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GOD IS NOT DEAD
By Gertrude Behanna

1950

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INTRODUCTION

[The material for this Introduction, slightly re-worded, was taken from the back of an LP Record. No copyright was found on the album cover. The digital text for the main part of the book was transcribed from a tape-recording of the record. -- DVM]

Gertrude Behanna was the only child of a Scotch immigrant who had become very wealthy. She had her choice of all that is worldly from money to entertainment. In an inimitable fashion she tells her highly personal story of alcohol, drug addiction, three broken marriages and attempted suicide. Sunk to depths of moral and physical misery, her body wracked by psychosomatic illnesses, a physician advised psychiatry, but strangely Gertrude turned to Christ, the "Great Physician."

At age 53 she discovered that God was not dead ... that through the miracle of Christ's divine love and power ... drugs, liquor and despair itself could be conquered. Her health regained, she has spent at least 15 years touring the country, telling her story, giving hope and encouragement to thousands in all walks of life.

In quoting from her own book "The Late Liz," Gertrude Behanna says, "In standing aside and looking back at this woman I used to be, it is more and more possible to detach myself, to view her in third person. She was she and I am I; Siamese Twins perhaps, one of whom must die that the other may live."

Many publications have reviewed her best-selling autobiography "The Late Liz," and following are some excerpts from these reviews.

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"This story will reach those who have put themselves beyond reaching, and they will be convinced by the sheer realism, wit, honesty, deadly accuracy and moving drama it contains ... Here's a story everybody -- and I mean everybody -- must read." -- S. M. Shoemaker, Rector of Calvary Episcopal Church, Pittsburgh, Pa.

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"... the autobiography of a very human personality that emerged from a miasma of glamour... liquor, and irresponsibility." -- Chicago Tribune

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"The story of this rich girl in search of God is sincere and unpretentious ... the author is a study in contrasts... intelligent but giddy, artificial yet candid ... This is a record of a personal faith and the two really important figures are completely formed. -- the author and her God." -- Toledo Blade

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"An all-out, pull-no-punches confession, filled with integrity. Engrossing reading." -- Adela Rogers St. Johns, San Francisco Chronicle

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"A small woman with a message great enough to change the world; with LOVE the keyword." -- Columbia, S. C. Record

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The recording from which this digital file was created was from personal appearances of Gertrude Behanna and tells the story she dedicated herself to give throughout the United States.

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GOD IS NOT DEAD

When I tell you what the Lord has done for me I have to tell you what the Lord had to work with, and He didn't have very much. And when I talk about what I used to be like I have to talk about money, because we had so much. And because there is no possible doubt in my mind but what this upholstering kept me many years. Our Father knows what you have need of, not what you want or what you would like or use, but what you have need of. So when we have we have so much more than we have need of there is a great wall, a great satin upholstered wall, that protects us from unhappiness of others and most of all protects us from reality. I never saw anyone who

was poor. I would see pictures of them but pictures aren't people. I would see pictures of tenements and I would say, "My, my, how can people live in such places." They had nothing to do with me. I had been born into a group that took it as their right that they should have permanent and excessive privileges. There is a great deal of talk for many years about the aching back of the poor man but, there is really not enough talk about the aching heart of the rich man. The being separated from people, and because we all are snobs, my behavior which for many many years was totally unacceptable behavior was accepted and so I was never allowed to face the consequences of my own behavior. In other words people played God with me.

I was an only child brought up for the first nine years of my life in New York City, living in the old Waldorf. By the time I was seven or eight years old I realized that my parents' own marriage was on the rocks. My father was a man of great brilliance of mind with a special genius for making money, and my mother was an extraordinarily beautiful woman and I realized quite young that I was caught between them -- I had neither brilliance or beauty. I would go places with my mother and people would do a double take and then say about me, "Well I am sure that she is nice and wholesome anyway."

How much this affected my later delinquency I don't know but that it had something to do with it I am perfectly certain. Since my parents marriage was already rocky, my father decided that his only child was not to marry -- marriage was for fools. She was to have 2 or 3 college degrees in this country then go to the Sorbonne in Paris and perhaps to Heidelberg in Germany. Then perhaps I could be the first woman ambassador to Great Britain. (We still haven't had one.) Then perhaps in my spare time I could find the cure for cancer.

Well, I heard all this. I knew that I would never do it. First, because I couldn't, and second because I didn't want to. Already the soil was being tilled for a sense of inadequacy -- of not measuring up -- I was not of a brilliant mind nor of beautiful face. And these plans of my father, whom I loved and respected inordinately, was making for me -- I would never carry them out.

At the age of nine I was sent to Europe to school. I was there until World War I blasted me back. I think that it has been typical of my life -- it takes a war to get rid of me. Everything has been extra dramatic and extra traumatic.

Since Smith College is not co-educational this was the first place I had ever been that my father could not go with me. This was very heavy business -- he had told me when to breath and how often, what to think and how to express it, whom to know, what to wear, what to study. Also for the first time I saw girls who had beaus. I would watch these girls batting their eyelashes, at the young males and telling them how wonderful they were and the young males would swoon.

Because North Hampton -- where Smith is very strategically located -- is surrounded by men's colleges and you could hardly miss, and I didn't. In my junior year I met a young man who was silly enough to ask me to marry him the first night that we met. And because the room was rather shadowy instead of saying yes I thought I would wait until he gets me out in the light and sees how wholesome [plain-Jane-ish] I am.

I had no idea that marriage was what the Roman Catholic Church and what our own Episcopal Church calls a holy sacrament. That it was a holy state. There wouldn't have been any one who could have told me. My father and mother could not have been more moral, more responsible, more ethical people. But, there was no God whatsoever, so of course there was no prayer and there was not even church membership. I do not need to tell you that knowing and serving God is not necessarily synonymous with church membership. Nor had I ever seen a Bible. I had seen the great Gutenberg Bible under glass in museums in Europe. I had seen the beautiful early illumined manuscripts from ancient monasteries, but I had never seen a Bible and I had never known anyone who had one. So there was no way for me to know that marriage was a holy state.

I married this foolish young man for just two reasons. First, to get away from my father's inordinate demands upon me, and second because I didn't think that anyone else would ever ask me -- really very simple reasons. The marriage should not have succeeded on such reasons and it didn't. It lasted five years. Out of this marriage I had a son -- a son who graduated from the proper prep school, and the proper college, both in the east -- and who a few years back graduated from ten years on skid row. Still sobriety hangs by a thread. He has not found Christ under the A. A. program, or in any church group or minister, or from any lay Christian. I am absolutely positive that it is the power of prayer that has gotten him and is keeping him sober. We do not know what prayer is, we only know that it is. When I pray for individuals I like to locate them in my mind's eye. So Bill is in Southern California. Wing your prayers labeled "Bill" toward Southern California.

This sense of inadequacy that I had had as a child, after the failure of my first marriage, of course, grew into a real and active guilt. I left Smith at the end of my junior year because a husband at that moment seemed more important than a diploma. I had not even gotten one diploma, I had gone off and married which was the one thing my father had not wanted me to do, however right or wrong he was, and that marriage had failed. A hard, still, small lump of guilt began to form inside of me.

At the failure of my first marriage with all this money it was absurd to think of getting a job, and anyway I didn't know how to do anything. So I looked around for husband number two. The only prerequisite for husband number two was that he be as unlike husband number one as possible.

Husband number one had been very dashing, therefore husband number two must be a nice quiet harbor. Well, I got one, I didn't know how quiet a harbor could be. When I came to write the book "The Late Liz" even though husband number two and I had been married for fourteen years, I could not think of anything he had ever said. Well, you have to say something in fourteen years, so what ever husband number two says in "The Late Liz" is what I think he might have said. This was a very good man. Again we have one of these moral, ethical men and very rich you all know his name and the biggest bore you can possibly imagine! It was in this second marriage that I became an alcoholic -- crossed this invisible line -- no one knows what it is or where it is, and it makes no difference. I had wine with my meals as a child in Europe -- no problem whatsoever. I had been a social drinker prior to this -- no problem whatsoever. Suddenly I became an obsessive drinker.

Alcoholism in my case specifically, surely was the result of mounting shame. Escapism due to knowing nowhere to turn -- knowing no God ("God" was a swear-word) -- knowing no one, my father long since dead and anyway long since disgusted with me. The first marriage had failed, the second marriage was failing. I was the only constant factor in all these situations. I was my parents' only child. Here were two men, and one woman named Gert. It had to be me. Along with Alcoholism, within a year or so I began to take drugs. With all the servants in the house, all I had to do for breakfast about 11 in the morning was to push a button and it would come up. I would spend a few minutes doddling with that. Then I would take Benzedrine to get me up. Somewhat later, not much later, I would take liquor to keep me up. And then a sleeping pill to knock me out. Well, this makes a very short day. There were only about two hours that I was "compus mentis".

When I look back on that woman, I know completely, utterly, basically, what it means to be born again. Because I am not that woman. There she goes. I look at her with compassion, overwhelming disdain, and with some amusement. There is a line in my book that I like very much and since no one ever quotes it to me I have to quote it to them. That line is: "It was as if we were Siamese twins -- one of whom must die that the other might live." Of course self pity set in -- one of the most dreadful diseases. If you don't blame yourself you must conjure-up someone to blame -- my parents, my first husband, my then husband. I could not blame myself because. I was not ready to do anything about this state, and anyway I did not know what to do.

There was no such thing as Alcoholics Anonymous. I knew of no one who knew God. And as I looked around I could find no one whose life seemed to be much more wise than mine. They were not drunks and I was. But nevertheless there was a lack of stability in all of their relationships and, above all, a lack of purpose and goals.

Out of this marriage I too had a son. A son who is now an Episcopal rector. Again I can understand personally and completely the words of our Lord, "Blessed are the pure in heart." Bard has always been good, not goody-good, but good. His brother and I have always seemed to have to learn everything the very hardest way. Bard has always been loving, always been strong and always been honest. And when through me, God was presented to him, he crossed at the narrowest part, and went on up the other side and spiritually. I have hardly seen him since, he is so far ahead of me. Bill and I have always seemed to have to wallow against the tide -- against the great breakers, banged back and forth, sucked down by great sea pusses wallowing in the sand Bard has been the pure in heart, and oh, so blessed.

I left this good, and rich, though boring, man at the end of 14 years. And married another man four months later for the pure and simple reason somebody told me I couldn't get him. Well, you see now what is happened to this woman -- she is using human souls for her own ego aggrandizement. However, you will all be glad to know that husband number three and I deserved each other.

This lasted twelve years and it was real mayhem. My first two husbands had been from the right side of the tracks. When I yelled divorce, which of course I increasingly did, they would say "Oh what would we do without you?" Number three was from the wrong side, and he did not know the rules of the very rich. And I yelled divorce just once too often and he said "Get going." Of

course I couldn't take it. I had never taken anything else, and I could not take this. So I tried to take my life. I took forty-five grains of Seconal cold sober on an empty stomach.

When I came to write my book. I had a doctor friend of mine check the book for possible medical inaccuracies. He said "Gert, if you took forty-five grains then that is what you took, but don't put it in your book. Because anywhere from ten to twenty is a lethal dose. Now I didn't throw up, they didn't get to me in time to use the stomach pump. I am not suggesting for a moment that God stopped the cosmic machinery so that one Gert Behanna could stand here and speak. But I do know that I should have died, and although yesterday was my sixty-eighth birthday, if you think I am dead, your crazy.

Because my younger son had been over seas in World War II in the second Marine division, he had had great experience with death and near death, and this was practically his mother's homecoming present to him -- that he should find her body. Knowing what to do he, let me lie there and called the doctor, the ambulance, the hospital, and I woke up 36 hours later in the hospital room with a great many tubes in it, and all of them ending in me.

Now right here, I want to say that all writers, all speakers -- (as you see I am not a speaker or a lecturer, I'm a talker. I just get up and talk. It's what A. A. calls a pitch) -- get misquoted, there's a fantastic headlines that come after I have spoken -- just fantastic. Things are all switched around so I want to tell you right here I am against suicide. Years ago Cal Coolidge went to church one Sunday without Mrs. Coolidge. When he returned Mrs. Coolidge said, "Calvin what was the sermon about?" He answered, "Adultery" -- and she said, "What did the minister have to say about it?" And Cal said, "He's against it."

So, I am against suicide. But if you really want to make it, I kinda hope you do, because there is nothing more embarrassing than when you come to and find out that you can't even die. I had failed my parents, I had now failed three husbands, I had failed two sons. I had put a blight on every life that was even remotely connected with mine. I wanted to leave life because life was intolerable. The thought that there was another world, a place which might follow this, -- and that this is the testing time of such a place that you might enter the grade for which you had prepared yourself -- had never entered my mind. I wanted extinction because I was without hope.

I was in the hospital for four days and in this incredibly palpable misery that surrounded me, I returned to my house which was not a home. And at midnight the first night the phone rang saying that my mother had died in California. With the very rich there is the biggest nonsense called sportsmanship. So with great sportsmanship I arose from my self-inflicted bed of pain to go out to California to inherit more money.

Can you imagine anything more absurd than the bravery which I wrapped around myself. I was out in California until the late spring of 1947 while the estate was settled. Then I returned to the Chicago area where I was then living -- a very sick woman. My crippled mind and heart had now crippled my body. I was walking with a cane crippled with psychosomatic arthritis dragging my right leg. My spine was so packed with calcium that the doctors all told me that within five years I would not be able to move my head. And I had a blood count of thirty-eight, which of course is pernicious anemia.

A totally sick woman, I went to the small sanitarium which you may be sure was a very expensive one. There they took pictures of things going down and pictures of things coming up. At the end of that time the doctor in charge of all the reports on me from the staff said to me, "Mrs. Behanna you are a very sick woman and there is nothing the matter with you." Well the word psychosomatic had come into more or less common usage and being a smarty I was very glad to use it, so I said, "You mean it is all psychosomatically induced? And he said yes. He then, however, did something that even I could not try to be amusing about -- He tapped his forehead and said, "But make no mistake, you are a borderline case." He then pushed a piece of paper across the desk to me. On it were written two names of two of Chicago psychiatrists -- "and we advise that you see one of them at once."

I then did a very strange thing. I pushed my chair back and I stood up and said, "I don't need a psychiatrist, what I need is God." I've no idea where this came from. I do know but that it was the first time in my life that I had ever used the word "God" seriously. What niche in my subconscious this was dragged up from I cannot imagine.

Somebody had sowed a seed -- this proves to me that it is only the seed sowing we Christians need to do. We do not need not worry about the soil or even consider it. The sower went forth to sow. Someone had given me a sense of something called "God". The doctor looked at me in perfect astonishment -- he had watched my spoiled behavior. This woman bringing her own linen sheets, her own pillow and pillowcases, and special cashmere blankets, my liquor bottles so discreetly put into silver decanters -- He looked at me and shook his head and said, "Well God wouldn't hurt a bit."

I didn't do anything about it then but I did say it. The doctor then suggested that I go away for a while, that I not return to my home which was being held together with merely monetary details, economic last procedures. Of course I had spent my life going away, so I got into my Lincoln Continental convertible and went to New York, my former home, and I was drunk for six weeks.

I wept on everybody's shoulders and told them what heels my husbands were and how much better world would be if they would just let me run it. At the end of this time, I went to New Canaan Connecticut to visit a friend. And she said, "Gert, before you return to the midwest there is a couple I would like to have you meet. Well, in this small world I already knew too many people, and I said, "Why do you want me to meet them?" She said, "Because their lives used to be rather like yours, and a few years ago something happened to change their lives."

I said, "What happened?"

She was a little embarrassed, she said, "They were converted."

I said, "Converted to what?"

She said, "To God." And then I was embarrassed. This was not socially OK. I had never known anyone who called herself, himself, a Christian, who had stood up the way I do now, and

said, "I'm a Christian!" Wow! No, I'd never known anybody like that. If I had known a Christian, they never mentioned it.

Of course, my first two Christians arrived. They were charming, and I was drunk. They ate their dinner, and I drank mine. And all evening long I bombarded them with questions about God -- (with sarcasm in her voice) Oh, so they knew God, did they? Well, well. And did God speak to them, and if He did, What did he say?

So they stood all this nonsense, ad nauseum, and finally the man said to me, "Gert, you do have a lot of troubles, why don't you turn them over to God?"

It stopped me! and the only reason I could imagine that it stopped me was because he meant it. Things that are meant -- are believed. There sat this sophisticated, New York business man, actually believing, that there was Someone to Whom I could turn over my problems.

I looked at him, and I said, "You make it sound as though I had suitcases too heavy to carry, and I needed a porter." He said, "That's about it."

Well, you see how blessed I was. If this man had reared back, and said, "Well! Now, we hardly want to confuse our Lord Jesus Christ with a Red Cap!" he's have lost me, right like that. Or, if he'd quoted Scriptures! Now you people want to watch it! When you're dealing with one another, it may be all right to say, "Leviticus 7:1 through 9." When you're dealing with bums, it won't do at all! and whom are you out to save? that little old black sheep? or the ninety and nine? "Fishers of men"? Whose pool?

(Tongue-in-cheek) I've been at this for fourteen and one-half years now, and nothing else, nothing else, -- and I still don't know who Leviticus is! (loud laughter)

But I got this so late! that I try to spend all my time with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, trying to find out what Love is -- how to live it, and how to give it away! This, is a full-time job for this one old woman.

This man let me have Jesus Christ on my only level of being able to understand help coming. He let me have Him a porter, because the removal of physical burdens was all I could conceive of.

Two days later I returned to the Middle-West. In my house was six weeks' accumulation of mail. I went through the First Class Mail, and I found a short note from the couple in New Canaan, welcoming me home. This AMAZED ME! WHY DID THEY CARE? They had only seen me one evening, and I had been a total mess! Why did they care? This was my initial introduction to the Courtesy of Christ.

They went on to say that every morning at nine o'clock Eastern Daylight time, they were sitting down to pray for me. THIS ROCKED ME! PRAY FOR ME! So far as I know, no one in my whole life had ever prayed for me, and God knows I'd never prayed for anyone! And I also remembered these people were not fools -- they were not sitting down praying to nobody.

They closed by saying that under separate cover they were sending me a little magazine then called "The Evangel," now called "Faith At Work". If I had time, they wished that I would look at it. I had time. I went through the Second Class Mail, found it, opened it up, and on the first was a one-page article entitled, "It Is Never Too Late To Start Over," by one Samuel M. Shumaker.

I'd never heard of Sam Shumaker, but then I'd never heard of any other ministers either. I read the article, I stood up and dropped the book, -- it's something I had never done in my life before -- I went over to my bed and got down on my knees -- and I said, "If You're anywhere around, I wish You'd please help me, because I sure need it." -- And in about twenty minutes, it was all over.

Of course there are no words -- all I know is that it was more like a spiritual shower-bath than anything -- I felt CLEANSED. I also felt WELCOME. I'd never had a home, and I'd never made one -- and I felt welcomed; I also felt FORGIVEN. And I knew exactly Who this was. I, who had never known anything about God in my whole life, knew exactly Who this was! And after a while I stood up, and I said, "Thank You, very much, Sir! I don't know anything about this, and I'm going to have to start from scratch, but I'll tell you one thing: I'll never take another drop of as long as I live." -- and I never have. And people are always saying to me, "I wish I had your character." Well, I don't have any character.

It doesn't make sense, that a woman of fifty-three would get down on her knees and twenty minutes later get up with character. Something had been added all right -- a Plus, and a Plus is in the shape of a Cross -- and you and I call Him, Jesus Christ. And I started from scratch, you better believe.

In a few minutes, I thought there was a prayer I had to learn once, "What was it?" And I got as far as "Our Father who art..." and then I thought, "OUR Father, not THEIRS, not just MINE... OURS..." and I thought of all the people in the world that never had a brother or sister. Suddenly I was sister to everybody -- every human being -- and for one split second I thought about my own sex, women, and the things they had taken for granted that they should do that I had never once thought of doing. I'd never seen a kitchen till I was twenty-one, and that was in a store window. And so I thought about cooking, and I went to the phone and I called my book man in Chicago, and I said, "Mr. Chandler, I want two books: the Bible, and The Joy of Cooking." And he said, "What's happened to you!?" and I said, "My God has happened to me," and He had.

First Prayers, the Bible, then the third thing I wanted was a minister. I couldn't have cared less what denomination... I wanted a minister, and I called a friend of mine who was a renegade Roman Catholic, I thought she might have bumped into one. Bless her, she didn't say, "What do you want with a MINISTER?" But she did shock me by saying, "Do you want a go-getter, or a man of God?"

I said, "I WANT A MAN OF GOD." Well, I got one! No great shakes at homiletics. When he stands up and preaches, he gets off the subject, and begins smiling at the Holy Spirit, and is just

dumbfounded when he turns back to find us still sitting here. But what LOVE! This man is shiny with love. You can warm your hands at it!

When I told him what had happened to me, he smiled, and he said, "Oh Yes! When you get your Bible, you'll find Paul -- same thing happened to Paul on the road to Damascus" -- just as though it was the next whistle-stop -- made it so real, so NOW. And I said to him, "Can I go to your church?" and he said, "Yes -- it isn't much of a church and their aren't many people in it."

I said, "God will be there, won't he?" and he said, "Yes, He'll be there."

So I went at 8:00 o'clock in the morning, thirty-six hours later -- I, at 8:00 o'clock in the morning! and I was the only person in the church except the minister. And it was the first time I ever heard the words, "We have erred and strayed from THY ways, like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against Thy Holy Laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done, and their is no health in us. But THOU, O Lord..." I thought they were written for me, and I still think so.

Behind the altar in this shabby, grimy, little church, was strangely, a magnificent, stained-glass window. There was a stained-glass man, kneeling in a stained-glass garden -- and by now I had read Matthew, and I found myself on every page but the "begats"! And so, I knew who this Man was, He was a Jew named Jesus, Who had died for a woman named Gert Behanna. And I still think so.

I would like to say that now I began to know a tiny bit about Who it was in front of Whom I had said, "Till death do us part," -- that I was allowed to make something at least decent and friendly out of one marriage. Prayers are answered, and I prayed my knees off, but very often the answer to prayer is "No". This thing had happened to me -- it hadn't happened to Bill Behanna. He thought I was nuts, and so I got kicked right out, and I landed on the Mojave Desert in Southern California... and I found that money belonged to God.

One must be careful about money. Great stewardship is necessary. Money is a mere commodity, like bricks: you can make a shrine with it, or you can slug people to death with it. But the more I said, "Our Father -- OUR Father" the more I thought about my black brothers and sisters on the packed, black continent of Africa -- about my yellow brothers and sisters on the packed, yellow continent of Asia, India, Egypt, our own land -- and thought about everything they had never heard of that I had always taken for granted.

I finally decided that if everybody in the world -- EVERYBODY -- had a house and a car that was free and clear, and \$200 a month, everybody would have enough, and above all, nobody would have too much. This was for me, not for you, not for anyone else -- just for me -- but if I believed this, I had to act on it -- and so I did. And then a bought a four-room house with one bath, rather like the Gate-Cottages I had had before -- and I sat back, waiting to be made "Saint Gertrude".

I thought, "How can you miss, gal? You know Who the Boss is -- you know Christ's Laws are the road rules -- you not only bought this little house, you don't have any money, but your happy in this little house -- and then a man came in my house, and he looked at the living-room, and he said, "This is beautiful. What are the proportions?" and I told him, and he said, "Oh, 800 square feet."

Well, I'd never thought in terms of square-footage, and then I did. I realized that if this one room was in a city slum, it would have partitions down it -- it would be four rooms, and four people at least would be living in each room -- and there was no danger of my being Saint Gertrude. I said to my Father, "Look, unless this house is completely used for You, one old woman can no longer indulge herself."

Well, when you pray prayers like that, YOU BETTER DUCK! There are some times that the five beds in my house are all occupied, and we stand in line for the bath. Because I'd always loved men and I never liked women much, I said Father, send me all the old bum men, all the old broken-down men." Know what happened? I'm up to here in women!

Didn't need to learn to love men, I was born loving men -- never knew any women -- scarcely knew my mother -- never had a sister. What with ten years of Latin and Greek, and all the other business, I didn't have time to have any close women friends. You can't love what you can't understand, or don't know. So now I've learned to love women -- and miracle of MIRACLES, some of them have learned to love me.

One came for 15 minutes, and stayed for 39 months! That's love. She was the town's bad girl when she came -- an alcoholic and a thief at 14. You ought to see her now! She's got a light around her. She's a trained Nurse in San Francisco, and blessed other people whom she nurses.

This had nothing to do with me. I am nothing in the world but a cracked, chipped, rusty old pipeline! It just shows what "odds and ends" Christ can use. If any of you come up and tell me that I'm wonderful, you better take the consequences! People are always telling me, "Oh, you're so wonderful." And I used to say, "Look! I'm not wonderful -- its God Who's wonderful," but then they just leaned back and said, "Well that just shows how wonderful you are." (Laughter)

I would not have it otherwise, of course, just more so. My talk is always the same -- but then remember, so are Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John! (Laughter and applause)

My life really boils down to two questions that I ask myself at least, every hour on the hour. The first one is: "Gert, How ya doin with Jesus Christ? How ya doin with Him? What's the score?" and the other one is: "Is this for God? or is this for Gert?" If its for God, we try to do it; if its for Gert, we try not to do it. If we don't know, we wait.

I want to close now with a prayer I always close with -- This is the prayer of a long-dead slave: "Oh Lord, I ain't what I wanta be. Oh Lord, I ain't what I oughta be -- and Oh Lord, I ain't what I'm gonna be. But Thanks Lord, I ain't what I USED TO BE! -- Amen."

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THE END