

## LETTERS FROM GRANDPA # 468

Dearest grandchild,

Today's letter will be about a preacher named Frank Wakely Gunsaulus. He was born Jan. 1, 1856 in Chesterville, Ohio to Joseph and Mary Gunsaulus. He lived in Chicago for 34 years and was pastor of the Plymouth Church from 1887–1899. While there he became famous for preaching a "Million Dollar Sermon."

Frank delivered that sermon in 1890 and is reported to have said: *"If I had a million dollars I would build a school to provide students from all backgrounds meaningful roles in changing industrial society."* According to the story, a wealthy industrialist named Philip Armour was present and said to Gunsaulus after hearing the message: *"If you give me five years for this school, I'll give you the million dollars"*. Thus began the Armour Institute of Technology which became the Illinois Institute of Technology. The school opened in 1893 and Gunsaulus was the president for 27 years.

This is the way Napoleon Hill quotes Gunsaulus in his book *Think and Grow Rich*. *"One Saturday afternoon I sat in my room thinking of ways and means of raising the money to carry out my plans. For nearly two years, I had been thinking, but I had done nothing but think! "The time had come for ACTION!" "I made up my mind, then and there, that I would get the necessary million dollars within a week. How? I was not concerned about that. The main thing of importance was the decision to get the money within a specified time, and I want to tell you that the moment I reached a definite decision to get the money within a specified time, a strange feeling of assurance came over me, such as I had never before experienced. Something inside me seemed to say, 'Why didn't you reach that decision a long time ago? The money was waiting for you all the time!'"*

*"Things began to happen in a hurry. I called the newspapers and announced I would preach a sermon the following morning, entitled, 'What I would do if I had a Million Dollars.' "I went to work on the sermon immediately, but I must tell you, frankly, the task was not difficult, because I had been preparing that sermon for almost two years. The spirit back of it was a part of me! "Long before midnight I had finished writing the sermon. I went to bed and slept with a feeling of confidence, for I could see myself already in possession of the million dollars. "Next morning I arose early, went into the bathroom, read the sermon, then knelt on my knees and asked that my sermon might come to the attention of someone who would supply the needed money. "While I was praying I again had that feeling of assurance that the money would be forthcoming. In my excitement, I walked out without my sermon, and did not discover the oversight until I was in my pulpit and about ready to begin delivering it. "It was too late to go back for my notes, and what a blessing that I couldn't go back! Instead, my own subconscious mind yielded the material I needed. When I arose to begin my sermon, I closed my eyes, and spoke with all my heart and soul of my dreams. I not only talked to my audience, but I fancy I talked also to God. I told what I would do with a million dollars if that amount were placed in my hands. I described the plan I had in mind for organizing a great educational institution, where young people would learn to do practical things, and at the same time develop their minds.*

*"When I had finished and sat down, a man slowly arose from his seat, about three rows from the rear, and made his way toward the pulpit. I wondered what he was going to do. He came into the pulpit, extended his hand, and said, 'Reverend, I liked your sermon. I believe you can do everything you said you would, if you had a million dollars. To prove that I believe in you and your sermon, if you will come to my office tomorrow morning, I will give you the million dollars. My name is Phillip D. Armour.'"*

The preacher's dream came true and in the fall of 2022 the Illinois Institute of Technology had 6,947 students. (3,105 undergraduates and 2977 graduate students)

Conventional wisdom would consider any man a fool who would dare to announce such an outrageous sermon in the newspaper, and then dare to preach it the very next day. An unknown poet has captured the genius of such audacity by writing:

*Thank God for fools, for men who dare to dream beyond the lean horizons of their days.*

*Men not too timid to pursue that gleam of unguessed lands of wonder and amaze.*

*Thank God for fools, abused, of low estate, we rear our temples on the stones they laid,*

*And ours is the prize their tired souls might not wait, theirs the requiem of the unafraid.*

*Thank God for fools, the trails that ring the world are dark with blood and sweat where they have passed.*

*And they are the flags of every flag unfurled, their ashes and oblivion at last.*

*Thank God for fools!*

Peter preached on Pentecost: **“Your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.” (Acts 2:17)** Please dare to dream!

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce