



from an Article in Jones 5th Grade Reader

Some may scoff at the presentation of material from fifth grade readers which I share often; but I believe these stories and values are worth remembering – more so, worth repeating and re-instituting in our modern school curricula. The values advocated and reinforced in the young minds of our nation will bear like fruit in future times.

If we forget from whence we have arrived at our present station, we will soon forget what is important to sustain our heritage and Christian faith.

Below are three only of many fine proverbs and quotes of Ben Franklin:

- “I have lived, Sir, a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth – that God governs in the affairs of men. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid? We have been assured, Sir, in the sacred writings, that *‘except the Lord build the House, they labor in vain that buildeth it.’* I firmly believe this; and I also believe that without His concurring aid we shall succeed in this political building no better than the Builders of Babel.” spoken at the Constitutional Convention, 1787.
- “It takes many good deeds to build a good reputation, and only one bad one to lose it.”
- “They who can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety.”

The following story I have corrected and reformatted for publication. The language is quaint, but beautiful. Some punctuation may be extended beyond its space, but I have attempted to proof those out of the article.

Benjamin Franklin
by H. W. Thomas¹

As a young man, Franklin was not only active and ambitious, but he was blessed with a large amount of eminently practical good sense. Unlike the great philosophers, who taught that learning was degraded by bringing it down to common affairs, this great

¹ Hiram W. Thomas was a popular Chicago preacher of the past.

philosopher of a later day and civilization sought constantly to utilize his knowledge in all practical ways, rather than to dwell in the world of abstract ideas.

He thought of the power of the lightning that plays across the sky, and with his kite and key he coaxed it down a string and confined it in a bottle. And from this simple experiment the Morses and the Edisons have gone on in improvement, till now this same electric fluid lights our houses and streets and carries messages across continents and seas.

He projected the first fire-engine company, and organized the first company of state militia and was colonel of its first regiment. In his plan for the union of the colonies he anticipated, if he did not really suggest, the model for the Constitution of the United States. He laid the foundations of the school that has since grown into the University of Pennsylvania; and in presiding over the post office of the colonies he introduced the penny stamp, that has since enlarged into our great postal service.

This poor boy, who began life making candles and setting type and eating his dry bread upon the streets of Philadelphia, at last stood before the royal and the learned of England and the Continent ; and was admired and praised for his great knowledge.

It was through his influence very largely the French court was won over to the cause of the colonies in the days of the Revolution; and without this support the independence of our country could hardly have been gained.

And then, at the close of the war, the same hand that in 1776 had signed the Declaration of Independence, in 1782 and 1783 signed the treaty of independence and peace with Great Britain and also the treaties of amity and commerce with Sweden and Prussia; and in 1789 that same hand signed the Constitution of the United States. He predicted at that time that the sun of his country should "be a rising and not a setting sun," — a prophecy that has been more than verified in a hundred years of unequalled prosperity.

It is said from childhood Franklin delighted to repeat the proverb of Solomon : "*Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men.*" He obeyed this proverb: he was diligent; and at last he stood before the royalty of Europe and received the public praise of Lord Chatham.

At the advanced age of eighty-four, his great life work done, "*he was gathered to his fathers.*" Upon the motion of James Madison, Congress adopted a resolution declaring that "his native genius was not more an ornament to human nature than his various exertions of it have been precious to science, to freedom, and to his country." And Lord Brougham declared, " One of the most remarkable men of our times as a politician, or of any age as a philosopher, was Franklin; who stands alone in combining these two characters, the greatest that man can sustain, and in this, that, having borne the first part in enlarging science by one of the greatest discoveries ever made, he bore the second part in founding one of the greatest empires in the world."

Footnote to the Story:

Morse and Edison: great electricians and inventors. It is to Morse we owe the telegraph. — Lord Chatham: William Pitt, also known as the Great Commoner. He was a famous English statesman who showed great sympathy and friendliness for the American colonies. — Lord Brougham (broo'am) : an English statesman.