. Beck

Driving down a country road, I came to a very narrow bridge. In front of the bridge, a sign was posted: "Yield." Seeing no oncoming cars, I continued across the bridge and to my destination. On my way back, I came to the same one-lane bridge, now from the other direction. To my surprise, I saw another "Yield" sign posted. Curious, I thought. I'm sure there was one positioned on the other side. When I reached the other side of the bridge, I looked back. Sure enough, yield signs had been placed at both ends of the bridge. Drivers from both directions were requested to give the other the right-of-way. It was a reasonable and gracious way of preventing a head-on collision.

When the Bible commands Christians to "be subject to one another" (Eph. 5:21), it is simply a reasonable and gracious command to let the other have the right-of-way and avoid interpersonal head-on collisions.

"Submitting to one another in the fear of God" (Eph. 5:21). "Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for 'God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble'" (1Peter 5:5).

### If I Had Known...

If I had known  
What troubles you were bearing,  
What griefs were in the silence of your face,  
I would have been more gentle and more caring,  
And tried to give you gladness for a space.  
I would have brought more warmth into the place...

If I had known.

If I had known  
What thoughts despairing drew you,  
(Why do we never understand?)  
I would have lent a little friendship to you,  
And slipped my hand within your lovely hand,  
And made your stay more pleasant in the land...  
If I had known.

### **The Soldier with an Unloaded Gun**

I am called upon to be a fellow soldier, and the very word soldier carries with it the idea of fighting. Remember I am not only to put on the whole armor of God for self-protection, but I am to carry the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God to enable me to fight the enemy. That soldier who goes on to the battle field with an unloaded gun or one who never shoots his gun, or one who is begging all not to shoot as to hit the enemy is a disgrace to the army.

Yet I go to many places where many of my brethren claim to be soldiers, but they have not shot a gun at the enemy in ten years, and begin to plead with me as soon as I get there, and beg me to be careful not to shoot any gospel gun toward Baptists or Methodists, or "outsiders," for if I do and a gospel shot hits one, they claim it will hurt his feelings and make him mad and he won't come to the church again. Many church members are more fearful of hurting the feelings of their sectarian neighbors, and regard their friendship and love far above that of God in whose army they claim to be fighting.

Brother, do you belong to this class? Then can you claim you are in fellowship with God, when you refuse to teach the gospel to those who are the Lord's enemies, who are not only building on the sand, but are spending their time and talent in cultivating the human plants, or human churches that Christ states shall be rooted up?" (J.D. Tant, Gospel X-Ray, page 159)

### **Most Sinful Nation Status**

"And I said: 'O my God, I am too ashamed and humiliated to lift up my face to You, my God; for our iniquities have risen higher than our heads, and our guilt has grown up to the heavens'" (Ezra 9:6).

The Swedish business journal Svensk Export Strategi rated 19 industrialized nations according to their sinfulness. The criteria were the seven "modern deadly sins"; smoking, drinking, drugs, gambling, overeating, night life, and prostitution. Spain came out on top, mainly because of its gambling and night life. France, with its high consumption of alcohol, was next. The United States' drug abuse earned it the rating as third most sinful nation. At the bottom of the list were Sweden, Finland, Norway, Portugal, and Japan. The writer of Proverbs said, "Righteousness exalts a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people" (Prov. 14:34).

### **Giving Thanks**

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1Thes. 5:16-18). A young man shared an apartment with three other graduate students who also had part-time jobs while in college. Each took turns preparing the meals, which usually consisted of canned vegetables, hamburger meat, baked potatoes, and was barely edible. No matter how poor the meal was, Joe always said, "THAT WAS A MIGHTY FINE DINNER." One evening the meal was worse than usual, and Joe made his regular comment. One said, "Why do you always say that when this was hardly fit for human

consumption?" Joe answered, "I come from a family of 11 children. My mother would spend all afternoon in the kitchen preparing dinner. One night when she called us to the table, there was only a plate, and straw on each plate. My father looked at it and asked, what is this straw doing on my plate? Mother said, "Oh! you noticed. This is the first time you have given any indication that you noticed what was on your plate." Joe then said, "I vowed that I would always express my appreciation to the person who had prepared my meal." Let us take the time to express our gratitude to those who have prepared a meal for us, to those who provided it for us, and especially to God from whom all blessings flow.