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HOW . JOSH . WORKED . UP . A
.. CONCEPT. . .

By JOSH, SENIOR.



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How Josh Worked Up a Concept.

Our minister is mighty smart;
He has advanced ideas,
And isn't slow to preach 'em out
As chipper as you please.
He says the words of Scriptor
Mean suthin' clear as day;
It's what he calls their consep,
But it ain't jist what they say.
At least it ain't that allus,
For the words can git askew;
"And if you stick to them," says he,
"You'll go a skewin' too."
So me and Josh we heerd him,
As plain as plain could be.—
Josh is jist comin' twenty-five,
An' 's a mighty help to me.
He does mos' of my business now,
I've got so old and stiff.
Of course I give him my ideas;
But he takes 'em in a jiff;
An' he never tries to twist 'em,
But he allus means jist right,
An' the neighbors an' the hired hands,
They'd trust him day or night.

Nex' mornin', eatin' breakfast,
Says I to Josh, "My son,
It's time we had that buckwheat in,
'N the plowin' isn't done.
An' both our teams is tuckered out;
I never see sich ground."
(You see we'd been a dreenin'
Of the big long meadow pond;
'N the hummocks and scrub will erroots,
An' cat-tail roots an' sich,
Made plowin' mighty tiresome,
For the bog was mighty rich.)
"Jim Jones is got eight oxen,
'N he said he'd come a day;
So send a man to tell him come,
An' send him right away;
An' write a line, an' make it plain
How much I mean to pay.
Jim's brother 'll have to come along,
So each kin drive two yoke;
But I reckon it'll take two days
To get the swamp all broke.
An' sence they'll have five mile to come,
Through the big piney wood,
I guess its worth a V apiece,
Ef they do the job up good."

Josh got his pencil right away,
An' writ jist where he sot;

An' then, bimeby, he comes to me
To show me what he'd got.
"No, no," says I, and straightened up,
"I've tell'd ye what to say;
I guess you've got a good consep;
Jist tell it your own way.
It's you that's writin' to Jim Jones,
I don't say nuthin' to him;
Jist start my consep down his way,
An' that'll have to do him."

So pretty soon the Jones boys come,
An' brought the oxen, too.
I tell you, how the roots did crack,
When they put them ox-teams through!
But when I come to settle up,
An' pay 'em what I orter,
They wouldn't settle, more 'an 'ile
'Ud settle into water.
I give 'em each a V, and says,
"That pays for team an' driver."
Says they, "We gits two Vs apiece,
Or we don't take a stiver!"
An' then they showed me Josh's line,
An' showed my name put to it
(The stoopid boy had writ as ef
I tell'd him how to do it).
It said: "You'll have a pesky job;
The meadow's mighty tough;

I've tuckered out my hosses there;
Two yoke won't be enough.
A double team on both the plows
'Ill do it slick as grease;
So bring your hull four yoke along;
I'll pay a V apiece."
"That means," says they, "the hull
four yoke
'Ill get four Vs among 'em;
An' ef you hadn't gin that much,
You bet we'd never brung 'em."
Says I, "That isn't my consep."
"What's that?" says Jimmy Jones
(His eyes wus bigger than his fists,
An' stared like two big stones).
"What's that?" says I; "if you'd a been
Last Sunday in your pew,
"You'd know consep means meanin', an'
It means *my* meanin' too.
It means the meanin' what I put
Right into Josh's head.
It isn't none of my consarn
What Josh here went an' said."
You orter a seen them fellers rare!
Waal—jist to tell it short,
We argied till there wa'n't no use,
An' then we went to court.

The jedge he was a fren' of mine,
An' honest as the light;
An' know'd 'at I was honest too,
Ef I could see it right.
Says he, "When folks gits other folks,
To put their meanin' down,
An' sends it out to *other* folks,
An' spreads it all aroun';
Folks number one is boun' to see
What number two's a sayin',
Or else folks number three does right
To hold 'em to the payin'."
Jist then I tried to say "Consep"
(Jedge goes to our church;
I kind o' thought he wouldn't leave
Our preacher in the lurch).
"Yes, yes," says he, "I heerd all that;
'Ts as ef our preacher fancies
'At goodness isn't up on talk,
An' has to take its chances.
Ef he kin find that in the Book
I wish he'd pint me to it,
I guess men couldn't talk at all
Ef they wa'n't helped to do it.
I guess the One that made their tongues
Could tell 'em how to use 'em;
An' ef they hadn't fust-rate words,
Could help 'em how to choose 'em.

But let that go. It ain't my trade
To tell men how to preach.
I on'y know that business talk
Can't crawfish out o' reach.
Don't talk to me about conseps!
I 'spose there's some sich things;
Jist like there's water in the airth
That ain't come out in springs.
An' so there's milk that ain't been milked,
An' sap inside the tree;
But sich don't butter buckwheat cakes,
An' sweeten 'em—for me.
You tap your tree, and bile your sap,
An' folks knows what they're buyin';
But this here dealin' in con-sep—
It's jist as bad as lyin'.
No, no, my fren', for common folks
That argyment won't wash.
You'd be the sneakin'est kind o' man
To lay that job on Josh."

I paid them twenty dollars down,
And ain't lost nuthin' by it.
I'll tell you how. You take my word,
An' jist go home an' try it!
There's words all through the Testament,
Which, every time I find 'em,
Thinks I, "There ain't no Josh work here;
There's Some One True behind 'em!"





