

All Rights Reserved By HDM For This Digital Publication
Copyright 1999 Holiness Data Ministry

Duplication of this CD by any means is forbidden, and
copies of individual files must be made in accordance with
the restrictions stated in the B4Ucopy.txt file on this CD.

* * * * *

THE PRICE OF A COCONUT

By Oscar Logan King
Missionary Evangelist

Printed by
Old Paths Tract Society
Shoals, Indiana

* * * * *

Digital Edition 08/30/99
By Holiness Data Ministry

* * * * *

FOREWORD

The life of Oscar Logan King is a romance of mission adventure. The events which led him eventually to his courageous and sacrificial labors in the West Indies did not all seem important at the time, as the title of this book indicates. But life's greatest decisions are often the sum total of small choices, and as the delicate needle of the compass points the way for the giant ocean liner, so the price of a coconut pointed the direction for one of God's most fruitful servants.

This simple, but engaging story will be a challenge to any who is interested in finding God's will for his life. It has a special message for young people facing life's choices in a world geared to satisfying desires rather than seeking the Father's will.

O. L. King was born in Crawford County, Indiana, May 3, 1887. He was the oldest son of a family of ten boys and five girls. At the age of fourteen he was saved and two months later was sanctified. Soon he found himself holding cottage prayer meetings and preaching wherever opportunity afforded. In 1908, he enrolled in Ruskin Cave College, Ruskin Cave, Tennessee.

In 1910, at the Indiana Assembly of the Pilgrim Holiness Church, he was licensed to preach and was called to pastor the church of that denomination at West Terre Haute. It was here that he met Elizabeth DeCamp, the daughter of the town doctor. This friendship grew and on July 2, 1912, they were married.

Early in 1918, the Kings set sail for the West Indies. After about three months of labor on the island of Nevis, they moved to Antiqua where Mr. King superintended the work, did extensive evangelism, and was responsible for the organization of a number of churches on the island.

In 1923, he was appointed superintendent of what was then known as the Northern Islands District of the Pilgrim Holiness Church. The Kings spent a total of thirty-four years as missionaries.

As a missionary pioneer, evangelist, administrator, and statesman, O. L. King became known as a fearless and effective advocate of the unevangelized. He loved the people of the islands dotting the blue seas of the Caribbean. Prior to his homegoing in 1964, he told a fellow minister that he felt the Lord would allow him to spend the millennium in the West Indies with his people.

-- Connie King Palm

* * * * *

PREFACE

This story was first given as an illustration in a missionary lecture at a missionary convention in Michigan in 1925, when home on our first furlough from the West Indies.

From that time until now the people wherever I have traveled have called for the "coconut story." Many requests have been made for it in print, but not until this summer (1936) did I promise to publish it.

It goes forth because those who have heard it seem to have enjoyed it and been blessed by it, and have expressed a desire to have it in print.

May the principles set forth in it bless all who read.

This volume is lovingly dedicated to my wife.

The Author

* * * * *

CONTENTS

1
Early Days

2
The Christmas Box

3

I See A Black Man

4

Christmas at Grandfather's

5

The Coconut I Did Not Buy

6

I Choose My Life Work

7

I Leave Home

8

Ruskin Cave College

9

Called to the West Indies

* * * * *

Chapter 1

EARLY DAYS

On the old hillside farm where the author of this story was born and raised, money and luxuries were not so much in abundance as they seem to be with the younger generation of these days.

We had to produce most of our living and were kept very busy at it. Our bread was obtained by raising our own corn and wheat; taking it to the mills and having it ground into meal and flour. Then we chopped the wood for fuel and Mother baked our bread in the old wood stove. This was real bread and we knew how we got it. It was cheap. The only middle man to get anything out of it was the miller, who took one gallon out of a bushel, toll, for grinding it.

If we wanted candy, we made it out of sorghum molasses which we manufactured ourselves from cane we had grown and ground in the old cane mill with the old gray mare as the motive power. If we wanted our candy flavored, we had peppermint growing by the old spring branch, horehound in the garden, shelibark hickory in the woods, sassafras in the fence corners, and wintergreen on the hillsides. We made our own extracts and flavoring cost us nothing. We produced our own candies without even buying sugar to make them. Why? Money was hard to get and there were precious few ways of getting it. We could get only fifty cents a day for work, and a day's work was from sunrise to sunset. The days were long in summer and this was about the only time we could get an opportunity to work for money.

We boys never had money for ice cream, in fact, we had never seen such a thing. Tropical fruits such as oranges and bananas were unknown to us. Some times, for Christmas, we might get a pound or two of old-fashioned stick candy, lemon or peppermint. We took our eggs and butter to the old country store and traded for such things as we needed. The storekeeper would not give us money for our farm products. We had to trade it out. In this way we bought our clothes and coffee and once in a while a pound of sugar, but most of the time our fruits, grown on our own farm, and our coffee, were sweetened with molasses made in our own factory.

Growing up in the midst of what the world would now call hardships, we were made out of something besides luxuries and something more real than paint and powder and more enduring. Through our veins rushed the heroism of producing something and beating back the wilds of the forests.

Christmas was a great time with us. Many times it was celebrated with a turkey raised especially for the occasion. Sometimes a fox would get the turkey before Christmas came, and then we might substitute wild rabbits or a big, fat, greasy opossum. Sometimes butchering could be arranged for a few days before the holidays. Then spareribs, backbones, sausage (the real thing) would be the order of the day. These were great days and in the midst of them our story begins.

* * * * *

Chapter 2 THE CHRISTMAS BOX

Grandmother came to spend Christmas with us. She had relatives in the city who were counted wealthy. They sent Grandmother a Christmas box containing many good things. Three things I remember -- candy, oranges, and a large coconut.

The box was opened on Christmas morning disclosing the first chocolate candy, the first oranges, the first coconut we had ever seen. This was a great Christmas! We found chocolate candy a stranger to our palate and it was not so much appreciated. The oranges would do, but we would just as soon have a good Roman Beauty apple out of the old apple bin in the garden.

The excitement began when that old monkey-faced coconut was brought out for inspection. Just before dinner Father, taking orders from Grandmother, the disposer of the Christmas box, sawed the nose and eyes off old monkey-face and Grandmother divided it among the children of our family and several cousins who had come to take Christmas dinner with us. My share was a piece about as large as my thumb. I tasted it cautiously, wondering if I would like it, but that first timid nibble caused me to smack my lips and say, "Yum, yum, that is the best thing I ever tasted." I put it in my pocket, then went through the house trying to trade chocolates and various kinds of candies for the pieces of coconut that my brothers, sisters and cousins had received, but there was not a one who would trade with me. I nibbled on my piece all day declaring it was the best thing I had ever tasted in my life. I was about eight years of age at that time and this piece of coconut made it the best Christmas I had ever enjoyed.

Coconut or Black Man

I wondered where such nuts grew and if I would ever see another one. The following spring at school, I was turning through a geography owned by one of the older scholars and came across some tropical pictures showing coconut groves and the coconuts being packed for shipment by a black man. Not being able to read, I took the book to the owner, showed her the picture, and asked where those things grew. Then she read a paragraph out of the book and told me they were a product of the tropics. But where was that? This question my timidity would not permit me to ask, though I wanted to know so very much. I turned to the girl and, with my index finger on the picture of the coconut, as I thought, I said, "That is the best eating thing you ever tasted." The group of children who had gathered around burst into laughter as the older girl said to me, "When did you ever eat one?" When I looked at the picture, I found I had my finger on the picture of the big black man who was supposed to be packing the coconuts for shipment.

All that day the scholars introduced me to each other as the fellow who "eats black men." This got pretty close to my timid disposition, but I told them I meant the coconuts were the best tasting things in the world and tried to convince them that I had tasted them. Because I could not describe the taste of them, but declared that there wasn't anything in the world that tasted like them, nor half as good, they said I had never tasted any. When I would come up with a bad lesson in school, they would say, "Well, he does fair you know. He has coconut on the brain and his head is going to turn to a coconut one of these days." They said this because I was always getting the book that had the pictures of the coconuts in it and looking at the picture and wondering if I would ever see another one. They grew in the tropics! But where was that? I often dreamed of the tropics and of coconuts, and thought of the great privileges of the black folk who lived in the tropics where the coconuts grew. Up to this time I had never seen a black man and I thought of them only in connection with tropics and coconuts on account of the picture I had found in the geography.

* * * * *

Chapter 3 I SEE A BLACK MAN

There wasn't a black man in the country where I was raised, and in those days people did not travel as they do in these days; so it was not so strange that I had not seen a black man. About the time school started in the fall, nuts would begin to ripen -- hickory nuts, chestnuts, butternuts, walnuts, hazelnuts -- and my brother and I would gather nuts on the way to school through the woods, and we would hurry home from school in the evening to gather nuts. Mother would tell us that if we did not stop staying out so late a black man would come along some evening and carry us off. We would tell her what we would do with the black man if he ever troubled us. That was all very well when we had never seen one.

One Saturday morning we went down to the public road about a quarter of a mile from our home to a place where a large walnut tree stood in the forks of the road. This road was not traveled much. My brother and I had gathered a nice pile of walnuts and sat down in the middle of the road to hull them. We were facing each other. I was facing down the road and he up the road. I remember correctly it was about 11:00 o'clock when I looked up from the walnuts we were hulling, and there in about ten steps of us was a big black man in the middle of the road, coming

right toward us! My brother looked up and saw my eyes and the fear in my face, and turned to look behind him to see what I was staring at. When he saw the black man he got up and moved around behind me, for I was the older. The black man saw we were afraid of him, so he came no closer to us but walked around against the fence. He spoke very kindly to us and asked where Mr. Rhodes lived. I finally got my speech back and told him the first house up the road and he passed on. We had vowed and declared what we would do for the black man if he ever troubled us, but this is what we did. As soon as he was around the turn of the road only a few paces away, I jumped to my feet with my hat in my hand and ran for home as fast as my bare feet could carry me. My brother ran after me, screaming at the top of his voice; and when I had outrun him and was leaving him behind, he became so frightened that he fell in the road, screaming at the top of his voice and crying, "Black man!"

Mother was standing on the front porch and saw me coming up the road, hat in hand, and running like a race horse. Hearing the screams of my brother, she came down the lane to meet us to find out the trouble, but it was ever so long before I could speak. Finally I said, "Mom, big black man down the road and maybe he has brother!" When Mother reached my brother he was as pale as death and so frightened he could scarcely stand upon his feet. My first introduction to a black man was quite exciting. Upon inquiry we found the black man had been sent from an adjoining county by the man he worked for, to get a team of horses that had been purchased through Mr. Rhodes.

Our simple manner of living and rough life, which develops brawny men acquainted with nature, continued; but the memory of the coconut never left me. I learned to work hard as a mere child.

* * * * *

Chapter 4 CHRISTMAS AT GRANDFATHER'S

When I was about twelve years of age, after finishing a hard summer's and fall's work, Father promised me, shortly after Thanksgiving, that I could spend Christmas with my grandfather; and I looked forward to this visit with great anticipation. I always enjoyed going to Grandfather's. He had been in the Civil War and drew a pension and always had some money; and he never failed to divide with me, for I was his eldest and favorite grandson. The morning before Christmas came at last and I was up early in anticipation of the trip to Grandfather's. Only one thing could have surpassed it, and that would have been to have received a big coconut. The Christmas that I had the first taste of the coconut was really the best Christmas I had ever known. After dinner Father went out and saddled the old gray mare. I jumped into the saddle and galloped off to Grandfather's. Along in the middle of the afternoon I rode up in front of Grandfather's old country homestead and shouted, "Hello!" Grandfather, in his soldier's uniform and brass buttons shining, came to the door. He gave a grand salute and called out in greeting, "Hello, General, where are you going?" I replied, "I thought I would come down and spend Christmas with you." With a smile of welcome Grandfather said, "Light and look at your saddle and hitch to the rack, and we will put the horse up after you have warmed awhile."

While supper was being prepared we sat before the old wood fireplace eating shiny red winesap apples I told Grandfather the apples were very fine flavored and very juicy and he said, "They can't be beat in the country." I agreed with him that I had never tasted anything better, but once, and Grandfather asked, "What was that?" I replied, "That was a piece of coconut Grandmother gave me for Christmas four years ago." Grandfather said he had seen a few in town several years ago but he had never tasted one.

My First Dime

While we were chatting, Grandfather rose up, threw his shoulders back and said, "We had planned to go to town tonight to see the Christmas sights and get some things. Would you like to go along?" Of course I was only too glad to go, as all boys would have been. Before he sat down, he took out his pocketbook, took out a dime, handed it to me and said, "You can have that to buy something for yourself." Boys in these days would not think that much to spend for Christmas, but in those days it was a lot of money for a boy. The thought of a trip to town with Grandfather to see the Christmas sights was so overwhelming I almost lost my appetite for supper. Soon we were off -- Grandfather, myself and a couple of uncles only a few years older than myself.

Christmas Eve in Town

After a two-mile tramp we came to the little country town, which boasted three or four fair sized general stores, a post office, drug store, and railroad station. They were all lighted up and decorated for Christmas. Santa Claus was in the window; and to me, who had never been in town at night and had never seen a light more powerful than a No. 2 burner kerosene light, this was a sight. There were so many things to buy and I had a whole dime to spend -- the first dime I had ever had to spend on myself. The puzzle was, what of the many things should I buy -- a present for Mother, or something for Father and Mother both? Thus pondering I went from store to store, and seeing so many nice things my mind was in a whirl. What should I buy with my dime?

* * * * *

Chapter 5

THE COCONUT I DID NOT BUY

I stopped in front of a grocery store and, looking in the window, I saw confronting me a large coconut lying on the floor -- just one -- and it was marked ten cents and I had the money! Here was my chance to have all the coconut I could eat for once. The store was full of people. I was so afraid someone would buy that coconut before I could get in and get it. I took hold of the door knob, but it was hard to turn and as I was trying to open the door, a Voice spoke to my conscience and said, "Leave the coconut alone. Do not buy it now." I had been taught to obey the voice of conscience. I stood gazing with longing eyes at the coconut; the memory of that first taste of coconut still lingered; the pictures in the old geography of the black man packing coconuts passed through my mind, and I wondered what black man had packed that one and how he ever came to send it here. As I stood hesitating the Voice said very distinctly and positively to leave the coconut alone, and I was afraid to disobey. I released the door knob and took another longing glance at the coconut, turned and walked back across the street and began looking at the things in

the drug store window. In that window was a small, red-backed Testament. The Voice said, "Go in and buy the Testament." That was also marked ten cents.

This was contrary to all human reasoning and I could not reason it out, for I had just received a nice Bible as a birthday present, and what did I need of that little cheap Testament? But the Voice had said to buy it, and I had found that it pays to obey the voice of conscience more than to obey the fleshly appetites. Here I consider I fought one of the biggest and most important battles of my life. Finally I stepped into the drug store. After waiting on the crowd in the store, the clerk said to me, "What can I get for you, sonny?" I replied, "I guess I want one of those little Testaments." He reached one over the counter and I turned the pages tasting coconut all the while. At last I dropped the dime into the hand, of the clerk and he wrapped the Testament and gave it to me, saying, "I think you have bought the most profitable Christmas present in my store for a young man." I said, "I hope so," and walked out into the street, planning to go back now and take a final look at the coconut, for the dime was gone and I was not afraid of disobeying the voice of conscience on that score.

I Meet a Strange Boy

As I walked across the street, my attention was arrested by a poorly clad lad of about eight years of age standing in the middle of the street. His hands were full of snow with which he was pelting the passers-by. I observed the crown was about out of his hat and his white locks were sticking out. The knees were about out of his faded overalls; the elbows out of his overall blouse. He gave me a whack on the shoulder with his soft snowball. I spoke kindly and gently to him. He said, "You are from the country, too." I replied, "Yes." Then he told me that he came to town to see the Christmas things, and that I should not leave too early for they would have fireworks after awhile and that would be fun. He said, "We have a time on Christmas."

Telling the Christmas Story

I talked to the boy about Christmas and the Christ of Christmas. I asked him if he knew whose birthday it was, and he said he did not know that it was anybody's birthday. I told him the story of the shepherds and the wise men and stirred his curiosity as deeply as I could. The Voice that speaks through conscience said, "Give the Testament to the boy." I then asked the boy if he could read and he said he could not. I asked him if his father could read and he said, "No, but Mother is a good reader." I told him I had a Book that would tell him all about the shepherds and the wise men and the Baby in the manger and how the Baby grew and became a great Man with power to open the eyes of the blind, raise the dead to life, make the sick well, and how he could make good boys out of bad boys. I handed him the little Book and it was received with eager hands, and I could see that it was prized very highly by the lad. He put it into a pocket that had no bottom in it and it fell into the snow. He picked it up, brushed the snow off and said, "I have a good pocket on the inside of my coat and I will put it in there." Searching his clothes he brought out a safety pin and pinned his pocket together, and as he did so, said, "The boys will likely rough me up before I leave town and I might lose it, so I will make it safe." I told him to be a good boy and wished him, his father and mother a happy Christmas and turned to leave him. He followed a few steps and said with a trembling voice, "Say, I am sorry I smudged you up with snow. I gist thought

you was some rough, stuck-up fellow from south of town." I told him it was all in Christmas fun and passed on.

By this time I had such a victory over my appetite for coconut that I scarcely wanted it at all. I met Grandfather and we hunted up the other boys and started for home.

On the way home the boys asked me, "What did you buy with your dime?" but I would not tell them. They offered me candy, peanuts, firecrackers, and many things if I would show them what I got with my dime. Then they accused me of losing it. All day Christmas they tried to get out of me what I did with my dime, but they never found out and will never know unless perchance they should read this story. All they could get out of me was, "That is all right what I did with my dime."

Christmas passed off with a good turkey dinner. Grandfather had laid in a good supply of candy and other things, and the next morning (Christmas) I found candy and firecrackers in my boots and some nice presents, but the mystery that no one ever could fathom was what I bought with the dime. The day after Christmas we went rabbit hunting in the morning and in the afternoon I got on the old gray mare and went home.

* * * * *

Chapter 6 I CHOOSE MY LIFE WORK

I spent much of my boyhood working on the farm, clearing ground and working in the timber, hauling logs to the sawmill and working around the sawmill. But with it all I ever tried to obey the voice of conscience. Only a few times did self and appetites ever get the best of me. That Voice that speaks to conscience kept directing me, and when I was nearing fifteen years of age I was led to repentance and through that to accept Christ as my Saviour. After I was converted and sanctified this world seemed so empty to me and everything in it seemed of such little worth. I began to look for something to live for. It was revealed unto me that the souls of men were all that would inhabit eternity, so I began to tarry much in prayer. This impression deepened on my heart and the Voice that speaks to conscience began to impress my heart and conscience that I was to give my life to the saving of men from sin and hell to heaven and immortal glory.

I Begin To Preach the Gospel

At about seventeen or eighteen I began to preach as a kind of exhorter in old schoolhouses and wherever people would assemble, and soon revivals began to break out and souls were being saved. One weekend I was asked to go some eighteen miles northwest and fill an appointment for an old circuit rider. The people there looked rough and hard. I tried to preach or exhort or whatever it was I did in those days, but the crowd seemed so hard. The floor of the house was smeared with tobacco juice and there were about as many bullet holes as nails in the ceiling. As I tried to preach I am sure there were more revolvers in the crowd than there were Bibles.

The Testament Appears

When I was feeling that I was a complete failure, the Voice that speaks to conscience impressed me to ask the people to hold up their Bibles so I could see how many there were in the house. There were a few around in the "Amen corner," but back in the middle of the house was a clean-faced young man who seemed to be intensely interested in what I was preaching. I noticed he held up a small Testament and immediately the Voice of conscience said, "There is the price of your coconut." Seeing no signs of conviction on the crowd, I dismissed them and made my way

lanterns for the homeward journey. Finally I came to the young man who had held up the Testament and I said to him, "Pardon a personal question, young man, but where did you get that little book you held up tonight?"

He replied, "That book has a story to it. I would not trade that book for any farm in this country." I insisted that he tell me where he got it. He said, "Some seven years ago I was in town one Christmas Eve and a boy came out of the drug store and gave me this Book and told me the story of Christmas, which I had never heard before." He said, "We reached home that night about midnight and Mother read the Book until almost daylight. We spent most of Christmas Day reading it, and we spent the long winter evenings reading that Book. The neighbors came in to hear it read and Mother read it over and over. One night we were reading it alone. Mother was reading the little Testament and Father began to cry and got on his knees by his chair and began to talk to Someone. I could not understand it and I tried to see whom he was talking to. He was looking up to the ceiling but I could see no one. Soon he jumped to his feet and began to clap his hands and jump around the room, and there was a light on his face that I had never seen before. He grabbed Mother in his arms and kissed her and kissed me, and took the Book out of Mother's hand and kissed it, and he was the happiest man you ever saw.

"A few days after, Mother was reading and her eyes filled with tears and she knelt down and began to talk to Someone she had read about in the Book, and after awhile her face lighted up and she began to say, 'Blessed Jesus! Blessed Jesus!' She kissed the Book and said, 'Blessed Book that told me of him. Now he is mine and I know the blessed Book is His.' That happiness continued in our home until the day Father went to heaven shouting, 'Glory.' Because the people came into our log cabin to read this Book and to hear it read, and to hear Father and Mother pray, this old schoolhouse has been converted into a church."

It was an old schoolhouse which had been abandoned, and after it was abandoned it became a gambling den. "See the bullet bores in the ceiling," he said, "Many of them have been plugged up to keep the wind out. It all happened because of this blessed little Book. Now there are a dozen more in the community and you will see in Sunday school in the morning that we use them."

I said to him, "Young man, would you know the boy who gave you that Book if you were to see him?" He said, "No, I was only eight or nine years of age, and I don't think he was over fourteen. Now I am grown and so is he, I don't think I would know him."

I said, "Take a good look at him and see if you can recognize him." He said, "Are you the fellow?" I said, "See if I am," and he turned a searching eye on my face. He said, "Yes, you are the man, for there is the scar on your face." Then things began to happen.

He grabbed me up, threw me across his shoulders and carried me up front and laid me on the altar and kissed me many times. Then he faced the crowd, which by this time had become not a little curious at such conduct in the church. The young man turned to them and said, "This is the man that sent this little Book to this community. You are all acquainted with the Book, now meet the man who gave it to me."

That night I was almost shaken to pieces and squeezed blue, and the altar was lined and meeting never broke up until long after midnight.

That was THE PRICE OF A COCONUT when the lad had obeyed his conscience, slain the Goliath of appetite and set the price of a coconut to gathering interest in the kingdom of God -- one saved in heaven, shouting the victory; one home saved and made happy; a gambling den turned into a church and a Sunday school where people met to read their Bibles together instead of meeting to gamble, play cards and fight and shoot the ceiling full of bullet holes. All this cost the author the self-denial of just one ten-cent coconut that he wanted so very much but hasn't wanted since.

That was a glorious weekend. I spent the night in the log cabin home of the young man. I don't say I slept, for that dear old mother in Israel blessed me all night and shouted because her eyes were privileged to see the one who had sent the blessed Book to them.

Sunday was a blessed day and great crowds came to see the one who sent the first Testament into their neighborhood, and the "God bless you's" are running through my poor unworthy soul yet; and nobody knows when heavenly beings will stop shouting, for "joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth."

I left that solitary neighborhood on Monday morning, perhaps to see it no more forever; but "the price of the coconut" does not end there.

* * * * *

Chapter 7 I LEAVE HOME

Some three or four years later I decided I should go to school to study the Bible. After two years of honest work and close living and much saving I had enough money to partly pay my way through school. Some Christian friends had advised me to go to Ruskin Cave College in Tennessee, some few hundred miles from home.

Born in a humble log house on the farm, growing up and living where I saw very few strangers, and being of a timid, backward disposition, it was quite an undertaking to leave home and go among complete strangers.

I was busy up to the time of leaving. I had preached a funeral on Saturday, preached twice on Sunday and came home late Sunday night. Monday morning I started on my first long journey from home. Father took me and my baggage to the station. Standing on the station platform, while waiting for the train, I said to Father, "I am going on a long journey this morning." Father almost in tears, said, "You can do as you please." There was no question in my mind about what I should do.

At last the train pulled in and the conductor called, "All aboard." I waved Father "good-bye" from the steps of the train as it moved eastward. In a few hours we had reached Louisville, Kentucky, where I was to change trains. I had never been in a large city before. The ticket agent told me I would have to go across town to the other station. The station was crowded with people and I did not know a soul; neither did I have the least idea how to get to the other station. A cab driver saw my perplexity and told me he would be going over with the mails in a few minutes, and he would take me and my baggage over. He was very nice to me. I told him I was on my way to school, and he made no charge for the transfer and pointed out some of the show places of the city as we crossed the town.

The ticket agent had some trouble locating Ruskin Cave, but at last told me that I would have to go to Tennessee City, forty-five miles out of Nashville. When he told me the amount of the fare I began to realize I was going somewhere. My ticket to Louisville was only one dollar, and I thought I had gone a long distance to reach that point; and now my ticket was \$9.25, and I figured that I was going just nine times as far as I had already gone. At last I was on a fast train for the South.

I Meet a Moonshiner

We had passed a few stations when a rough-looking man got on the train and took a seat just in front of me. He turned around and began a conversation and I thought he acted very strange. Up to this time I had never seen a drunken man, and I wondered what was the matter with this stranger. He seemed to know the country through which we were passing and pointed out the battlefields, Mammoth Cave, and many other places of interest, as the train sped down the line. After a while this man wanted me to go back to the men's washroom with him. I asked him what he wanted back there. He said, "I have a grip full of good old-fashioned Kentucky moonshine -- the best ever made." I informed him I had no use for moonshine, nor the moonshiner, and that if I could find a policeman when the train stopped I surely would have him arrested for moonshining whiskey. I told him I could not stand for that business. Then he tried to be more friendly to me and told me I would have to spend the night in Nashville and that the place I should go to was the Salvation Army. Before this he had been telling me what a time we could have when we reached Nashville, but I had made up my mind to have him arrested and searched for illicit liquor. When the train pulled into the next station, a policeman got on, having in charge an insane person; and when I went to the front of the coach to speak to the officer, my moonshiner hurried to the other end of the car, got off the train and was gone with his moonshine.

I found even in my early experiences that, if you take your stand for right against wrong, it keeps you out of bad company.

"Doing My Bit" in Nashville

The train pulled into Nashville just as it was beginning to get dark. Following the directions my moonshiner friend had given me, I took the street car and reached the Salvation Army just as they were getting ready for their evening campaign on the streets. They asked me if I was a preacher. I told them I was a sort of a preacher and was on my way to school, where I hoped I would receive some help in the making of a preacher. I spoke on four different street corners that night and afterward preached in the hall, and seven precious souls bowed at the altar seeking to be saved, and prayed through.

After the service was over the Captain came around and hugged me and said, "Young man, you are a real preacher. You were a hero in the altar service. If you go on, I prophesy you will make it hard on the devil. You are deserving of the best supper that our lassies are able to produce." This all sounded so strange to me. Nobody had ever given me such words of encouragement and appreciation before. My home people had never thought of me except as a farm boy. That was surely a grand supper! After a chat with the officers, and a "God bless you" from half a dozen fine-looking young women who had helped to pray things through, I was shown to a good room and a good bed. My train was due to leave at 7:30 in the morning and the Captain ordered my breakfast and his for 6:00 o'clock, and the young ladies assured it would be ready on time.

In my room at last and resting, I reviewed the strange events of the day in a world I never realized was so large, nor had so many evils and perplexing problems.

[To help eliminate any possible confusion in the reader's mind about the chain of events in the story, I here note that the next paragraph is a "flash-back," -- an hiatus in the chronological chain of events in his story -- consisting of O. L. King's recollection of events that transpired during his train trip before he had arrived at the Salvation Army quarters. -- DVM]

For the first time I had come in touch with the color prejudice of the South, and I turned this problem over in my mind as I lay resting. Shortly after my moonshiner friend left the train so hurriedly I came face to face with this color situation. Our train had pulled into the station and, seeing a man across the aisle eating his lunch, I was reminded that Mother had packed a lunch for

Everybody in the coach began to leave except the man eating his lunch across the aisle from where I was sitting. He said to me, "Young man, you sit still. I'll show them niggers where to go"; and at this he pulled out a gun and laid it on the seat and said "Don't you move until you are through your lunch." Some colored folk put their heads in the coach door and he grabbed his gun and said, "Not a kinky head in that door until we are through our lunch and out of here." I stayed in my seat because I thought I was being ordered to do so at the point of a gun, but I saw the gun was for the black folk with which they were going to fill the car. Evidently here were some people who had not learned that: "God that made the world . . . giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth." Finishing our lunch, we left the coach for one in the rear.

[Beginning below, the chronological thread of the story prior to the "flash-back" is picked up and continued.]

As I lay upon my bed pondering the events of the day and the way the Lord had led me, and this strange attitude toward the black people, I thought this was a strange world, and I went to sleep still wondering.

By the time the Captain and I were through breakfast and prayers, the horse and buggy was at the front gate and the Captain took me to the station. As I thanked him for his kindness and bade him good-bye he assured me that I should not be forgotten.

* * * * *

Chapter 8 RUSKIN CAVE COLLEGE

At the station I observed a crowd of young men and women who seemed to know one another. Each wore a white ribbon on which was printed "Ruskin Cave College." As that was the place I was bound for I made an effort to get acquainted, and we had a good time together on the train. Two old-fashioned hacks drawn by four mules each were waiting at the station for the students, and after a ride of about two hours we reached the beautiful college campus.

We were summoned to the dining room by the bugle, where a splendid dinner awaited us. There were welcome speeches and I began to feel a little at home.

Our Baggage Is Searched

Shortly after dinner, three young men and myself were standing on the campus when one of the professors stepped up and introduced himself. He was tall and stately looking. After a few minutes conversation, he said, "Gentlemen, I would like to have your trunk keys and baggage keys." At this request, I handed over my keys, showing the professor which one unlocked each piece of baggage. The other young men turned red in the face and were not inclined to give up their keys. One of them told the professor he could send their baggage to their rooms and they would take care of it, but the professor said, "Your baggage is in the Inspection Room and will not come out until it is inspected. It will either be inspected or sent back to the station and its owner with it." One young man said, "Take mine back to the station," and he turned back from his career. The other two reluctantly handed up their keys. I said, "Professor, if you find anything in my trunk that the Institution does not approve of, you can take it out and do what you wish with it." The reply was, "I think I will find yours all O. K.," and he walked away. The other two boys said, "My! If I had known this was the rule, I would have taken some things out when I was in Nashville last night." The next day I saw a great bonfire in the college yard of half nude pictures, cob pipes, cigarette papers, peek-a-boo blouses and many other things, all going up in smoke.

Reader, did you ever think that day by day we are packing a character trunk that will be inspected by the Judge of the Universe? If you have something to unload, something that will not stand inspection, unload here. This is your Nashville. Don't wait until the keys are demanded.

The Price of a Coconut

[In the following three paragraphs O. L. King "jumps ahead" in his story before again reverting back to a continuance of the main chain of events. -- DVM]

Two or three days after my arrival at the college I was walking on the campus, and feeling very blue and strange among those hundreds of young men and women. I stopped to watch the hack unload some new students and their baggage in front of the college entrance. Among them I saw a light-haired young man and that inner Voice said, "There is the price of your coconut." It was the same young man to whom I had given the Testament several years before. I asked him what he was up to and he said that God called him to preach. His mother had gone to heaven and he had sold the old farm and had come to school. Now I had a companion in the loneliest hours of my life -- the price of my ten-cent coconut. We had a good year together and a profitable one.

The young man proved to be a brilliant student. Circumstances forced me out of school, but he stayed and finished his course. He wrote me, giving me an invitation to his commencement exercises, desiring I should come, but said if I could not come he was making arrangements to sail for China as a missionary and expected to spend his life there. Who can tell what "the price of a coconut" did for souls in China?

Some day we will have to give an account of how we spend our nickels, dimes and dollars for self-gratification while souls are perishing for the Word of Life. I, personally, prefer to have the interest of the coconut piling up in eternity rather than the momentary gratification of my appetite.

[Beginning below, the author again picks of the chronological thread of his story.]

Finding My Place in College Life

I found that adjusting myself to college life was quite different to the old country school at home. After two or three days I began to feel as though I was not quite so much at sea.

On Friday morning the President of the College visited me in my room and informed me I was to be the preacher for the Sunday evening service. This I tried to decline, but was informed that when told to do anything by any member of the faculty it was to be done and that "I can't" was not known around the college. I explained to him that I had never preached to a crowd like that, that I was accustomed to preaching to country people and that I had not come there to preach but to learn how. He replied, "The only way to learn how to preach is to preach." He took me by the hand and said, "God bless you, we will depend on you for Sunday night. I replied, "You will be sorry."

The remainder of Friday and Saturday I spent praying for a message. This student-body was a select crowd from several states, and it was the opening of the school year and many of the parents and friends of the school were present. It was a well-to-do and highly educated crowd. I had to preach to them and there was no way out of it. Saturday night I could scarcely sleep. Early Sunday morning I went out in the woods and prayed and searched my Bible for a text. I told the Lord I was ready to preach anything he wanted preached. Finally I heard from heaven and got my text, Matt. 7:24-27, about laying a good foundation. This was some relief to the strain I had been

under for two days; but as Sunday evening drew near, I was under a heavy burden and had no desire for supper.

The chapel bell began to ring, calling out the crowd I was to preach to. I looked out the window and saw them coming from every direction. Down on my knees I went and told the Lord that when I made my consecration I said I would do what he wanted me to do; that I didn't know I would have to preach to that kind of crowd, but that I was there and it was my appointed task, and he would have to help me.

When I reached the vestibule of the chapel with my Bible under my arm, it was being whispered all through the student body that young King from Indiana was the honored preacher for the evening. It was so considered because it was the first Sunday night of the school year. Fathers, mothers, and friends would be leaving for home the next day. Several of the theological students were saying, "He must be quite a preacher or they would not put him up for such an occasion as this." This all made me wish it were their opportunity instead of my responsibility.

I slipped timidly in and sat down on the front seat in the congregation. The choir was in its place. Many noted personages were on the platform. It was time for the service to begin and the President began looking around and saying, "Where is our Indiana preacher?" He soon spied me on the front seat and came down and apologized for not bringing me to the platform with him. He gave me a seat by his side, introducing me to several on the front row on the platform. The music began. I had never heard a piano before; and as for cornets, trombones, violins, the only use I had ever seen them put to was for the dance, and I was almost sure they belonged to the devil. Such music I had never heard and the singing such as I never dreamed possible. Somebody led in prayer and I was on my face on the floor praying for help. The offering was taken and a beautiful young lady sang a solo, and I haven't heard her equal since. At the close of the first verse she had the crowd out of their seats on their tiptoes. Twice this was repeated during her song. I was feeling smaller all the time. When the song was finished and the shouts died down, the President arose to introduce the young preacher from Indiana; and he did it with the eloquence the occasion demanded.

I opened my Bible to the text the Lord had given me; laid it on the stand and was speechless. Not one word could I think of. I walked across the long platform and back to the stand, ran my hand through my hair, and the President said, "Now you can preach, King. Go at it." I threw my head back, straightened up and went at it. I was clear out of myself. It did not seem to me as though I was on the floor. I felt as though I was standing somewhere in mid-air. I had a select crowd to preach to, who had high ideals; and I showed them that it mattered not how high they soared in lofty ideals or eloquence or what their achievements were in education or wealth; if they failed to dig down to the rock and place the foundation of their character where it would not slip, all their efforts would be a failure and they would come to nothing worthwhile. Nearly everyone in that great crowd was capable of seeing, and they did see after three-quarters of an hour of solid preaching, and the altar was full of seekers.

When I had finished the President said the message was from God, and that it was true that whatever we build on the sand of a corrupt nature and sinful life unrepentant of will not stand and is sure to fall sooner or later. They came to the altar from all parts of the large auditorium, and

over a hundred prayed through that night. A revival started that night and ran for two weeks; every student prayed through and many that came in from the surrounding country.

After this every boy was my big brother and every girl my sister. When the school was finally organized, I was elected presiding elder over the spiritual part of the college. They had prayer meeting bands, and my business was to examine the students as to their spiritual condition and have general oversight of the religious part of the school. This made me a member of the faculty.

I think this was the first and last time I ever had stage fright. When I got to an utter end of myself, Christ came in His power and moved on the whole scene, and souls went to the bottom and built on the rock.

Shortly after Christmas when my funds were running low, I informed the faculty I might have to leave, but they informed me that they needed me and if I left they would feel it most keenly. And thus, by not backing out when the test came, I found my place in the college life.

* * * * *

Chapter 9 CALLED TO THE WEST INDIES

Back to the picture of the black man and the coconut that the school children had so much fun over because they thought I said "he" was the best tasting thing in the world, because I had my finger on the man instead of the coconut. Who knows but through that experience my mind was attracted to the black and brown race and I finally heard that faithful Voice that had guided my steps faithfully so many years speak and call me to the black people in the West Indies, to love them and minister to them the Word of Life down in the tropics?

I Meet a Black Man from the Tropics

I was glad for the opportunity to go to God's Bible School a few years later. There, as a poor boy, I had the opportunity to work my way through school. It was the only way I could go through. One day we were tarring and sanding a roof on a three-story building. I was drawing up the sand and gravel and hot tar. The tar was being melted in a large kettle by a big black man from the tropics, who was a student in the school. At the time I did not know him nor where he was from. I walked to the edge of the roof and called for tar. I looked down and saw the black man coming down the walk from the dormitory in a big hurry, and his eyes resembled two full moons. The kettle of tar he had been tending was on fire and the black smoke was rolling high. I saw him run with a small pail for water. Knowing the result of throwing water on blazing tar, I swung down the rope and arrived just as he dashed about a quart of water into the burning tar, causing it to boil over and continue to burn on the walk. He next tried the experiment of throwing sand on it

Running to a scrap heap I got a piece of galvanized iron, covered the kettle and smothered the fire, and then turned around and formed my first acquaintance with a black man. I found him to be a missionary and the cause of our little excitement was this -- someone had given him a quarter

for his missionary mite box and he had gone to his room to put the money in the box. While he was gone the fire got into the kettle of tar. The last I knew of my black friend, Alfred Taylor, he was still working for his mite box and pressing into service of the same kind as everyone on his field. Some years after, I went as a missionary to his country, and we had blessed fellowship preaching together.

The second black man I became acquainted with was Peter Stoefel from Africa. He also was a student in God's Bible School. He had been saved out of heathenism. I found him a Christian gentleman. He was also from the land of the coconuts, and talked about chasing monkeys up the coconut trees and throwing stones at them. Then the monkeys would cut off a nut from the tall tree and throw it at him. He told me how he would sleep in the trees to keep the lions and tigers from getting him, and how he used to take his bath in the grass while it was wet with dew. One morning, he said, a large lion came down to a small stream only a few yards from where he was. He lay very still until the lion began to lap water; then he shinnied up the tree as fast as he could and got in his blanket that was tied in the limbs of the tree like a hammock, and where he had been sleeping.

One day Peter got so homesick for his own people that he ran away from Bible School and started to walk to New York to get a ship to Africa. After walking long distances, sleeping in barns and haystacks, Peter returned to Bible School to await the proper time for his going. Asking Peter where he slept at night, he told us that one night he borrowed a blanket from a clothesline, tied it in a tree, slept as he did in Africa, and returned it the next morning before the people were up. I remember Peter's farewell message and his text, which he said he couldn't find in the Bible, and he asked me to find it for him. I told him it wasn't in the Bible but in his grammar. He wanted a text to fit his experience in school and this is what he had chosen, "The mills of the gods grind slowly, but exceedingly fine."

The pictures in the old geography of the black man and the coconuts had made vivid impressions on my childish mind, and now my contacts with two Christian black men from the tropics studying for the ministry had made the pictures seem more real, and all the more so as these trophies of grace from the tropics told me stories of their own country. At that time I did not know I was to spend fifteen years in the land of the coconut, seeking ebony jewels for the kingdom of heaven. We found many of them in the West Indies.

When the Lord saw I had mastered my abnormal appetite and desire for coconuts, He took me and set me in the middle of a forty-acre field of waving coconut palms and the black boy climbed the trees and threw them down until we said, "It is enough. This is plenty."

If we delight ourselves in the Lord He will grant us the desires of our hearts. Cast thy bread (or dimes or coconuts) upon the waters and it shall doubtless return to you after many days.

The price of a coconut may seem small, but Henry Ford and John D. Rockefeller could not buy the author's interest in it with all they possess.

Reader, why not invest the price of a box of chocolates or a dish of ice cream, or some other thing your appetite is calling for, in the kingdom of heaven and start it to work drawing

heavenly interest? Do you want to be a hero in heaven's sight? Do you want to master all your appetites and desires for the world and sow to the Spirit, that you may reap eternal life?

The coconut story is ended. May it bless your hearts as you read it, is the prayer of your unworthy servant in the Gospel.

* * * * *

THE END