

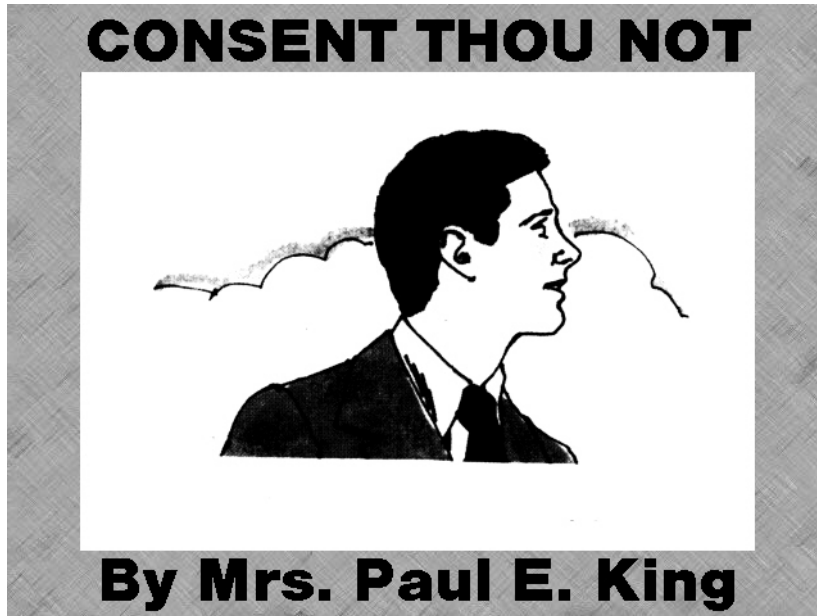
Copyright 2001 By Lucille King
All Rights Reserved and Duplication
Of This Publication Is Forbidden,
Except For Personal Use

* * * * *

Digital Edition 10/22/2001
By Holiness Data Ministry

* * * * *

The Sunday School Beacon
June 7, 1998



CONSENT THOU NOT
By Mrs. Paul E. King

The warm southerly breeze blowing in through the windows of the school drew Dale Eastman's attention to the sun-filled sky and the shaded lawn outside. It was hard to concentrate, he thought, when May, with her robin-egg-blue skies and her sunny charm, tugged at one's heart and beckoned him invitingly outdoors among her greening trees and budding bushes. His mother was working in her garden, he knew; she had told him

last night that the plants he had bought and brought home for her from his after-school job would be planted this very day in the fertile, prepared soil that he had spaded and worked earlier in the week.

But he must concentrate, Dale told himself severely. Life didn't consist of doing only the things one enjoyed doing. Ah no; many chores and duties had to be done for mere duty's sake, he soliloquized thoughtfully. And this was where self-discipline entered the picture -- self-discipline and temperance.

Casting one last, lingering look at the gently swaying trees beyond the windows, he settled down to the work before him. When he had completed this test paper -- the last of his final exams -- it would be finis, so far as his four years of schooling at Meridan High were concerned. They had been good years, he mused in fond retrospect, and he had grown spiritually -- not because of the school and some of its teachings and practices, but in spite of it. The trials he had endured and the triumphs he experienced were the very essence of this spiritual growth, he realized anew.

Dale finished the exam in record time, going over each question carefully a second time before turning it in to his teacher. This was the end, he thought lightly, going back to his desk and sliding into the seat. Or was it the end of learning? he wondered suddenly, realizing that, should the Lord delay His return for His Bride -- the Church -- four years of college awaited him, their open arms beckoning him on to deeper depths of learning, opening bright new vistas for his mind. And even after college, one's learning never ceased, he realized suddenly. No (unless he became a youthful statistic), his learning would go on and on and on -- to his grave. It didn't cease with a high school diploma held in one's hand. Rather, that was the beginning. At least it should be, Dale thought seriously.

Collecting the things from his desk that he would no longer be needing in school, he stacked them on a corner of the desk and stared through the open window, mentally counting the days left till graduation. It was sad, in a way, he mused, but exciting, too, to be graduating -- to know you "made it," as one of his classmates had defined what the word graduation meant to him.

Dale sighed, thankful that his goal had not been merely to "make it" -- a bare passing grade -- but that he had done as his mother and now-deceased

beloved father had told him to do -- his very best. His effort and diligence had paid off, too; even now his farewell oration for the commencement exercise was typed and lying on the desk in his bedroom, ready for delivering when the night arrived.

Education, he realized, was not all of life; nor should it become the all-consuming passion of life, either, he told himself, watching the sun play hide-and-seek with the maple leaves. It was meant to be a means to be harnessed by the Christian for the glory of God. Yes, that's what the Lord wanted him to do: learn all he could then use it for His glory.

"Hey, Daydreamer, wake up!" a voice shouted in Dale's ear. "Didn't you hear the bell? School's out for the day. For the weekend, to be more explicit."

"Uh . . . Oh, I'm sorry, Lewis. I was thinking."

"As though I couldn't see, or tell!" the sandy-haired young man exclaimed jovially, slapping Dale soundly on the shoulder. "How about celebrating tonight? This was our last and final exam, you know."

"Where to?" Dale asked quickly. "The Pizza Palace? Sure, I'll go there. I'll even ask Sherri to go with me. What time?"

"Eight o'clock, sharp! Just think of it, no more homework, no exams, no teachers watching your every move and no more rolling out of bed at six in the morning. Suddenly I feel liberated!" and with another slap on Dale's shoulder Lewis hurried out of the room.

Upon arriving home from work, Dale did his usual daily chores then took a quick shower and changed into clean clothes. "I shouldn't be gone long, Mother," he said. "Lewis wanted to 'celebrate' a bit tonight -- no more exams, you know. I asked Sherri to go along."

"The Pizza Palace?" Mrs. Eastman asked, smiling pleasantly.

"I suppose so. At least I think that's where we're going. We almost always do. Either there or to the MilkyShakey Jug. How about a pizza for you? Just a small one, with sausage and cheese and. . . ."

"Don't try to fatten me, dear," Mrs. Eastman teased. "Your father preferred that I stay more on the slender side. But enough of my chit-chat, there's your ride. I heard the horn blow. Be careful, Dale, and rest assured that I'll be praying for you. And for the others, too. Lewis isn't a Christian. . . .
"Her sentence trailed meaningfully.

"I'll be careful, Mom," Dale said, kissing his mother on the end of her nose and hurrying out to the car. "Eight bells, on the button!" he exclaimed, sliding in the seat beside Lewis. "Sherri said she'd love to go with us; so drop by her house."

From Sherri's house Lewis went to the Randalls', where he picked up four more people before heading north.

"Hey, I thought we'd go to the Pizza Palace, like always, or to the Jug!" Dale exclaimed as the car sped out of town and raced down the highway with incredible speed.

"The Pizza Palace? To celebrate? Man, you're crazy! This is a real celebration; no kid's stuff tonight. OK, Henry, open the bottle," Lewis said to one of their classmates sitting in the back seat of the car. "Open the bottle and pass it around," he said again, his voice silky-soft but sinister sounding.

"You're joking!" Dale said quickly in utter disbelief. "You don't drink; none of you."

"We don't? Who says we don't? Here, I'll show you how skillful I am at 'tipping' and guzzling," Lewis boasted, laughing loudly. "Pass the 'celebration,' fellows," he said again.

Sitting on the edge of the seat and facing Lewis, Dale said quickly, "Let me out, Lew; I'm a teetotaler. I'm not interested in this kind of celebrating."

"You're a sissy, that's what you are, Dale Eastman. A sissy and a square, and tonight we're going to make a man out of you. Here, taste this!"

Shocked beyond words, Dale said sincerely, "And I thought you were a friend."

"I am," Lewis rejoined quickly, "that's why I want you to taste this."

"No way!" Dale said, pushing the disgusting bottle away. "If I had known what you were up to," he added, "I'd never have come along. Let me tell you something."

"No preaching! No preaching!" Lewis shouted, raising a hand in protest. "Tonight we celebrate," he reminded, sounding hateful and smelling strongly of alcohol now.

"You may call me a square, or a sissy, but I want all of you to hear something," Dale said quickly. "I remember when I was just a little boy. My father came home from a church service one night and said, 'From tonight on, we're having a family altar.' He got the family Bible down and read it; then he gathered Mother and me around him and prayed. I'll always remember the sense of awe that came over me that night. Every day after that we had family prayer, and soon I got converted. Just before Dad died, he said, 'Son, come here and sit by my bed. Let's have prayer together.' I sat by his side, reading the Word of God and praying when suddenly his weak hand reached up and was laid in love upon my head. In a firm tone of voice he said, 'My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.' He was quoting, of course, from Proverbs 1:10. God was there; heaven came down and broke through in that humble bedroom, and in a wave of glory my father departed this life and went sweeping through the pearly gates. Fellows, you can't entice me; my mind is made up; I will wholly follow the Lord. I've found something infinitely better than what the world has to offer and I am fully satisfied."

"Shut up!" Lewis commanded. "I told you I didn't want to hear any preaching."

"Then let me out," Dale replied. "Sherri and I'll walk home."

"But I'm not going home," the girl said quickly.

"The bottle doesn't interest me but the dance does, and the outdoor theater to."

"Dance? what dance? And theater? why didn't you tell me, Lewis?" Dale asked, turning and facing the young man behind the steering wheel.

"Because I want to make a man out of you, that's why. All your life you've had a steady, monotonous and boring diet of church, church and more church. It's time you broke out of the traces and had some fun."

Dale smiled. "What you term monotonous and boring is sheer joy to my soul," he answered.

"Forget it!" Lewis shouted wildly. "Here's the dance hall; everybody out!"

"I'm going home," Dale told the group firmly. "Coming, Sherri?"

"Are you kidding!" she exclaimed, laughing hysterically. "I wouldn't miss this part of the celebration for anything in the world. No, I'm not going. Enjoy your walk," she added, following the others inside the building.

It was late when Dale finally got home, tired and weary and foot sore. Mrs. Eastman was waiting for him.

"I'm sorry, Mother," he said. "Lewis didn't go to the Pizza Palace, nor to The Milk Jug either. . . ."

"I prayed for you, Dale. All evening, I prayed," she replied. "He was drinking, wasn't he? Lewis, I mean?"

"Ho . . . how did you know?"

"The Holy Spirit led me out in specific praying along that line. But where's Sherri? What about her?"

"She . . . remained with the others at the dance hall. I was deceived in thinking that she was a Christian. I'll have to call her mother, though, and tell her that she is no longer in my care. I asked her to go along, thinking we were going to the Palace."

"Yes, I think you're right, Dale. The Hutchinsons need to know. This way you're free from all responsibility, should anything happen to Sherri. You mentioned a dance hall. . . ."

"That's right. When the fellows started passing liquor around, I asked Lewis to let me out of the car, but he refused. He said he wanted to make a man out of me. Well, to make a long story short, when he drove up in front of the dance hall and we got out, I started walking home. I wanted Sherri to accompany me, but she refused. From the tenor of her tone, she knew all along what Lewis had planned. But I thank God, Mother, that in my heart there was no pull or desire for their kind of life. Since the Lord saved and sanctified my heart and since the day Father died, my entire being has had but one desire: to live holy and godly and be like Jesus. Dad's last words to me have been a bulwark of strength."

"His last words, Dale?"

"Yes. I'll never forget them nor the feel of the gentle pressure of his loving hand upon my head. 'My son,' he quoted, 'if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.' It was as though God Himself had said the words to me, so indelibly was the verse written upon my heart." "Thank God," was all Mrs. Eastman could say.

"It's a sad thing," Dale continued, "the way the average young person lives. Most of them lead undisciplined lives, resenting being told what to do or what not to do. Undisciplined, their lustful desires drive them like slaves. Actually, every sinner is a slave whether he is aware of it or not, and, contrary to his distorted thinking, discipline is not slavery. It is freedom, as well as being Biblical and Christian. Well, enough of this. I'd better call the Hutchinsons. . . ." And away Dale went, singing "Victory in Jesus" lustily.