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TO SHINE IN USE

By Hal B. Joiner

How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnish'd not to shine in use!
-- Ulysses -- Alfred, Lord Tennyson --

THE LIFE STORIES OF:

Rev. Henry A. Erdmann

John H. Abrahams

Albert L. Crane

Sponsored by:

Rev. Elbert Dodd,

General Moderator

Bible Missionary Church

Anchor Publications

Natchitoches, Louisiana

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Sister Ann Baldwin for her tireless efforts and also for the suggestion of the title, TO SHINE IN USE.

* * * * *

FOREWORD

The biographies of these three men have been a personal inspiration to all of us who have worked these months on this book. As great and as good as these three men were, it has not been our motive to glorify men alone. Our desire has been to glorify the God who makes men great.

It is our prayer that the reader will not go far into this book before the record of the lives of these godly men will grip them and challenge to a deeper walk in the holy things of God.

As you finish this book you will have seen that all godly lives follow familiar patterns -- every life different, but similar in dedication, sacrifice, and similar in devotion to God.

They were great only because they wholeheartedly served a great God.

Each of these men loved life, and loved people. Each one had his own gifts and calling, but none the less each a success.

Humble men are the hardest to write about, for they do not purposely leave extensive records of their life and deeds. But it has been a challenge to Sister Baldwin and I and others to gather as much information as we have. Our chief source has come from that which these men have written in the hearts of men. This was their legacy to us and what a rich one it has been.

Hal B. Joiner 1975

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DEDICATION

To
SISTER ERDMANN, SISTER ABRAHAMS,
SISTER CRANE

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Part 1

REV. HENRY ALBERT ERDMANN

Editor in Chief of Sunday School
Literature of the
Bible Missionary Church

Holiness Advocate
1887-1974

* * *

INTRODUCTION

From the least assuming sources and out of difficult circumstances often come those who make the greatest spiritual contributions. "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence." (I Cor. 1:26-29)

Born of German parentage, in an obscure community, Henry Albert Erdmann came on the stage of human activity. When he started to school he was sent home because he still could not speak English well enough to be conversant with his teacher and classmates.

To the casual observer, he held little promise of success but Henry Albert Erdmann was endowed with gifts and graces that destined him to become a great teacher of men. He was great because he came to know God in saving and sanctifying power. It was plain to all who knew him that here was one who from his youth until the hour of his death remembered his Creator and sought first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

It will be the purpose of this biography to portray, in part, the life and labors of this man who in his earthly pilgrimage sought to glorify God by a godly walk and vital piety.

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Chapter 1 HOLINESS ADVOCATE

It has been hard to capture with pen the thrilling sense of adventure that is wrapped up in the life of this extraordinary man. His productive life spanned an unusual number of years. Saved at the age of 16; active in the work of the Lord until his death at the age of 87. A span of 71 years of constant service in the kingdom of God. What a challenge his life should be to us all. He took for granted that the Lord meant what He said in Ec. 8:8 "and there is no discharge in that war;"

Those who might be tempted to believe the life of the "servant of God" to be tedious or monotonous need only to read carefully the life of Rev. Henry Albert Erdmann.

It can be seen that the Christian life is not that detached and indifferent thing that many worldlings would have us believe. His life was as exciting as that of any hero in fiction.

The story his life tells is inspiring and proves forever that the life of a "servant of God" is anything but dull.

The life story of H. A. Erdmann should give many people, old and young alike, a new conception of what does make life truly worthwhile, and what true greatness is. Simply byproducts of Christian living.

This is the biography of an extra ordinary man whose ministry and usefulness spanned an unusual number of years.

He preached his first sermon at the age of 16 at Cherokee, Oklahoma in 1903. He relates in his book, that his text was John 3:16, and that it took him a total of 15 minutes to cover the subject.

Rev. Erdmann kept an interesting set of ledgers and the first recorded sermon in it gives the date, March 14, 1914 and April 24, 1973, at Twin Falls, Idaho, as his last entry in his ledger.

This soldier of the cross preached a changless message. This first recorded sermon of 1914 at Princeton, Texas was from the text found in I Cor. 6:19-20. "What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

His last recorded message was preached at Twin Falls, Idaho on the subject "The Apostles Doctrine", from the text, Acts 2:42,

"And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."

This text, unintentional I am sure, but a perfect epitaph for one who had undeniably "continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine," in his own ministry.

Holiness Preacher

Though, Bro. Erdmann held many varied jobs and positions within the church, he was dedicated to the call to preach "second blessing" holiness. Bro. Erdmann would not compromise the doctrine of Entire Sanctification. Those who knew him best, and those who heard him preach, all agree that he believed whole-heartedly in the two works of grace. And that the two works of grace were working in his own heart.

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Chapter 2

HIS LIFE AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Let us leave for a moment this general view of the man who is the subject of this biography and gather as much as possible of the interesting details of the life of this saintly man.

His German Parentage

Rev. H. A. Erdmann was one of twelve children born to Fred and Matilda Erdmann. Fred and Matilda Erdmann were of hardy German stock, immigrating to America in the year 1882.

We do not have any information giving us any specific reasons for their coming to America but as was the case in most instances it was a search for a better way of life.

Great portions of land had been given to various railroad companies from 1867 on. The high cost of construction caused many railroad promoters to dispose of their land grants. By advertising and sending agents abroad railroad companies sought immigrants as workers and as land-purchasers. Large groups of Europeans were thereby brought to the American Mid-West.

The state of Iowa attracted a great number of German immigrants. The rich, black fertile farm lands, much like their own homeland, was the magnet that drew them to this particular area of the United States.

Not speaking the English language they naturally felt more at ease among their own German speaking friends. This resulted in the forming of German settlements and colonies.

Some of these settlements and colonies became famous and some of them still exist today. One of these being the four villages known as the "Amana Colonies" near Iowa City, Iowa. Their woolen and electrical products are known throughout the world.

If you should visit one of these villages you will find prototypes of the hardy industrious, fun-loving stock of German people that immigrated to this country almost a hundred years ago. It was from this same type of people Rev. H. A. Erdmann descended.

The Erdmanns were hard working farmers all of their lives. As far as we can tell they were never prosperous and it was years later before they would own a farm of their own.

Monotony and hardships were the order of the day for the farmers of the late 1800's. From seed time to harvest the average American farmer was a hard worker in the fields, and his leisure was usually as monotonous as his toil. He was often isolated and was denied conveniences and advantages which his fellow countrymen took for granted. This was the story of the Fred Erdmann family. These hardships may have been blessings in disguise for young Henry Erdmann, fitting him for the day he would be called from the hard sod farm of Iowa to the often tedious labors in the "Master's labor fields."

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Chapter 3 HIS BIRTH AND EARLY CHILDHOOD

On a hard, cold, blustery January 12, in the year 1887 five years after his parents arrived from Germany, a small gift arrived at the humble home of Fred and Matilda Erdmann. That precious gift was to be named Henry Albert Erdmann.

Rev. Erdmann's father loved to tell his son of the day the blizzard was raging and he was born. Bro. Erdmann in his good humored way liked to refer to it as the day he, "discovered America."

The Erdmann family was not a small family. Henry was one of twelve children born in this home. There were six boys and six girls, making a happy even dozen.

The Family Moves

Four years after his birth the family moved from the southern portion of the state to a section in the northern part. This move was from Union County, Iowa to another German settlement in Hancock County.

Methodist Church Background

In the providences of God the Erdmann family attended a German Methodist Church and Sunday School, giving him a good foundation in holiness doctrine at an early age. Most Germans of that day were either Catholic, Lutheran, or Mennonite. Not much is recorded of the evangelism

of the German Americans. So we feel that God had his hand on Henry Erdmann from the beginning. It would be interesting to know the details of their association with the Methodist Church.

His First Year of School

The first year of school was hard on this bashful, timid child. His playmates were all Germans and the German language was also spoken in the home. It was natural then that he didn't learn the English language, as a child and was unable to speak a word of English when he first started to school.

As a young lad, Henry Erdmann may have looked much the same as his fellow school mates at the little one room school house. But there was a great difference, a painful difference to Henry Erdmann: He could not read, write or speak a word of English. He attended few classes his first year of school because of this.

He had one lasting attribute in his favor, which was the strong desire to learn and get a good education. This desire put him ahead all through life. He had many excuses along the way to give up and quit, but he never did. Many who had greater advantages in the beginning were soon left far behind by this determined soul. A determination that would be well for others to copy.

His curriculum for the first year was not hard for his teacher to decide upon. His first year in school was spent learning the English language.

His Great Timidity

In intensive study it also helped him to partially overcome his "terrible" timidity.

Those who knew Rev. Erdmann in his adult years found it hard to believe he had once been so handicapped by timidity. But by way of illustration we will use his own words found written in his book, "SOME EXPERIENCES IN MY LIFE AS A MINISTER". "One day we were to have company from town. We had no sugar in the house. Our folks were poor and did not always have such luxuries as sugar in the home. Mother gave me a small pail that would hold about a pint and sent me to a neighbor's home to try to borrow some sugar. I went with fear and trembling. Mrs. Lenz met me at the door and asked me in. I landed in the first chair in sight. By noticing that little pail she was persuaded that I had come to ask for something. Her daughter joined us there in the room. They asked me many questions as to what I had come for: Is it flour?, Is it coffee?, Is it salt?, etc. They asked me everything except sugar. I just sat there, hung my head and shook it to mean "no". They finally went out to the kitchen to see what might be there that they had not mentioned. As soon as they were out of that front room, I made exit through the door and made a beeline home. I told Mother they didn't have any sugar either. I was too bashful or timid to speak one word to Mrs. Lenz and her daughter."

It is only another demonstration of the power of the grace of God. Showing us when God calls a man He will also outfit that man to do the job He had called him to do. The sinners and backsliders that heard him preach such sermons as, "Crossing The Dead Line", and "What Is Sin" would never dream that the man who stood before them had ever been bashful, or timid. Nor the

unsanctified who yielded to the attraction of the anointed messages he preached; sermons such as, "Holiness, What, Why, How", or "Holy Like God", would never believe this man had ever been hindered by the inability to speak.

Those who were there at the General Conference of the Bible Missionary Church in Denver, a few years ago, will never forget the forceful, clear, explanation that he gave on the "Authenticity of the Bible", and made plain the reasons why it should be the Bible of the Bible Missionary Church.

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Chapter 4 DETAILS OF EARLY LIFE

Getting back to the details of his early life. It was while living here in Northwest Iowa near the town of Klemme that young H. A. Erdmann entered his first school. By this time the family consisted of father, mother, five boys and one girl. They were living on the Frank Wellemeier farm. After about six years of moving about "Papa" Erdmann bought his own farm southwest of Hayfield, Iowa.

In the year 1901, this farm was sold and the family bought another farm near Jefferson, Oklahoma. By this time the last of the twelve Erdmann children had made their appearance in the world.

The One Room Schoolhouses

Bro. Erdmann attended many one room school houses, generally were only in session about five or six months each year. He had a strong desire to further his education whenever possible.

Amusing Incidents At School

He remembered two very amusing incidents in these early days at school. At one school he had a peg-legged man as a teacher who knew less than the pupils. One day our pupil asked his teacher how a certain word in the fourth reader was to be pronounced. The teacher looked at it, hesitated because of ignorance, and finally said, "Just call it Jerusalem and go on."

He recalled another time and place when he had a very overweight lady school teacher that caused all the children to have a hearty laugh when her chair splintered from her ponderous weight and deposited her on the floor.

A Move To Oklahoma

After the Erdmanns moved to Oklahoma he attended another rural school for two years. On the advice of the teacher his parents placed him in an advanced school in the city of Jefferson, Oklahoma. He attended here and did very well in his studies.

A School Teacher

At this stage of life he felt the urge to take an examination for county certificate to teach school. He passed the examination and obtained a second grade county certificate in Wood County, Oklahoma. From this point on teaching, both in public and church schools, became a way of life and livelihood to Bro. Erdmann. Most of the churches that he pastored were generally not able to financially support he and his growing family. The salary for teaching though often small, enabled him to pastor small home-mission churches. His first school paid him \$45.00 per month, and others didn't do much better, but God always supplied their needs and enabled him to continue preaching the gospel.

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Chapter 5

A NEW CHAPTER IN HIS LIFE

While teaching in Sylvia, Kansas he took on the responsibility of married life. Being united in marriage to Freida Henrietta Derks of Mounridge, Kansas.

Time was to prove Bro. Erdmann's choice of Frieda Erdmann as a wife was a good one.

She stood faithfully by his side through every phase of his ministry.

The pressure at times was almost unbearable; she suffered much sickness but remained a good wife through it all.

She bore Bro. Erdmann two wonderful children, Esther and Fred.

Freida Erdmann finished her earthly race after only 16 years of marriage. She had been a good soldier of the cross, she had finished her course. Although missed greatly the Lord saw best to take her home to be with Him.

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Chapter 6

HIS RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

His Conversion

Rev. H. A. Erdmann was converted under the preaching of the fiery old holiness preacher, John T. Hatfield, in 1903 somewhere near Burlington, Oklahoma.

His Sanctification

In 1905 he was clearly sanctified wholly after making a full and complete consecration. Not knowing at the time when he signed his name at the bottom of a figurative parchment of

consecration that God would write on its pages, "I want you to preach!" Since he had said "yes" to the will of God he yielded to the call which kept him busy most of his remaining years. He believed a true Christian appears as a Christian, professes to be one and is one! He lived true to what he believed.

* * * * *

Chapter 7 BOY PREACHER

His first sermon as a "boy preacher" was preached at the age of 16. This was the year 1903. It is not the first sermon recorded in his ledger but in his last book we found he refers to it very vividly.

"I made my first attempt at preaching at Cherokee, Oklahoma, when I was of the age of sixteen. I chose the biggest text in the Bible, John 3:16, and then preached everything from Genesis through Revelation, and finish in fifteen minutes. And how the Lord blessed me for preaching the whole Bible!" It should be pointed out that he continued to be a preacher of the "whole Bible."

A Student at Peniel College

In September, 1913 H. A. and Frieda Erdmann moved to Peniel, Texas, where he entered Peniel College as a student-teacher. In June 1914 he received a Bachelor of Oratory degree from this college.

Old Fashioned Revival

While teaching here at old Peniel College, he and another student held an outstanding "Holy Ghost" revival about twenty miles from the college. They found a one room school house and started "meeting." They saw people struck down with conviction. Most of them prayed through to great victory. Out of this revival came one missionary and two "second blessing" holiness preachers.

Not For Financial Gain

A truth surfaces in the journals and writings of Bro. Erdmann that souls were more valuable than financial gain. He refers to his lowest remuneration for a ten day revival as his "prize offering". This offering was two nickels for the ten days.

"We received our prize offering at a country church not far from Edgewood, Texas. We were there ten days. I preached twice every day except on Saturday. Nothing was said those ten days about an offering for the evangelist. On the last night of the revival the pastor had the plates passed for an offering for the evangelist. They came back with two nickels in them and that was our material remuneration for that revival. Brother Evangelist, Can you beat that? One evangelist told me about fifty years ago that he conducted one revival for which he received absolutely nothing. The pastor told him his people were so poor that they just could not afford to pay him

anything. So according to his experience, I had been quite well treated, and felt that I should divide my offering with him, but he would not accept it."

One notation following a meeting in Tanner, Texas, 1916, bears this financial statement: "Here we saw no results. For our services we received some "cold checks". But left with victory in our souls." Concerning finances; after a meeting in 1916 he simply states: "Profession 7, received \$30.58." Another was recorded. "No professions. Received \$8.00." So you can easily see that his rewards were not financial, but as he said: "The world is seeking thrills, but no greater thrill is known than the thrill of having a little part in the Lord's work."

"Yes, I have had tests, some unpleasant things, so far as the human is concerned. Many times I had to stand alone, and walk alone, other young people not going my way, and even now, not many crowds going the way of Holiness unto the Lord, but His blessings have been rich and extravagant, and if I could live my life over and leave out some things and were given my choice as to what should be left out, I would not want a solitary one of those trials and tests and unpleasant things left out. They have all contributed to the enrichment of my life, and as I look back at some of them I thank God that He ever saw fit to trust me with them.

I have also had many glorious experiences which I would not trade off for anything that I can think of. The following I have not related very often, because many would only scoff at it and say it was only an imagination. But I know that it was real. I was passing through the most severe trial of my life, being persecuted almost beyond endurance by people who were supposed to be sanctified. It seemed that I could not endure it longer. One night I was lying on my bed, crushed and weeping. In the night, at about one o'clock in the morning, Jesus walked into that room and the room was made light enough for me to see Him through my tears and recognize Him. He came to the side of the bed and looked at me with a profound look of sympathy and tenderness, an expression that said, "Do not be afraid, I will stand by you and will never fail you." Then He held out His hand over me as in an expression of benediction and vanished. My soul was comforted and I soon went to sleep. Who would not gladly endure persecution, trials and tests for such a visitation as that? I was a young preacher then, and that has enabled me to hold steady in every test since.

"It has been a blessed life to live in the will of God. If I could live it all over again, I do not know how I could improve it, unless it would be to add a few more tests and so-called unpleasantnesses, and then watch the Lord go to work and bring us through with victory and some extra grace. With every emergency God furnishes emergency grace. If you don't believe it, then let Him have a chance to prove it."

Further Work and Education

After being principal in the public schools at Placid, Texas, and pastoring the Nazarene Church, they moved to Ham in, Texas.

He entered Central Nazarene College as a student and teacher. He studied here two years and did home mission preaching during the summer with Bro. John Pruitt and Felix Graham. He then received a Bachelor of Science Degree. While here at Hamlin a foster daughter, Effie Hamlin

came into the Erdmann home. Also Esther Rachel, now Mrs. Hurshel Hendrix, was born at Hamlin.

Superintendent of Schools

Rev. Erdmann was superintendent of schools at Swenson, Texas and then held the same position at Wister, Oklahoma. While living here at Wister and pastoring the Liberty Hill Church of the Nazarene, a son, Fred Howard Erdmann, was born. Also while pastoring and teaching here he took advantage of the nearness of the University of Oklahoma and attended classes there.

Norman, Oklahoma

Moving once more to Norman, Oklahoma where the State University was located he continued his study and pastored the local Nazarene Church. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree in June 1923. By the best records we have he was thirty-six years old at the time. It is quite evident that he had an unusual thirst for knowledge and took advantage of every opportunity to advance his secular and spiritual knowledge.

Back To Hamlin College

Due to his educational attainments he was in demand both in public and holiness schools. After receiving his Bachelor of Arts degree, he returned to Hamlin College for one year as dean and business manager of Central Nazarene College.

Back To The Northwest

An invitation to assume the chair of the Department of Science in Northwest Nazarene College at Nampa, Idaho, was extended. This was in 1924. They boarded the 1917 Model T Ford and arrived after an arduous journey of two weeks.

The work was a rewarding one, but as the case with most pioneering works of its day N. C. was unable to pay a living wage to the Erdmanns. So after three years of struggling, and deeply in debt he had to retreat to better paying public school work.

Public School Work Again

After several positions the Erdmann family arrived in Lone Tree, North Dakota as superintendent of schools. He also pastored the Minot Church of the Nazarene.

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Chapter 8 DARK DAYS

While here at Lone Tree tragedy struck the happy family. The wife and mother of the home slipped away to be with Jesus on December 23, 1933.

Dear Brother Erdmann, Esther, and Fred, spent a very sad Christmas that year. Yet, God stood by them, and as we read through his Journal it is evident that his determination was to go on. He accepted the will of God and was soon back preaching the gospel and caring for his two precious young children, trying as best he could to be both father and mother to Esther and Fred.

In his greatness he was not immune to the sorrows that befall all men. He was tried in the furnace of loneliness and heartache; sifted by adversity his lot was not to go through life without trial, but to be strengthened by the promise that joy shall follow sorrow.

He was to learn that God has not promised us no physical or temporal immunities. All these things only caused him to look heavenward.

His daughter, Mrs. Esther Hendrix, wrote: "I've enclosed some articles I found that he had written. The one on 'Heaven' was written shortly after my mother's death. He missed her so and was very lonely."

* * *

HEAVEN

By H. A. Erdmann

The distance from the altar to the cross is the distance from earth to heaven. It does not matter so much where heaven is; it does matter that we reach it. All failures of earth from Adam are nothing compared to missing heaven.

If others miss heaven that might not mean so much to you: but if you should miss it that would be a crowning calamity. There are a thousand roads that lead to hell, but only one that leads to heaven. The multitudes are traveling on the broad way of sin comparatively few are on the narrow way.

A woman said she wanted to go to hell because her relatives were there. I do not. If our unregenerate relatives can make it so hard for us here, what would it mean if we were to be with them in hell forever?

When I am through with life, I do not want to meet my relatives anywhere but in heaven. There, thank God, the headaches and heartaches will be over. John will understand James, and Jane will understand Mary.

There are some things I will miss when I get to heaven. I will miss the harsh criticisms of my brother. He will then understand that I meant to do right, even though it may have been ever so bunglingly done. He will miss my often thoughtless unkind remarks, when he was trying his best to be good. He will look into my eyes, and I will look into his with a new light.

Mansions may touch mansions with never a line between. There will be no court house in that city, where questions must be settled, for there will be no questions there. Bad lawyers will

not be there. The good lawyers will probably be busy planning the governmental affairs of new planets. Harmony!- heaven!

I will miss the funeral train. Crepe will not be fluttering from my mansion door. There will be no spades in heaven, no long black coffins, no new-made or moss grown graves on the hillsides of glory. No mossy leaning tombstones, no chiseled epitaphs, no muffled tom-tom of pain, no tear wet faces, no aching hearts, no empty chairs, no bureau drawers with little empty shoes, or baby dresses; no lonely night, no well worn path to the silent city, no stifled sob, no dirge and no death. O, soul of mine, that's heaven!

I will miss the much rumble of commerce, the leaden jingle of shackles, the sweat stained face of the toiler, the greedy heart of the money changer, the groans of the oppressed, and the jarring earth noises will not be there: I said that I would miss them, but it will be a blessed miss. All this will almost be a forgotten dream in the ever shifting unfading glories of heaven.

My mansion walls will be clearer than transparent glass inlaid with roses and flowering vines. Trees will bend with luscious fruit, unmarred by blight or crawling worm. The skies will be of a softer hue than the warm amber shades of the Orient, bluer than our far flung western arches, and brighter than the quivering heavens where God's boreal searchlights play. The air will be so ethereal that we will never grow drowsy, no weight of weariness will ever steal over immortality, and rest will take on a delightful significance never found in earthly lexicon. A light streaming over the vast domain will be so soft and shimmering that undreamed of glories will swing into the vistas of space, ever new and changing for our eternal entertainment. Glories will file on glories, light on light. Panorama will succeed transcending panoramas, and the day will never grow old; Heaven of light.

I will hear music such as man never heard. The musical minor of the dulcet chords with the mellow major of the dulcet bell. The harps harmonize with the hallelujah of the lyre. Silver strings, golden value, and ebon key respond to the skillful touch of that orchestral throng. The air is vibrant with a melody beyond anything ever hoped in earth's sweetest dream-days. Heaven of music.

Suddenly from near the great white throne rises a song. It is a new song. Angels are not singing it. They have folded their wings and pause to listen: O! from whence these voices? Where the charm that chimes in heaven's rhythms from lowest strain to heaviest crescendos?

Listen! Through that song ripples the drip of crimson, I catch the agony of the cross. Then, Hark! In that undertone of melody I hear the cry of a sinner, and in the swell the shout of a soul redeemed. The light trembles and mellows, the music softens, a sacred hush lies on that angelic throng, and now, stronger and stronger, higher and higher, louder and louder swells the triumphant song, until from arch to arch the echoes repeat; "Worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing." Heaven of Song!

O what will heaven be? Dear mother, I will meet you there, father, I have missed you. I will soon be with you always. Husband, I have been so lonely here without you, I will meet you at the portal. Precious wife of my bosom, gone on before, soon, soon will death row me over the river and I will be at your side. Jesus, my blessed Redeemer I will soon behold Thy face.

All this I owe to you. The music and the mansions, the light and the loved ones there, the gladness and the glory -- All to Thee I owe: Where Jesus is 'tis heaven there.

Days With The Children

Rev. Erdmann did his best to carry on, and it was here that his daughter graduated from high school and Howard finished the eighth grade. Teaching was abandoned for a season as Bro. Erdmann continued to serve as pastor of the Minot Church of the Nazarene.

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Chapter 9 A HAPPY EVENT

On May 25, 1935, Zella Florence Berton became the bride of H. A. Erdmann. He lovingly wrote of her as the "Queen" that was "inaugurated and crowned" in the home. These two made a happy combination, especially since Sis. Florence Erdmann was also a capable teacher in her own rights.

Entering The Evangelistic Field Full Time

In 1936 the family moved to Bethany, Oklahoma. Rev. Erdmann held revival meetings for a year before accepting a pastorate at Sayre, Oklahoma. His first recorded sermon at this pastorate was on Sept. 9, 1937. He spoke from the text James 4:5. He spent a profitable three years here before going on to pastor two years at the church in Custer, Oklahoma.

Moving from Custer they accepted a call at Gooding, Idaho.

After several moves into Missouri and back to Idaho the Erdmanns settled in Jerome, Idaho, where Bro. Erdmann taught Algebra in the Junior High School and his "queen" taught first grade in the Jefferson Elementary School. Bro. Erdmann retired as a teacher in 1963 at the age of 73.

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Chapter 10 COMMENTS OF INTEREST IN HIS JOURNAL FOUND

April 1914

"At Arbalo, Texas, wife was with me. We lived on cabbage soup and fought the devil hard. Some people cursed us while others made restitution. Squared up in general and got right with God."

July 1916

"Here we fought flies and prayed as best we could during the day and preached at night."

July 1916

"This meeting was held on the devil's play ground, but God gave us several of his followers.

July 1920

"Here some folks promised to serve us with "ancient eggs", but never fulfilled their promise."

1921-1972

"From the woods here God gave us some of the most genuine cases of conversion and sanctification we ever saw. When we started they told us to leave the "sanctification stuff" at home. But we obeyed God, He got them under conviction, and they got saved, reclaimed, then sanctified, Glory! It pays to obey God, rather than man."

August 1922

"Received 50 cents. Praise the Lord!"

"One lady told us she didn't like revivals because they always made her so nervous. Thank God! She got good and nervous in this one, finally came to the altar and was regenerated and later sanctified."

December 1926

"Here I preached in a school house to a mixed conglomeration until some asked me to not come any more because if I would keep on coming, they couldn't go to heaven."

"Drove back and forth 42 miles each evening to this meeting in 35 below zero weather."

August 1961

"Rev. Elbert Dodd was my co-laborer here in a very profitable camp. Altar was lined with hungry, earnest seekers in practically every service.

1963

"Here the devil tried to kill me by having a woman run a red light and ran into me."

Boycotted. Saw nothing accomplished."

1964

"A very wonderful camp. Bro. B. M. Loftin was my co-laborer. He is a true man of God and is very fine to work with."

1967

"Here the devil fought extremely hard. A carnal church boss had done the cause much harm, but God subdued him, he came to the altar, did some apologizing and fixing up. Several were saved or sanctified."

These are just a few candid samplings of our dear Bro. Erdmann's views and thoughts about some of the persons and places that he preached. These views span the years 1914-1973.

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Chapter 11 A JOB WELL DONE

In the early formative years of the Bible Missionary Church, Rev. L. P. Roberts recommended Rev. H. A. Erdmann to be the Editor in Chief of our Sunday School literature.

Rev. Roberts knew the Erdmanns well having pastored them for a number of years.

With Rev. Erdmann's background of writing and publishing he was quickly chosen to fill this important place.

No one could have filled this office better. Our Sunday School literature became second to none in the holiness movement.

Under Rev. Erdmann's leadership the Sunday School literature publication increased and improved.

The demand for these good lessons increased until our Sunday School literature is used by several denominations and holiness groups today.

The Sunday School literature of the Bible Missionary Church is where it is today because of the tireless efforts of Rev. H. A. Erdmann. His was certainly a job "well done".

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Chapter 12 THE IOWA ILLINOIS PREACHER'S MEETING

In January, 1972 he held the Iowa-Illinois Preacher's Meeting where he had just finished a ten day revival with Rev. Tony Ross and the people of the Mt. Pleasant, Iowa Church. Rev. Frank Baldwin was the presiding District Moderator.

Emergency

And on his way home by bus he became gravely ill. The bus driver recognized that he was a very sick man, arranged that he be taken to the hospital in Cheyenne, Wyoming.

He was transferred to the county hospital although a very sick man. God watches over his own and miraculously word was gotten to his good friend, Rev. L. P. Roberts, that he was in the hospital.

Rev. Roberts took a quick trip to Cheyenne to see about him. The doctors treated him for several days until it was possible for Dr. Waldon Kurtz, Rev. Ken Arnold and Rev. L. P. Roberts to load him in a station wagon equipped with oxygen and move him to another hospital in Denver, Colorado where Dr. Kurtz could oversee his medical care and he could be near the Christian brethren.

Death had to wait, God had his own plans. He was treated about two weeks for pneumonia and other related problems. Then he flew home once more to be with his wife and continue his labors for the kingdom.

Final Sunset

After a partial recovery, not well, but still active as the Editor in Chief of the Sunday School publication.

He has recorded in his ledger that he preached two more times at Twin Falls, Idaho on March 31, 1973 on "How To Keep Well Spiritually" and again on March 24, 1973 on "The Apostles Doctrine." The close of a ministry of over 70 years. Not many can equal his record.

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Chapter 13

AUTHORED A NUMBER OF BOOKS

Someone has said he was a prolific writer. Many tracts, poems, songs, articles, Sunday School lessons and books were written by him. Books such as:

1. Must We Sin (Unpublished)
2. The Carnal Mind And Its Cure.
3. The office Work of the Holy Spirit.
4. Notes on Revelation.

EVENING SHADOWS

The Lord did not promise that we ourselves shall not grow old, sicken and die; but he has promised that we shall arise to live in His company forever. And so after his threescore years and ten over Bro. Erdmann began to pass through the vestibule of the evening shadows of life.

He passed in 'peace' from this life at Jerome, Idaho, January 18, 1974.

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SEVERAL MESSAGES FROM THE PEN OF REV. H. A. ERDMANN

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SANCTIFICATION

Rev. H. A. Erdmann

Sanctification is a progressive conformity of the body, soul and spirit, the whole heart and life, to the will of God. I Thess. 5:23. It includes both dying to sin and living in holiness: I Pet. 2:24. In its nature sanctification is a divine work performed by a divine Spirit in the believer and follower of the divine Savior: Titus 3:5. It is the greatest stepping stone in the progress of divine life, and not until sanctification can a soul make spiritual progression: Job 17:9; Prov. 4:18. Sanctification is a work that is wrought internally: Eph. 4:23. It is a work always visible in its effects: Acts 11:23; Rom. 7:4. It is a work which is never left till it be perfected: Phil. 1:6.

Sanctification is a work absolutely necessary for our peace and usefulness in this world of sin and sorrow, and eternal happiness in the world to come: Rom. 6:20-22; Eph. 5:26,27.

When a person is really sanctified, when he has found his Pentecost, that person will live a life that is free from sin: Rom. 6:2; 6:18. Not only will he live a sinless life, but he will love and practice holiness: Ps. 51:7, 10; Rom. 6:22; and will, in humility, worship God with a whole heart: Job 42:5, 6; Eph. 3:8. He will be dead to the world, the flesh, and everything that is unlike God, and will not glory in his broad acres, automobiles, business achievements, scholarship, etc. He glories in nothing save in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ: Gal. 6:14. When he meets with afflictions, though severe they may be, he will be found in patient submission to the whole will of God: Job 2:10; Ps. 39:9; his desires for heaven and heavenly things will grow and intensify day by day: 2 Cor. 5:4-8; Phil. 1:23. Praise God for the glorious experience of entire sanctification!

(Editor's note: This is Bro. Erdmann's first article to appear in the HERALD OF HOLINESS, Vol. 1, No. 44, page 5, Feb. 12, 1913. The volume number indicates this was still the first year for the HERALD (Official organ of The Church of the Nazarene), the first issue having been published April 17, 1912. Brother Erdmann joined The Church of the Nazarene in 1908 in Hutchinson, Kansas. For over 60 years holiness articles have been coming from the pen of this good man now past his 80th year. He is now a member of The Bible Missionary Church and Editor-in-Chief of her Sunday School literature.)

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PARABLE ON BOYS

By H. A. Erdmann

Verily in this day and generation the father bringeth up his son on the streets and sidewalks. He lieth around the soda founts and imbibeth slop and hook-worm. He groweth in knowledge of nothing save cigarettes and cuss words.

When he attaineth the age of sixteen he acquireth a suit of clothes turned up at the bottom two furlongs above his feet. He displays a pair of noisy socks with purple background with violets to the front. He weareth a pair of pointed shoes, also a green necktie. He looketh like a banana merchant on the streets of Cairo.

The inside of his head resembleth the inside of a pumpkin. He falleth in love with a spindle-shanked girl with pink ribbons in her hair, and craveth for an automobile that he may ride her forth in the springtime. He scattereth his pin-money like a cyclone scattereth a rail fence. He sitteth up at night to write poetry and giveth no thought to the multiplication table. His mind turneth to the varieties of life and not to the high cost of corn bread.

Verily, verily, he needeth a board applied to the southwest corner of his anatomy.

He thinketh his father a plodder and his mother a back number. He pictureth to himself great riches suddenly acquired. He dreameth of steam yachts and private cars.

Yea, he thinketh himself the real stuff. He butteth in where he is not wanted; he criticizeth his elders; he purchaseth himself cheap perfumes and smelleth louder than a billy goat.

When he groweth up he getteth a job in a store at a dollar a day and swipeth the change from his boss until he is caught.

* * *

PARABLE ON THE TOBACCO SEED

By H. A. Erdmann

(One of His Early Published Articles)

A grain of tobacco seed, though exceedingly small, being cast unto the earth, grew, and became a great plant, and spread its leaves, rank and broad -- so that huge and vile worms formed a habitation thereon. And it came to pass, in the course of time, that the sons of men looked upon it, and thought it beautiful to look upon, and much to be desired to make lads look big and manly. So they put forth their hands and did chew thereof. And some it made sick, and others to vomit most filthily. And it then came to pass that those who chewed it became weak and unmanly, and said, "We are enslaved and cannot cease from chewing it." And the mouths of all that were enslaved became foul; and they were seized with a violent spitting; and they did spit, even in the ladies' parlors, and in the house of the Lord.

And the saints of the Most High were greatly plagued thereby. And in the course of time it also came to pass that others snuffed it, and they were taken suddenly with fits, and they did sneeze with a great and mighty sneeze, insomuch that their eyes were filled with tears, and they did look exceedingly silly. And others cunningly wrought the leaves into rolls, and did set fire to the one end thereof, and did suck vehemently at the other end thereof, and did look very grave and calf-like; and the smoke of their torment ascended up like a fog. And the cultivation thereof became a great and mighty business in the earth; and the merchants waxed rich by the commerce thereof.

And it came to pass that the professed saints of the Most High defiled themselves therewith; even the poor who could not buy shoes, or bread, nor books for their little ones, spent their money for it. And the Lord was greatly displeased therewith, and said, "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord." "Wherefore come out from among them saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you." But with one accord they exclaimed: "We cannot cease from chewing, snuffing and puffing!" Alas! "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey?" Will ye be the servants of a dirty, nasty seed?

* * *

HOLINESS, A SECOND WORK OF GRACE

By H. A. Erdmann

Holiness is the conformity of the heart and life to the law of God; the elimination of inborn sin, the purification of the moral nature, and the restoration of the image of God, the Holy Spirit abiding within, reigning and ruling the life, so that the soul is all glorious within.

Holiness is inwrought by the work of sanctification. This brings the intellect, and the whole personality of the Christian into captivity to Christ, so that he thinks for Him. It fills the heart with the love of God, so that one is unselfish and beneficent; with a life of obedience to His will, so that it is his meat and drink to do the will of God.

The experience of holiness is a **SECOND WORK OF GRACE**. It may be obtained soon after conversion (and should be), and then is to be enjoyed throughout life. It is wrought in the soul by faith, "purifying their hearts by faith" (Acts 15:8). It is effected through the blood of Christ, "Wherefore, Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate" (Heb. 13:12). It is preceded by a full and complete consecration. (Romans 12:12).

Holiness is an experience separate and distinct from justification, " by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus 3:4,5). Justification is a judiciary act, one of pardon. Sanctification is a ceremonial act, one of cleansing. Only born-again persons are eligible for sanctification. When sanctification, or holiness, is spoken of in the New Testament, it is always addressed to Christians. Holiness is always preceded by complete and thorough consecration, and a sinner cannot consecrate. A sinner repents and gives up bad things. A born-again person consecrates and gives everything he controls over to God to be used for God's glory and to be a blessing to others.

The disciples of Christ were sanctified on the Day of Pentecost. They were saved men before Pentecost. They were followers of Christ, (Matt. 19:28); their names were written in heaven (Luke 10:20); they were not of the world (John 17:6,9, 14); they were ordained to the ministry (John 15:16); Jesus had sent them out to preach (Matt. 10:5-8). It is absurd to think that Jesus would send out unsaved men to tell others how to be saved.

But these disciples had not yet received the Holy Ghost. "But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given" (John 7:37-39).

In the seventeenth chapter of John is recorded the prayer in which Jesus prayed the Father to sanctify them. Then He commanded these same disciples to tarry in Jerusalem until the Spirit would come upon them, and promised, "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost."

The Samaritans were converted under the ministry of Philip (Acts 8:5-8, 12) and were later sanctified under the ministry of Peter and John (Acts 8:14-17).

Cornelius, who lived in Caesarea, was a "devout man." He feared God, gave much alms, prayed to God always, etc. Surely he was a born-again man before Peter came to hold service in his home. Then he was sanctified through the ministry of Peter, when he received the Holy Ghost. (Acts 10)

At Ephesus a number of people became Christians under the preaching of Apollos. (Acts 18: 24-26) These same Christians, a short time later, were sanctified under Paul's preaching. (Acts 19:6,7)

The Thessalonians were in a justified state (I Thess. 1:14), but they were not sanctified, as is evidenced in I Thess. 3:10-13. In I Thess. 4:3, 7 Paul urged them on to sanctification, and in I Thess. 5:23, 24 Paul assures them that "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it," referring to 4:7, "For God hath not called us to uncleanness, but unto holiness."

Other instances may be cited from the New Testament where those who received the Holy Ghost baptism were already Christians, and we have scores upon scores of persons who testify to the fact that they were sanctified after they were justified, but we have never found even one person who would profess that he had received the Holy Ghost in sanctifying power, cleansing his heart from all inbred sin and rendering him holy in the sight of God, at the same time that his sins were pardoned.

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MEMORIALS

Rev. Elbert Dodd, General Moderator

I have known Bro. Erdmann, since 1940, when I preached for him where he pastored in Texas.

He was a wonderful Bible Scholar, and one of the strong Holiness preachers of the day in which he lived.

When the Bible Missionary Church was formed, he became Editor-in-Chief of the Sunday School literature of the Bible Missionary Church, and did a wonderful job as Editor of Said Church.

He loved God, the church, his family, and his friends. He really stood by the Bible Missionary Church and its leaders.

He was a wonderful friend, and a brother beloved of mine.

REV. L. P. ROBERTS,
District Moderator, Intermountain Conference
And life-long friend and one time pastor of the Erdmanns

It was my wonderful privilege to know Rev. H. A. Erdmann from my early ministry. He and his wife were members of my first pastorate. He was a Christian gentleman in every respect.

His ministry was deep and rich and he stood by and boosted me in every service.

He was principal of the high school and his wife taught also but they were among the most faithful in every service. During revival they would be present at every noon prayer and fasting service. They never left an altar service while there were still seekers.

Bro. Erdmann stood one Sunday morning and said, "If I would have gone where I preferred to go today, I would have gone to Nampa to hear one of the Generals, but when I got sanctified, I died out to my preferences. And my duty and responsibility is in my home church, therefore I am here."

Bro. Erdmann's principles were of the highest. He was an educated man but there were none more common than H. A. Erdmann. It was my privilege to recommend him to our brethren as our Editor-in-Chief of our Sunday School literature. He did an excellent job! God bless his memory, it still lives on. Heaven is richer for his passing.

MEMORIAL ARTICLE IN MISSIONARY REVIVALIST

Rev. Henry Albert Erdmann was born January 12, 1887 in Afton, Iowa, and died January 18, 1974 at Jerome, Idaho. In 19?? he moved to Oklahoma with his parents. He was graduated from the University of Oklahoma and taught in elementary, high schools and colleges. In 1921 he was ordained as a minister in the Church of the Nazarene.

He married Freida Dirks in 1913 in Kansas. She died in 1933. Later he married Zella Benton in Minot, N. D.

Survivors include his wife, of Jerome, Idaho; one daughter, Mrs. H. V. Hendrix, Bartlesville, Oklahoma; one son, Fred Erdmann, Great Falls, Montana; one brother, Oscar Erdmann, Halstead, Kansas; five sisters, Mrs. Anna Hamilton, Argonia, Kansas, Mrs. Freda Scheurman, Jefferson, Oklahoma, Mrs. Matilda Scheurman, and Mrs. Martha Lawson, both of Wichita, Kansas and Mrs. Ella Todd, Rose Hill, Kansas; six grandchildren and seven great grandchildren.

Funeral services were conducted in the Twin Falls, Idaho, Bible Missionary Church by Rev. Spencer Johnson, Rev. Sherril Stiles and Rev. Elbert Dodd. W. T. Armstrong sang "Beyond the Sunset." Clyde Dilley led the congregation in singing "Sitting at the Feet of Jesus." Lloyd Carr sang a song written by Brother Erdmann, "This I Know." The committal service at the grave was in charge of Rev. Robert Barker.

Brother Erdmann was truly a prince and a great man. He was saved at the age of 16 and sanctified four years later, and testified that he never backslid. He felt the call of God upon his heart to preach and began his ministry at the age of 16. He was a great preacher, able educator, and prolific writer. He possessed the combination of a cultured mind and deep spirituality, which is a rare thing among educators. Along with this he was very approachable and sympathetic. He was not too big nor too busy to be helpful. He also possessed a dry sense of humor that did good like a medicine.

In the great moral issues of the day he squarely and courageously took his stand. The courage of his convictions led him to cast his lot with the Bible Missionary Church where he loved and served until his death. For a number of years he served as Editor-in-Chief of the Sunday School literature of the Bible Missionary Church. He wrote books entitled Must We Sin?, The Carnal Mind and Its Cure, The office Work of The Holy Spirit, Notes on Revelation, Homiletics and Pastoral Theology, and Interesting Experiences in my Life as a Minister. It is difficult to comprehend the untiring zeal with which he worked even in old age.

In his early ministry he made great sacrifices and bore many hardships. He did it unto the Lord and testified that he had no regrets about his sacrificial life: "it has been a blessed life to live in the will of God. If I could live it all over again, I do not know how I could improve it, unless it would be to add a few more tests and so-called unpleasantries, and then watch the Lord go to work and bring us through with victory and some extra grace." (P. 24, Some Interesting Experiences in My Life As a Minister, By H. A. Erdmann) He passes from labor to reward. His battles are over and for him there is rest and home.

"There is a land where shadows never deepen,
And sunset glories fade not into night,
Where weary hearts shall win the boon of endless blessings,
And faith is lost in sight.

A land where sad farewells are never spoken,
Where every loss of life is richest gain,
Where stumbling feet at last shall find a haven,
And hearts have no more pain.

A land where those who sigh for long-lost faces
The loved of life whose going brought them pain,
Shall find them in the brightness of the Father's glory,
Where they shall meet again.

On that bright strand the blood-washed ones of Jesus
Are safe, no more the weary feet shall roam;
They find at last all that the heart has longed for,
Within God's house at home."

His family has lost a precious loved one. The church has lost a wise counselor and journalist. The preachers have lost a good friend and brother, but our loss is Heaven's gain. By the grace of God we may meet him again on the sunny banks of sweet deliverance. He rests from his labors and his works do follow him. His spirit is with the Lord while his body awaits the trumpet sound and the resurrection morn.

-- Spencer Johnson

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PART 2
JOHN HERMAN ABRAHAMS
A LABORER IN THE VINEYARD
1899-1972

By The Abrahams Family

* * *

Chapter 1
HIS HERITAGE

"Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." (1 Cor. 11:1)

This was the guiding principle of Bro. John H. Abrahams' life. His goal and deepest desire was to live such a life of Christ, that others would be attracted to salvation, and do likewise. Putting God first, and serving him with all his heart, mind, soul, and strength was his way of living. Every task in God's cause was important to him and those he undertook, whether it be serving on the General Board or mowing the church lawn, he did with the same degree of dedication and thoroughness.

Many years ago, conditions in Germany were such that a young girl, sixteen years of age left the family to make her way to the promised land of America. Being poverty stricken and with no funds to pay for passage on ship, Caroline Felix made her way on board as a stowaway. En route she made her presence known and worked in the gaily as a cook's helper. Having heard of a

settlement in Nebraska of other German people, she made her way there and worked as a hired hand in the fields and housemaid after fieldwork was done. She sent whatever meager means she received to her poverty stricken family in Germany.

In Henderson, Nebraska she met Henry Abrahams, to whom she was married, and to this union two children -- Henry and Fred -- were born. The family then moved to Canada where the third child, John Herman Abrahams was born. The intense cold weather soon caused a move to California where three more children were added to the family. Sickness came, and because of the intense strain while caring for her youngest child, the mother succumbed to a heart attack. Bro. Abrahams dearly loved his mother, and even though she died when he was very young, he remembered her vividly. The news of her death came as a terrible shock to him. One story about his relationship with his mother is definitely a sad one, and we should take warning and be cautious about our own dealings with young lives. He told the story, that as a very young boy, he had a personal problem that to him seemed very important. He decided to talk to his mother about what was bothering him. When he told her his problem, she thought it was amusing and she laughed about it, ignorant of the fact that he was really troubled. He was crushed, and felt that she was laughing at him. He decided then, that in the future he would just keep his problems to himself. This incident must have made a deep impression on him, because it carried over into his adult life. There were very few people with whom he shared his most intimate problems.

Next, the family moved to Nebraska and lived in the German Mennonite settlement of Henderson. German was spoken in the home and at church. The people of Henderson were plain, hard-working people. Hard work from morning until night was their way of life. The nicest thing one could say about one's friend or neighbor, was that he was a hardworking person. Bro. John Abrahams, or "Johnnie" inherited this pride in hard work. All his life he was proud of the fact that for whomever he worked, he gave them more than they paid for. The lifestyle of the people in Nebraska then was not geared to gentleness, neither was there a great deal of appreciation for fine arts and other things of similar beauty. But, John had a keen sense of appreciation for things of real beauty such as a beautiful sunset, a field of ripened wheat, sleek horses, and such.

Schooling was not considered essential in the community where he grew up, and as a result, he never finished school. However, he loved to read and studied worthwhile books, and he was always willing to learn.

After his mother died, and his father remarried, he worked at various jobs. He told that he was working on a farm at the time his father remarried, and went on his honeymoon. John was expected to work hard during his father's absence, and send his wages to his father. A few years later, when his father divorced and married a third wife, John was shocked and disappointed, but remained loyal to his father. There were those who were angry about the situation and lashed out verbally at his father, but as Brother Abrahams told many years later, "He was still my father and I had been taught to honor my father and my mother." In years to come, when the rejected stepmother had no place to live, Bro. Abrahams took her into his own home and made her a part of his family.

The Abrahams family moved to Lake Charles, Louisiana in 1916, and settled on a large rice farm south of town. John loved farming and had a flair for planning and planting. Even after retirement, in later life, he worked on his son-in-law's rice farm, just because he enjoyed it.

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Chapter 2 HIS FAMILY LIFE

On June 29, 1922, Bro. Abrahams made one of the most serious choices in his life, and yet, he made it one of the finest choices in his life, when he chose a country schoolteacher, Gertrude Tiaht [sic], to be his wife. The ceremony was performed in the little country church by Reverend Wall, and the service was conducted wholly in German. Together they started out on another milestone of life, and they made several decisions about the manner in which their home and family life would be run even before any children were added. First, they decided that they wanted a large family. Both of them loved children, and God blessed them with eight - five girls and three boys. Also, they would keep the love between themselves alive and glowing. This is the comment that was made by one of their children. "We children were keenly aware of the love between our parents. Daddy was certainly king of the house, but by the same token, Mother was his queen. Being sassy to Mother was strictly forbidden, and rated a severe spanking. They exemplified a beautiful example of Christian love, and were sweethearts to the end. Daddy still opened the doors for Mother, they sat close to each other in church and in the car, they enjoyed each other and treated the other with love and respect." Bro. Abrahams was always the first to admit that without Sister Abrahams, the direction of his life would have been much different.

Another factor that Bro. and Sister Abrahams held true to, was that they would live to be a blessing, and never do or say anything that they did not want their children to do or say, or go to a place where they would not be proud for their children to see them. Bro. Abrahams told once that when he was attending a business meeting in New Orleans in some of their finer hotel dining rooms, he had to leave the meeting because of the offensive floor shows. He knew that he would not have wanted his child to see it, or see him in that situation.

He was a wonderful Christian father. A strict disciplinarian, he believed whole-heartily that to spare the rod was to spoil the child. One of his girls said, "If a spanking was promised, one could be assured that it would be delivered. Preceding the spanking was a talk about why the punishment was necessary. Following the spanking was a prayer for God to help us to behave better in the future. I can easily remember that I would have gladly taken the spanking without the prelude and post-lude, but it was a package that wasn't offered in parts." Bro. Abrahams insisted on obedience and respect to parents, teachers, and adults in general.

He worked closely with public schools while his children were of school age. He cooperated all he could in permissible matters, so that when he had to take a stand for or against some principle, the people of the school could see that they were not trying to just be contrary to everything, but that he was really concerned about the welfare of all involved. He was extremely proud of his large family, and taught them to respect and cooperate with their teachers and the authorities at school. If, an Abrahams got a spanking from a teacher at school, he got a second helping when he got home. He taught his children the dignity of working for good grades, and the love for education. Since he was denied schooling past the sixth grade, he encouraged his children to get even a college education. Four of his eight children graduated from college.

He and Sister Abrahams made it a practice to see that their doors to the home were always open. The children felt free to bring their friends over, and on several accounts, he provided a home for people that were not even kin to him. Without accepting outside pay, a homeless teenage boy, and also his stepmother found a home within his walls. Another elderly couple, Brother and Sister Petersime, lodged there for many months, and they too won a place in Brother and Sister Abrahams heart. Bro. Abrahams enjoyed doing this, and always put the welfare of others before his own personal comfort.

Bro. Abrahams and his wife, also decided early in life that God would be the center of their home, and that they would always have a family altar. They had family prayer both morning and night. All the children, and even the visitors would gather around the table before breakfast, and he would read a chapter or two from the Bible, and usually a few comments from a devotional book. Then, everyone would kneel for prayer, and Bro. Abrahams would pray for guidance for each one that day. At night, they would gather in the living room, just before going to bed. Sister Abrahams would read a Bible story and then all would take turns saying prayers, beginning with the youngest and ending with Bro. Abrahams. Even after all his children were married and had left home, each night he would call their name in prayer around a family altar, and pray for God to lead their lives in the right paths. He was an outstanding man of prayer. God often whispered secrets to him concerning the welfare of his loved ones when he was concerned and praying for them. Once when his oldest son was in Germany in World War II, God miraculously aided him. He hadn't heard from Bob, his son for days, and after church one Sunday night, he felt a tremendous burden of prayer for the safety of his son. Bro. Abrahams, his wife, and Brother Paul Pitts went into the study of the church, and earnestly sought God in prayer, and agonized there until they prayed clear of the matter. After it was learned, that at that exact time Bob was surrounded by the German enemy and headed for what seemed like certain death. But, for no reason known to them the Germans retreated. What they didn't know was that a man of God had lived so close to the Lord that he felt the burden of prayer, he prayed, and God answered and delivered.

One of his children remarked, "I believe Daddy got his most pleasure from knowing his children were following the example he and Mother set for them, and walking a Christian life. The greatest disappointment and heartache that Dad experienced, to my knowledge, was when one of his children lost out spiritually. His reaction would be to pray, fast and trust until he saw results. His prayers were daily, his total fasts, except for water, would at times exceed a week, and he planned to trust and believe until every one of his children were in the center of God's will. This love later extended to his grandchildren, and he carried the same heavy burden for them."

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Chapter 3 HIS BUSINESS LIFE

Immediately after Bro. Abrahams was married, he and Sister Abrahams moved to Kaplan, Louisiana, where Bro. Abrahams began farming. Because of high floods, the rice crop failed, and he lost everything he had materially. He said even his horses -- the means of transportation to many -- to pay his bills and to put himself in the position to where he could leave Kaplan free of debt.

They moved back to Lake Charles where he worked at several jobs before beginning his association with the Ford Motor Company. He liked to tell how he got this job with the Huber Motor Company, the local Ford dealer, in 1924. He walked into the place and announced to the manager that he was going to work there. The manager apparently liked his direct approach and began to talk to him about the car business. He asked Bro. Abrahams if he knew how to figure deals. Bro. Abrahams told him, (strictly on faith in his ability) that he could do it as well as anyone else. "Well, lets do it then." replied the manager. You be the salesman, and I'll be the customer, and you figure a deal for me now." Not having the vaguest idea how to begin, but not willing to give up, Bro. Abrahams replied, "Are we here to play games? I thought you wanted me to go to work here!" So, he was hired. He went straight home and said to his wife, "Mother, for the rest of the day, we will have an arithmetic lesson. I must be able to figure deals by 8:00 tomorrow. Sister Abrahams' experience as a school teacher was an important asset then, and when it became necessary, Bro. Abrahams had learned to figure deals expertly. He worked with the Ford Motor Company for over 40 years, and in that time he occupied several positions. Many years in the service department brought him many friends and satisfied customers. The only difficulty he had was when the so-called "experts" who were hired by the company found fault with his tactics, and accused him of using his heart instead of his head in conducting business. But, when he worked with his heart in it, he rose to higher positions, and gained the confidence and friendship of many. His business slogan was that "Satisfied customers are the best advertisement", and worked toward the goal of satisfying all he could.

He lost all he had materially three different times in his life. These consisted of his crop failure, his home being destroyed by a tornado, and a business failure.

On October 30, 1941, a tornado struck the southern part of Lake Charles, damaging several homes, one of them being the Abrahams home. When the storm struck, the house was torn from its foundation and set down in the front yard. The roof was torn off, the chimney crashed right next to one of the children, causing minor injury, and much damage was done to his livestock. Sister Abrahams and three of the children were at home when the storm struck. When they saw the tornado approaching, they knelt down together to pray for protection. God marvelously spared their lives, and when the neighbors came crying, thinking of the devastation and doubtless death they were sure to find, they were astonished to see that no one was hurt, and all had to marvel at God's goodness. All was in wreck and ruin, but no once was there a complaint or murmur from Brother and Sister Abrahams. Instead they found the good things that they still had to praise God for. Bro. Abrahams was offered help from the Red Cross in this time of need, but he refused it and told them to go over to one of their neighbors who had also been hit by the storm. He never failed to find someone who was worse off than he was.

Bro. Abrahams retired from the Ford Motor Company in 1962. He had established a reputation in the business community also, as being an efficient, honest, hard-working person. Through his business he reached many people that otherwise would have been neglected. His reputation still lives on today to these people, and they respect his memory.

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HIS LEISURE TIME

Bro. Abrahams loved the outdoors. He was not a fisherman, for he always said his very presence scared the fish away, nor was he a huntsman, but he loved to be outdoors and to work with one of God's greatest creations, Nature. He loved a garden and spent many happy hours with his berry plants, turnips, onions, beans, fruit trees, etc. He believed in organic gardening and made many trips collecting leaves, hay, and straw for the garden. He had a personal conviction on even tithing the fruits and produce that he grew, so his garden provided food for both family and friends.

After retiring from the business world, his main "business" was with the outdoors. He also loved farming and during the rush seasons, he would help out on his son-in-law, Dan Hoffpaur's rice and soybean farm. Often he would testify and give illustrations of things that he had learned during his meditation while driving a tractor. He would look at Nature and try to learn from it, and then would share his experience with others.

Another means of relaxation for him was reading. He made up in many ways for his lack of schooling by reading a variety of books on different subjects. In the cool of the evening, if there were no meetings to attend, he would sit outside under the oak trees, or in his favorite lounge chair and read. His favorite book was the Bible. He would read, and he also memorized long passages from its pages. He particularly loved to read a portion and then think about it and look in commentaries and reference books for different opinions of interpretation. He enjoyed reading the biographies of strong Christian men, and collected scores of books on the lives of missionaries and church leaders of the past.

Singing was also an important part of his life. One of his children made these comments. "In so many situations, I remember him singing. As far back as his boyhood in Nebraska, singing was an essential part of him. Quartet and choir singing was part of the social life in his community. After moving to Louisiana, he and his brothers sang in a community chorus and in different quartets. Before they were married, he and Mother often sang in a mixed quartet at church. Daddy had a beautiful high tenor voice, and was called on frequently to sing solos at church. He would practice at home with Mother playing the piano for him. Sometimes they sang duets. It is hard for me to think of Daddy without thinking of him standing in front of the church leading the singing. I can hear his voice and see him with one hand holding a hymnal, and the other hand marking the beat, as we all stood to sing "Sunlight, Sunlight in My Soul Today," during the Sunday School opening ceremonies." Bro. Abrahams never lost his beautiful voice but because of a loss of hearing, it was impossible for him to sing in public, because he could not hear to stay on key. However, many times around his home, or out in the garden, one could hear as he sang praises to his Lord. Time after time, he would lull children to sleep, simply by singing some soft hymn or lullaby to them. His singing was a blessing to many, and would always lift the soul that was down-hearted, for when he sang, his spirit was in the song, and one could feel that there was something good in this life to praise God about.

Brother Abrahams was very active in the work of the church. For many years he was Sunday School Superintendent, but also was, at other time Young People's President, Sunday School teacher, and Song Leader. God seemed to have endowed him with a special gift for teaching Sunday School. Many people have said that he was the best they had ever heard. Bro.

Abrahams once remarked that "I never seek a job in the church, but never do I turn one down. If the people elect me for the position, I feel I need to do my best even though I don't feel capable in myself." Each office he was elected to, he took as a trust from God and did his best to enlarge God's Kingdom. Bro. Abrahams sat on many church boards, and many times he was under pressure and misunderstood, yet he never took anything personal. He was against any quick decision on anything of real importance. He wanted to pray much, and seek the will of the Lord. Many people didn't always agree with him, being human, but he disagreed in such a way that others could see his point of view too. Above all, he was consistent and faithful to God's house. His children said, "Sunday School was an important part of our lives. We never missed going to Sunday School unless we were very sick. Daddy was a Sunday School superintendent for 47 years. It was a mere matter of principle with him that we not only get to Sunday School, but to never be late. Somehow they managed to get eight children ready on Sunday morning, and still arrive on time. We can still remember Daddy's standing in front of the church telling those assembled that the way to get to Sunday School on time, was just to start getting ready earlier. We not only had a perfect attendance record for Sunday School, we had an impeccable record for church - any time the door was open. Sunday morning, Sunday night, Wednesday night, revivals, weddings, zone rallies -- we were there for them all. And we were expected to behave as we should while we were in church. If there was any talking, running around, or gum chewing during church, we could be assured of having to pay for it later."

Bro. Abrahams was always a cheerful giver, and put forth a great deal of effort to teach his children that it was "more blessed to give than to receive." One Sunday, he gave all he had to the church, even when he knew no other finances would be coming in until the next payday. On the way home from church that night, he told his wife about it, and she upheld the fact to him and the children, that the Lord would provide. The very next day, a man came and bought mere "junk" from them, and through this, the Lord repaid them all that they had given the day before. For Christmas one year, he and Sister Abrahams gave checks to the orphanage instead of gifts to each other. He rejoiced that he could help others and always was looking around for someone that was worse off than he was. He loved to slip little "extras" to young preachers and opened his heart and home to them.

One of his greatest joys was his grandchildren. When his oldest son, Robert, and his wife had their first baby, it was as if an heir to a throne had been born. He was content to sit for hours in the rocking chair with that baby, his first grandchild, and sing, and pat, and just look. When his second son, Jim, and his wife became the parents of twins, he almost burst with pride, and his joy knew no bounds. It was no problem at all for him to hold a little boy in one arm, and a little girl in another, and rock and sing, and grin. As the grandchildren continued to come, each one was a special event. He lived to have twenty-five grandchildren, and he often gave thanks that they were all healthy, bright, happy children. He loved them, and had such a loving and bright spirit, that one could not help but want to be around him. One of his son-in-law's made the comment, "Paw Paw," as the children called him, loved to have his children, grandchildren, and friends come to see him. He loved them. If we missed seeing him on Sunday afternoon, he would ask the children at church that night if it was really Sunday. In a way, I had a selfish motive in going so often to see Paw Paw and Grammy. First, I enjoyed it, and second, I wanted more of his spirit to rub off on me and my family." This was the way many people felt about the Abrahams and truly their lives were a blessing.

Bro. Abrahams was a man of strong convictions. His political convictions were his own, and they were formed after much reading and discussion. He was a conservative who strongly believed in the system of democracy and free enterprise. In local elections, he was an active supporter of whichever candidate he felt would carry out his office with respect to the law, and to God.

Yes, he loved his family and friends dearly, but always put God first. He would pray and fast concerning decisions, and then when God gave him instructions, he would stand on them, and do what he felt God wanted him to do. The love and loyalty he had for God and His Cause characterized the way he felt about his family. The home life his family enjoyed was one in which Brother and Sister Abrahams set the example of putting God first, others second, and self last.

Mr. & Mrs. John H. Abrahams of 1406 E. Prien Lake Rd. Lake Charles, La., were honored Thursday evening June 29th with an open house, in their home, in celebration of their 50th wedding anniversary. Their eight children were hosts for the occasion and all of them were present. Around 200 friends and relatives attended this gay occasion.

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Chapter 5 HIS SICKNESS AND DEATH

Bro. Abrahams' sickness was in many ways a blessing to those about him, for he always exemplified a cheerful spirit, never complaining, and could always lift a hearty praise even in his deepest pain.

For quite a while, Bro. Abrahams had been experiencing extreme dizziness and ear difficulty, and finally he went to seek relief. Except for minor weight loss, he had no other indication of serious illness. In February of 1970, he was examined at the Diagnostic Clinic in Houston, Texas, and found that surgery must be done. After the surgery, it was diagnosed that cancer had destroyed one kidney and the tissue surrounding it had also been invaded so that treatment was not advised. He was on the operating table for over six hours. The surgeon came out totally exhausted and explained the situation to the family. He reported that often they had given up on cases such as Bro. Abrahams', but some unseen force seemed to drive him on, and would not let him give up. The nurse, doctors, and hospital staff first thought him a preacher because of the way he prayed and witnessed. They remarked that he was a very cooperative patient, and he helped them by his cheerful attitude. He had to follow a very strict diet following this operation, and by doing so, he lived two years longer than the doctors expected him to. He tried many diets, etc., but always sought the Lord's will first.

These are the comments made by one of his sons Jim. "When your father is terminally ill of cancer and all other methods of cure are exhausted, I guess you will try anything. We had heard somewhere of a "miracle" cancer cure at the Bio-Medical Center in TiJuana, Mexico. After some discussion and prayer, we decided that any last effort would be better than none, so arrangements were made to see what could be done there. Dad and I flew from Houston, Texas, to San Diego,

California, where we spent the night. Early next morning we took a taxi to TiJuana, where Dad was given a physical. We had to wait overnight before the results would be known, so we just wandered around the town where Dad was quite interested in the surroundings.

Next morning, the clinic told us that Dad's case was too far gone to be cured by them, but that medication could be given that would hold his pain to a bearable level. In this one respect I believe that the medication given was effective.

As we were packing to leave Mexico, Dad noticed that I was hiding the medication in various pockets of my clothing. He asked me why this must be done. I answered that it was unlawful to carry any type medication or drug across the border. He immediately informed me in no uncertain terms that if it was unlawful then he would not allow me to do this. He told me to put the medication in the suitcase, and if the border guards found it when searching our luggage, he would simply tell them the truth. Dad was rather strong-willed, so I just went along with his request, scared to death that we would wind up in some obscure Mexican jail with a drug charge lodged against us. He told me that God's will would prevail and he was not in the least bit worried about the situation.

When we got to the border, the guards asked us to open our luggage and prepare for search. As our turn arrived I began to get the jitters, but the inspector casually glanced at the contents and told us to go ahead. Dad looked at me with a glance that was easily interpreted to mean "I told you so! God will provide."

In the taxi from the border back to San Diego, I began recalling a portion of Dad's past. His mother had died when he was 13 years old. He remembered the funeral quite well and had on occasion told me the story about leaving directly from the cemetery to the train, and since then he had never returned to California to see his Mother's grave. I decided then and there to rent a car and drive the few miles to Escondido in an attempt to relocate the grave-site. We did this, and on the way he was as talkative and excited as I have ever seen him. As we approached the town, he began recalling major landmarks such as the old train station, etc., and he remembered which way the road would turn. Upon arrival to the cemetery, we were amazed to find a beautiful new building at the gate, that was surrounded by extremely neat grounds. The receptionist was most cooperative and gave us a map of the place. We had no trouble finding the area where Dad's Mother was buried and within two or three minutes we found her gravestone. The next few minutes were quite emotional. Dad wept in remembrance and I wept for him. We made a paper tracing of the headstone and returned to the airport in San Diego." Though no cure for the cancer had been found, Bro. Abrahams had found a balm to a heartache when he had been able to once again see his Mother's grave.

For two years he suffered terrible pain with the cancer, but always requested your prayers, not your pity. He attended church even when he couldn't hear, or make out what the preacher was saying.

One Sunday night, several weeks before his passing away, since he was unable to go to church, several of his children stopped by after the service to see him. He called the children and grandchildren around his bedside, and wanted to have another family prayer. Sister Abrahams read

the Bible, then prayed for Bro. Abrahams to have a good night of rest, but then Bro. Abrahams began to pray. In his prayer he began to quote the 103rd Psalm which he loved and had so often quoted. At first his voice was so weak that none of the children could hardly hear so they moved closer around his bedside. As he continued to quote the scripture, his voice became stronger and he began to praise God and laugh and cry, and "Bless the Lord." As heaven swept low that night, everyone was in tears for Bro. Abrahams seemed to forget that anyone else was in the room, and he prayed for all the children and grandchildren to meet in an unbroken circle around the great white throne. Within several weeks he was around the throne enjoying his "Sunrise."

When Bro. Abrahams did die, it was not a moment of weeping and grief. He simply smiled a faint smile and stopped breathing. Those who were at his bedside rejoiced that he was no longer in pain, and that he was finally able to explore the heavenly city about which he so often talked and sang.

ONE OF BRO. ABRAHAMS' FAVORITE SONGS

SUNRISE

1.
When I shall come to the end of my way,
When I shall rest at the close of life's day,
When "Welcome home" I shall hear Jesus say,
O that will be sunrise for me.

Chorus:
Sunrise tomorrow, sunrise tomorrow,
Sunrise in glory is waiting for me;
Sunrise tomorrow, sunrise tomorrow,
Sunrise with Jesus for eternity.

2.
When in His beauty I see the great King,
Join with the ransomed His praises to sing,
When I shall join them my tributes to bring,
O that will be sunrise for me.

3.
When life is over and daylight is passed,
In heaven's harbor my anchor is cast,
When I see Jesus my Savior at last,
O that will be sunrise for me.

Bro. Abrahams had a gift for singing. He loved to sing for the glory of God.

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A MEMORIAL TO JOHN H. ABRAHAMS

John Herman Abrahams was born in Gretna, Manitoba, Canada in 1899. His family moved to the Lake Charles area in 1916. He was married to Gertrude Thieart in 1922. He was associated with the Ford Motor Co. of Lake Charles most of his life having retired in 1962.

He departed this life Oct. 29, 1972. He is survived by his wife, three sons and five daughters, Robert and Jim Abrahams of Lake Charles, Bill of Mechanicsburg, Pa., Mrs. Edith Hoffpauir of Iowa, La., Mrs. Betty Palmer of Homer, La., Mrs. Doris Pettit, Mrs. Alice Bertrand and Mrs. Grace Burge of Lake Charles.

Two brothers and three sisters, Fred and Albert Abrahams and Mrs. Ben Boeze of Lake Charles, Mrs. George Lowen of Houston, Tex. and Mrs. Virginia Jenkins of Memphis, Tenn., twenty-five grandchildren and a host of friends.

Brother Abrahams was gloriously saved and later sanctified in 1925, later uniting with the First Church of the Nazarene of Lake Charles. He was a strong, godly layman, having served the church as Sunday School Superintendent, choir director and teacher for 37 years.

He joined the Trinity Bible Missionary Church of Lake Charles in 1962 and was an outstanding leader in his local church, District and General boards. He was a man of prayer, faithfulness and love. He never compromised righteous principles with anyone, but was loyal to God, his family, his church and pastors. The text for the funeral message, II Sam. 3:38, surely does describe the life of Brother Abrahams, "And the King said unto his servants, know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day."

In April 1972 as Brother Abrahams was praying early one morning, He saw Jesus the Savior, and as he cried "Come a little closer" -- the Savior came and embraced him tightly to His bosom. He, weeping, testified how gloriously real and wonderful it was to be safe in the arms of Jesus.

News of his death brought sadness to many people and churches, who expressed themselves with letters and flowers to the family, and some donations in his memory to the Beulah Mountain Children's Home. About 500 friends and loved ones attended his funeral as a tribute to a good, holy man who had made the crossing. Officiating for the funeral service was Rev. W. S. Brown, Rev. Elbert Dodd and Rev. M. E. Perkins. The presence of the Lord was richly felt throughout the service. The following poem was given as a tribute to this noble life and godly influence.

One more saint has crossed the river,
Another Pilgrim has just gone Home.
He shouts with angels in the City,
And praises God around the throne.

Here, he was faithful in the battle,
Here, he bore the heavy load.

All his sorrows are now forgotten,
In the City of our God.

Here the nights were long and dreary,
As he suffered, without complaint,
Now he's joined the rapturous chorus
In the city of the saints.

There He's waiting for the rapture,
When the dead in Christ shall rise;
He'll be waiting in the morning,
For the reunion in the skies.

Rev. W. S. Brown, Pastor

* * * * *

TRIBUTE JOHN ABRAHAMS BY ELBERT DODD

I first met Brother John Abrahams, in 1938, he and I became fast and close friends. He was then Sunday School Superintendent of the First Church of the Nazarene in Lake Charles, La.

He served on the District Advisory Board of the Louisiana District Church of the Nazarene while I served as District Superintendent.

Brother Abrahams, was one of the finest Christians and laymen that I have ever known. He had wonderful judgment, and loved God, his church, his family and his friends.

He was one of the best friends that I have ever had, and I loved him like a blood brother. He was a wonderful Bible teacher and stood by the cause of God, as long as he lived.

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Chapter 6

PERSONAL IMPRESSIONS

If I were asked my impressions of "Uncle Johnny" as we affectionately called him, I would begin by saying he was a man we respected. His appearance and bearing naturally commanded ones respect. He lived a life before us that never caused us to question the fact that we should respect this godly man.

Second, I would say he was a man we listened to. He was easy to listen to, he had something to say, and he said it well. We learned after a while the secret of this attraction was his habit of studying, thoroughly, and lovingly the Word of God. In doing this it made him a man who spoke with authority.

Third, he was loyal. I remember a day after his so-called retirement, he was working in the rice fields with his son-in-law, (my brother-in-law), Dan Hoffpauir. He got off of his tractor and came and sat in the car with me awhile and we talked, or rather I gladly listened. Our conversation centered on loyalty. "As long as you are a part of something, be loyal." He told me this had been an important practice in his own life. I believe if all of his pastors could add to what I am saying on these pages that they would agree.

Fourth, he was a man of prayer. I have heard often of the early morning prayer meetings in "Old First Church". "Brother Johnny" prayed a hole through the sky. And it was not said lightly.

Fifth, he was faithful. He was there; nothing more need be said. Unless providentially hindered, he and his family were there, and on time. It was the "law of the Abrahams," the "Medes and Persians" too if they went to the church that "Bro. Johnny" was the Sunday School superintendent.

He had a grin that would melt those who might disagree with him. It would warm any heart, make any stranger welcome.

Sixth, he was a Sunday School teacher, who stayed at his post even when his body was wracked with pain from the terminal sickness that finally took his life. It was a challenge to the rest of us as we admired his courage in the face of so much suffering.

Seventh, he was a comforter. He lived to comfort others, even though it might cost him dearly. Many times I visited his room at Diagnostic Hospital in Houston to lend whatever assistance that I could, but secretly I went to be encouraged myself. I never went away without being fully repaid by the display of "working" holiness.

I plan to see him again; I plan to fellowship with "Uncle Johnny" another day.

-- Hal Joiner

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A TRIBUTE BY REV. W. BROWN, PASTOR

It was my privilege to pastor Bro. John Abrahams the last five years of his life. Those sunset years were certainly a climactic testimony to a godly life.

He was certainly an outstanding layman and possessed strong qualities that made him so. First and foremost, he was a man full of the Holy Ghost and faith. He lived and was led by the Spirit of God.

He loved and carried a great burden for the church. He attended every prayer meeting, early or late, and carried a burden for the lost in prayer and much fasting.

He was a man of great respect. He always respected his pastor as the overseer of the flock and was always willing for the pastor to lead unless a righteous principle or compromise was involved. He was a man of deep convictions and godliness and would not compromise his conviction and righteous principles even with his best friends.

On one occasion he was asked to give a paper at the preachers' meeting on the subject, "What I Expect from my Pastor." While many laymen would have welcomed the opportunity, Bro. Abrahams refused, simply saying: "It's not the layman's place to line the ministry up. He was very helpful to his pastor by way of suggestions, but always with kindness and respect.

He and his good wife were wonderful parents and were faithful to their children, to God and the church.

When he received the news he would only live a few months, his testimony was "that's all right, my life is in the hands of God." He remained faithful to his responsibilities as Sunday School superintendent and Bible Class teacher, just as long as he had physical strength. As he taught his class the last time, the Lord gave me these words-a small description of a Godly life:

"One more saint has crossed the river,
Another pilgrim has just gone home,
Another pilgrim has just gone home.
He shouts with angels in the city,
And praises God around the throne.

Here, he was faithful in the battle,
Here, he bore the heavy load,
All his sorrows are now forgotten,
In the city of our God.

Here, the nights were long and dreary,
As he suffered without complaint;
Now he's joined the rapturous chorus,
In the city of the Saints.

There he's waiting for the rapture,
When the dead in Christ shall rise,
He'll be waiting in the morning
For the reunion in the skies.

-- Rev. W. S. Brown, Pastor --

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Part 3
ALBERT LUTHER CRANE:
Sweet Singer of the Holiness Movement

By Ann Baldwin

* * *

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to especially thank Sister A. L. Crane for all the information and help she gave me when I was writing this biography. Next, I wish to thank Rev. Elbert Dodd for giving me the assignment, because the writing of this story has proven to be a real spiritual blessing to me. Also, I appreciate the cooperation of each one who wrote a tribute; to Ferne Roberts for taping the session with Sister Crane; to Esther Gray and Gordon Crane for sending tapes; to Paula Flores for typing the manuscript; to Frank, my husband for his encouragement and lending a listening ear.

Ann Baldwin

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Chapter 1 PRELUDE

This building was certainly no object of architectural design. Except for a front porch shading its entrance, it could easily have passed for an oversized barn with its high rounded roof and coat of red paint. It had, at one time, housed a box factory, but now it was filled with blessed and eager people whose faces reflected both joy and conviction from hearts convinced they were doing the right thing. Obviously, a worship service was to be held and the people were anxious to begin when Brother Albert Crane stepped briskly forward to lead the singing.

The revival had been in progress for four weeks, but the weather had turned colder, as it often does in Idaho near the end of September, and the charcoal heaters were not as effective as they needed to be. Besides, as many as five hundred people packed underneath a 60 x 90 tent necessitated a change. Those in charge of the meeting had discovered the box factory on Highway 30 between Nampa and Caldwell, not far from where the tent had been erected, and felt they were very fortunate to obtain this temporary housing as winter would soon be coming on.

This was no ordinary revival. There had been a special and unusual seal of the Lord's presence from the first service held under the tent; and now, the change of location had in no way diminished that exhilarating sense of great spiritual freedom nor the power of mighty altar services which had marked the meetings from night to night. Another element was present in the atmosphere, however, a feeling of destiny -- a conviction that something historic was happening. There was a spirit of excitement and anticipation such as must have prevailed in an Israelite camp the night previous to a God-ordered march or in a wagon train just before the beginning of the westward trek.

There was nothing Albert Crane loved more than being in a revival service; he was completely at home on the platform for he had been a song evangelist for the past thirty-four years. Despite his sixty-eight years, he felt like Caleb -- strong enough to take the mountain looming directly ahead of him that crisp October evening. He was not a large man, only five feet seven inches tall and weighing 155 pounds. He was quick and agile as a high-rise steel worker; intense and sensitive as a concert master. His somewhat sparse gray hair was combed smoothly back from his forehead and his rather close-set eyes moved expressively over the congregation, making contact with hearts and then drawing the strings of each one into a large handful which he would give to the preacher when it was time for the message.

Two very young ladies were playing twin pianos for the congregational singing that evening; Esther Crowe, a seventeen year old high school senior, and Naomi Knapp, only fifteen years old. Brother Crane felt comfortable with these girls playing, for despite their youth, both were excellent musicians who could easily follow his unique style of moving from hymn to hymn or from key to key without calling a page number.

Looking out over the congregation, he saw familiar faces, old friends from all over Treasure Valley, that vast, rich farmland watered by the Snake and Boise Rivers and which stretches over southwestern Idaho reaching across into Oregon. Albert Crane was on home territory. Hadn't he and his wife sung for revivals in every Nazarene church on that district but two? (And they had sung in these two, but not for revivals.) Hadn't they been called back to some of those same churches six to fourteen times? And it was people from these churches who had gathered under the tent and were now here, in the box factory. One hundred and twenty-six of these would soon become charter members of the Bible Missionary Union.

Brother Crane had known of the inevitability of this moment for some time. All across America, holiness people had been discerning change in the wind. Prayer meetings were organized by some of these concerned ones. His own son, Gordon, had been meeting one night each week at the home of Dr. Roscoe Kellogg along with Clarence Turner, George Stoops, Dale Chappell and Raymond Edwards. These men felt the need of keeping spiritual and were concerned about raising their families in an atmosphere such as they, themselves, had experienced in days gone by. Gordon later recalled, "While at one of these prayer meetings, we discussed the possibility of having our own tent meeting. We didn't have in mind, at the time, starting a new church. We just wanted an old-fashioned tent meeting."

Under the leadership of God a place was located on Highway 30, midway between Nampa and Caldwell, for the erection of the tent. A telephone call was placed to Rev. Glen Griffith requesting that he come as the evangelist. A date, September 8, 1955, was set for the beginning of the meeting. Also, for the first time the actual formation of a new church was discussed. Following this phone call, a trip was made to McCall, Idaho, where Brother and Sister A. L. Crane were caretakers for Victory Camp. Would they be the singers for the tent meeting? Albert and Edna Crane knew and felt God's promptings, and because of this, they readily agreed to come and sing.

While Albert Crane was making moving arrangements, a good group had gathered the Saturday before the scheduled starting date and were busily engaged in pitching the tent, arranging for benches, building a platform and stringing lights. The following Wednesday evening, a prayer meeting, with Clarence Turner in charge, was held under the tent. Thursday night, Brother Griffith arrived and preached to a crowd of approximately 150 people; Raymond Edwards led the singing that evening. Then, on Friday, the Cranes arrived and were to have charge of the music from then on.

Albert Crane knew that he was helping write the beginning of a new chapter in the history of the holiness movement. It would be wonderful; it would involve much agony. There would be great blessings; there would be heart-rending disappointments. No bridge-building is easy! But God was leading. Albert was absolutely persuaded that this new step was God's will for his life. He would follow, having perfect confidence in his guide. With God he had traveled safely all the way from Tamaroa.

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Chapter 2 BOYHOOD

Tamaroa, the birthplace of Albert Luther Crane, is a small southern Illinois village located in Perry County and situated on Highway 51 that slices through the center of the state lengthwise cutting it into two almost equal halves. The settlement forms the eastern angle of an isosceles triangle with the larger cities of St. Louis, sixty miles away to the northwest, and Cape Girardeau, Missouri, an equal distance to the southwest, sprawled around the northern and southern angles. The mighty Mississippi bulges and recedes along the western boundary of the triangle from St. Louis to Cape Girardeau. The Little Muddy River, only five miles east of Tamaroa, meanders along a southwesterly path to the large river. Thirty-seven miles west of Tamaroa, the Kaspaskia River makes its way to the Father of Waters.

Here, Albert Crane was born August 30, 1887, the same year that Victoria celebrated her Golden Jubilee as Queen of England. One year earlier in 1886, President Grover Cleveland, the first Democratic president elected after the Civil War, had dedicated the Statue of Liberty, a gift of France to the United States. Also, that year, T. B. Arnold had copyrighted a song by Rev. F. A. Miller entitled, "My Friend".

His father, Ransom Nimrod Crane, was a large man, six feet tall. He was a Civil War veteran, a farmer, a strict disciplinarian, but one who was very fond of his large family. Years later, when members of the family visited together, they delighted in recounting stories and incidents of their childhood. One they really enjoyed recalling concerned "Father and the Tablecloth". It seemed Ransom Nimrod Crane required discipline and order at meals. Now, this would be quite a difficult matter to achieve with giggling, pinching, shuffling boys and girls crowded around one table. Invariably, someone would spill something on the tablecloth always to be sharply reprimanded by Father, "That was nothing but carelessness! You are simply getting into the habit of spilling."

One day, however, Father spilled a cup of coffee during the meal. The children wanted to laugh but they were afraid to, so they suppressed their mirth as the brown stain spread over the spotless tablecloth. Then Ransom Crane said quite abashedly, "Well-ll, someone had to do it and it was me this time." At this the children released their whoops and hollers and laughter and enjoyed a good joke at Father's expense.

There are no records telling how or when Sarah Reddick Crane, the mother, came from Pennsylvania to Illinois, but it is known that she was of German Pennsylvania Dutch descent. She was born July 9, 1840. Between the years 1863 until Albert was born in 1887, when she was 47 years old, Sarah bore Ransom Crane twelve children. Two children, Maggie and Logan Henry were born during the Civil War. Then came Julian Evaline, Rachel Elizabeth, Ezra, Leander, Walter Dallas, Anna Myrtle, Alonzo Scott, Onas Ransom, Mable and finally, Albert Luther. Sarah had a merry, rollicking brood who loved to play jokes on one another. Sarah and Ransom never moved from the old home place. They lived there until the children married and moved to homes of their own. An older daughter later lived on the old place, and today, the farm is owned by Earl Hampelman, son of Rachel Elizabeth. Sarah's daughter-in-law, Edna, remembers her as being a small lady and "a very nice person."

The Cranes attended the Christian church and some of the children sang in the choir.

Little Albert, was born in a cozy, weather-boarded house surrounded by love, close family ties and abundant good humor. At night he heard the winds sighing and singing soft harmonies in the leaves of the silver poplar and oak trees which stood sentinel in the yard. He heard the cackle of chickens, the croaking of frogs; all of the farm animal sounds -- the grunting of hogs, neighing of horses, and the mournful lowing of cattle. He felt the welcome relief of shade as an escape from the steamy heat of Illinois summers. He enjoyed the gentle fragrance of old-fashioned flowers blooming in his mother's yard. He drank deep, cold draughts from the well down by the granary and he heard the spring rains hammer the roof and gurgle and splash filling the cistern at the end of the L-shaped porch which half-circled the house.

Albert Crane was unusually gifted in music -- a child prodigy. When he was three years old he begged to play his older brother, Dallas', violin. Dallas replied, "Hands off! You might break it."

One day, however, when Albert was five years old the family was all outside in the garden picking blackberries and he was left alone in the house. The overwhelming compulsion to play got the better of him and he carefully picked up the forbidden instrument.

Meanwhile, the berry-pickers were filling their pails with the soft, luscious blackberries. No longer was the fruit making tiny metallic rings as it fell into empty pails.

Instead, the cheerful family conversation was undertoned by the velvety whispers of ripe goodness falling into rapidly filling buckets. Perhaps the children's mouths fairly watered at the thought of fresh blackberry jam dripping from hot brown-backed biscuits or of flaky, crusted cobbler to be downed with cool, country milk. Bluish-purple smiles betrayed those who were unable to resist sampling the sun-warmed morsels of sweet, seedy fruit. Suddenly, a sound from the house caught their attention. Music was drifting from the open doorway.

"Who's playing the violin?" They questioned, looking at one another in amazement. And dropping their pails, they raced toward the source of melody.

Bursting through the doorway they were astonished to see the five-year-old playing all the tunes that he had always thought he could play. He was having a wonderful time! The brothers and sisters laughed and cried at once as they listened to the tiny virtuoso. Needless to say, he never had to ask to play the violin again.

By the time he was six, Albert was playing for dances all around the countryside. It was both novel and amusing to see the minute fiddler whose feet were unable to touch the floor. Albert played and played until his little eyes refused to remain open another second. Even after he had dozed off, he kept playing. When the dancers stopped, he would awaken with a start, and begin playing again.

By the time he was nine years of age, Albert was entering all the music contests and always came away bearing the prize ribbon.

Now, emotions quite different from the aesthetic occasionally were evidenced in young Albert's heart. He was capable of stronger feelings. One particular example of this produced much chuckling, later, when it was brought to mind: An older sister, Eva, was being courted by a special young swain. Mother Sarah had prepared a good Sunday dinner for the honored caller, but in those days of large families, someone had to wait for a second table to be served. In this particular instance, Scott, Onas and Albert, the three youngest boys were the logical ones to wait. Now, the time this episode took place was just at the very early beginning of the strawberry season. All of the first ripened berries had been picked and everyone was looking forward to having them for Sunday dinner. Unless one has experienced the frustration of waiting until the second table, he cannot appreciate the emotions of the three little boys who had been chosen to wait. Aromas had wafted into every room and around the yard all morning. Every saliva gland was pumping to full capacity. They had heard comments on how good everything was. Smacks and sighs of satisfaction could be heard from the privileged first-table crowd. Every now and then they would peak into the living room to see how the strawberries were holding out; their frayed patience finally snapped, however, when Logan, the eldest, passed the rapidly diminishing berries a second time to the guest. "Have some more," he urged. It was then that the angry little eavesdroppers exploded, "Let's whip him!" How they laughed when they remembered it much later.

Now, when the eight-year-old Albert was playing and singing and experimenting with his brother's violin in preparation for winning ribbons and prizes at musical contests, events were taking place as far away as New York City and Los Angeles that would have a great bearing on his future. In December, 1895, The Association of Pentecostal Churches of America was formed in New York City; Rev. H. F. Reynolds, who would later become a dear friend of Albert's, was associated in this work. In October, of that same year, a number of persons, led by Rev. Phineas F. Bresee, and Rev. J. P. Widney formed the First Church of the Nazarene at Los Angeles. On October 8, 1908, at Pilot Point, Texas, these two groups, along with various other holiness bodies would consummate a union to be known as The Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene. Who could dream that young Albert Crane, dance fiddler from Tamaroa, Illinois, would someday cast his lot with "The Nazarenes"?

When Albert was only fourteen years old, he lost his father. Ransom Crane's soul left this world July 12, 1901. He had lived sixty-six years. Sarah buried him in Williams Cemetery, a mere one-quarter of a mile from the home-place he loved so well. She made sure there was room for her to be beside him when her time came "to join that innumerable caravan". Two months after Ransom's death, President McKinley was struck down by Czolgosz's bullet at the Buffalo Fair. He died later, humming, "Nearer My God To Thee"; but Washington D. C. seemed a long way from Tamaroa. Teddy Roosevelt, the new president, was just another name.

Time passed. Hours were spent practicing the beloved violin, but a new medium for musical expression was beginning to challenge Albert, the guitar. He was to master the instrument, developing an intricate and unique technique of playing all his own. And through the spell of his playing many would be lifted to the very presence of God.

God had a definite blueprint for Albert's life and special providence were utilized to bring the plan to fruition. When he was sixteen or seventeen, the widowed Sarah took him with her on a

visit to Louisville, Kentucky. That visit altered the direction of Albert's life and put him right on course for the will of God.

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Chapter 3

"GOD LEADS HIS DEAR CHILDREN ALONG"

Ezra Crane, Albert's older brother, was a brilliant, well-educated man who had left an administrative position in an Illinois college to become railroad mail clerk on the run from Louisville, Kentucky to St. Louis, Missouri. Because his work kept him from home so much of the time, his very attractive, English-born wife, Ada, was lonely and felt she needed a companion to live with them.

Discussing this matter with Ezra's cousin, in her very pronounced accent, adding a few h's here and omitting a few there, she was delighted to hear the latter reply, "I know the very one for you. I've done some sewing for Edna Collins. She doesn't live far from here and I believe you'd like her."

Ada immediately contacted Edna's mother and gained her consent for her daughter to move to the Crane home and become her companion. Soon Edna's small, lithe, trim figure could be seen flitting through the lovely rooms of the Crane home, cheerfully helping where she was needed and thoroughly enjoying her new position -- one that would continue for eleven years.

This graceful, charming girl, her face framed by very curly dark brown hair, first met Albert Crane when he was nearly seventeen years old, the same age as she. Though the visit was short, lasting only a few days, Albert, no doubt, was very attracted to the brown-eyed teen-ager who stood only five feet three inches tall. Very likely, he enjoyed seeing her raise her eyes to meet his for he was not tall, though he was lean, very strong and energetic.

Edna's father, Thomas Collins, was Irish while her mother, Jane (called Jennie) Darlington, was Irish and English. Recently, when someone asked if young Albert serenaded her with "My Wild Irish Rose", a song of the '90s, she replied chuckling, "I don't know about that. But I do remember him singing it."

After Albert returned to Tamaroa to complete his high school education, Edna enjoyed her days in Louisville. She often accompanied the Cranes during an evening at the theater. She remembers there was nothing she enjoyed more than an evening in this glittering fantasy world.

And while Edna Collins strolled in her long, ankle-length dress down a Louisville sidewalk, enjoying the luminous greens and fuchsias and yellows of spring, America was moving ahead in response to the teeth-clacking, jaw-jutting, high falsetto of Teddy Roosevelt. Spring had come to the nation at the turn of a new century. Soon the streets of Louisville would begin to hum to the tune of Model-T Fords and more and more homes would have telephones and electric lights. More marvelous yet, they would soon read that two brothers, Wilbur and Orville Wright, had actually invented a workable flying machine.

Meanwhile, Edna had been attending the Broadway Methodist Church. Mrs. H. C. Morrison was her Sunday School teacher. At this time "The Pentecostal Herald", a weekly journal edited by Dr. Morrison, advocating the Bible doctrine of sanctification, and reproducing articles and testimonies of the old Methodists, was published and circulated from Louisville. All of Edna's folks were Methodist. Her uncle, Erban Darlington, was a Bishop in the Methodist church.

To discover how the message of salvation reached Albert Crane's heart, one must understand that it was through his friendship and the witnessing of Edna Collins that he found the Lord. It is necessary, therefore, to learn of her conversion first. Here, in her own words, is the story.

"One night I went with my brother to a church (he was younger than I recently saved - a wonderful experience). It was a mission in a large building where "The Pentecostal Herald", a Methodist church paper was published. Dr. H. C. Morrison was the editor. It was a wonderful service! I was miserable for brother had prayed conviction upon me. At the close of the sermon, a friend asked me if I wanted to get saved. I went to the altar and Jesus wiped away all of the sin. I was so happy! The preacher did not say anything about jewelry or worldliness, but God did. And I shed it all! I wanted to look like a Christian and I haven't wanted the world since. Before I was saved I never went to the moving picture show in my life but we did go to the theaters. I thought I never could stand it if I couldn't go to the theater. I just loved that. After I was saved, when I would go to work, I'd pass the theater building and I wouldn't even think about the theater - oh for months. And all at once, I looked up and saw the building and thought, "Oh isn't it wonderful! I don't want to go any more!"

Soon after this wonderful experience, the First Church of the Nazarene was organized in Louisville, and Susan Edna Collins was a charter member. Bishop Darlington, her uncle, felt badly about this. However, the new convert was growing in grace, encouraged by her exposure to some of the best and richest holiness preaching the world has ever known: Phineas Bresee, W. B. Godbey, C. B. Ruth, Bud Robinson, Beverly Carradine, I. G. Martin and many others.

Several years after Sarah had passed away on March 12, 1908, and was buried beside Ransom in Williams Cemetery, Albert returned to Louisville to make his home with Ezra and Ada. At this time, he was now twenty-one; he was a very good looking young man, fair-skinned, with a mass of black hair. Edna noticed that his hair was soft with easy waves, and that his eyes were hazel.

Albert's moving to Louisville made him feel comfortable in more ways than one. For it was a matter of concern to him that Eric Griffith, his sister Eva's son, also found Miss Susan Edna Collins to be a very interesting person.

After Albert came to live in Louisville, he did not attend the Christian Church with his brother. Instead, he chose to attend the Nazarene Church with Edna.

Though Albert had attended church all of his life, he had never been taught about salvation. He soon was saved, forgiven of all his sins, for the first time in his life. He was a happy young

man, well liked by every one and became a real blessing to others. He had a good experience with the Lord and was quite enthusiastic about it. The Nazarenes preached and taught, from the word of God, that there was another work of grace, wrought by the Holy Spirit, subsequent to regeneration, whereby the believer's heart is cleansed from inbred sin and his life is empowered for Christian service. Albert was convinced by the Spirit of the truth of this wonderful teaching. By faith, he presented himself to God as a candidate for Holiness and was sanctified. He spent the remainder of his life telling in word and song of this wonderful and full salvation and of victory for the soul through the blessed atonement purchased for sinful man by Jesus Christ on Calvary.

Music was Albert's life. Though he often played the violin for the church services, he was now majoring in the guitar. While Albert was mastering this instrument, practicing long hours, always tapping his foot with his perfect sense of timing, song writers like Mrs. C. H. Morrison, Haldor Lillenas and others were composing songs about this wonderful second work of grace -- songs Albert would use in his ministry -- songs that would become Holiness classics.

A year or so later, on a summer's evening, as he and Edna were walking near a park in Louisville, Albert Crane asked her to become his wife. On November 2, 1915, about six weeks before President Wilson married Mrs. Edith Boiling Gait, Bishop Darlington spoke the familiar words of the oldest ordinance of man in the presence of a house filled with guests whom Ada and Ezra had invited to share the event. Edna, blushing and radiant in a dark blue suit with soft gray fur at the neck and cuffs, forever joined her future and fortune with Albert's. Many, many years later after Albert had gone to heaven, their dear friend, Rev. Carl J. Kinzler, would write, "It is difficult to think of A. L. Crane without his wife. They worked so well together."

A small crisis occurred during the first month of their marriage which set the pattern for the young couple's future Christian commitment. Such a small thing! But it must be remembered that often very small things are symbolical or indicative of the entirety. In reviewing the lives of these two effective Christians, this one incident is a pivotal point; a veritable crossroads; a strategic focal point. As Sister Crane remembers, this is what happened:

I shed my jewelry when I got saved -- took it all off. And then, when we were going to get married, he (Albert) wanted to know if I would have a wedding ring. I said, "No."

He asked, "Well, why?"

I replied, "That's jewelry."

"That isn't jewelry!" he retorted.

I answered, "It is to me."

My girlfriend, who was sitting nearby, spoke up, "You get it. She'll wear it."

Well, they put it on me that night. We didn't have a ring ceremony, but my uncle, the Bishop, put the ring on me. He came from Huntington, West Virginia to marry us.

So, for almost a month, I'd cry and I'd cry and I'd take that ring off. My finger felt so heavy. He's come home from work and say, "You don't have to take that ring off. Now that's all silly!"

I said, "To me it isn't silly." So, the next day I was praying again, "Lord, if he leaves me tomorrow, I'm not putting that ring on again. But you can take care of him. You just talk to him and let him see it, but I'm not putting it on again."

So, when he came home that night he looked down and said, "Well, the ring is gone."

I replied, "Yes, and I'm not wearing It anymore."

He said, "Perfectly alright. You do just what you think you ought to do."

The Lord had taken care of it don't you see?

The choice had been made. Their feet never wavered from the path "less traveled by" which was taken that day.

By then, the world had entered an era which would be known later, as the separation period between the old America of strict, unchanging moral values and the nation we know today. The development and growth of the motion picture industry contributed largely to this change. The holiness people immediately discerned that the product turned out by this industry was detrimental to real spirituality and would cause emotional, moral and spiritual disaster to its participants. They unequivocally, denounced movies and forbade their membership from attending the theater where motion pictures would be shown. Time has since vindicated their stand.

News from Kansas City encouraged the Cranes and another couple to leave Louisville for this bustling metropolis which straddled the geographical center of the United States. They would be living here when Congress declared war against Germany, April 6, 1917. The westward movement had begun for Albert and Edna Crane. They would follow it until sunset.

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Chapter 4 "I WILL MIND GOD"

In the early spring of 1912, the Nazarenes purchased an old residence property at 2109 Troost Avenue, Kansas City, Missouri, and there founded the Nazarene Publishing House. Machinery and equipment were brought from Peniel, Texas, and from Los Angeles, California; new machinery was installed and new supplies purchased. The first issue of the official church organ, "The Herald of Holiness", appeared under the date of April 17, 1912. Rev. B. F Haynes was the editor. By the close of that year, in a nine-month period, the new publishing house had sent out 938,825 copies of its periodicals. The concern was growing; holiness literature was in great demand.

It was here that Brother and Sister Crane moved about one month after their wedding date. Brother Crane was to work for the Nazarene Publishing House which had been operating at this time for approximately three and one-half years.

The Cranes enjoyed those early days in Kansas City very much. They were welcomed and so graciously received by the church there. Dr. and Sister Reynolds, especially, took a great liking to the young couple from Louisville and entertained them in their home. When a baby boy, Ralph Lee, made his appearance in the Crane home October 21, 1916, Sister Reynolds felt that the young mother needed her help. How Edna appreciated the loving and thoughtful attention given her by this great lady of God!

No couple ever welcomed their first baby more than Albert and Edna. These were good days: surrounded by loving, spiritual friends, having a part in the propagation of the gospel through the printed page, and Albert was now singing in a quartet.

The Lunn brothers, Merv and Percival, along with their wives, were numbered among the dear friends of the Cranes in those Kansas City days. M. Lunn would later be named manager of the Publishing House.

In April 1918, two very significant events happened which had a real bearing upon the Crane's lives. Congress declared war on Germany and on the 21st of that month another baby boy, Jack Collins, was born. He was great company for little Ralph.

Soon after Jack's birth, the Cranes moved to Lola, Kansas, a small town about 100 miles southwest of Kansas City on Highway 169 toward Chanute and Coffeyville. This was during the time of the terrible influenza epidemic that swept the entire country. Sister Crane recalls, "So many people dying! Sometimes two and three in one family. Albert got it and was really sick; then little Jack had pneumonia; then I was down with it. Albert was then up but not well; he was singing for two funerals a day."

Albert enjoyed working in the Lola Church. It was not large, much smaller than Kansas City First Church, and how they did use him in the music department there! It was there, in the year 1919 when he was 32 years old, that Albert first began to feel the Lord was talking to him about going into the field as a song evangelist. Of course, he wanted to be sure -- there was Edna, Ralph, Jack and a new baby on the way. So he prayed and "waited on God" for sometime.

During the days at Lola Albert had his first real test of faith. He had lived on such a mountain-top of spiritual blessing and, until this time, he had not been exposed to the sufferings of the saints nor to hopes deferred. There was, however, in the Lola church a man whom Albert really believed in, a wonderful Christian, but this man became very, very ill. The praying people met together in behalf of this brother. Of course, Albert Crane was right there. These faithful ones prayed until after midnight when suddenly they "broke through". The room lighted up with the presence of the Lord and they shouted and shouted, rejoicing in what they believed to be a witness of the man's healing. Brother Crane came home and announced to his wife, "The man will be working tomorrow! The Lord came tonight and healed him. I know He healed him," he reasserted, "the room was all lit up and looked as if it was full of angels!"

The next morning, however, instead of the man being healed, the Lord had taken him to Heaven. Albert was almost floored. He had never experienced anything like that - the light, the blessing, the assurance. Everyone who had been in that prayer meeting was thrown into bewilderment and near despair. As Edna watched Albert's perplexity, she was very concerned and anxious lest his faith become damaged. God didn't leave Albert in this slough, however, for He helped him pray until the young man realized God's will in the matter. God even revealed to Albert somewhat of the reason why He took the beloved brother home.

Those sincere Christians, like some even today, had mistaken the assurance of God's hearing and intervention, for the assurance of His healing.

The day before Christmas, 1919, God gave the Cranes their third son, Albert Gordon. Sister Crane says, "He was such a dear, sweet boy. He always thought it was hardly right that his birthday was so near Christmas for he didn't get many birthday presents."

In 1920, the little family moved again. This time, southward to Chanute, Kansas. And it was there that Albert settled the call to go into the evangelistic field.

Sister Crane has special reason to vividly recall Brother Crane's early entry into the song evangelistic ministry. She remembers, "His first meeting away from home was near the time that our fourth boy came - a sweet boy, just like the other three. . .he (Albert) didn't get home until just before Kenneth made his appearance, July 1, 1921."

In every family, little incidents occur, especially when children are involved, that prove to be embarrassing. Something lively was always taking place in the Crane household. In Chanute, one of those incidents took place. Sister Crane had been very ill. A nurse had been employed to care for her while Mother Jennie Collins, came from Louisville to watch the four very lively little boys.

Now, in those days, people with large families used an oiled-cloth for a table covering rather than bothering with the difficult laundering of linen ones. The Cranes, however, had received so many tablecloths for wedding gifts that Sister Crane thought, "What's the use of having an oil-cloth when I have so many of the others?"

But the nurse approached her one day and said, "Sister Crane can I buy an oil-cloth instead of these tablecloths? It's so much more washing!" Sister Crane agreed and an oil-cloth came into constant use at their table.

One day, however, a young man from Texas came to visit Mrs. Collins. She had taken care of him when he was a child and he loved her very much. Sister Crane prepared a lovely dinner bringing out a beautiful linen cloth for the table, doing her best to make everything look very pretty and attractive.

Finally, they all gathered around the table to eat. Everything was so proper and lovely. Sister Crane turned to the guest asking him to say the blessing. Everyone bowed his head and it

was then that three-year-old Jack spied the linen tablecloth which hadn't been used for sometime. He excitedly cried out before the guest could invoke one word of the blessing, "Oh Mother who brought us this?"

Sister Crane, keeping her dignity, chose to ignore the tiny questioner and looked at the guest, nodding again for him to pray.

Again he was interrupted - this time by Ralph answering, "Oh Jack, it's ours. We just haven't used it for a long, long time."

Sister Crane would have preferred getting under the table in her humiliation, but she looked at the guest and nodded one more time.

He finally got the blessing said.

While the rest ate, Sister Crane was wondering if the man thought they had never asked the blessing before at their house or if he thought that they only had one tablecloth and used it so seldom the children forgot they had one.

1921, was the year Sister Crane began singing with her husband - a duet that would bless and lift men and women, boys and girls toward God and Heaven, through the spangled years of the roaring '20s, the sparse years of the Great Depression of the '30s, the years of suffering and separation caused by World War II during the '40s, the years of great significance in the holiness movement during the '50s, and on and on until Brother Crane went sweeping through the air to God's glorious eternal city in the early '60s. Paul L. Holmes, a dear friend of the Cranes, remembers their first years in the song evangelistic work.

The windy fall night of 1921 we entered the Canaan Chapel Church on the wind-swept plains of western Kansas. It was a rather large country church, and was filled with singing people. This was our introduction to Brother and Sister A. L. Crane.

We had never heard such singing and when Brother Crane lead out with "When the Roll is Called Up Yonder", the atmosphere was charged with the mighty presence of God and shouts of victory were given from liberated hearts. The wonderful crowning glory of the service was the special song by Brother and Sister Crane. Their songs were always backed by God-filled, dedicated, prayerful life.

From that year on they traveled far and wide singing the wonderful songs of God and we heard them many, many times. He usually sang at our annual camp meeting at Palco, Kansas. Businessmen from town and farmers from their fields crowded into the tent to hear the wonderful singing and preaching. Many of the farmers were glad to leave their fields early to hear this wonderful singing.

Brother Crane had a way of getting the fire on the altar of the Lord, and keeping it there by his prayerful attitude during the sermon.

The altar songs were blessed with power and many sinners filled the aisles weeping their way to the altar to meet their God and we have never known better altar workers to pray and carry a burden for the lost. Many singers have to spare their voices, but not the Cranes, for how they would pray and pour out their hearts for the salvation of the seekers.

The passing of Brother A. L. Crane has left a gap which has been keenly felt by all of us as a church. He was fearless and uncompromising in the pulpit, sane and balanced in his counsel gentle to his friends, warm and brotherly in fellowship and always took the lead in fighting sin in high places. Many of us will be better men because of leadership of this man. One thing that stands out was his love and kindness for young people.

Eternity alone will reveal the good this great singer did while he was on earth. When the Bible Missionary Church was started, no sacrifice was too great to make the church to a success. He gave much time as Secretary of the Missionary Revivalist.

Our hearts cry out, we too, hope to meet this blessed man and our Christ when the prophecy of Enoch is fulfilled, "Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints." Me thinks in my pondering that Brother Crane will still be singing "Though I Am Unworthy in the Least of All the Saints, I Expect to be There When He is Crowned," and also, "When the Saints Go Marching In."

Let me bow my head and weep with joy in my heart, that the grace of God gave to the world a saint that has been such a blessing to me, my family, the church, and the world.

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Chapter 5 IN THE FIELD

Brother Crane entered the evangelistic field during the decade in American history that has been labeled, "The Roaring '20s". At first, it seemed as if the country was really intending to deal with existing evils. The Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution which prohibited the manufacturing, sale and drinking of alcoholic beverages went into effect in 1920. World War I was over and it looked as if a period of "normalcy" was beginning in the world. But the decade of the 1920s has been called one of the flashiest and saddest times in our history. They were years of unending change. One historian said, "The world was shifting gears, starting to move with bewildering speed. The destination was not clear, but the speed was breathtaking."

Women were kicking off the traces during this era of restless life when all the old rules seemed to be gone. The typical figure of this time was the Flapper, a girl who bobbed her hair, smoked, wore short skirts and was openly freer with the opposite sex than women had ever been. Holiness people drew the line against this new image of womanhood which is contradictory to Bible standards. It probably was during this era that the word "old-fashioned" began to be used in song and sermon as holy people deplored the changes and cried for the former days and defended time-honored beliefs.

Although automobiles were not new in 1920, they began pouring out of the factory in such great numbers at that time that soon the face of the countryside was changed. Rev. W. M. Tidwell marked the coming of age of the automobile as a time when change hit vital religion. Before, great crowds had thronged street meetings and filled the churches. After the automobile came into wide use, the picture began to change.

The fever for riches struck many Americans. Stock market speculation was infecting the whole country. Everyone was telling stories of fortunes that could be made overnight. There was also a raging fever of real estate speculation. Many of the people of the '20s, during the administrations of Harding and Coolidge, were extremely materialistic, dreaming of fabulous riches, forgetting the One who said, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth.

And while Americans were dancing the Charleston and having their fling, the Bolsheviks, who had revolted in Russia in 1917, were winning the civil war in their country and by 1921, Communism was fully victorious in that country.

Into this melee walked Albert and Edna Crane with sanctified hearts, a song on their lips, a call to return to the "old-fashioned" way, a dedication to another kingdom.

During these early days in the evangelistic field, Albert held a meeting in Denver with Dr. R. T. Williams. This great leader was such a help to the young singer. He gave Albert wonderful advice at this time- advice that he never forgot.

Brother Crane also held two camps with C. W. Ruth and held meetings with E. E. Shelhamer.

On September 4, 1924, the four little Crane boys were finally presented with a baby sister named Marjorie Jane. The Cranes were then living in Palco, Kansas, a small village just northwest of the center of the state. Palco, in the heart of the wheat country, lies between the Saline River to the south and the south fork of the Solomon River to the north. Plainville, a town of near three thousand, lies approximately seventeen miles east of Palco. Sister Crane says, "We lived there eighteen years-a long, long time for us to stay in one place."

After moving to western Kansas, the Cranes were busy, but according to Sister Crane, "It wasn't easy." Following the joy ride of the '20s, the '30s opened with a crash despite the election campaign promises of Herbert Hoover, and the United States was plunged into the deepest depression of its history. By the end of 1932, half of the nation's productive machinery was idle. Banks closed and many depositors lost their last savings. Farmers could find no buyers for their crops and many had their homes and land taken for unpaid debts. Sister Crane continues, "Times were hard. Depression days. Money scarce. But they were good days for they kept us on our knees."

The following account by Sister Crane will give an insight into the life of a song evangelist during the '30s.

"The children were in school. One time Albert was in Texas for two meetings. I was looking forward to his coming home and hoped he would have a little money. When he came, he had a crate of chickens and a few gallons of sorghum. That was all the church could do. We had food, but no money. But still we had the Lord. One morning after the children had left for school, I poured out my heart to the Lord. He blessed my soul and I knew He heard. Later on in the morning, a preacher we had helped several times came to our door and said, "While praying this morning, the Lord spoke to me saying Sister Crane needs help. Stop by and give her some money."

God never failed to care for these precious ones who had forfeited everything to do His will. Another time when the Cranes were in need, God spoke to a preacher in Nacoma, Kansas, telling him to send them some money. Sister Crane later explained, "He didn't have the ravens feed us, but He did send His servants around."

Here is another account of God's special watch-care over His servants during those depression days. Sister Crane remembers.

"Albert was going to a meeting about fifty miles from our home. Kenneth had had two teeth extracted and the doctor said not to let him take cold - no breeze on him. But I sent him to school the next day and he was in a draught most of the day. When he came home, he had some fever. Later on, after the children had gone to bed, I went to him and his fever was dreadfully high he was breathing just so terrible, and I was really uneasy. So the first thing I did was say, "Lord, send Albert home! I need him." And then Kenneth got so much worse. I didn't think he'd last until morning. I didn't know how to get ahold of the doctor. We were out in the country - so I got down to pray and I told Jesus I didn't need anybody but Him - And He was there with me. So He gave me a promise. I thanked Him for every prayer that He had answered and that I knew He was going to undertake for Kenneth but I forgot to tell Him not to send Albert home.

So I waited a while and it wasn't long until Kenneth was breathing like a baby. His fever was all gone. The Lord's presence was so real. I can think of it, even now, while I am telling it! It wasn't long until I knew that I could go to bed....

Quite a bit after midnight, here Albert came. I had forgotten all about asking the Lord to send him, so I said, "What did you come home for?"

"Well," he said, "I don't know. After I sang the special and sat down, the impression came to me -- go home!"

And that was when I had first found out Kenneth was so bad. And I said, "Well, Honey, the Lord has beat you here. Kenneth is alright."

Toward the close of the '30s Sister Crane remembers another time when the grocery shelves contained nothing but oatmeal. She says, "We didn't have any sugar and didn't have any milk. I fixed the children the oatmeal -- couldn't hardly keep from crying -- but I gave it to them and they never said a word. They never did complain about anything."

After the children had gone away to school Sister Crane got down on her knees before the Lord and said, "Now Lord, it isn't for me. I can do without it, but I do want something for the children."

She ended this story by telling that that very day she got a letter with some money and by nightfall some praying ladies came with a large pounding to her door. She had never told them about the need at all but her heavenly Father, who knew, once more proved that He was looking out for His children.

Toward the close of the '30s when many were wondering just how effective The New Deal under President Franklin D. Roosevelt really was, two of the Crane sons went to Idaho. Rev. Glenn Griffith, District Superintendent of the Church of the Nazarene, invited the Cranes to come there, also, promising to keep them busy in evangelistic work. The Crane's accepted the invitation and on the 1st of November, 1939, they moved to The Great Northwest. Albert thought the country was certainly, "Like the Land of Goshen wonderful fruit. So plentiful. A far cry from the dust-bowl days in Kansas."

The Crane's settled easily into their new surroundings. There were many old friends from Kansas living there. In fact, someone had remarked that Nebraska and Kansas had taken over Idaho in those days.

The same year the Cranes moved west, a new song was copyrighted by the Stamps-Baxter Music Company. This new song by E. M. Bartlet would capture the imagination and hearts of Christians and become one of Albert Luther Crane's favorite congregational songs. It was titled, "Victory in Jesus".

The Cranes were kept busy in The Northwest, singing all over that part of the country. A shadow, however, fell across their pathway during those days. Three of their sons had to go to World War II and that was very hard for both parents, especially for Sister Crane.

The saddest event in Albert Crane's life occurred during these years. There was nothing he loved more than being in the thick of the Lord's battle, singing, praying, praising but something happened which caused him to have to leave the evangelistic field for over a year. In the dead of the winter, during a revival meeting at Nyssa, Oregon, Sister Crane suffered a break in health. Brother Crane took her home, returning immediately to conclude the revival. Sister Crane was home for a while, but later had to be hospitalized until the last of August. The meetings they had slated had to be canceled. This was a very hard time especially in the face of the doctors gloomy prognosis that Sister Crane could never again be active in the meetings. "But," recalls Sister Crane, "in a little over a year, we were going as hard as ever. Albert was so happy to be back in the work again. He was happiest in a revival meeting." In 1945, the Cranes began working in the McCall, Idaho, Victory Cove Camp Meeting. This was the Nazarene Youth Camp and also their camp for boys and girls. The Cranes were workers and caretakers here until 1955. The young people loved them. Rev. Larry Roberts, now principal of the Boise Christian Day School, recalling those good times at Victory Camp said of Brother Crane, not long ago, "He was the best horseshoe player I ever saw."

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Chapter 6 ON THE PLATFORM

Fragments of description have come from various people who worked with Brother Crane in revival meetings. The key word in describing his activities on the platform was "spirit" -- not primarily in the sense of liveliness, though that quality was definitely characteristic of Brother Crane; but rather, in that quality of soul and mind that is directed by the Holy Ghost.

He had a clear concept of the part a song evangelist was to play in a service. First of all, he knew that polished performance and excellence of entertainment were not the paramount objectives of a good song evangelist. Instead, getting the minds, hearts and emotions of the people integrated and focused onto the one central object of worshipping the Lord and becoming totally involved in the service before the preaching was utmost in his concept. Along the way, he had learned and developed principles and techniques which distinguished him as unique and individual in his style and method of accomplishing this purpose. He had the Spirit's seal and approval of the way he operated. First of all, he made his song selections a matter of prayer. This was completely a spiritual matter with him. Next, he knew music and had perfect pitch, therefore, he could move easily from song to song. This he frequently did. For instance, if he was singing in the key of E Flat, he would move immediately into another song and then another of that key and on and on as long as the Spirit led and directed and the congregation responded in heart and spirit. He had been known to sing fifteen or twenty minutes without a break to call a new page number. The people responded to the spirit and direction of his leadership.

Esther Crowe Gray describes a rather difficult transition of songs which Brother Crane often achieved. She tells how he would start a song written in one flat and if the Lord didn't bless he would immediately move into another song in two flats, then he might go on to a song written in three flats such as, "I Know Whom I Have Believed". Esther says God usually broke in when they were singing this particular song. Then, it was characteristic of Brother Crane to move on into still another song of four flats such as "Victory in Jesus". Esther recalls, "I guess that's where I learned to keep my eyes off the piano and my hands. I had to watch him - keeping an eye right on him. It was a real privilege to be able to play for him."

Naomi Knapp Kennedy says, "He was the easiest director to play for. He was a real leader - completely the leader. He knew what he was doing and the response in spirit that he was striving for. He knew how to get the audience into the spirit and then he knew what to do after they had reached that peak. Some directors can bring a congregation to a climactic moment and then lose control of the situation. He never did."

Brother Crane had a perfect sense of rhythm. No dragging the song service was permitted when he was in charge. Naomi remembers that his foot was constantly tapping, especially when he was playing his guitar. That does not mean that he always chose faster moving songs. On the contrary, Sunday mornings were almost exclusively dedicated to devotional type songs. "Majestic Sweetness" and "I Will Praise Him" were among his favorites for this service or perhaps he

would choose "Glory to His Name". He never seemed to miss it in his selection of songs. His sensitivity was in perfect tune with the Holy Ghost.

His keen musical ear caught any mistake or discord. Esther remembers, "I could never hit the wrong note or make a mistake without his noticing it and looking over with a little mischievous smile and pointing his finger at me. All the time he never missed a beat with his song leading."

Sister Crane says, "He has had some evangelists tell him that they seldom worked with anyone whose specials fitted right in with their messages like his. He never wanted a preacher to tell him what they were going to preach on, for he prayed over his songs and felt he had the mind of the Lord and they most always were right along with the message. He would start praying about the invitation songs as the evangelist started his message. He loved the work and the Lord used him."

Sister Crane usually sang the special with her husband. Her rich alto blended well with his second tenor. Their only accompaniment was the guitar which Brother Crane played so skillfully. Listening to recordings of their singing, one is reminded of the gentle harmonies heard on older phonograph records of the early, innocent era in American music. Their day definitely influenced their singing style. There was absolutely no country or western influence in their singing as one might suppose at hearing they used the guitar, nor was there any folk strain. There was no dramatic holds - nor pauses. It was simply good, unpretentious, sweet singing that spoke directly to the heart of the hearer. Their music had a gentle sweeping movement, perhaps influenced by Brother Crane's years with the violin. Moreover, the anointing of the Lord made their music timeless in its appeal. They sang songs which so expressed the Christian experience that people never tired of hearing them, often requesting the same ones over and over again.

Esther remembers Sister Crane saying to her, "You know, Esther, Father and I have learned several new songs. We try to learn new songs right along and sing the new ones -- but invariably people come along and say, 'Oh, when are you going to sing our songs?' By that, they meant songs such as "Sweeping Through The Air", "My Heavenly Father Is Looking Out For Me", "I Expect To Be There When He Is Crowned", "Grazing", or "My Friend". They sang these songs over and over again, but they never grew old to the people who heard them - service after service.

Esther Gray tells of traveling with Brother and Sister Crane to a revival meeting as their accompanist somewhere during the year, 1957. After school was out, Brother Crane invited Esther to travel with them to the state of Kansas for a revival meeting.

Sister Crowe, Esther's mother said, "Yes, Esther. As far as I'm concerned, you can go. I have full confidence in Brother and Sister Crane that they will keep a close watch on you and will protect you - not only physically, but spiritually."

Esther remembers that her mother's trust was certainly verified. There was company in the house where they were staying during that revival and people started to talk about church troubles. Brother Crane looked over at her and said, "Esther, I don't believe you need to hear this. You can go to your bedroom."

At the motel he always called her in for devotions. "It's time for worship!"

Esther says, "I looked up to Brother and Sister Crane as spiritual, spiritual leaders. Their lives had such an impact on my life. Throughout the days, as we traveled, they would sing, or talk about the scriptures, or just praise the Lord together. Many times over Brother Crane would say, "Mother, lead us in prayer'."

Esther continues her story. "While we had spiritual times together, we had some wonderful times of laughter. Even though they were much older than I, they made the trip interesting for me. Many times when Sister Crane would lean her head back and try to sleep awhile, Brother Crane would lean over and gently push her nose up - just enough to awaken her. He thought that was really fun play. Or he would lay on the horn just to awaken her. They kept life interesting."

My Friend

Verse 1

They tell me the path to heaven,
Is filled with many a thorn;
That the feet that will follow Jesus,
Will be weary oft and torn;
But they do not hear the whisper
Of His voice, so sweet and calm,
And they do not feel the rapture,
As I press His wounded palm.

Chorus 3

O let me walk with Jesus,
He has been a friend to me;
For He fills my heart with gladness,
And He saves and keeps me free.

Chorus 4

O come and walk with Jesus,
He will be a friend to thee;
He will fill thy heart with gladness.
He will save and keep thee free.

Verse 2

They say there are heavy crosses,
And burdens many to bear;
That the way is too straight and narrow,
And the sun shines seldom there;
But around the cross there's glory,
And His strong arm bears my load,
And his loving smile is sunshine,

And He gives me naught but good.

Verse 3

They tell me the way is threatened
With clouds and many a storm;
But I hide in the "Rock of Ages,"
Until all without is calm.
If my cup is sometimes bitter,
'Tis because He knows it's best;
He but lets my feet grow weary,
That I may have sweeter rest.

Verse 4

O, hearts that are crushed with sorrow,
Whose eyes with weeping are dim;
Weep not, for the Master calleth;
Bring your load of grief to Him;
For He soothes the brow of sorrow,
And He calms the heaving breast,
And He heals the broken hearted,
And He gives the weary rest.

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Chapter 7

THE BIBLE MISSIONARY CHURCH

The decade of the '50s marked a time of serious decision making among the radical holiness people all over America. The label "radical" was brought into use in reference to those who had refused to accept changes in the church in those areas pertaining to separation from the world. Violations of the standard of modesty, and the acceptance of certain fashions which would contribute to a confusion of the sexes were among the changes deplored by this group. It has previously been noted, that at the very inception of motion pictures into American life, holiness churches had drawn a clearly defined and uncrossable line against them. In 1952, when it became evident that the same churches would fail to take a hard line against television, which devout people discerned to be equally as dangerous to spirituality as the movie, many began taking a prayerful re-examination of priorities. Being true to God-given convictions and endeavoring to save ones children from an "untoward generation" immediately outranked denominational loyalties. The issue was not in stated doctrines but rather a vital concern that these worldly innovations would lead the church constituency into a state of compromise or capitulation where genuine holy living would be impossible to realize or else would be totally nonexistent.

Church leaders who still held to the "old-fashioned way" met together in groups discussing alternatives: either to retain their church affiliations and risk becoming sour or bitter in the fight for

the old-fashioned way, or to sever former church ties and continue on under a new name and charter.

By September, 1955, a group from Idaho had pitched a camp about five miles west of Nampa and four miles east of Caldwell. On the evening of September 8, a crowd gathered for worship about 7:45 in the evening. Rev. Glenn Griffith was the evangelist. The day before, Rev. Griffith had mailed his Elder's Orders to the proper authority. Some of the others who were attending the camp meeting, including Brother Albert Crane the song evangelist, had also asked for their church letters.

The meeting continued under the tent for four weeks until weather and the large crowds contributed to a decision to re-locate in an abandoned box factory not far from the tent.

On November 9, 1955, the Bible Missionary Union, Incorporated, was organized with 126 charter members. The following General Officers were chosen: Rev. Glenn Griffith, Moderator; Rev. Alva Turner, Treasurer; Gordon Crane, Secretary; A. L. Crane, Business Manager.

News of the birth of a new Protestant denomination spread quickly. Within ten months of its existence the movement had rapidly spread to include churches in twenty states with 100 ordained Elders and a great host of lay people.

June, 1956, the first copy of the official organ of the Bible Missionary Union was printed under the banner of, "The Missionary Revivalist". Rev. Spencer Johnson was editor. The first editorial was entitled, "It is time for revival!" Business manager for the new holiness periodical was, A. L. Crane.

The following notice appeared in that first issue:

"We are getting more calls to come and organize than we can get to. Be patient, our friends, we will get to your town just as soon as possible. You can organize prayer bands and pray. Pray that God will help us who are trying to get to you. We are coming, so hold on."

The first General Conference of the Bible Missionary Union was held September 2-9 at 26th and North Federal Boulevard, Denver, Colorado. Rev. L. P. Roberts was the host pastor. At this Conference, the name of the organization was changed to, The Bible Missionary Church. Two General Moderators were elected: Rev. Glenn Griffith and Rev. Elbert Dodd.

Brother Dodd, a strong and influential church leader from the state of Louisiana, joined the group at this Conference, lending tremendous weight and support to the organization. In the October, 1956, issue of "The Missionary Revivalist", he gave a statement entitled, "Why I Joined the Bible Missionary Church". This article expressed the feeling and spirit of many others who had joined this new church.

"I did not join the Bible Missionary Church because I did not have a place to preach. I had a wonderful people to work with in Louisiana and I did not have to leave. Neither did I join because the church leaders were unkind to me. All the church leaders were wonderful to me.

I joined the Bible Missionary Church because I had spent nights and days in prayer and felt led of the Lord. I also felt that I would miss the will of God if I failed to join the Bible Missionary Church. I went out to Denver to observe. I said if God is there, and I feel God has called this movement to spread the gospel and hold high the standards of God's church and if I feel led, I will join. God was upon it and I felt his clear leading so I joined."

In addition to the election of two General Moderators, Rev. L. P. Roberts was elected to the office of General Treasurer; Rev. A. L. Crane was elected to be General Secretary; Mrs. Alma Kinzler became secretary of orphanage box work.

Brother Crane worked faithfully as General Secretary of the Church and Business Manager of "The Missionary Revivalist" until his home-going February 9,1961.

The April, 1961, issue of "The Missionary Revivalist" carries a banner headline on the front page: "Know Ye Not That There Is a Prince and a Great Man Fallen This Day in Israel?" II Samuel 3:38. Beneath this headline is a picture of Albert Luther Crane and beside his name, the date 1887-1961. Flanking the picture are words of a song which the Cranes had used, "Thru The Gates".

On February 8, 1961, Brother Crane worked on "The Revivalist" and visited with Brother and Sister George Roberts and Brother Frank Baldwin.

He hadn't been feeling well and very quietly slipped away to be with Jesus, Thursday, February 9,1961.

His dear friend, Rev. A. L. Turner, conducted the funeral service, assisted by Rev. Elbert Dodd and Rev. Spencer Johnson. Brother Turner's sermon text was taken from Joshua 24:30. "And they buried him in the border of his inheritance..."

Onas, the only member of the large Crane family who was still living, came from Illinois to attend his brother, Albert's, funeral. Being very impressed by the large crowd and many flowers he said, "He surely had a lot of friends."

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Chapter 8 PEN PICTURES FROM HIS FRIENDS

Some of the men who were closely associated with Brother Crane in those early days of the Bible Missionary Church have written tributes which reveal his talent, his character, his devotion and the affection which others felt for him.

ALBERT LUTHER CRANE
By Alva L. Turner

The life of influence, the ministry and the benediction of many will live on forever to bless the generations who follow them. Among the number is that of Albert Luther Crane.

To have been associated with Brother Crane, and to fight shoulder to shoulder with him in the beginning days of the Bible Missionary Church, is an experience never to be forgotten. We had watched this good man, who, with his wife, at considerable cost, had stepped out to be among the number who originated the old-time Holiness crowd which would become the world-wide Bible Missionary Church, with preachers and missionaries in many states and countries.

Brother Crane was wonderful to work with! It was our happy privilege to become his pastor, at the Midway Church. March 18, 1956. This relationship continued until the time of his home-going five years later. Among the characterizing qualities that stood out in his life were those of spirituality and faithfulness. One never had to wonder where Brother Crane stood. He helped to form the manual of his church. He stood strong for its enforcement at all times. His 'amen' and 'that's right' rang out in the services when truth was declared. The Saturday night men's prayer meetings of the church found Brother Crane present at the altar praying for the services of the following day, and for the advancement of the little, but growing church he loved. When our church was in quest for a song evangelist for an approaching revival, the Board always felt none better could be found than A. L. Crane. But whether it was leading the singing, singing the specials, keeping the church clean and presentable, or locking up for the night, he could be counted on. He was careful, conscientious, and congenial.

I was in revival meeting in Duncan, Oklahoma when the heart-breaking news came that Brother Crane, during the night of February 9, 1961, had slipped away to be with Jesus.

After the last Friday evening service of the revival, Brother Dodd, my wife and I boarded the train to hasten to the side of the family, and to conduct the funeral service of one who had been my counselor, helper and close friend in God's great cause.

The Church is stronger because Albert Crane lived. Heaven's pull is greater because he is there, today.

May God let the mantle of Albert Luther Crane rest upon many as we carry on where he left off to go home.

BROTHER A. L. CRANE AS I KNEW HIM

By J. E. Cook

I first met this unique man in the early days of the Bible Missionary Church. It was at the first General Conference of the Church held in Denver, Colorado in September, 1956, that I learned that he and Sis. Crane were a part of that courageous band of one hundred twenty-six charter members who made up the "Mother Church" of the movement located at Midway, Idaho.

It would be only natural that a layman of such vision and purpose would fill an important place of helpfulness and in the ongoing of this pioneer holiness work. Consequently, he was elected as the Church's first General Secretary and also business manager of "The Missionary

Revivalist", official publication of the denomination. He served both offices faithfully for five years.

I still remember his unique manner and ability as a song leader and guitarist. He inspired his audience to sing, to put some life into it. It was difficult to be present and not take part in the song service. Then, when he and Sis. Crane sang the special song, accompanied only by his guitar, the Glory would fall and the folk would shout and run the aisles. His style of playing the guitar was all his own - not beating or whipping - just strumming or picking it with three or four fingers. Beautiful was the word.

His personality was also very impressive. His sense of humor, the twinkle in his eye, his natural wit, a personal interest in everyone, all combined to make him most enjoyable to be around and make one glad to be numbered among his many friends. His radiant smile, his relaxed manner put you at ease in his presence. I never saw him with a frown.

The most unforgettable impression of Bro. Crane was his genuine sincerity, his love for God and the good old-fashioned way of holiness of heart and life. He and his precious companion made their choice to live and die with the holiness folk whatever the cost. No sacrifice of time, talent, or material-means was too great to see God's cause prosper. They sang in revivals, holiness conventions, and camp meetings across the nation in addition to carrying on his office and paper work. In my opinion, they immortalized the song, "The Coronation Day". I firmly believe A. L. Crane has joined the church triumphant and awaits the coming of loved ones and friends to the City of God to help crown Jesus King of Kings and Lord of Lords in the culmination of all things. May the memory of this great Christian layman inspire us all to fight the good fight of faith and lay hold on Eternal Life.

I KNEW BROTHER CRANE By Elbert Dodd

Bro. A. L. Crane was one of the most spiritual song evangelists I have ever known. Also, he was a wonderful layman and a loyal friend. He loved God, the Bible Missionary Church, his wife, his family and friends.

I had the privilege of working with him in revival meetings, visiting in his home - his faithful companion is a wonderful cook and they both knew how to make one feel welcome in their home. It was a joy and privilege to know dear Brother Crane.

A TRIBUTE TO BROTHER A. L. CRANE By Perry Thomas

As a young preacher doing the work of an evangelist it was one of the great blessings of my life to be privileged to work with Brother and Sister A. L. Crane in a number of revival campaigns. Possibly time softens memory but I cannot remember one time when the service was turned to me after the special singing of the Cranes and the unique song leading of Brother Crane without that peculiar anointing of the Holy Spirit being present. All the evangelist had to do was step into the pulpit and begin preaching; the manifest presence of God was there.

Brother Crane was not only a co-worker in the great vineyard of God, but I counted him as one of my personal friends. He was always ready to boost and encourage this young preacher. A notation he penned in the fly leaf of my Bible will always be cherished:

"The word of God is to the soul what bread is to the body. We are admonished to 'study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed rightly dividing the word of God (truth).'

The Psalmist writes 'Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against Thee.'

To be profitable in the service of God one must be equipped with the knowledge of the word of God. God help each of His children to be so equipped."

A TRUE FRIEND

A L. Crane

Through the medium of memory this great old Song Evangelist and Warrior of the Cross lives on. The words of the scripture writer are true in his case also; "He being dead yet speaketh."

A BROTHER BELOVED

By L. P. Roberts

It was my privilege to know dear Bro. Albert L. Crane, one of the most accomplished guitar players and singers that I have ever heard.

Bro. Crane sang for me as I preached in revivals in my early ministry and he was a brother beloved. He would always stand by and boost the closest preaching, and he was a man of prayer and consistency in his living.

Bro. Crane could get a crowd to sing as few song leaders could. I shall always remember the time when he and wife and I traveled to Wichita, Kansas, to make preparations for the General Conference in the Bible Missionary Church. We stopped over at Stafford, Kansas, for a service and the people were amazed at the way Bro. Crane could play and sing. Bro. Crane will be long remembered in our home for the dear brother that he was. We do miss him from our midst, but Heaven is richer for his passing. His memory lives on. His influence is still living.

THAT MAN A. L. CRANE

By Carl J. Kinzler

It is a privilege to write a word about A. L. Crane. Our memories of him are very pleasant. As our thoughts go back to this good man, we think of a person with a special musical talent. God had planted in him a heart that just would sing and sing. His love for music was strong. He was right at home leading a congregation in song and the people were moved to sing when he led. He prayed and depended on the Holy Spirit for His anointing.

He was a master on the guitar and this gift was ever used to play and sing the Songs of Zion. He was not a preacher but his selection of songs always had the message that brought conviction to the listeners. If a verse of song were needed which would be especially appropriate for the moment, no time was lost in looking for it; he knew it and would start it with or without the words or music. It was always the right song, whether it was for the evangelistic service, or for the altar call or to help someone pray through to victory. The songs he chose were the expressions of his soul.

It is difficult to think of A. L. Crane without his wife. They worked so well together. They could well be called, "The sweet singers of the Holiness movement." It seems we can hear them now as they sang, "My Friend" or "Sweeping Through The Gates" or "I Expect To Be There When He's Crowned".

Our association with him and his wife is memorable and precious. They sang for many of our revivals when we were pastoring. They were always a blessing to us in the services and in our home. We enjoyed their fellowship very much. They were praying people and very cooperative - always giving their best to the Master.

A MAN FULL OF FAITH AND THE HOLY GHOST By Clyde Dilley

It was in the year 1939 that a group of saints were gathered in the parsonage in Caldwell, Idaho.

A man came to the door inquiring for a friend who had moved out from Kansas, recently.

This man proved to be Bro. A. L. Crane.

As he and I became acquainted, we became very close brothers in the Lord.

Bro. Crane was a blessing to everyone he came in contact with. A man of sterling Christian character and integrity. He and Sis. Crane were a great blessing as they sang the glory down time and time again under the anointing of the Spirit.

He was among the first led of the Lord to take his stand for old-fashioned holiness in the beginning of the Bible Missionary Church. I can think of no better way to describe our feelings as a church when we needed our first General Secretary and distribution manager of our church paper than Acts 6:5. Relative to choosing of Stephen, "And we chose Brother A. L. Crane, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost."

Praise God for Brother A. L. Crane.

I EXPECT TO BE THERE WHEN HE'S CROWNED By Clyde Dilley

Oh the saints are gathering homeward

Where there'll be, no sorrow, grief or pain.
And among that happy number is our precious Brother Crane.
Yes, he has entered through the portals of the place to which we're bound
Now he knows he'll get to be there
When our blessed Savior's crowned.

How we loved to hear him sing it, while he dwelt with us down here
Oh the joy that thrilled our spirits and the Lord came very near.
As he sang of coronation day how the echoes did resound
Now we know that we shall see him
When at last our Saviour's crowned.

Oh! The happy glad reunion
Oh! What joy will fill my soul
To shake hands with Brother Crane again
While waves of glory roll.
We will praise the Lord forever as the joyous songs abound
Yes' we'll be there through God's mercy,
To see our Saviour when He's crowned.

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Chapter 9 THE FAMILY REMEMBERS

Albert Crane loved people. In fact, nothing grieved him more than when he sensed someone did not like him. If he thought he had offended anybody, whether he was at fault or not, he always went to that person and apologized.

He enjoyed talking with his friends and having them share a meal at his table. When company came he wanted Sister Crane to prepare a real feast. This usually included ham, roast or Swiss steak. Now, when just family was there, he preferred plain foods like soup beans simmered along with ham hock or sauerkraut and wieners. As always, he delighted in biting into a thickly buttered slice of Sister Crane's home-baked bread. In fact, just before he so unexpectedly passed away, he had bought twenty-five pounds of flour, especially for bread.

The most accurate witness to a man's true character should come from those who have known him best - the members of his own family circle. If the family cannot speak favorably for one, it matters little what anyone else has to say. The following tributes come from children and grandchildren. What better way is there to conclude the story of a man's life?

A TRIBUTE FROM RALPH

To simply state that father was talented musically would probably be considered by those who knew him as an understatement and superficial reference to a man whose native ability was, to say the least, considerable.

Those who knew Father also knew the chosen instrument for his work as a song evangelist was the guitar, yet his ability to play any stringed instrument was well known to his family and his expertise with the violin was well documented in his youth. To me, one of the most commendable facets of his life was the complete dedication of his talents to the Lord's work.

Father was not just a man with musical talent but a man whose prime interest in life was "the Lord's work". He was happiest when participating in a "meeting". I never knew him to refuse a "call" to a church because it was too small, unable to pay what he needed or because it didn't offer proper exposure for his talent.

During Depression days, Father, as did many others, performed many and varied tasks apart from his "chosen" work to provide for his family. One such endeavor was working on a farm for a period of time. Some of my fondest memories are of evenings we spent together during those days when we were all home. We'd engage in various activities after chores while father entertained us by playing one of his instruments. In reflection, I suppose we took such events as matter of fact never realizing that not every home was so privileged.

Time has a way of dimming in our memories the hardships and difficulties of former days and we rather retain vivid memories of those pleasant events that made growing up in our family such a cherished part of our lives.

Time also has eased the tremendous sense of loss we felt with Father's passing. I remember when in my sorrow, there suddenly appeared in my consciousness a thought like a bright light that eased my sense of loss "he was ready to go."

Time doesn't permit nor do I feel it would serve your purpose to dwell further on the events of Father's life. I like to simply state that we loved him, we miss him and I'm thankful for the heritage that's mine through the example of his and Mother's lives and the home they made for us.

GORDON RECALLS

I appreciate my Father and his dedication to the work he felt the Lord had called him to. He would rather be singing for meetings someplace, whether large or small, than anything else. I have seen him travel great distances for just one meeting, even though there wasn't enough pay to cover expenses, because of his love for the service of the Lord.

He had unusual ability in his song leading which few will ever forget. He very seldom missed it in his choice of songs and usually ended up his part of the service with such a spirit that it was easy for the preacher to preach - which he felt was his job to do. In addition to jumping from one song to another, he had the ability to end the song in one key and, without the aid of the piano, start another song in another key-right on tune when the piano caught up with him.

My Father was a strong disciplinarian, what he believed he believed strongly, and we respected him for it. He always stood for the old-fashioned way and always tried to be on the side

of right. I have seen him have to take his stand against those who meant much to him, but he stood. He has set a good example for his children.

He was generous in giving, humble in spirit, consistent in living, and I'm confident he is in Heaven.

MARJORIE JANE REMEMBERS

One of the things which is the most vivid in my mind when thinking of my Father was his love of people. He enjoyed having company more than anyone I know. He always wanted someone to come over for a snack after church and enjoyed conversing with them. I can hardly remember a time when we didn't have someone during the day for a meal. His house was open to everyone.

His love and knowledge of music was something I didn't appreciate fully until I was grown. I received just enough of the music he had to wish I had more. I used to go to concerto and come home and cry because I couldn't play or sing professionally. He had perfect timing and pitch. He could hardly stand to hear someone sing a song and not get the time right. His voice was just as clear at 70 as it was when he was younger. He had a great influence on my life which wasn't fully realized as to the great extent, until after he was gone.

JACKIE CRANE COOK SPEARS (Jack's daughter)

The first thing I remember about my grandfather is hearing him and Grandmother sing - and hearing him play the guitar which no one else could play like he could. My favorite song was, "A Light Guiding Me". I still remember hearing them sing that-and how special it was!

Through the tapes that have been made in recent years of their singing and his playing, my children and husband, who never met him, have been able to hear him, too. I really thank the Lord for the Christian heritage he has given us - especially through my grandparents. It has been my prayer that I can be making memories like that for my children - because I can remember we all would gather round while Grandfather would play. It was such a blessing; such an uplifting time.

They took me to McCall with them a few time when they were up there in the summer. I remember Grandfather was always busy working on the cabins and on the grounds. I never saw him just sitting around very much. He was always a very active person. I remember, especially how hard he worked during those summers trying to get grass to grow about the cabins there and his concern in trying to keep the children, during the camps, off of that grass. They always wanted to cut across it.

I remember, especially at McCall, he would sit down with me every evening and play checkers - and his patience at doing that - because I always lost. I can appreciate that more now that I have children of my own. It takes a lot of patience to sit down with children when it's a game that might be monotonous to you. . . to have the patience to sit there with a child and play game after game - night after night - they were precious memories....

I started to play the violin when I was in the sixth grade and after I had lessons for a year and Grandfather could see that the violin meant something to me, he gave me his violin. Of course, music meant so much to him. He was so particular with his things that it was a great honor to me to have him trust me with his violin. I still have it - it's one thing I valued as we listed our wills, I was sure that that went to whichever one of my boys should really enjoy music and appreciate it....

I remember, of course, so vividly his funeral. . the funeral itself was very uplifting to me. I was just seventeen at the time. . .the Lord gave me a new determination that day-that I wanted to be there -- to meet him in Heaven. It was so special, and as I say, there was some tears of sadness but there was a blessed assurance; there was no doubt where Grandfather was. . His soul was in Heaven. The Lord taught me to re-commit my life even that very day.

Again, I am so thankful, and I don't think I've really expressed this to Grandmother. . .that the Christian heritage we have is so special. I just hope and pray that the Lord will help me to express this to our children and that they will have fond memories to look back upon, too.

MY GRANDFATHER

By Karen Sue Waite

(Marjorie Jane's daughter)

My Grandfather has played an important role in my life for as long as I can remember. Even now, he is in my thoughts often. Every once in a while, I will see someone who reminds me of him or I will see a guitar in a store window that looks like his. As far as I am concerned there is no one who will ever be able to play the guitar quite like Grandfather. I can remember, as a small child, when he would take out his guitar and sit on the edge of the couch and play for me. His fingers would fly over the strings like magic.

My grandparents started taking me to Victory Cove when I was one-year-old and took me every summer until I was eleven. I used to love helping him get the cabins and grounds ready for camp. After camp started, in the evenings, after services, he would get his guitar and we would all gather a round the outdoor fireplace. Grandfather would play and we would all sing. Music was his whole life for as long as I knew him, he was always humming or whistling.

Every time my grandparents sang in a service you could feel the presence of God. He used my grandparents to minister to souls and I know a lot of people were saved through my grandfather's music.

I always felt so proud and happy when I could say, "That's my Grandfather!"

When my grandfather was taken home to be with the Lord, I was at a loss to understand why the Lord had to take him from us. I think He must have needed the best Minister of Song to lead His choir of angels. There is no doubt in my mind that that is exactly what my grandfather is doing right now.

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THE END