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FAREWELL
By Mrs. Paul E. King

I feel old. Really old. Very old. Strange, too, since I am not old. Not really. My days have been only three hundred and sixty-five. Old? Not at all. Then why this feeling of age; of being old? Sit down, I will tell you as best I can. I hope you will be able to grasp in a small measure what I am about to say via written words even though they will never be able to let you know fully and completely why this feeling of age when, by all other standards, I am still but an infant--an infant making a final exit. Tonight, at the midnight hour, I will cease to exist.

I never dreamed, when I came in to the ringing of bells, the blaring of horns, the shouting and gaiety and noisy laughter of drunk and half-drunk partygoers, that I would age so rapidly.

It was exciting, that night one year ago, to make my entrance at the midnight hour with the gonging of the village square clock and the joyous pealing of a thousand or more church bells. To some, snuggled deep beneath their quilts of down, I tiptoed in silently on snow-studded feet, feeling young and gay and light. To others who were waiting for me, I came in with a bang, loud noise, dancing feet and revelry; while, to still others who were waiting for my entrance, I came in to the sound of prayers and intercession and waiting upon the Lord for revival and to songs of praise and adoration to the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

What a reception I received! What a motley host greeted me! Quite a heady feeling, I must confess. Such a greeting!

The hands of the village square clock moved slowly past the hour of my gala and grand entrance and the joyous pealing of the thousand or more church bells died softly on the still night air as I, an infant, watched while the revelers and the partygoers, some staggering and swearing and cursing, fumbled in pockets or purse for their car keys and drove, dangerously, away into what remained of the night.

Not all were revelers and drunkards, however, as I stated previously: from the churches came those with tear-stained cheeks and radiantly-bright faces. Hope shone in their eyes and faith was in their hearts as they wished each other a spiritual and Spirit-filled New Year ere departing for their home and their beds.

It was these latter-mentioned ones that inspired me and gave me courage and strength as I embarked upon this venture of all ventures.

I began with a zeal and a zest so attributable to the very young: I could scarcely wait to see what was ahead for me. And what a shock I received! Yes, what a shock!

The very first day .of my new beginning was like a blight on my clean page: I could scarcely believe what was happening! All over the land -- yes, I said everywhere -- the screams and the cries of the unborn being murdered rose and fell from hospital after hospital and clinic after clinic and out-of-the-way places. Added to the cries of the myriad murdered unborn were the screams and the cries of the physically, sexually and emotionally abused children. Did you ever see the face of a child living under and with fear? What about his or her eyes; did you never see them? I saw enough in the very first day of my existence to wish I had not three-hundred and sixty-four more to "journey" through!

Day after day after day my tenure passed; night followed day; day followed night. I felt the mounting hate and unrest in hovel and mansion alike; saw the cheating, the gambling and the practice of deceit and deception until I was sure I could bear no more. There were murders -- many murders -- rapes, burglaries, robberies, thefts -- surely -- surely -- my tenure must hold some good! It must. It must! More than the cursing, swearing, drinking, fighting, doing drugs, murders and immorality.

Ah! A light! The God-fearing! The holy ones. In their homes and in their churches and their Christian schools, on their knees! Praying! Praying! Agonizing. Interceding. Pleading with God for a turnabout for the nation; for the churches; for the schools. For themselves!

I felt an infusion of strength surge through me as I listened to them pray. Hope welled up inside of me as I watched them, joyously and willingly, walk in the light of God's Word and follow its teachings, its principles and precepts. These -- yes these were the "city on a hill . . . the salt of the earth . . . the candle[s]" lighting the world. They were the cohesive force in the world, holding things together and warding off the judgments of the Almighty, All-righteous God, whose pure eyes cannot behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity (Hab. 1:13).

I feel cold; extremely cold. The time of my "exodus" is here. I feel it. Sense it, too. Soon the clock in the village square will gong out the death knell for me. I will pass away forever to never again return. I am so young; so very young: still only an infant -- a one-year-old infant -- but so very tired and old feeling. Farewell. Farewell. My time has come; I must go. But oh, ye Christians, shine for Jesus. Yes, yes, shine. Shine! There is no light but His light. Stand up for the Lord Jesus Christ, and shine! Farewell. . . .