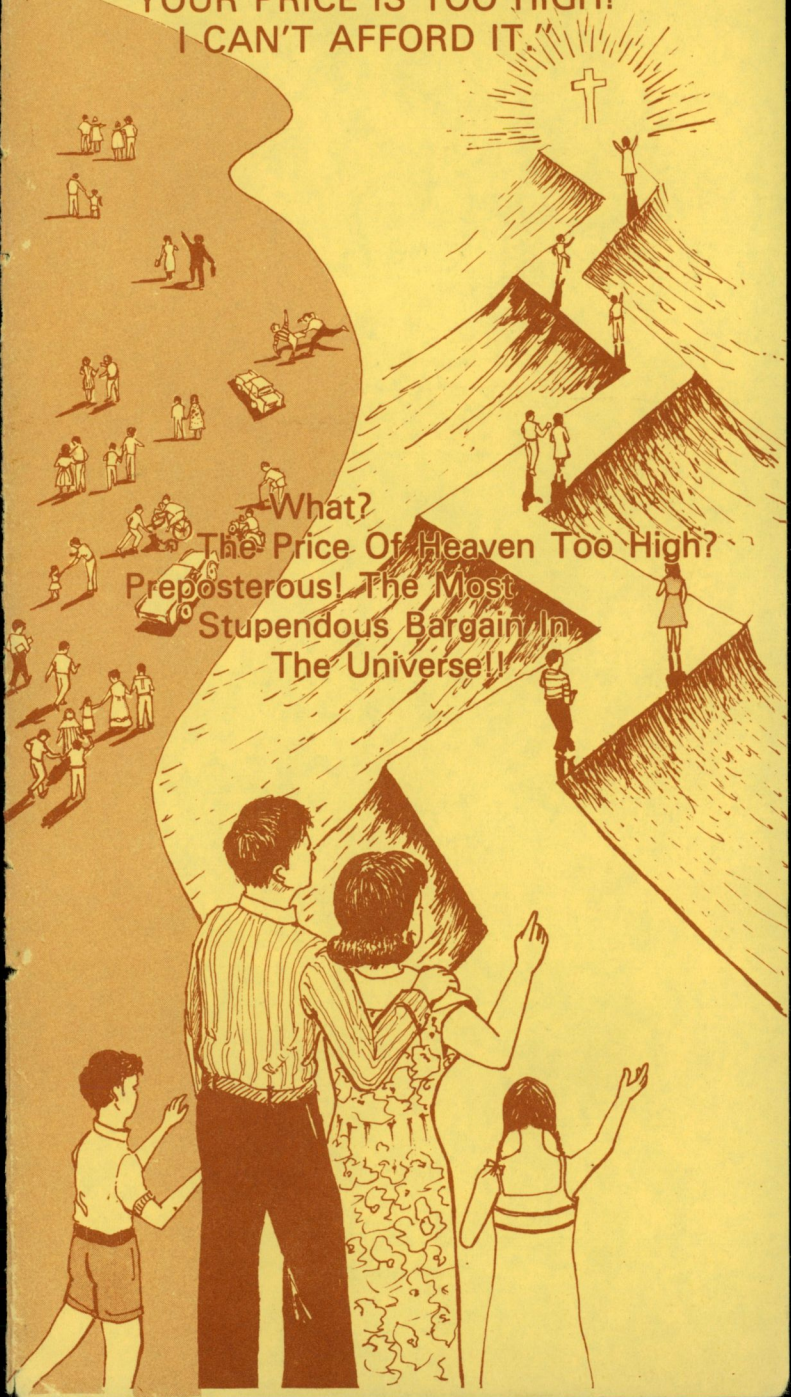
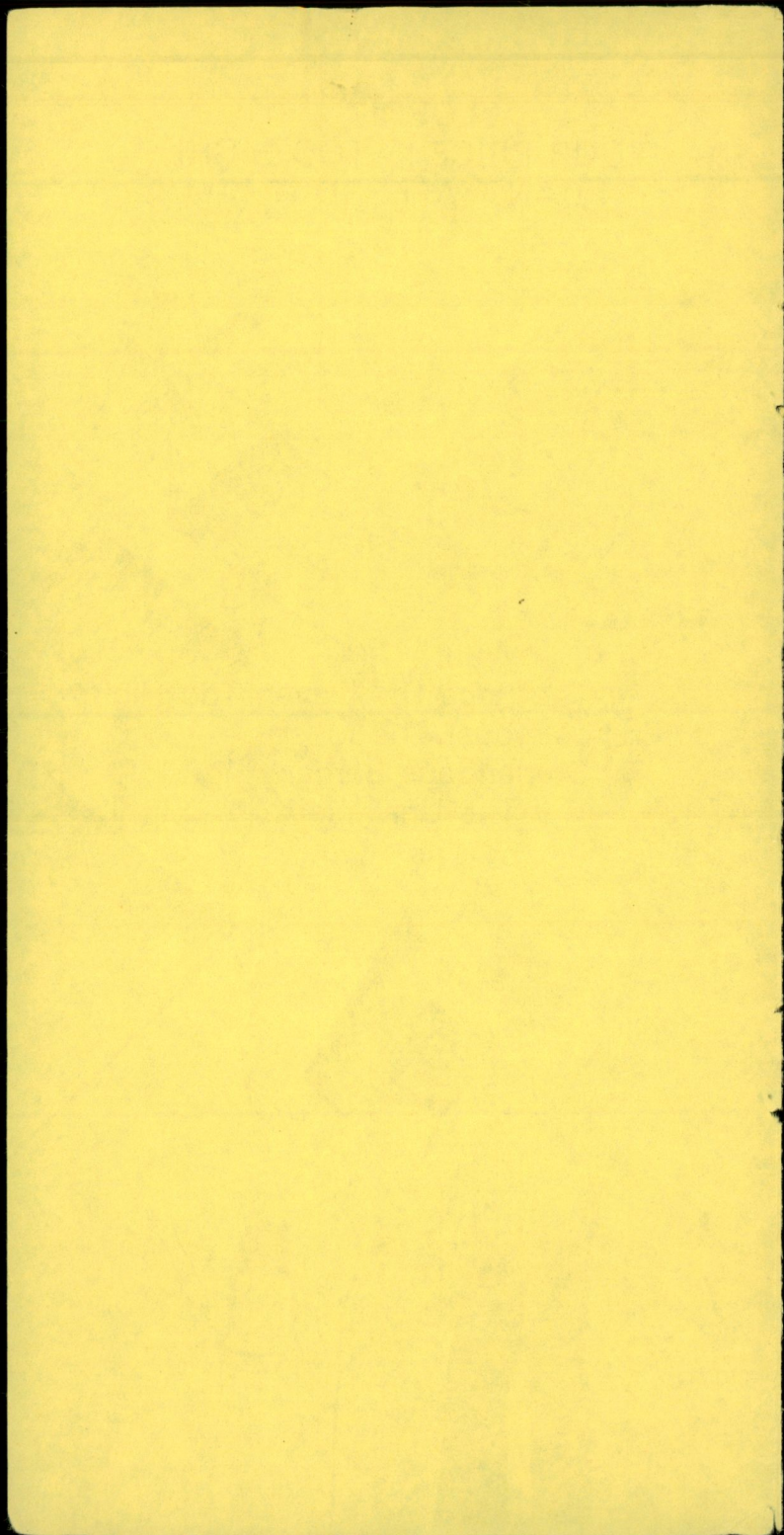


"LORD!"  
"YOUR PRICE IS TOO HIGH!  
I CAN'T AFFORD IT."



What?  
The Price Of Heaven Too High?  
Preposterous! The Most  
Stupendous Bargain In  
The Universe!!



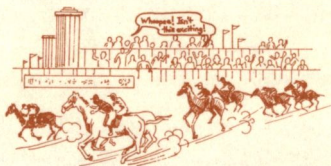


This article, "Lord, Your Price is Too High!" was taken from a sermon preached by Elder Mel Rees, a "retired" worker who is continuing to serve the cause of God effectively and in a wonderful way. This material is used by his permission.

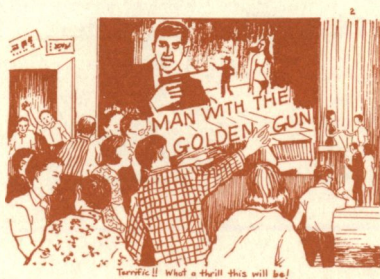
Department of  
Stewardship & Development  
Far Eastern Division

**"Lord, Your Price Is Too High!"**

"It costs too much to be a Christian," a man said one day. "There are always requests for money, for buildings, for schools and literature and missions and church expense. The price is too high. I can't afford it." So he decided being a Christian was not worth all the money it cost. He left the church.

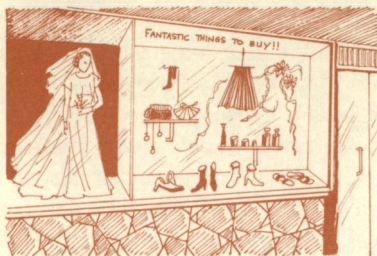


Perhaps we should not judge this man too quickly or too harshly. It may be that he was just being honest with himself. It certainly is a man's duty to examine the efficiency of his expenditure. God gives all the freedom of choice. So it is possible that the rest of us should also take a good look at the dollars and cents we are spending and giving, or feel we should be giving then ask ourselves these questions, Is the price too high? Is it worth it? Then decide once and for all one way or the other.



We know the world has a great deal of so-called "pleasure". Many would be "happy" to exchange all the money and effort it costs to be a Christian for these "pleasures". There are things to wear, things to eat, things to ride in, things to see, places to go, high positions to win, riches to gather, and "endless benefits" to enjoy. All these things are waiting for us if we are willing to pay the price. Some of these so-called "pleasures" seem to be real bargains.





This is a serious matter. It is time for us to take a good look at this whole matter of religion. We need to be wholly committed or quit wasting our time. We owe it to ourselves. This is only being fair with one-self. Also in fairness to God we owe it to Him. We need to decide, once and for all, because God wants us to do this. We need to be totally committed or get out of the way of others who are.



"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot." Revelation 3:15. Old timer Joshua had seen life in Egypt. He had also been 40 years in the Sinai desert. Now he was in Canaan. He looked around and decided he made the right choice. It was worth it. Then he said, "As for me and my house we totally commit ourselves to God. We will serve the Lord."



The urgency of the times we are living in demands such decisions. "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." James 1:8. Once there was a certain popular politician. When the people voted for him, he was in one party; when he won the election and was put in office, he changed his allegiance and joined another party. The people discovered that they could never know which side of the fence they might find him. They saw he was a time-serving opportunist and was not a good and loyal representative of the people. The Apostle James says that "a double-minded person is unstable in all his ways." Jesus also said, "No man can serve two masters; . . . he cannot serve God and mammon." Luke 16:13.



It is impossible to be a follower of Christ by putting one foot inside the church and keeping the other outside. Mrs. Lot found this out the hard way. An angel literally dragged her out of the city. But her heart was still in Sodom. Her house, her clothes, her friends, her dishes, her children, her grandchildren, her bank account and everything she had was there. The pull of Sodom was too great. The material things of life meant too much to her and she looked back. Thereafter the only thing a traveler could see in the vale of Siddim, after Sodom had burned, was a pillar of salt that looked like a woman. Such is the tragedy of indecision and the folly of a wrong choice.

The Christian road is not an easy one. Jesus said it was a cross. It takes plenty of time. If a person has ever been involved in one of the leadership responsibilities of the church, he knows what this means.





A worker's wife carries responsibilities in the Sabbath School Department. She not only carries that work during office hours, but she also carries it while she is home and even on holidays. Almost all of her spare moments she spends working on Sabbath School programs and talks. It takes plenty of time, effort and cultivated abilities. There are many meetings. Many times it is not convenient to go, but efforts must be put forth. There are many lost opportunities for doing other things, lost pleasures, lost outings and picnics and what-have-you.

Many, many times members of our church have gone out looking for a job. Employers have interviewed them and were interested in their service. But these individuals had to tell their employer that they could not work Friday night and Saturday. Although the employer expresses his interest in employing the individual, now his attitude suddenly changes and he says, "I'm terribly sorry. We are unable to use you in this post because you cannot be on duty on Saturday." Those individuals, of course, could have taken those jobs. Many Seventh-day Adventists do take such jobs and work on Saturday. Then they go out and drink, see movies, and so forth and try to forget about their religion. If such employees went to work on Monday while recovering from a drunken hang-over, perhaps the employer would have forgiven them. But when a man puts God first he often has to pay the price by giving up a good job.

Being a Christian takes pride away. It costs pride. Once a young Seventh-day Adventist Christian boy attended public school. Later, however, he took an examination to attend one of our little church schools. During the following days and weeks, as he

walked by the homes of many of his old friends on his way to church school, he heard them say, "There goes that Advent boy. There goes that strange fellow!" They ridiculed him. Yes, it takes pride away to become a genuine Christian. There is a price one must pay.



What about money? Those who return tithes and generous offerings often take twenty, thirty or more percent of their income to support church work and activities. A pastor was once teaching the principles of stewardship in a local church. One night during the meeting, a man stood up and asked if he could have permission to say a few words. He was not a public speaker, so he stammered and hemmed and hawed. Finally he said, "Something happened to me and I want to tell you about it. Yesterday I was out in the field plowing. Suddenly I became very, very angry. In fact I got so angry that I couldn't plow any more. I stopped the tractor, turned off the motor, walked across the field and returned to the house. When my wife saw me come in the house she asked, 'Peter, are you all right?' I answered her saying, 'Well, I suppose so.' Then I sat down, and she asked me again, 'What's wrong with you, Peter? Are you



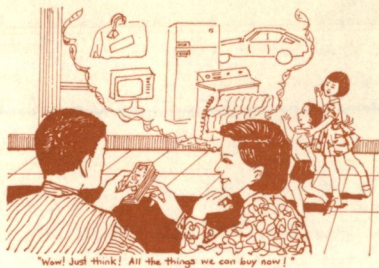


sick?' 'No,' I said, 'I'm not sick, I'm mad.' 'But what are you mad about?' 'I don't know.' 'When did this happen?' she continued. 'Well,' I answered, 'I was sitting on the tractor plowing and suddenly I became angry. The longer I sat there and drove the tractor, the madder I got.' My wife was still uncertain about me and queried, 'Why, Peter, that's not your nature. You're not like that. I've never seen you get mad.' 'Well, I'm mad now,' I retorted.

"My wife kept asking, 'When did this start?' 'Well,' I said, 'it started two or three nights ago when that fellow down at the church was talking about selfishness. By the way, Mary, do you think I am selfish?' 'No,' she somewhat reassuringly answered. 'I never thought you were.' I replied, 'Well, maybe that's my problem—selfishness. Will you pray with me?' So the two of us got down on our knees and started praying. I said to the Lord, 'Dear Lord, I have been very selfish. I don't want to be but I can see that I am. Please Lord, take selfishness out of my heart.' When I got up off my knees I wasn't mad any longer. So I walked back across the field again, got on my tractor and continued plowing."



The devil wants us to feel that being a Christian is too costly. He wants us to believe the price is too high, and cannot be paid. A person stops to think of all the different things he might be able to buy with the tithes and offerings he places in the church treasury. He does not realize that these belong to the Lord and that he is only returning what belongs to Him. Tithes and offerings not only acknowledge God's ownership but also expresses our love and gratitude for His marvelous love, care and protection.



"Wow! Just think! All the things we can buy now!"

Let us notice some of the Bible characters who counted the cost of being a Christian. Take for instance, Judas. Judas was an intellectual. He was a man of discernment. He was able to weigh advantages against disadvantages. He followed Jesus up and down the roads and trails of Galilee and Judea for about three years. Judas finally decided that Jesus, the young Rabbi, was really not going to make anything of himself and that there was no bright future in following Him. So Judas sold his share in paradise for thirty pieces of silver. Afterwards, however, as he thought the matter over more carefully, he realized that he had not made a good deal after all. So went out and hanged himself.



The price of covetousness - Judas took his own life.

We see many people in the church today who consider that heaven and paradise are not even worth thirty pieces of silver. They don't have that much invested in the heavenly treasury. It is really amazing to see how little value most people place on their eternal future.



Everyone invited to great supper but only few came. Why?



One day Jesus gave an illustration of this phenomena. A certain man made a great supper. He sent out many invitations, got everything ready and then sent out his servants to urge everyone to come. Then they all with one accord began to make excuses. The ears of those who heard Jesus tell this story must have burned when they heard Him telling about the excuses and alibis the people offered. One man had bought a piece of land and had to go and see it. Another had bought five yoke of oxen and had to prove them. Still another man married a wife. Luke 14:6-20. Can you imagine a person buying a piece of ground before he had even seen it? Is it conceivable that a man would buy five yoke of oxen and not know whether they could work or not? And where does the invitation say that the man could not bring his bride? The wife is always welcome. She would have been the center of attraction. All of these excuses, however, betrayed the preoccupied mind of the invited guests. Other interests had become all-absorbing. The heart that is absorbed in earthly attractions cannot be given to God.

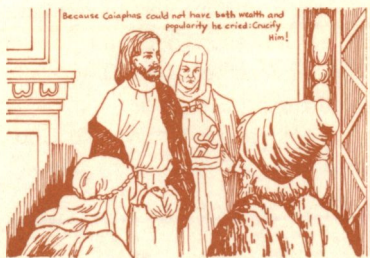


Times today haven't changed from what they were then. The alibis and excuses for not getting involved in church work are the same today. Sometimes it is

real estate. It may be something a person bought. It might be his relatives and friends. But it is always something that holds more interest for a person than God's cause and eternal salvation.

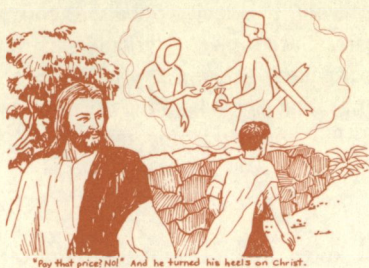


Caiaphas, the high priest of Jerusalem, considered the price as Jesus stood before him. He knew that Jesus was the Son of God. He had to weigh the cost. Was he willing to pay the price, his own popularity, his own wealth, his own position? Would he be willing to take off his rich garments, humble himself and take a position like this lowly Galilean Jesus? He considered the price and then he said, "Crucify Him, kill Him." To Caiaphas the price of following Jesus was too high and he was unwilling to pay it.

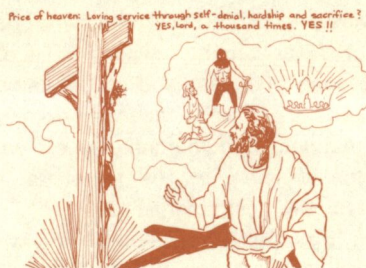


The rich young ruler also thought the price too high. He went away sorrowful because it cost too much. The price was more than he was willing to pay. But Matthew and Peter, James and John all left their gainful and profitable occupations, exchanged them for hardship and toil and sacrifice, in order to follow Christ. The price seemed very reasonable to them. Zaccheus, after he had had dinner with Jesus, decided it was a real bargain to follow Jesus. Nico-





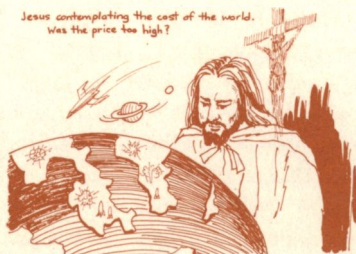
demus also thought very carefully about the cost of accepting Christ after that night's meeting with Jesus. Later when he saw Jesus hanging and suffering upon the cross he gave his heart to the Lord. Worldly wealth and position meant nothing to him now. He became poor in this world's goods and gave all that he possessed to the work of the gospel. For value received he considered the cost a fantastic bargain.



This is our need today. We need to see Jesus hanging on the cruel tree. Then the things of this world will lose their fatal fascination. The Apostle Paul gave up position, power, wealth, influence and suffered the cruelest persecution all during his life. Finally he gave up his life as a martyr for Christ. But he could say, "I have fought a good fight. I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." And Paul looked forward to a crown of righteousness. He knew it was reserved for him in heaven. Was the price too high? Temporal "pleasures" and worldly benefits too dear to exchange for a heavenly mansion, perfect happiness and a life that would never end? The greatest achievements of position, wealth and pleasure sank into insignificance in contrast to the heavenly offer. No, the price was not too high.

On the contrary, the devil's price was too high. What wages does Satan pay? Unhappiness and broken families, diseased bodies, shortened life now and punishment, total annihilation and eternal separation from God. Pay this kind of a price? Paul said, "No, never."

Did you know that Jesus had to make the same decision? Before the need ever arose he had to decide if we are worth the price He would have to pay. Isaiah 53:11 says: "He shall see the fruit of his soul and shall be satisfied." Acts of the Apostles, page 601: "What sustained the Son of God during His life of toil and sacrifice? He saw the results of the travail of His soul, and was satisfied. Looking into eternity He beheld the happiness of those who through His humiliation had received pardon and everlasting life. His ear caught the shout of the redeemed. He heard the ransomed ones singing the song of Moses and of the Lamb." He beheld my happiness. His ear caught my shout. He heard me singing the song of Moses and of the Lamb and He was satisfied. Yes, our redemption caused the shameful treatment and murder of the Son of God. If we decide to walk in His footsteps, we must realize that it will cost a great deal of time, effort and money. In fact it will cost everything we possess in this world, literally everything! But how strange the fascination for the perishable things of this life when we will lose them all anyway, no matter which way we choose. Yes, we will lose them all anyway.





Making a decision is not always easy. One of our pastors accepted an invitation for supper one evening. It was a church member's home. The weather had been bad, snow had been falling. Because of the dangers in traveling during such bad weather the pastor thought of cancelling the appointment. He decided, however, to go ahead and finally arrived at this member's home. It was a beautiful country winter scene and the pastor was now happy that he had gone ahead. He would be able to stay with this family for a number of days if the storm made it impossible for him to leave. He was invited into the kitchen where food was being prepared. The middle-aged couple had a large wood stove and a tea kettle of water on it, boiling. From it spewed a jet of steam, singing a little whistling tune. The pastor sat at the large kitchen table with the husband while the



wife continued her food preparation. On the wall was a ticking and striking clock which also provided music. Through the large kitchen window they could watch the beautiful falling snow outside. Together they all enjoyed a very delicious evening meal. After the meal was over the man's wife cleared the table while the pastor and her husband continued their conversation. Finally his wife finished her work and sat down at the table with her husband and the pastor.

The host had invited the pastor there for some specific reason though the pastor at this point didn't know what it was. After some time there was a lull in the conversation. It was broken by the husband. "I wanted you to come here tonight because I'm going to make a decision," he said decisively.

"Tonight I'm going to decide whether to be a total Christian or no Christian at all. If I decide to be all Christian then I'm going to go all out for Christ. If I decide not to be a Christian then I have gone to church for the last time in my life."



His elbow had been resting on the table. Now he dropped his hand and parted his fingers. Next he took the finger of his right hand and placed it between the two parted fingers. "If I go this way I will be an all-out Christian, but if I follow this way I've gone to church for the last time." Then he put his right finger on the knuckles of the two parted fingers of his other hand and quit talking. The pastor was transfixed. He watched the man's finger and hand with breathless anxiety. In his heart he prayed, "Lord, please, please dear Lord, help him to make the right choice, the right decision." The man's wife was sitting there with a terrible expression of agony etched on her face.

Her husband had been the local elder of their church for fifteen or sixteen years. He was very highly respected by the members of the church. The pastor never dreamed that he was not a totally dedicated Christian. But now the elder himself said that he was at the crossroads of his life's journey. He had not been an all-out Christian, but tonight he was going to decide one way or the other. For some moments there was complete silence except for the singing of the tea kettle and the ticking of the clock. The pastor and the man's wife were held in painful suspense. During those silent moments earnest petitions ascended heavenward.



In an old edition of the book, *Bible Readings for the Home Circle*, there are three pictures portraying a man playing a game of chess with the devil which is called the "Game of Life." An angel standing behind the man was trying to influence the man to make the right move.



And no doubt an angel behind the church elder on this day, was also trying to help him make the right decision and not let Satan win this game. His wife and the pastor waited in keen apprehension for seemingly hours. Then finally the man's right hand started to move. He placed his hand on the finger which indicated he would be a total all-out Christian. Then the tension broke as he bowed his head and gave a sudden sigh of relief, as if exhausted in making this great decision. Then with great firmness he said, "I'm going to be an all-out Christian." The pastor breathed, "Amen." His wife sobbed softly.

The pastor told no one else about this experience. Only the three of them present that evening knew about it but people in the church began to talk. They said, "Isn't it amazing that our church elder, Brother So-and-so is so great?" Visitors asked the question, "What! Do you mean that he is different?" Members answered, "We can't quite explain it but he is so different from what he used to be." Person after person saw the change that had come into this church elder's life. This all happened after he made his decision that night to be a total, all-out Christian. From that day to this, this man has been a totally dedicated Christian. He decided that night that it was worth it to go all out for the Lord Jesus Christ.

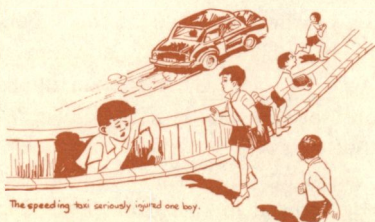


Dear fellow believers, don't you think it's time we become committed, totally committed, to our profession of Christianity? Let us consider what is in store for us.

"But as it is written eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for them that love Him." 1 Cor. 2:9.

With such a wonderful prospect in the future, how can we neglect to become totally involved for Christ? If a person allowed his imagination to run without restraint in thinking about the future inheritance, still he would never even come close to visualizing what God has prepared for His people in the earth made new. Brethren and sisters, please, let's not throw it all away.

A missionary from India one time told of this experience. A British businessman was coming home from his office. He was sitting in the back seat of his car. Ahead of him he saw a horrible sight. Some little children were playing in the street, where they always played. A taxi cab ahead of them came skidding around the corner of the street real fast. The boys tried to get off the road but before all of them could, the cab hit one of the boys, knocking him





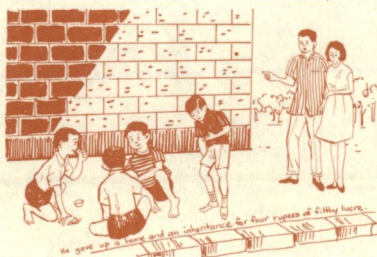
over into the gutter. The businessman ordered his driver to stop and he immediately got out of his car, walked over to the boy in the gutter. He found him still alive but bleeding and suffering. The man took the child in his arms, spoiling his nice suit with the blood and dirt of the street. Then he ordered his driver to rush to the hospital. They raced to the hospital and there, under the skillful hands of an experienced physician, the boy's life was saved.

This businessman and his wife then made frequent trips to the hospital to see the little fellow. When he got better and was sitting up in bed they noticed he was a very charming boy. They began to love him very much. Every day thereafter, they would visit him. One day the lady said to her husband, "I have been thinking . . . " Puzzled, he asked, "What do you mean? Well, I've been thinking, too." She smiled at her husband. "Do you mean thinking about adopting him?" "That's right," he agreed. His wife was delighted at their united decision. Their own two children were grown and one of them was in government service. The other boy ran a large business. Now their large house seemed rather empty to them. They thought it would be wonderful to have a little boy running around in the house again. So they planned to make him a full heir to their considerable



fortune, as their own children didn't really need their money. They decided to give this adopted boy the best education that money could provide. He would be their own son. Lawyers investigated the case and found out that he had no parents or kin folk. He was an orphan. They went through all the procedures to make him their heir. Finally the day came when they

could take him from the hospital to their home. Several times after this, the boy's foster mother took him back to the hospital to have his dressings changed. Under her loving care he improved rapidly. One day she was too busy to take him to the hospital herself and she asked him, "Can you go to the hospital by yourself today?" He answered, "Yes, surely." So she put four rupees in his hands. He took the money she gave him and started for the hospital immediately. That was the last they ever saw of him for he never returned. The grieving foster parents could only surmise that he left the house, opened his hand, saw the money and felt that he had a fortune. He had never had so much money before. He just took off and disappeared. He threw away his heirship to a fortune for four rupees of filthy lucre.



Jesus says, "Behold I stand at the door and knock." He is waiting for us to come and open the door and He will come in and sup with us. How vitally important that we decide to accept the invitation of Jesus our Lord. The price of heaven too high? Preposterous! It is the most stupendous bargain in all the universe. A truly wise man will





promptly and wholeheartedly accept this fantastic offer. Dear fellow believers, whatever you do, don't ever throw it all away for four rupees' worth of the junk of this world.

"Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." *1 Cor. 4:1, 2.*



