

The Knowledge Bank at The Ohio State University

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THE ENGINEER

---A Parable

One day three men, a lawyer, a doctor, and an engineer, appeared before St. Peter as he stood guarding the Pearly Gates.

The first man to step forward was the lawyer. With confidence and assurance, he proceeded to deliver an eloquent address which left St. Peter dazed and bewildered. Before the venerable Saint could recover, the lawyer quickly handed him a writ of mandamus, pushed him aside, and strode through the open portals.

Next came the doctor. With impressive, dignified bearing, he introduced himself. "I am Dr. Brown."

St. Peter received him cordially. "I feel I know you, Dr. Brown. Many who preceded you said that you sent them here. Welcome to our city!"

The engineer, modest and diffident, had been standing in the background. He now stepped forward. "I am looking for a job", he said.

St. Peter wearily shook his head. "I am sorry", he replied; "we have no work for you. If you want a job, you can go to Hell." This response sounded familiar to the engineer and made him feel more at home.

"Very well," he said, "I have had Hell all my life and I guess I can stand it better than the others." St. Peter was puzzled. "Look here, young man, what are you?"

"I am an engineer," was the reply.

"Oh yes", said St. Peter, "Do you belong to the Locomotive Brotherhood?"

"No, I am sorry", the engineer responded apologetically, "I am a different kind of an engineer."

"I don't understand," said St. Peter, "what on earth do you do?"

The engineer recalled a definition and calmly re-

plied: "I apply mathematical principles to the control of natural forces."

This sounded meaningless to St. Peter and his temper got the best of him. "Young man", he said, "you can go to Hell with your mathematical principles and try your hand on some of the natural forces there!"

"That suits me," responded the engineer, "I am always glad to go where there is a tough job to tackle." Whereupon he departed for the Nether Regions.

And it came to pass that strange reports began to reach St. Peter. The Celestial denizens, who had amused themselves in the past by looking down upon the less fortunate creatures in the Inferno, commenced asking for transfers to that other domain. The sounds of agony and suffering were stilled. Many new arrivals after seeing both places selected the Nether Region for their permanent abode. Puzzled, St. Peter sent messengers to visit Hell and to report back to him. They returned, all excited, and gave St. Peter their report.

"That engineer you sent down there," said the report, "has completely transformed the place so you wouldn't recognize it now. He has cooled the entire place with artificial refrigeration. He has drained the Lakes of Brimstone and has filled the air with cool perfumed breezes. He has flung bridges across the Bottomless Abyss and has bored tunnels through the Obsidian Cliffs. He has created paved streets, gardens, parks and playgrounds, lakes, rivers, and beautiful waterfalls. That engineer you sent down there has gone through Hell and has made of it a realm of happiness, peace, and industry!"

Courtesy Oklahoma State Engineer.