

THE PARABLE OF THE BRICKLAYER

This is a story about a bricklayer who was injured while trying to get a load of bricks down from the 10th floor without help. On his insurance form he wrote the following: "It would have taken too long to carry the bricks down by hand, so I put them in a barrel to lower them by a pulley, which I had fastened to the top of the building. After tying the rope securely at ground level, I then went up to the 10th floor and swung the barrel of bricks out over the pavement. Then I ran down ten storeys and untied the rope, holding it securely, trying to guide the barrel down slowly. But since I weigh only 140 pounds, the 500-pound load jerked me from the ground so fast that I didn't have time to think of letting go of the rope.



"As I passed between the second and third floor, I met the barrel coming down. This accounts for the lacerations on my upper body. I held tightly to the rope until I reached the top, where my hand became jammed in the pulley. This accounts for my broken thumb. Suddenly, the barrel hit the pavement with a bang and the bottom fell out. With the weight of the bricks now gone, the barrel only weighed about 40 pounds; thus, my 140-pound body began a swift descent and I met the empty barrel coming up. This accounts for my broken ankle. Slowed only slightly, I continued my descent and landed on the pile of bricks. This accounts for my sprained back and broken collar-bone. At this point, I lost my presence of mind completely, let go of the rope, and the empty barrel came crashing down on me. This accounts for my head injuries.

"As for the last question on the form: 'What would I do if the same situation arose again?' Please be advised that I am finished trying to do the job all by myself."

(Mar 26/16) Jerry Hennig