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IT HAPPENED AT CHRISTMAS-TIME

By Duane V. Maxey

A Potpourri of Items From
The HDM Library About
Christmas and Events
That Occurred at Christmas-time

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Part 1

SALVATION "AT ANY COST"

From Illus\Sac-Zea\1043.Txt
A Part of: "How God Works"
By Otto Lee Terrill
Lakewood, Colorado

This that I am going to tell now covers several years of time. We were having revival with Arthur Calhoun as evangelist. Gene was not saved. He was going to college in the fall. We had prayed for him to get saved for some time. I thought I would die if he did not get saved. In fact, I told God if it took my life to cause Gene to get saved I was willing to give it. This all happened the last year we were on the farm. I was mowing hay for Walt Cole. It seemed like Gene was not interested in being saved. So I thought maybe I was in the way. I asked God if I was where He wanted me to be. I started to laugh and cry. I asked God if that was a sign that I was where He wanted me to be that He would do it again (make me laugh and cry). He did so much that I thought I would have lock-jaw. I asked Him to stop it. That night or the next, Gene went to the altar and was saved.

Something happened that night that I never experienced before or after. I was in a seat where Gene was kneeling. It seems I could not pray anything only "Thank you Lord". When Gene left the altar, I could not get up from the seat. My strength was gone. In a few minutes I was able to get up and by holding on to the seats I made it outside. Brother Walt Cole saw me and came out to see if I was all right. I was holding on to a tree to stand up. He helped me to his car not far away. Walt asked what he could do. I told him I would be all right and for him to go help those at the altar. I had told God if it took my life, I was willing to give it and maybe this was the time. I said, "Lord, if you are going to take me now it is all right. But if not give me strength to get back into the church. I was hardly able to raise my head off the car seat. God gave me strength. I walked back in the church. I didn't know what had happened. The pastor said it was the effects of carrying a burden.

Gene went to college and lost out again.

Some years after he was married and had two children I was farming again and picking corn. I was praying for him to be reclaimed again. Many was the time I would have to stop the tractor and wipe tears from my eyes to be able to see where I was going. I was picking corn about six weeks before Christmas in 1957. I remember having my hand raised and saying, "Lord, save that boy." A voice out of the northeast said, "At any cost?" Then I remembered my promise to give my life if that was what it took. Was I still willing? Then that same voice said, "At any cost?" I said, "Yes, Lord, at any cost," thinking maybe my time had come. But Satan said to me that it was going to be Diane, our oldest grandchild. At this point I was about ready to back out. I started to tell God I didn't want to see anyone die. At this time God showed me a room cut in half.

Gene, Arlene, and Diane were dressed in good clothes standing in this clean room. David was dressed in white and laying in the cornstalks on the ground in the dirt. This scene was right to the side of the tractor where I was picking corn. Satan said that I wanted it to be David not Diane. I said, "Lord, don't let anything happen to David." The burden was lifted and I just could not figure what it all meant.

I remember on Sunday before Christmas we were praying in morning worship. I prayed for God to keep his protecting hand over Gene and his family as they traveled. They were going to Arlene's parents first. As I prayed for them as they traveled, I had a strange feeling, but thought it was because they were traveling on Sunday--which we never did.

We did not know that Gene had just been saved. They were hit by a car with four young people who were drinking. It was told that they were going about 80 or 90 miles per hour. Arlene and Diane were killed instantly. Gene lived for 48 hours, but was unconscious all of the time. David was in the hospital for 10 weeks. We needed 18 pallbearers, and the seed corn company Gene worked for sent six and the president of the company came...At the funeral I asked one man that I knew was a Christian and who worked with Gene if he was saved. The man said, "No doubt about it."

...For some time after this I looked for things that would indicate Gene was saved. The many things people had said to me were brought to my mind. The next morning at worship, I read John 14:26, the last part of this verse, "and bring all things to your remembrance". God said that these words were for me.

One more thing about the spot where God met me in the field. I didn't feel like I could farm it so I decided to leave it stand idle. The next spring when I was working the ground to plant, I was getting close to the spot I was going to leave. I was trying to decide just where I should go around this spot of ground, as I knew within a few feet where it was. But God made me forget it until I had gone over it several feet. I want to thank God for what He has done and what He is still doing for me and mine.

* * *

Part 2

THE LONG WALK

From Illus\Sac-Zea\1043.Txt

A woman missionary in the South Pacific Islands was explaining to a group of children the custom and significance of giving gifts at Christmas. "Giving gifts," she said, "expresses love and reminds us of the perfect gift of love we received from God: Jesus." Later that week, a young native boy came to the missionary's side and said, "I love you and want you to have this." He pulled from a straw basket the most beautiful shell the missionary had ever seen. As she admired its beauty, she recognized it as a special shell only found on the far side of the island, a half day's walk from the village. When confronted by this, the boy smiled and said, "Long walk part of gift!"

God "walked" 2000 years with his people before sending the gift of Jesus. And he has walked 2000 more years expressing the significance of Him!

* * *

Part 3

WHY GOD SENT US A SAVIOR

From Illus\Sac-Zea\1043.Txt

I received a Christmas card that had a special significance for me. I'd like to summarize it for you:

"If our greatest need had been information, God would have sent us an educator. If our greatest need had been technology, God would have sent us a scientist. If our greatest need had been money, God would have sent us an economist. But since our greatest need was forgiveness, God sent us a Savior."

* * *

Part 4

A TRANSFORMING GIFT

From Illus\Sac-Zea\1043.Txt

When a young man left home for his freshman year of college, his mother was concerned that he wouldn't keep his dorm room in order. So when she visited him at Thanksgiving, she was not surprised to find his room in total disarray. Papers and books were scattered all over the place. But what shocked her the most were the obscene pictures hanging on the walls. At Christmas time she sent her son a box of presents, including a portrait of Jesus. He thanked her for the gifts but didn't say anything about the picture. In the spring when she visited the school again, her son was eager for her to come to his room. Upon entering, she found on the best wall space the picture of Christ. All the other pictures were gone. Wisely she said, "Jack, there is something different about your room. Did you get a new rug?" "No." "Is this new paper on the wall?" "No." "When I was here before, it seemed to me you had more pictures than now." "Yes, I did, Mother, but those other pictures all seemed out of place after that one of Jesus came into the room."

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Part 5

CHRISTMAS, NO TIME TO FORGET THE WAR (a)

From: Illus\Pai-Run\1042.txt

Ecclesiastes 8:8 "There is no discharge in that war; neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it."

Job 41:8 "Remember the battle, do no more."

The loss of Fort Washington opened the way to New Jersey. British forces under Maj. Gen. Charles Cornwallis quickly poured in. General Washington had left part of his army to protect New England. The rest sought safety behind the Delaware River.

Howe did not pursue Washington. Instead, he ordered his men into winter quarters, and assigned Maj. Gen. Sir Henry Clinton to seize Newport, R. I. The British had assigned Hessian troops to garrison Trenton, N. J. Washington's reinforced army launched a three-column attack on

the Hessians. Men under Col. John Glover (1732-1797) ferried one attacking force across the ice-clogged Delaware River on Christmas night, 1776. These troops assembled swiftly, then silently marched toward Trenton.

They took the Hessians by surprise and captured 1,000 prisoners on December 26. After some hesitation, Washington took his entire army across the Delaware. But Cornwallis' stronger army advancing toward Trenton endangered the American positions there. Washington marched south, then east around Cornwallis during the night of Jan. 2, 1777. The following day, he won a brilliant victory at Princeton, defeating some redcoats marching to join Cornwallis.

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Part 6

CHRISTMAS, NO TIME TO FORGET THE WAR (b)

From: Illus\Pai-Run\1042.txt

On a frigid Christmas night in 1776 George Washington, along with 2,400 men and 18 cannons, was ferried across the freezing Delaware River. The daring offensive took the Hessian mercenaries serving with the British completely by surprise. A British loyalist tried to alert the Hessians, but their drunken commander refused to interrupt a card game to receive the message. More than one hundred Hessians were killed or wounded, and nearly one thousand taken prisoner. Not a single American life was lost.

Why had Washington and his army left behind the warmth of home and hearth? We know that Washington sensed the guiding and protecting hand of God in the struggle to establish a new nation, and like other Americans he longed to make a fresh start after years of colonialism.

* * *

Part 7

WHY THE SCALES DIDN'T WORK

From: Illus\Pai-Run\1042.txt

A tired-looking woman entered a grocery store and asked the owner for enough food to make a Christmas dinner for her children. When he inquired how much she could afford, she answered, "My husband was killed in an accident. Truthfully, I have nothing to offer but a little prayer." Although the man was unmoved at first, he thought of a clever response to the woman's simple request.

"Write your prayer on a piece of paper and you can have its weight in groceries," he said sarcastically. To his surprise, she plucked a folded note out of her pocket and handed it to him saying, "I already did that during the night while I was watching over my sick baby." Without even reading it, he put it on one side of his old-fashioned scales. "We shall see how much food this is worth," he muttered.

To his dismay nothing happened when he put a loaf of bread on the other side. But he was even more upset when he added other items and it would not balance. Finally he blurted out, "Well, that's all it will hold anyway. Here's a bag. You'll have to put these things in yourself. "I'm busy!" With a tearful "Thank you," the lady went happily on her way. The grocer later discovered that the scales were out of order.

As the years passed he often wondered if that was just a coincidence. Why did the woman have the prayer already written before he asked for it? Why did she come at exactly the time the mechanism broke? Whenever he looks at the slip of paper which bears that mother's petition, he is amazed, for it reads, "Please, dear Lord, give us this day our daily, bread!"

* * *

Part 8

WHOSE ATTENDANCE WOULD DRAW A CROWD

From: Illus\Pai-Run\1042.txt

One Christmas Eve the telephone rang in the office of the Pastor of the church in Washington, D. C. that President Franklin Roosevelt attended. "Tell me Reverend," the voice inquired, "are you holding a Christmas Eve service tonight?" When advised that there would certainly be a service that evening, the caller asked, "And do you expect President Roosevelt to attend your church tonight?" "That," explained the Pastor patiently, "I can't promise. I'm not sure about the President's plans for this evening. But I can say that we fully expect God to be in our church tonight, and we feel secure in the knowledge that His attendance will attract a reasonably large congregation."

* * *

Part 9

A RECONCILIATION NOT REGRETTED

From: Illus\Pai-Run\1042.txt

Renowned British novelists William Thackeray and Charles Dickens once had a vicious quarrel. Just before Christmas in 1863 they met in London, but refused to speak with one another. Pricked in his conscience, Thackeray turned back and seized the hand of his friend, saying he couldn't bear the coldness between them. Dickens was touched, and the old anger and jealousy gave way to reconciliation. Shortly afterward, Thackeray suddenly died. Reflecting on this incident, a man who knew both Thackeray and Dickens wrote in his memoirs, "The next time I saw Dickens he was standing at the grave of his rival. He must have rejoiced, I thought, that he had shaken hands so warmly a few days before."

* * *

Part 10

TYPICAL OF TOO MANY CHILDREN

From: Illus\Pai-Run\1042.txt

A little girl was sitting on the lap of one dressed as the fictitious "Santa Claus". She gave him a whole list of expensive toys which she wanted for Christmas and then without a word of appreciation, she jumped off Santa's lap and started toward her mother. Her concerned mother spoke quickly, "Honey, haven't you forgotten something?" The little girl thought for a moment, then said, "O, yes." Then turning back, she shouted, "Charge it."

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Part 11

DIDN'T THINK HE NEEDED THE WHOLE LOAD

From: Illus\Ivn-Ove\1041.txt

Out in Wyoming's ranching country a severe snowstorm hit the area the Sunday before Christmas. Although the minister felt certain that nobody was going to show up for his church service because of the weather, he opened up the church just in case someone might appear. Sure enough, through the cold and snow, a weather-beaten cowboy appeared in the doorway of the church. The minister did not recognize the man as one of his parishioners, however he invited him in and the cowboy took a seat near the back of the church. After a wait of 20 minutes, it became apparent to the minister that this cowboy was going to be the only person to attend his church that day. Approaching the man, the minister asked him if he was expecting a full service.

"I've been a cowboy out in this part of the country all my life," the fellow answered. "And all winter long I feed 500 cows every day. And come rain or shine, sleet or snow -whether one comes or all 500 come -- I feed them every day." Duly inspired, the minister launched into a sermon that lasted the better part of an hour and a half. At the conclusion, the minister walked over to the cowboy and asked him how he enjoyed the service. "Like I said before," the cowboy answered, "I've been feeding 500 cows every day all my life. And come rain or shine, sleet or snow -- whether one comes or all 500 come -- I feed them every day. But if only one cow comes, I don't dump the whole feed load."

* * * * *

Part 12

UNIMPRESSED

From: Illus\Dan-Hyp\1040.txt

Orville and Wilbur Wright had tried repeatedly to fly a heavier-than-air craft. Finally one December day, off the sand dunes of Kitty Hawk, North Carolina they did what man had never done before. They actually flew. Elated, they wired their sister Katherine, "We have actually flown 120 feet. Will be home for Christmas."

Hastily she ran down the street, shoved the telegram -- the news scoop of the century -- at the city editor of the local paper. He read it carefully and smiled. "Well, well! How nice the boys will be home for Christmas." --Maxwell Droke

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Part 13

A GIFT THAT LASTED ALL YEAR

From: Illus\Dan-Hyp\1040.txt

A young successful attorney said: "The greatest gift I ever received was a gift I got one Christmas when my dad gave me a small box. Inside was a note saying, 'Son, this year I will give you 365 hours, an hour every day after dinner. It's yours. We'll talk about what you want to talk about, we'll go where you want to go, play what you want to play. It will be your hour!'"

"My dad not only kept his promise," he said, "but every year he renewed it -- and it's the greatest gift I ever had in my life. I am the result of his time."

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Part 14

THE STAR IN GOD'S WINDOW

From: Illus\Bac-Cur\hdm1049.txt

One night, a man and his small son were walking slowly down the streets of a large American city. The child was delighted to see the many service stars hanging in the windows of homes, each star proudly proclaiming the fact that a son was in the service of his country. He clapped his hands excitedly as he approached each new star, and was duly impressed by those homes with more than one star in the window. Finally they came to a wide gap between houses, through which the black velvet of the sky was clearly discernible, with the evening star shining brightly. "Oh look, Daddy, cried the little boy, "God must have given His Son, for He has a star in His window!" --Harry Lauder

* * *

Part 15

THE SAME SIZE HE WAS LAST YEAR?

From: Illus\Bac-Cur\hdm1049.txt

A girl of ten years went with a group of family and friends to see the Christmas light displays at various locations throughout the city. At one church, they stopped and got out to look more closely at a beautifully done nativity scene. "Isn't that beautiful?" said the little girl's grandmother. "Look at all the animals, Mary, Joseph and the baby Jesus." "Yes, Grandma," replied the granddaughter. "It is really nice. But there is only one thing that bothers me. Isn't baby Jesus ever going to grow up... he's the same size he was last year."

[At Christmas-time 1999, Christ seems to have shrunken in size greatly in the minds of millions. -- DVM]

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Part 16

THE PAGAN ROOTS OF CHRISTMAS

From: Illus\Bac-Cur\hdm1049.txt

What did December 25 originally celebrate? For some time before the coming of Christianity, December 25 was a time of pagan celebration. The pagans knew that at this point in their calendar the shortest day and longest night had passed, that little by little the sun would rise higher and remain longer in the sky, bringing with it the promise of spring.

Prior to this day occurred the week-long Roman feast called Saturnalia (December 17-24), held in honor of the deity Saturn. This festival brought hopes for peace, happiness, and goodness that supposedly occurred during Saturn's reign.

Emperor Aurelian (A. D. 270-275) quickly capitalized upon the heathen worship of the sun and, in the year A. D. 274, officially declared December 25 as the birthday of the Unconquered Sun (dies natalis solis invicti). --These Times

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Part 17

HEALED IN ANSWER TO PRAYER

From: "The Preacher Girl"

by Celia (Bradshaw) Winkle, hdm0601.txt

At the age of seven, because of malnutrition, Celia took typhoid fever. It was on Christmas Day that she took to her bed. She got so low the doctor gave her up and told them it would be impossible for her to get well for, said he, "the linings of all her intestines and stomach have passed out and are as raw as a piece of beefsteak." Once they thought she was dead and sent for the undertaker, but before the messengers reached him, they were brought back. The mother could not give up hope yet.

During the time of Celia's illness, her mother had prayed and sought God in the secret closet every chance she got, and was sanctified at home. She had learned of the experience through an old man, G. C. Bevington, who went around doing personal work. Through this man, too, she learned, for the first time in her life, that God would heal the body in answer to prayer. After she got into the experience of holiness, she was so full of God and His glory, and her faith was so increased, that she began to pray for God to heal her little girl. Celia had lain for weeks, and was literally starving to death -- was nothing but skin and bones, and much of the time was unconscious. The mother fasted and prayed from a Friday until the following Tuesday with not one bite of food or one drop of water, and still caring for her family, but she slipped away at every chance to pray. Finally, the same Heavenly Father who had heard her prayer alone, and had sanctified her soul, heard her petition for her child. He said, "I will spare her for my glory alone." People came by crowds to see the little girl who, for weeks, was dying with typhoid fever.

But Celia began to get better -- the mother had touched God. Consciousness came back. Celia cried for food, but she was so near starved that she could have only potato water with a little bread in it every two hours. At that early age she learned to tell time by watching the hands of the clock as they moved so slowly, getting around to the place where she could have more broth.

When Celia was sufficiently recovered, her mother told her how terribly sick she had been and of her prayers for her child's healing and that God had told her He would heal her "for my glory only." Those words were grated into the mind and heart of the little, pale, bony girl. She rolled them over and over in her mind. She decided they meant what they said -- she was to live for God, and Him alone.

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Part 18

PHILIP EMBURY, CONVERTED UNDER WESLEY ON CHRISTMAS

From: Cyclopedia of Methodism, Letter E, hdm0723

Philip Embury, a local preacher from Ireland, probably conducted the first Methodist service on the continent of America. He was a descendant of the Palatines, who had been exiled from their own country on account of their religion and who had settled in Ireland, in Ballingarane, west of Limerick. He was born about the year 1730, his parents been members of the German Lutheran Church. He was converted on Christmas, 1752, through the instrumentality of Mr. Wesley. His qualifications were soon recognized, and he was appointed class-leader, and subsequently local preacher.

About 1760 he emigrated in company with a few families and settled in New York; but we have no information of his holding any religious service until 1766. Late in the year 1765 a number of emigrants from the same neighborhood arrived in New York. Mrs. Barbara Heck, moved by the religious destitution among the circle of friends, urged Mr. Embury, -- who was her cousin -- to commence preaching. After some hesitation he consented and she collected four persons, who, with herself, constituted his audience. These he enrolled in a class, and from that time conducted services regularly in his own house.

[From among the very few writings of Philip Embury comes this, his account of his conversion: "On Christmas day, being Monday, the 25th of December, in the year 1752, the Lord shone into my soul by a glimpse of his redeeming love, being an earnest of my redemption in Christ Jesus, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." -- DVM]

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Part 19

ABOUT CHRISTMAS

From: Cyclopedia of Methodism, Letter C, hdm0721.txt

CHRISTMAS is so called because of special "mass" or religious services referring to the birth of Christ, which are held on that day. The observance of Christmas is not of divine

appointment, nor is it alluded to in the New Testament. The day of Christ's birth cannot be fixed from any historical data, but for a number of centuries the churches have adopted this day in commemoration of that glorious event. It was carefully observed by the ancient churches since the fourth century, and the Church of England had religious services suited to the occasion. Mr. Wesley strictly observed these, and directed his ministers to preach on all the great festivals of the church. He prepared a number of hymns suitable to the occasion, and published them for the use of his societies. For many years a Christmas morning prayer-meeting was extensively held, in which Christmas hymns were sung, suitable addresses delivered, and prayers offered. In Puritan communities but little attention is paid to the day, and the Methodist congregations share in the general feeling, but usually there is some religious service held during the day.

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Part 20

DIVINELY PROTECTED AT CHRISTMAS-TIME

From: "From The Mouth of the Lion"

By a Prisoner of Japan, Leon Clarence Osborn

hdm0948.txt

The Bible school was dismissed by the Japanese, the hospital closed on Christmas Day, the whole compound put under guard, and all property confiscated. It was a time of grave concern and excitement on the part of every one.

A Japanese officer told us that we were to be taken to Tientsin, three hundred miles distant...

Day after day was spent in this place. My room was next but one to the torture chamber. The screams of the Chinese being tortured added to my distress. One man was tortured until he could scream no more. He was carried, either dead or unconscious, past my window and thrown into the room where the cages were. The floor was brick and very cold, but I did not see the door open again until the third day. Some of the prisoners were given the water cure: (when their head and knees were tied close together and water was poured into their nose and mouth, until they were nearly drowned.) Others were beaten within an inch of their lives.

During these dreary days, my Bible was my one source of comfort and inspiration. I had often wanted more time in which to read the Bible and now I had it. Many books of the Bible were read upon my knees, and God daily cheered my heart through His Holy Word.

Christmas Day came -- the first Christmas that Mrs. Osborn and I had been separated in all the years of our married life. I was a bit lonely, but the words of that old hymn, "Unworthy as I am, still I am a child of his care," came to me and I sang them over and over.

On December 26, in the middle of the afternoon, a Japanese officer and a Korean interpreter suddenly came into my room saying, "We have a little affair on this afternoon."

"What affair?" I asked.

They replied, "We are going to have a trial."

When I asked where it was going to be held, they answered, "It is going to be held right here in the guard-room."

The ever-present guards were dismissed. The Japanese officer sat down on one side of the table with the interpreter just in front of him, and I was told to sit down on the other side. The officer then lifted his hand and began to shake his fist, saying, "Our nations are now at war. We are enemies. We are going to have a trial and we want you to know that if you do not tell us the truth, it is within our power to use force and compel you to tell the truth."

Though the torture master was just outside the room, and the torture chamber, where one of our evangelists had been given the water cure a few months previous, was near by, I answered as calmly as ever in my life, "I shall tell you the truth." The Bible assurance is, "When they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." God surely came to my rescue that afternoon and put into my mouth the word with which to answer my accusers.

"A Chinese guerrilla general recently surrendered to affirmed the Japanese officer, "and he told us that at one time three years ago he bought \$4,000 worth of medicine from the Bresee Memorial hospital. What do you know about it?"

I replied, "I was not here three years ago, but in America. However, I am sure our hospital did not sell these drugs; for, in the first place, we can never secure enough drugs for our own use, and furthermore, we have not been in the habit of selling drugs to outsiders. If we did this, there would be no end of demands for medicine. Moreover, I do not believe that you Japanese are going to believe the testimony of one man and condemn our whole hospital."

The officer nodded his head, feeling a bit flattered, but said, "We have more evidence than this." The question was discussed for some time, but finally was dropped and never brought up again.

"You have been treating Chinese guerrillas -- our enemies -- in your hospital. Tell us what you know about this," said the Japanese officer.

I replied, "There are guerrillas all around us. If they came to us at all, they did not come in their uniforms and we did not know them. Since ours is the only hospital within a radius of seventy-five miles, and since the population is so dense, we treat many thousands of patients each year, and it is quite possible that we have unknowingly treated a few guerrillas, but we certainly do not cater to them. They do not love the Christian Church, being more or less communistic. In fact, they do not believe in God, so why should we especially favor them?"

At length, the Japanese officer admitted that they had proof that we had taken in only two guerrillas, and he added, "You know what we did with those two, do you not?"

I replied, "Yes, I heard what you did with them." The first one was a young farmer boy of twenty who had been forced into the guerrilla army and wounded a week later. He was brought to our hospital where he gradually improved, and was soon to be dismissed. Spies found it out and reported him to the Japanese, who sent men to take him into the city. Our good hospital superintendent pleaded with them to let the young man stay and get well; but in spite of her protests he was taken out and buried alive. The second man had been in our hospital only an hour when the Japanese came for him. I helped him off his bed and he was taken out and shot down in cold blood. Naturally, it was not very pleasant to be reminded of all this, knowing that the torture master was standing just outside my door. Thank God, the Master of heaven and earth was also near by.

At this point I was again asked to give my life history, which I had done many times prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor. All Americans were frequently asked for their history, and again I must give mine, knowing that if I made a mistake I would have to suffer for it. However, God helped me as I answered their many questions as to when and where I was born, how many years, I had spent in elementary school, high school, and college; what I did after completing my education, when I came to China; what I had been doing and where I had been living while here; how many times I had furloughed home and what I did while at home, the names of my father and mother and their occupation and age; how many brothers and sisters I had and their ages and the line of work they pursued. After answering all these questions which really had no bearing on the case, I was then asked the question, "Were you sent to China by the United States government?"

God here again quickened my mind and I turned the question upon the officer, asking, "Were the 160,000 Japanese living on American soil today all sent there by the government of Japan? I did not believe they were, nor have we been sent to China by the United States government. Our only reason for being here is our response to Christ's commission, 'Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature'."

However, as time goes on, I am becoming convinced that many of the Japanese on our soil were sent here by their government. As they fished along our coasts and among our islands, they sounded the depth of the water, they took pictures, they made maps and charts, and they studied the weather conditions, all for the Imperial Navy of Nippon. Today they know our coast lines and our weather conditions as well, if not better, than do most Americans in charge of the United States Navy. Recently General MacArthur, in reporting a big Japanese convoy in the Solomons coming in under cover of a storm, said, "It seems that the weather conditions were made to order by Japan." They have made it a part of their world domination program to know the weather conditions in these various zones so thoroughly that when the time came for them to strike, they could do it with the utmost efficiency.

To resume the account of my trial -- the torture master was called in as it began to grow dark. I did not know what the verdict would be and could only trust that God was ever mindful of His own. Finally he was dismissed and I was told to return to my room.

Upon reaching my room, I immediately dropped to my knees and lifted my hands and voice to God in prayer. I was reminded to read Daniel and as I opened my Bible, these words stood out

in big print before me: "My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths that they have not hurt me; forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O King, have I done no hurt. Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him because he believed in his God." (Dan. 6:22-23). I said, "Amen, Lord, I believe in my God too," and with a red pencil wrote beside these verses, "December 26, 1941."

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Part 21

JOHN ALLEN WOOD IN BAD COMPANY ON CHRISTMAS

From: His Autobiography, hdm0277.txt

When I was eighteen years of age I had an experience which taught me an important lesson. The young people of the community got up a Christmas sleigh-ride and invited me to go with them. I consulted my class-leader and he advised me not to go with them, and said if I did I would be sorry. Contrary to my usual custom, I discarded his advice and invited my lady and went.

On our way we visited and talked religion, she being a member of the Presbyterian Church, so I got on in the first part of the ride pretty well. But when we reached the hotel where we stopped for refreshments, to my surprise the ball-room was opened and lighted and a dance was inaugurated. I felt mean and contemptible, and my lady and I staid out alone in the sitting room. On our return they got to racing and running horses and that aroused the old 'Nick in my horse, which had been a racer and was used to that kind of performance. In spite of all I could do, he would run and was not satisfied to simply keep up, but would shy out and run by the others.

I felt ashamed and mortified -- a young Methodist and a Presbyterian racing horses and coming into town on a full run. I learned a lesson, and I was never caught by Satan in that trap again.

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Part 22

CHRISTMAS SERVICES AT CITY ROAD CHAPEL

From: "The Makers of Methodism," hdm0688, by W. H. Withrow

"City Road Chapel burying ground," said John Wesley, "is as holy as any in England." Aye, truly. From all parts of Christendom come pilgrims to visit that sacred spot. Beside the tomb of John Wesley grows an elder tree, clippings from which have been transplanted to almost every part of the World -- An emblem of the Church which he planted, which has taken root and brought forth its blessed fruit in every clime.

In this venerable mother church of Methodism for many years service was held, as at the Foundry, at five o'clock in the morning, and we have records of large gatherings assembling on Christmas Day at four o'clock, and again at ten.

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Part 23

IN 1768, COKE'S PROVIDENTIAL MEETING ON ANTIGUA

From: "The Makers of Methodism," hdm0688, by W. H. Withrow

The project of reaching Halifax had to be abandoned, and running before the storm, they made, on Christmas Day, the port of Antigua, in the West Indies. It was, indeed, a happy day for the sable myriads of those islands, for it brought them a glad evangel of redemption -- of peace on earth and good will to men . As Dr. Coke walked up the street of the town he met a ship carpenter and local preacher, John Baxter by name, who had under his care a Methodist society of nearly two thousand souls, all blacks but ten.

How came this native church in this far-off tropic isle? Twenty-eight years before an Antigua planter, Nathaniel Gilbert, heard John Wesley preach at Wandsworth, in England. The good seed took root in his heart, and he brought the precious germs to his island home, where they became the source of West India Methodism. This, in turn, was one of the chief means of Negro emancipation and the beginning of the great movement of African evangelization. On the death of Nathaniel Gilbert a pious shipwright took charge of the native church, which eight years later was found so flourishing.

Dr. Coke ranged from island to island, sowing the seed of the kingdom in the good ground of those faithful African hearts. On every side he found evidence of the quickening power of the leaven of Methodism conveyed by strange means to those scattered islands -- by converted soldiers or sailors, by pious freed Negroes, and at St. Eustatius by a fugitive slave, whose ministry was a marvel of spiritual success. Under the preaching of the black apostle many of his hearers fell down, like dead men, to the earth, and multitudes were converted from their fetish worship to an intelligent piety.

The Dutch officials of the island, however, scourged and imprisoned Black Harry, and passed an edict inflicting thirty-nine lashes on any Negro found praying. With a fidelity worthy of the martyr ages these sable confessors continued steadfast amid these cruel persecutions. Dr. Coke subsequently interceded at the court of Holland for the religious liberty of the blacks, but, for the time, in vain . Yet he lived to see St. Eustatius a flourishing Wesleyan mission, and, ten years after, met Black Harry a freed and happy man.

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Part 24

A MARVELOUS CONVERSION ON CHRISTMAS NIGHT

From: hdm0788, "Records of Modern Miracles"

By Emma M. Whittemore

Chapter 19, "The Odd Glove"

As the winter advanced, a real necessity arose to prove to the poor tramps of the street that there was something more in religion than an address or a handshake, or a "God bless you".

Accordingly, much prayer was offered that means might be granted whereby beds, clothing and food, could be provided, and that these things might speak of God's provisional love to these homeless, and often degraded, ones. From various sources bedding, clothing and food supplies reached us.

On separating the things the bundle contained, we discovered an odd glove. Vainly we searched for the mate. Just for a moment we were inclined to throw it aside, when Capt. Potter reminded us that one odd glove might just as well have come in answer to prayer as if its mate were there. We therefore showed it respect equal to the other gifts and placed it upon the shelf ready for service.

It was nearing the end of the year and we wanted to add all possible joy to the lives of those to whom the Mission ministered. On Christmas night a wretched looking specimen of humanity entered just as the meeting started. He was in a half-drunken condition and took a seat upon almost the last bench in the hall. There was a hole in the crown of his hat, through which his bushy hair protruded in a rather comical way. When he removed his hat, his hair stuck untidily in every direction, and might have been mistaken for a mop. It had not seen comb or brush for many a day.

As the meeting proceeded, prayer was silently offered for him by one or two whose hearts had been stirred at the sight of the poor sin-marred creature. Suddenly he interrupted the service by raising a very dirty hand, and waving it to attract attention said most earnestly, with tears in his bleared eyes, "For God's sake, if there is any hope for me, won't you all put up a prayer?"

In a moment Capt. Potter Was by his Side, and placing his hand on his shoulder, said in his winning way: "My dear fellow, of course we will pray, and if you mean what you say, prove it by stepping to the front." I have always felt that God is able to clear even a drunkard's brain sufficiently for him to grasp the truth. After a bit of a struggle the man staggered forward as though meaning business. It was not easy for him, and we could see that he was ashamed of himself, but he gained courage under the Captain's kindly sympathy. At last he reached the front bench, then as he got down upon his knees, he seemed to realize what it might mean should he be truly saved. If ever a sinner called upon God, poor drunken Joe called that night. None of those present can ever forget it. It seemed as though the cry came from the very depths of despair, and that all earthly power was unavailing. It was only the prayer of the publican, uttered in a most heart-stirring and appealing way: "Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner." Covering the request with the precious name of Jesus, he had not to wait very long before he realized the efficacy and power of that Name, and his joy knew no bounds.

When God took such a walking ragshop of a man, half-dazed with liquor, and redeemed him in the Blood of the Lamb, should anyone doubt the Gospel's power? We learned afterwards that Joe had heard of the Mission, and feeling that after all there might be a possibility of making something out of his life, he had that evening determined to go to the hall and see what could be done. Tattered and torn, and presenting a miserable appearance even to his own drunken eyes, he had mustered up what little courage he possessed and borrowed a coat from a former acquaintance who was almost as poorly off as himself. Buttons it had none. The button-holes had long since been torn through. And so two iron meat-skewers were the ingenious and unusual fasteners.

After rising from his knees, we noticed that the poor fellow had but one arm. It was one of the most bitterly cold nights we had had that winter and our stock of clothing had run low, but just before the meeting broke up, like a flash, the one odd glove came to the mind of Capt. Potter. Asking the man to wait, he hurried to the closet and taking down the glove could not suppress a "Hallelujah". He hurried back to Joe and as God cannot make a mistake, it proved to be the right-hand glove for that one-armed man. It fitted him perfectly, and being fleece-lined, was delightfully warm and comfortable.

People may smile skeptically and perhaps I am old-fashioned now, but I have always felt that this was but another instance of our Jehovah's wonderful forethought in allowing the original owner (who could readily afford it), to lose one of his gloves in order that that poor, one-handed man might have a suitable covering for many a cold winter day. How he treasured that gift of God's love! When we told him the whole story, he was more profoundly stirred than he could possibly have been had there been a pair. It was to him a wonderful reminder of how strangely but wonderfully God may supply all our needs.

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Part 25

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE M. E. CHURCH IN 1784

From: hdm0778, "The Autobiography of William Watters,
First American-born Methodist Circuit Rider

December 25, 1784

The Christmas Conference -- Organization of the M. E. Church

On the twenty-fifth of December, one thousand seven hundred and eighty-four, our conference met in Baltimore, to consider the plan of church government, which the doctor brought over recommended by Mr. Wesley. It was adopted, and unanimously agreed to with great satisfaction, and we became instead of a religious society, a separate church under the name of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

This change gave great satisfaction through all our societies in America, and the more so, as it met with the approbation of our European brethren, and particularly to those who had some time past thought it their duty to administer the ordinances, but had desisted therefrom, rather than rend the flock of Christ; as also to those who had long felt scruples of conscience in receiving them from men that they could not believe were sent by the Lord Jesus to minister in holy things, many of whose lives were immoral.

[Hardly had Watters located when he was cheered by news of the arrival of Coke, with authority from Wesley to organize the Church. On December 25, 1784, sixty out of the eighty-three preachers then in the traveling connection, assembled in the city of Baltimore for the "Christmas Conference" at which the Methodist Episcopal Church was organized. Commenting on this organization in his memoirs, Watters says, "We became, instead of a religious society, a separate

Church. This gave great satisfaction through all the societies." The first native itinerant had served faithfully through most of the forming period of the young denomination: he now saw it take organic and permanent form.]

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Part 26

WIREMAN'S FIRST REVIVAL MEETING

From: hdm0180, "Kentucky Mountain Outlaw Transformed

By Charles Little Wireman ("Bulldog Charlie")

A few days after I received a letter, for the newspapers had heralded the fact of my conversion being a mountain outlaw and that I had been called to preach and would become an evangelist. A Presbyterian preacher several hundred miles away had been visiting in my home town while I was carrying on for the devil, and I had been pointed out to him as the bad man of the town, and when he read in the papers of my conversion and call to preach and that I would enter the evangelistic work he wrote me a letter and gave me my first call.

I got the letter and went immediately to my mother and told her. "Why," she said, "You can't go. It is a long ways; you don't have any money. You have been making restitutions with every dollar you could get hold of. You do not have clothes to preach in, and no money to pay your fare. So I would just forget it if I were you." I do not believe that my mother meant to discourage me, but she had never had a call to preach. You be careful about the attitude you take toward those whom God has called to His Gospel.

I went into a room and got on my knees and said, Now, Lord, here is a call to hold a revival meeting. I know you have called me to preach. If you want me to go to this particular meeting, make it plain in some way." Committing this matter into His hands I said "Amen." Upon opening my eyes, hanging on the wall before me was a motto. My sister told me it had been there eight months, and I had never noticed it until this time, and this is what it said: "My presence shall go with thee." I said, "Amen, that is all that I wanted." I went in and told my mother that I would go and hold the meeting in the Presbyterian Church, I went to the depot and asked the price of the ticket to that place, walked back down the street, met a fellow that I had gambled with and never had known him to have much money, always took all I would have away from me with the cards, and he noticed as I talked with him, there was something preying upon my mind. He asked me what it was, and I told him that I had received a call to hold a meeting and did not have money to pay my fare and I was praying and thinking about it. He said, "Charlie, how much would it take, do you know?" I was prepared to tell him. He ran his hand in his pocket, pulled out the amount and gave me thirty cents extra. I said, "I will pay you back some day." With tears in his eyes, wicked man that he was, he said, "No Charlie, you will not pay me back. I want the honor of being the first contributor to your ministry." God will see us through, even if He does have to make some old gambler or drunkard pay our bills.

I went home and went out to a neighbor's and out where they threw their garbage and waste. In that pile of junk I found an old, dilapidated suit case; it would not fasten. I took it to the house and cleaned it up the best I could, and put in the new books that I had and a few belongings

in that suit case, had to tie it together with string, and putting on the only suit that I had in this world--a little brown summer suit. That was in December! The breeches were too short at one end, and they were patched. I had a cotton made shirt and heavy brogan shoes, and that was my wardrobe. Someone had given me a Bible about half as thick again as this songbook and about as big with only one back. But I was proud of that Bible and I packed my Bible, mother fixed me a lunch and I kissed her good-by and started out on my first evangelistic trip. It grieves me to find young men over the country claiming to be called to preach who have to have a number of changes of raiment before they will go, and about the first thing they will ask is what salary that church pays, or how much money they will get? I didn't take that into consideration. I knew God had called me to preach and all I wanted was a place to preach.

A snow storm impeded my progress toward that city and I had to lay over one night in a depot. The next night just about dark I arrived in that city, got off the train, inquired about the minister of the Presbyterian Church and was told that he was forty miles away and the telephone wires were down in the storm and there was no way to contact him. I had thirty cents. I saw a sign hanging at half mast on an old drab hotel which said, "Rooms, 25 cents per night." I made up my mind to spend the night in that hotel. I went in and paid my quarter and had my nickel left. I went to bed. I preached against lodges, but found upon retiring that I had joined the Red Men. I have slept on better beds, but got through the night.

The next morning I asked permission to leave my suit case in the lobby. When I was asked if I was not going to stay for breakfast, I told them no, but I did not tell why. I hadn't eaten anything the day before except the lunch mother had prepared for me and nothing that day. Along about dark, after I had walked the streets all day with the collar of my little brown summer suit turned up around my neck, wearing my calico cap and being the gazing stock of the people, I suppose they thought another bum had hit town. They didn't know that royalty had hit the town. I want you to know that I am no slouch; it is just the way my clothes fit me.

About dark that night I contacted the pastor by phone and he was surprised that I was there. We had had a misunderstanding in our correspondence and he wasn't expecting me for a week. I was in plenty of time for my first combat. He said, "Now Brother Wireman, you go to a certain home on a certain street and tell them that I sent you to begin the meetings tomorrow." (That was two nights before Christmas.) "And I will be there as soon as I can get there. But go on with the meetings until I come." I got my suit-case, walked several blocks to this number, rang the door bell and a little boy about twelve years of age came to the door. I said, "Is this where so and so lives?" He said it was. "Well," I said, "I am the evangelist that is to hold your meeting and Rev. Kirk told me to come up here and you folks would take care of me." He turned and walked back through the house and a little sedate, prim, well dressed woman came to the door and looking me over, said, "What is it?" I said, "It is an evangelist. Your p astor told me by phone to come up here and you would take care of me." She said, "He did?" I said, "He certainly did." "Well," she said, "come in." Not a very warm reception, but I got out of the storm. She asked me a few questions, where I was from and so on and then said, "Since you are tired, having come so far she didn't know I had come only a few blocks that day) you will occupy this room around here. My husband won't be in until later on tonight, as he is the mayor of the city." And there I was in the little brown summer suit with the breeches too short at one end, my calico cap, cotton made shirt and brogan shoes and one-backed Bible, being entertained in my first meeting, in the mayor's home.

The next day we gave it out by phone and otherwise that the meetings would begin that night. The time came for service and I went over to that nice Presbyterian Church. I went in, walked over the plush carpet, sat down in an easy chair on the platform; I went in, it seemed, almost to my ears, before I stopped; looked about but had to pinch myself for identification in a place like that. Just a few people came, maybe a dozen folks.

The man in charge of the devotions finally finished and said, "Our evangelist will now take charge." Every eye was upon me. I walked up behind the pulpit stand, and it dawned upon me that if I was going to preach I ought to have some kind of text. I opened my one-backed Bible and here's the first thing I saw: "If so be," and that was my first text. Open your mouth and the Lord will fill it--if He has to. I said, "You will find my text in such and such a place and it reads, 'If so be.' And I preached like a house on fire from, "If so be." If so be that we will pray God will hear us. If so be that we will work, God will honor us. If so be that we will have faith, God will give us victory. Glory! Just like a house on fire. They went out and told over town that there was the strangest, most eccentric and peculiar preacher up at the Presbyterian Church that had ever been heard of since John the Baptist came dressed in camel's hair in the hills of Judea.

All the next day I spent in prayer reading the Bible without finding my text. The second night when I stood up and opened my Bible this was the text, "Looking for and hastening unto." "Now," I said, "we have looked and hastened to this occasion, and that we are looking forward and hastening to the great judgment bar of God and we better get ready." And preached like a house afire from the text, "Looking for and hastening unto."

Now the crowds came. One of the leading members of that church, one of the official members, was a congressman and he was the money man of that church and city. He was building a dance hall and was an elder in that Presbyterian Church. I heard about him and one night the Lord came upon me and I set my jaw and came right down his alley. I said, "Any man that professes religion and would build a dance hall is as sure of hell as a nickel is a gingersnap, unless he repents and gets right with God." When we went home that night the mayor's wife said, "It is all over now. There is not telling what the Congressman will do as he is the big fellow in our church." And the devil tantalized my mind tremendously about that and the next day as I walked down the street I made it a point to walk opposite his law office. But, as I was walking down the street, he stood in the door and recognized me, hailed me, and asked me to come over. The devil said, "Here is where you are going to get in bad." When he invited me into his office and gave me a seat, he said, "Preacher, I didn't sleep well last night. I had a bad conscience. I want to thank you for that message that you brought last night. That awakened my slumbering conscience and made me realize the awfulness of a church member building a dance hall." He said, "I want to give you this information, and I want you to give it to others, that that building now in progress, will not be a dance hall as was first intended; it will be converted into a legitimate business house." He said, "I like your preaching. I admire your courage. How do you write your name?" I told him. He wrote a check, said, "Perhaps you need a little change," and handed me a check for fifty dollars. I went immediately and bought the nicest suit I could find, a lovely hat, nice pair of shoes, a good overcoat and when I got dressed up in that outfit I was about the prettiest thing you ever saw???

While praying one day in the church, I discovered an old bench under the platform and drug it out. A rough old bench. I carried it into the main auditorium and set it down in front of the pulpit stand on their beautiful plush carpet. That night as people came in, they would look at me, and look at the old bench and at one another. The first mourner's bench so far as I know that had ever been erected in a Presbyterian Church. That night I preached on the new birth. The altar filled. Among the seekers was the Congressman. So in my first revival meeting I had a congressman gloriously converted, along with many others who were just as precious to my Lord as was the Congressman.

The mayor's wife had not come to the service that night and the little boy, about twelve years of age, was there and as the people were repenting and beating the mourner's bench and beating the floor and crying for mercy I said, "We are going to stay here all night unless these people get through." The little boy ran home, woke up his mother and said, "Go to the church; you never saw anything like it. The Congressman and a lot of people are down at an old bench that preacher has over there, and, some of them are beating the floor, and the preacher said they would stay all night if they didn't go through." He thought they were trying to go through the floor.

Now, I got home with enough money to nearly pay all my restitutions and had some money left out of the first meeting. The devil said to me, that I would spend my days, if I preached, preaching in the country school houses in the mountains of Kentucky. I gave him to understand that I was perfectly willing to do it. But God has seen fit to let me travel with this glorious gospel in every state in these United States and in Canada and Old Mexico. I have preached in big camp meetings, big churches, and little churches, city churches, country churches, village churches, tents, brush arbors, mission halls, Salvation Army citadels, and from the curb stone on the street. I have never been a popular preacher, but have always been a prominent preacher.

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Part 27

"BULL-DOG CHARLIE SHOT THEM "OFF THE CHRISTMAS TREE"

From: "Bull-dog Charlie and the Devil," hdm0841

[These stories are only related to Christmas by Wireman's use of the term "Christmas Tree," but they are good reading, so I included them. From his peculiar use of the term, I suspect that he had seen or heard of someone shooting the bulbs off of a Christmas Tree -- or, maybe he did that himself before his conversion. -- DVM]

One day while preaching in a camp at _____, Ohio, I was approached by a very modestly dressed old lady, who said she had been told I had some open time before I was to be at the Ohio Conference Camp. She said she was the head of an interdenominational campmeeting and would like for me to be their evangelist. I accepted. Her son met me in the capitol city and on our way to the camp we stopped at the church of which he was pastor. They were having a worldly shin-dig. I found out the camp which she said was interdenominational was run by her and her preacher son. About the third night I opened up my guns and shelled the woods, and shot both of them off the Christmas tree. Next morning, after breakfast, the old lady informed me I was through. She said I could pack up and move on. I do not remember ever having had anything to tickle me as that did; I had to laugh in her face, and at intervals while I packed I had to sit down and laugh. This camp

was at a crossroads. There was a general store, a post office and two churches. There was no bus serving the community. Since they had not offered to take me to where I could get a bus, I went to the store and called a pastor I knew who lived about twelve miles distant. I told him what had occurred and the predicament I was in. He said he would come and get me. In the meantime the word had gotten out, and the pastor of the church about a hundred yards from the camp invited me to preach in her church that night, and I accepted. Notices were put up at the store and the phones were kept busy. I preached to the campmeeting crowd at the church that night. The pastor of the other church announced I would preach for him the next night. I spoke to the same people who, had been at the camp. The following evening I preached in a church twelve miles away to that same crowd. I rested at night, and then preached over the weekend and went on my way rejoicing. When the devil closed up one door against me, God opened up four for me. "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm."

It was the first night of another campmeeting. A man came, shook my hand, told me his name, introduced me to his wife, and went on to say, "I am a lawyer, and your preaching interests me, because you preach in an argumentative manner. My wife will tell you that you are the first preacher she ever heard me compliment. I have never gone the second time to hear an evangelist. I am coming back tomorrow night." The next night he came, accompanied by his wife, and asked if I would come to his house a certain day for dinner. I told him I would if not providentially hindered. During the preaching the next evening, I knocked him off the Christmas tree. I saw he was not going to speak to me and I went to him. I shook hands with him. It was like shaking hands with a cold pump handle on a frosty morning. I said, "Well, tomorrow is the day I am coming to your house for dinner." Speaking sharply he said, "You do not need to come." I turned to his wife and said, "Didn't I promise to come to your home for dinner tomorrow?" "Yes, sir," said she, "you did." He spoke again, and said, "I told you, you did not need to come." I said, "Sir, I promised and I will be there." He took off without even saying good night. The next day about 11:00 A.M. I rang the door bell. His good, Christian wife came to the door and I saw she had been weeping. She invited me in, and when seated she said to me, "My husband is very angry. I don't know what he is going to say when he comes home." She asked to be excused and went about preparing dinner. When he came in, I said, "Good morning." He muttered a good morning, sat down and buried his face in a newspaper until she announced that dinner was ready. He arose and started for the dining room. I got up and took after him. He sat down, and so did I. He made a boarding-house reach for the biscuit plate. His wife said, "Rev. Wireman, will you ask the blessing?" He sat there like a pouting child while I prayed. He helped himself to the biscuits and put them back where they were. It was now my time to make a boarding-house reach, and that I did. He would pick up a dish, help himself and put it back. I would pick up a dish, push it under his nose and brag on his wife's cooking. His appetite seemed to fail and he left the table without even saying "Excuse me." I lingered at the table, eating with a coming appetite. I cannot remember when I enjoyed a meal like I enjoyed that one. I went into the room where he was sitting, his face buried in a newspaper: On the wall were two large old-fashioned pictures, one of an old lady and the other of an old man. I said, "Whose pictures are those?" He mumbled out, "My father and mother." I replied, "Your father is certainly a venerable looking old gentleman, and your mother has such a sweet face. Are they yet living?" He said, "No." "Your mother must have been a good Christian, she has such a saintly appearance," said I. "She was a Christian, wasn't she?" He said, "Yes." "She must have prayed much for you," I offered. "By all means, you should get right with God and meet her in Heaven." He suddenly leaped to his feet, ran over to me, and threw his arms around my neck. Weeping, he asked me to

pray for him. He fell to his knees and began to pray. His good wife, who had prayed long for him, joined us, and throwing her arms around him, together we bombarded Heaven until God saved the wicked lawyer. It pays to be a man of your word.

After having preached for a few days in a certain place, I realized the gospel gun had shot the pastor and some others off the Christmas tree. I heard the pastor one morning on the phone. He said, "Yes, I will tell him!" He came in my room and said, "We want to see you down at the church in a little while." I went down and found the "we" who wanted to see me consisted of the pastor and an old tobacco-squirting church boss. There was a time when I didn't know which I had rather meet -- a church boss or the devil himself. I have long since made up my mind. I had rather meet the devil at any time or place, for I read, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." But my experience has been Resist a church boss and he will jump on you. These men at the church proceeded to tell me they had decided that my preaching was destructive rather than constructive. I said, "It has about destroyed both of you fellows, has it not?" They replied, "You have your choice, either change your way or close the meeting." I said to them in Southern parlance, "The meetin' is dun closed." They went on to say, "We don't want the meeting closed. We just want you to change your way of preaching." I said, "I am not going to do it." They told me, "You haven't got an offering yet." I told them I was not for sale, for I had sold out long ago -- lock, stock and barrel to God Almighty. I inquired when the next train would leave for Kentucky and when they told me I replied, "I will be taking it." They accompanied me to the train. While I was purchasing my ticket, one of them said, "If Brother Wireman just will go, I feel alright about it." The other man replied, "So do I." Turning to me they asked, "How do you feel about it?" I said, "I imagine about like a great big brindle bulldog would feel with two little Chihuahuas barking at him."

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Part 28

PREACHERS WHO REGARD THEMSELVES AS "PUBLIC PETS"

hdm0172, "Beauty For Ashes," by George Douglas Watson

VII "Causes of Heart Wanderings"

Another cause of spiritual weakness is that of being spoiled by earthly kindness. Just as millions of children go to wreck through false kindness and lack of correction, so thousands of Christians are ruined in their spiritual life by an excess of popularity and earthly kindness. This is more particularly true of ministers than any other class. If they have some talent and success, and good evidence of grace, they will inevitably have many friends. These friends will manifest their love, some wisely, and some unwisely. In many cases, preachers are flattered and praised and receive presents and are toasted and feasted until their grace is gone and their common sense as well. They are tempted to regard themselves as public ecclesiastical pets; to accept gifts on birthdays and Christmas days and wedding days; to have every want anticipated; to be complimented on every sermon, or every prayer; to be invited to parties and state occasions, until they dwindle into soft sentimental poetical dudes of the Church, not only unfit to lead souls to God, but, like the mincing Agag did to Saul, lead souls down to hell. Many a minister, who was a poor farmer boy or a factory hand when first converted, and who began his Christian life with a heavenly fibre in his soul, has imperceptibly taken the velvet and cologned road into a spiritual desert. Paul and Wesley both declare against softness of life as a cause of soul-ruin.

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Part 29

THE GIFT HE WANTED MOST, BUT DIDN'T GET

From: hdm1012, "Living Waters," by Daniel Isom Vanderpool

I remember hearing the late Dr. R. T. Williams, former general superintendent, now gone to heaven, tell a story that has always touched my heart. It was the story of an elderly man who lived with his daughter. Christmas-time came and the old fellow sat by the fire one evening awhile before Christmas, and he said to his daughter, "Won't you come and sit with me a little while? Come and sit with me and talk to me." She looked at him and said, "Why, Daddy, don't you know that these are busy days? This is Christmas-time and I am so busy. Daddy, you sit there by the fire and read and you excuse me this time." A night or two later he said, "Daughter, wouldn't you come and sit with me and talk to me tonight?" She said, "Daddy, didn't I tell you that I was very busy? Didn't I tell you that Christmas-time was here and I've got so many things to do? Daddy, I'll sit with you some other time."

By and by when Christmas morning came, the daughter placed in her father's lap a gift that she had prepared for him. When he opened the package he found it was a beautiful sweater. When he looked at it he said, "Oh, isn't this beautiful!" She said, "Now, Daddy, you know what I've been doing. Every night you wanted me to come and sit with you by the fire, I have been knitting this sweater. I have been working to make this pretty sweater for you." He looked at the sweater, rubbed his hand over it, then looked at his daughter and smiled, and said, "Honey, it is beautiful, and it's nice that you have been thoughtful of me; but, honey, I could have bought a sweater, and it would have been so nice if you could have come and sat with me by the fire a little while. It was communion and fellowship that I wanted to enjoy." God seeks the fruit of fellowship in our lives.

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Part 30

HOW ASBURY SPENT HIS CHRISTMASES

hdm0560, "The Heart of Asbury's Journal"

By Ezra Squier Tipple

Christmas-time Entries From Asbury's Journal

[A perusal of the entries will reveal that Asbury was always "busy about his Father's business" at Christmas-time. He did not take it to be a time to slacken in his calling. -- DVM]

DECEMBER 22, 1771 -- I preached to a large company in the evening, and felt much power. I know that God was with us indeed, yea, was nigh to bless the people. On Christmas Day we had a very comfortable time. On Friday, the twenty-seventh, I set off with two of my friends for Staten Island. On the twenty-eighth we arrived at Justice Wright's, where we were entertained with the best his house afforded. From thence I went to my old friend Van Pelt's, who received me with his former kindness, and collected a congregation for the evening, to whom I preached, but had a

violent pain in my head. After service I went to bed, and was very ill. However, the next day, being the Lord's Day, I preached in the morning and also in the afternoon, with some freedom of mind. In the evening I returned and preached at Justice Wright's.

CHRISTMAS DAY, DECEMBER 25, 1772

I then went to Joseph Dallam's, and on Christmas Day attended the church, and heard Parson West preach a plain, useful sermon which contained much truth, and afterward received the sacrament.

* * *

CHRISTMAS DAY

DECEMBER 25, 1775 -- Being Christmas Day, I preached from i Tim. 1:15 "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." My spirit was at liberty, and we were much blessed both in preaching and class meeting. Hitherto the Lord hath helped me both in soul and body, beyond my expectation. May I cheerfully do and suffer all his will. endure to the end, and be eternally saved!

* * *

CHRISTMAS DAY

DECEMBER 25, 1777 -- Mr. W. read a good sermon, suitable to the day, at church. Many people attended at the preaching house, where I declared from 1 Tim. 1:15, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." The language of my heart on this Christmas Day was, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee."

JANUARY 2, 1778 -- I experienced much of the love of Jesus Christ shed abroad in my heart, and through his meritorious mediation found a delightful nearness to God. Indeed, I have found great happiness during this Christmas season, and have endeavored to redeem my time by diligent industry. May the Lord keep me steadfast and faithful to the end, and bless me with an abiding witness that I love him with all my heart.

* * *

DECEMBER 25, 1778 -- This being the day for Commemorating the Saviour's birth, I preached at E. W.s with much inward freedom, though the audience were not greatly moved.

* * *

THE CHRISTMAS CONFERENCE

DECEMBER 24, 1784 -- Having continued at Perry Hall for a week, we this day rode to Baltimore, where we met a few preachers. It was agreed to form ourselves into an Episcopal Church, and to have superintendents, elders, and deacons. When the Conference was seated Dr. Coke and myself were unanimously elected to the superintendency of the church, and my ordination followed, after being previously ordained deacon and elder, as by the following certificate may be seen.

* * *

DECEMBER 25, 1787 -- Last night while sleeping I dreamed I was praying for sanctification, and God very sensibly filled me with love, and I waked shouting, "Glory, glory to God!" My soul was all in a flame. I had never felt so much of God in my life; and so I continued. This was on Christmas Day -- a great day to me. I rode to the widow Wollord's, and preached on, "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." During the last five days we have ridden one hundred and forty miles.

* * *

CHRISTMAS DAY, 1788 -- I preached in the open house at Fairfield's. on Isa. 9:6. I felt warm in speaking, but there was an offensive smell of rum among the people.

* * *

DECEMBER 25, 1789 -- On Christmas Eve I made a visit to Counselor Carter, a very social gentleman, a Baptist. After preaching we had fifteen miles to ride, and twenty miles the next morning to Lancaster quarterly meeting.

* * *

CHRISTMAS DAY, 1790 -- I had thirty miles to Hanover. William Glendenning began before I came; when he had done I went into the tavern-keeper's porch; but I afterward judged it best to withdraw, and speak in another place. I stood in the door of a public house, and, with about half of my congregation out of doors, preached on, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy." The people behaved exceedingly well, and the town was very still.

* * *

CHRISTMAS DAY, 1791 -- I preached on John 4:14, and had a comfortable season; many spoke of the dealings of God with their souls. The examination among the preachers relative to character and experience was very close; all was meekness and love.

* * *

CHRISTMAS EVE, 1792 -- We rode in the rain twenty-five mile to our kind Brother Horton's, and found many people had gathered.

CHRISTMAS DAY, 1792 -- Although the weather was cold and damp, and unhealthy, with signs of snow, w rode forty-five miles to dear Brother Rembert's, kind and good, rich and liberal, who has done more for the poor Methodists than any man in South Carolina.

[Colonel James Rembert was a wealthy slave owner, who lived in Black River in South Carolina. Rembert Hall was on Asbury's route to Charleston, and once a year he found delightful shelter there.]

* * *

CHRISTMAS DAY, 1793 -- (South Carolina). Came to Blakeney's, on the waters of Lynch's Creek; here I preached to about forty people, it being Christmas Day.

* * *

CHRISTMAS DAY, 1794 -- We changed our course, and took the grand Camden road to great Lynch's Creek, thirty miles. When I came to Mr. Evans' and told my name I was invited to stay; and it was well for us that we did.

* * *

CHRISTMAS DAY, 1795 -- We set out at six o'clock for Georgetown, and came to Urania Ferry, which we crossed. We were detained at the two ferries about three hours, and rested one, and came to Georgetown about four o'clock in the evening, having ridden thirty-seven miles without eating or drinking, except a lowland hard apple, which I found in my pocket.

* * *

DECEMBER 24, 1797 -- It is exceedingly cold still. The pain in my breast is returned; I fear it is immovably fixed. more or less until death. Lord, thy will be done! Wearisome days are appointed for me. Brother Dromgoole came in the evening of Christmas Day. I am cheered with company, and with Christ also. I feel as if the coming year would be marked with displays of divine power upon the souls of men to whoever may live to see it.

* * *

DECEMBER 17, 1798 -- Came to Charleston. Fasting and riding through the heavy sands, cause me to feel ill. I received a cooling breeze in a letter from the North. For the first time I opened my mouth upon Psa. 66:13, 14. We have peace and good prospects in Charleston; very large congregations attend the ministration of the Word.

CHRISTMAS DAY, 1798 -- I preached from Luke 2:14, and at the new church on Hag. 2:7.

* * *

DECEMBER 24, 1799 -- (South Carolina). We came twenty-three miles to Chester's, the best entertainment we could find; it was but for a night.

CHRISTMAS DAY, 1799 -- We rode twenty-three miles to a pole meetinghouse, near Trotty's; thence ten miles to Jacob Barr's; here I was once more at home.

* * *

KEEPING CHRISTMAS

CHRISTMAS DAY, 1800 -- At Glenn's Flat, Chester County, Sealey's meetinghouse, we kept our Christmas. Brother Whatcoat preached on, "The Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." My subject was, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." We lodged at Robert Walker's, eighty years of age, awakened under Mr. Whitefield in Fogg's Manor, reawakened at Pipe Creek, and a member of the first Methodist society in Maryland.

* * *

CHRISTMAS DAY, 1802 -- I preached at Rembert's Chapel, and on Sunday James Patterson spoke on, "Enoch walked with God." There is a great change in this settlement. Whenever our preachers gain the confidence of the lowland planters, if indeed that time shall ever be, so that the masters will give us all the liberty we ought to have, there will be thousands of the poor slaves converted to God. The patient must be personally visited by the physician before advice and medicine will be proper; and so it is, and must ever be, with the sin-sick soul and the spiritual physician. Letters from the North announce very pleasing intelligence of a great work of God in Maryland and in parts of Virginia.

* * *

[Asbury was greatly bereaved this year. Three of his most efficient preachers had died. His opinion of Wilson Lee appears in his Journal under date of November 3. Nicholas Watters was the brother of William Watters, who was the first American-born Methodist preacher, and like his brother preached with great acceptance in several states. Tobias Gibson was the pioneer itinerant in the Southern Mississippi Valley, a man of unsullied reputation and ceaseless labors.]

CHRISTMAS DAY, 1804 -- I gave them a sermon upon Isa. 9: 6: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." A "child," after his human nature; a "son of God." "The government shall be upon his shoulder" -- upon the shoulder it was that ancient temporal governors carried their badge of office. His "shoulder" shall be strong enough for the thousands of his faithful ministers, and the millions of his faithful ministers, and the millions of his faithful people in his church militant, who shall confide in his strength. "His name shall be called" -- that is, he shall in reality be what he is called. "Wonderful" -- that is, a mysterious and miraculous person in his manifestations-in his birth, spiritual and holy; and in his miracles, notable, perfect, and undeniable. "Counselor" this may refer

to his ministry-his prophetic, priestly, and kingly offices. "Mighty God" -- mighty in the power of his grace. "The Everlasting Father" -- as such, giving life, and life eternal. "Prince of Peace" -- giving and preserving peace in his kingdom; and thus contradistinguished from temporal princes, who are so generally promoters of war.

* * *

CHRISTMAS DAY, 1805 -- I preached at Rembert's Chapel; my subject, I Tim. 3:16: "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness," etc.: 1. I gave a pastoral introduction; 2. A brief explanation of godliness, the knowledge of God in Christ Jesus, confidence in God, love to him, fear of offending him. To this were added a few thoughts on the six cases in the text. It was not a pleasant season. Christmas Day is the worst in the whole year on which to preach Christ, at least to me. I am now in the fortieth year of my labors in the ministry; thirty-four years of this time have been spent in America.

* * *

CHRISTMAS DAY, 1806 -- Our new chapel at Liberty is thirty by fifty feet. I gave them a sermon in it on I Pet. 4:3-5.

* * *

A NOTABLE CONFERENCE

CHRISTMAS DAY, 1808 -- I preached on John 3:17. We opened our Conference on Monday. We had great labor, which we went through in great peace. Between sixty and seventy men were present, all of one spirit. We appointed three missionaries, one for Tombigbee, one to Ashley and Savannah, and the country between, and one to labor between Santee and Cooper Rivers. Increase within the bounds of this Conference, three thousand and eighty-eight. Preaching and exhortations, and singing, and prayer-we had all these without intermission on the campground, and we have reasons to believe that many souls will be converted. The number of traveling and local preachers present are about three hundred. There are people here with their tents who have come one hundred and fifty miles. The prospects of doing good are glorious. We have already added two new circuits, and gained six preachers. There may have been from two to three thousand persons assembled.

[This conference was held at Milledgeville, Georgia, and it is said that this was the first and only Annual Conference in this section held in connection with a camp meeting. Among others received on trial was William Capers, destined to a brilliant career as preacher, college professor and president, editor, missionary secretary, and, after the division of the denomination, bishop.]

* * *

DECEMBER 20, 1812 -- (Charleston, South Carolina). I preached at Cumberland Chapel in the morning, and at Bethel in the afternoon. The presiding eldership and the episcopacy saw eye to eye in the business of the stations: there were no murmurings from the eighty-four employed.

Christmas Day was a day of fasting, and we dined one hundred at our house on bread and water, and a little tea or coffee in the evening. Funds are low; but our church is inured to poverty, and the preachers may be called the poor of this world, as well as their flocks.

[This is the final Christmas-time or December 25th entry from Asbury's Journal included in Tipple's "Heart of Asbury's Journal." Tipple wrote of Francis Asbury that he "died as he lived -- full of confidence, full of love -- at four o'clock this afternoon," Sunday, March 31, 1816.]

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Part 31

FREEBORN GARRETTSON, THE "PAUL REVERE" OF THE 1784 CHRISTMAS CONFERENCE

From: hdm0168.tex, "Freeborn Garrettson," by Ezra S. Tipple

When Coke had met Garrettson in Delaware, and had conferred with Asbury and other preachers, and it had been decided to call a General Conference at Baltimore, he wrote in his Journal: "Here I met with an excellent young man, Freeborn Garrettson. He seems all meekness and love, and yet all activity. He makes me quite ashamed, for he invariably rises at four in the morning, and not only he but several others of the preachers. Him we sent off, like an arrow, from north to south, directing him to send messengers to the right and left and to gather all the preachers together at Baltimore on Christmas Eve." And this the appointed herald of the Christmas Conference did. "I set out for Virginia and Carolina," he writes, "and a tedious journey I had. My dear Master enabled me to ride about twelve hundred miles in about six weeks; and preach going and coming constantly. The Conference began on Christmas Day."

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Part 32

METHODIST WORTHIES AT THE 1784 CHRISTMAS CONFERENCE

From: hdm0168.tex, "Freeborn Garrettson," by Ezra S. Tipple

The day before Christmas, 1784, there might have been seen riding along a road leading into Baltimore a cavalcade more interesting in some ways than Chaucer's Canterbury pilgrims. There was not to be seen such diversity of dress as shown in Stothard's picture of that famous English band of pilgrims, for this Maryland procession was made up of soberly dressed Methodist preachers, who had been guests of Henry Dorsey Gough, a man of large wealth, whose home, Perry Hall, some twelve miles from the city, was for years both a preaching place and haven of rest for the itinerants.

These were serious men who were riding that day from Perry Hall into Baltimore, for they were about to engage in the most important conference of Methodist preachers ever held in America; confident of divine guidance, for hitherto had Jehovah helped them; audacious because a continent now free stretched out before them to be taken for Christ. At ten o'clock the next morning the first session of the famous Christmas Conference assembled. Coke, as Wesley's representative,

was in the chair. Of a total of eighty or more preachers nearly sixty were present, and of these we know the names of twenty-nine.

Beyond question the most conspicuous figure was Francis Asbury, who had been picked by Wesley for the general superintendency, but there were other men present equally worthy of notice, as, for instance, Whatcoat and Vasey, recently arrived in America, accredited messengers of Wesley; Reuben Ellis, "an excellent counselor and steady yoke fellow in Jesus"; Edward Dromgoole, an Irishman and a converted Romanist; John Haggerty, a trophy of John King's zeal, and who could preach both in English and in German; William Gill, pronounced by Dr. Benjamin Rush, the eminent physician, "the greatest divine he had ever heard"; Thomas Ware, afterward the founder of the denomination in New Jersey, and a successful preacher for a half century; Francis Poythress, who the year previous had borne the standard across the Alleghenies; Joseph Everett, "the roughest-spoken preacher that ever stood in the itinerant ranks"; Le Roy Cole, who was to live long, preach much, and do much good; William Glendenning, an erratic Scotchman; Nelson Reed, small of stature but mighty in spirit; James O'Kelly, then a most laborious and popular evangelist but later a rebellious controversialist; John Dickins, one of the ablest scholars of early Methodism; William Black, the first apostle to Nova Scotia, who had come to plead for helpers; Caleb Boyer and Ignatius Pigman, the former the Saint Paul and the latter the Apollos of the denomination; Jonathan Forrest, who was to be privileged to see the Church, which in this historic assembly he helped to found, increase from about 15,000 members to 1,000,000, and from 80 or more traveling preachers to over 4,000; and Freeborn Garrettson, tall, broad-shouldered, high-browed, grave but with a kindly smile, serene and self-poised, and as worthy as any of these named or any of the others present to sit in this first great Conference of the Church...

It was once said to Robert Hall concerning Christmas Evans, "He has only one eye;" Hall replied, "Ah, but that's a piercer; why, sir, it is an eye to light an army through a wilderness in a dark night." Such was Garrettson's power of spiritual leadership, and it lay in this: he seems to have had but one thought, namely, to please God.

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Part 33

WHEN IT FROZE IN JUNE

From: "Pointed Illustrations" by W. M. Tidwell, hdm0231

Illustration entitled: "He Went to Church"

[This one only alludes to Christmas, but it is too good to leave out. Actually, it would fit best in my publication entitled, "Providential Irony". -- DVM]

All his life Old Bill had never gone to church. No matter how much we coaxed, we could not persuade him to attend even on Christmas or Easter. "When it freezes in June," he would say, "then I'll go to church."

One year it was unusually cold and stayed that way till late spring. In the first part of June the mercury dipped to freezing for several nights. I thought about Old Bill and what he had said.

Perhaps this phenomenon would bring him to church. It did. One Sunday Old Bill made his first appearance in church. While the organ played softly, six men carried him in. -- Selected.

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Part 34

HE EXPECTED THE RAVENS ON CHRISTMAS NIGHT

From: "Effective Illustrations," hdm0165.txt,
by W. M. Tidwell

A little boy and his widowed mother had been reading of how the ravens fed Elijah. The two were sitting in a fireless room beside a bare table on a bitter Christmas night. Both were very hungry and their case was desperate, but simple faith triumphed. When they had finished reading and had knelt down to pray, the little boy asked if he might open the door for God's ravens to come in, for he was sure they must be on their way. The mother agreed. The Mayor of the town was passing the house and noticed the open door and came to find out what was the matter. The story was soon told and his response was, "I will be God's raven." Very soon their need was abundantly met. -- From the Christian Herald (London). Sent by E. M. James, Toronto, Canada. Prize illustration.

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Part 35

AN UNUSUAL CONVERT AT CHRISTMAS-TIME

From: hdm1543.txt, "When God Taps on Your Shoulder,"
by Fletcher Clarke Spruce

It was Christmas time, 1934. My roommate, George Gardner, and I were hitchhiking from college to conduct a revival for my brother who was pastor at Temple, Texas. Somehow we separated and George caught a ride to Dallas and I got one to Fort Worth and on to Waco. At midnight a limousine stopped for me. On the seat were cigarettes, a half-empty flask of liquor, and a revolver. We had not gone far before the driver pulled up for more drinks, then started speeding crazily and singing loudly.

It seemed appropriate that I try to improve the situation, so I offered to drive -- but my offer was graciously declined. Partly through necessity I found myself testifying to the drunken stranger at the wheel, asking such elementary questions as: "Are you a Christian?"

To my delight he slowed to a crawl, pulled off the pavement, and turned the key. It was one of those quiet, crisp nights with full moon streaming down -- a good night to pray. And pray I did, for that was all I knew to do.

"Have you ever been saved?" I asked.

"I promised my wife before I left Fort Worth that I would not touch a drop tonight, and she is on her knees praying for me right now." His voice broke and he bowed over the steering wheel.

"Maybe we could pray too," I continued. "God can answer your wife's prayer and deliver you from this awful sin." Soon he was weeping loudly -- then shouting! He threw the flask and the cigarettes out the window and testified to God's grace, sober as could be.

I did not lead him to Christ alone. Neither did his wife. It took the both of us working together in an unseen and unknown partnership. Likely few of us ever see people saved without the help of another. We are laborers together -- with Him!

* * * * *

Part 36

GOD'S KIND OF LOVE IS UNSELFISH

From: hdm1506.txt, "Beside the Shepherd's Tent,"

by B. V. Seals

I know we are admonished in the Bible not to judge one another, but I think if you want to examine your own heart to determine how religious you actually are, it could be measured by how unselfish you are, how much you are interested in self and how little you are interested in others. There is not much really disinterested benevolence in this world, not many people doing good just for the pure joy of it, but that perhaps is the only Christian benevolence.

If we invite people home with us for dinner this Sunday, they are supposed to take us next Sunday. We all know how nervous we get around Christmas time for fear somebody will send us a more expensive gift than we send them. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.

I asked my wife one time if I could invite some friends to our place for Christmas dinner. We were too far from any of our people to have them. She said it would be all right. I went downtown where there was an old man that sacked up potatoes and weighed up sugar in the back of the grocery store where I traded. He lived in a little shack all alone down by the railroad. I went to him and said: "Dad, I've seen you here working and I know you live all alone. I have often thought of my dad; if he were somewhere alone like this, I would like for somebody to be kind to him. I talked it over with my wife, and we want you to come to our place for Christmas dinner."

He stood up and knocked the dust off his overalls and said, "You mean me?"

I answered, "Yes. Don't worry about fixing up too much. Just come. Eats will be the main thing."

I rounded up two others like that, and when they showed up at my place I hardly knew them. They were dressed like bankers, and we had a wonderful time. We had a big turkey the people had given us, for I think that was our first year in the pastorate there. U. E. Harding says the first year they give you a turkey, the second year a chicken, the third year a rabbit, and if you stay any longer than that you are on your own. I think that was our first year, so we had a big turkey. We did a good job by it. Then we got down on the floor and helped the children put their train tracks together. When we were all through, I had prayer with our guests. I never insisted on their coming

to church, but the three started coming regularly, and as long as I was there I had those three to preach to, and had them as close friends.

When will the church start out to be unselfish, to pour out its life like incense on the altar of God, to seek not its own but the welfare of others, and most of all the glory of Christ? God's kind of love seeketh not her own.

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Part 37

A WHEEL-BARROW FULL OF ANSWERED PRAYER

From: hdm0656.txt, "Gipsy Smith" -- an Autobiography

When my father and his brothers traveled about the country, all their families accompanied them. By this time my father had prayed my sisters Emily and Lovinia and my brother Ezekiel into the kingdom. They came in the order of their ages. I was the next, and in my heart I, too, was longing for God. My father used to pray continually in my hearing, "Lord, save my Rodney!"

All this time my father was very poor, and one winter at Cambridge we were in the hardest straits. My father was sitting in his van, looking solemn and sad. That day one of my aunts, I knew, had been buying provisions for the Christmas feast on the morrow. This had excited my interest, and, boy-like, I wanted to know what we were going to have for Christmas, and I asked my father. "I do not know, my dear," he said, quietly. There was nothing in the house, and he had no money. Then the devil came and tempted him. His fiddle was hanging on the wall, and he looked at it desperately and thought to himself, "If I just take down my fiddle and go to a public house and play to the people there, my children, too, will have a good Christmas dinner." But the temptation was very soon overcome. My father fell on his knees and began to pray. He thanked God for all His goodness to him, and when he arose from his knees he said to his children, "I don't know quite what we shall have for Christmas, but we will sing." He began to sing with a merry heart:

"In some way or other
The Lord will provide:
It may not be my way,
It may not be thy way;
But yet in His own way
The Lord will provide."

Just then, while we were singing, there was a knock at the door of the van.

"Who is there?" cried my father.

It was the old Cambridge town missionary, Mr. Sykes.

"It is I, Brother Smith. God is good, is He not? I have come to tell you how the Lord will provide. In a shop in this town there are three legs of mutton and groceries waiting for you and your brothers."

A wheelbarrow was needed to bring home the store. The brothers never knew who gave them these goods. But the word of God was verified: "No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly."

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Part 38

A GRACIOUS OUTPOURING AT CHRISTMAS-TIME, 1928

From: "Missionary Prospector," hdm0802, by Lula Schmelzenbach

At the Christmas feast of 1928, the Lord gave us a most gracious outpouring of His Holy Spirit, and Brother Schmelzenbach, weak in body, but with the old-time fire in his soul, preached a mighty sermon to about six hundred black faces, about half of them raw heathen. When he finished he turned to Joseph, who was close by his side, and said, "Joseph, give your testimony, and close with an altar call." Joseph was immediately on his feet, and fired away. "Men, brethren, all ye people: I am a Swazi of the Swazis. There is not a person in this great company who does not know who I am. You all know how earnestly I served Satan when I was still walking in darkness. I had such a bad temper when a child my parents feared some day I would murder my playmates in one of those mad rages. None tried to stir my temper, for when they did I might have killed my offender had they not interfered. Numbers of times my parents had me treated by a witch-doctor, thinking I was bewitched. In manhood I became worse, often getting drunk.

"The witch-doctor told my parents the only thing that would cure me was to become a policeman of the white chief. They were needing a policeman at that time and I was given work. I was sent to Mbabane, the capital of Swaziland, where I was in the police force for the big chief of Swaziland. Although they gave me nice clothes to put on I felt no different on the inside. I was still as bad a drunkard as I ever had been, I still lied, stole, swore, and all other things that are bad. The only reason I was concerned about my bad temper, was I feared I would kill a person some day, and then be killed for it. My white chief soon found that I had plenty of cleverness to fool people so they appointed me as a detective.

"I had been in this service only about three months, when one day one of the men disputed my word. I was on him at once, beating him. The big white chief came running out and demanded the others take me off. They pushed me into the courthouse. I then saw that the witch-doctor's remedy had failed. I kept on with my work. It was not easy work, because I had to go day or night and some prisoners were very dangerous.

"One Sunday I was on a detective case when I came to a building where people were singing. I drew near and looked into the window. I knew that every person who covered his body with clothes of the white people, was called a believer, who worshipped God in the different churches seen about the country, but I did not know how they worshipped, nor did I care. Every

time a native worker would come near me I would laugh him to scorn, and tell him that he was bewitched by a white man.

"When the singing stopped a white missionary rose to her feet and began to speak. She was reading from a little black book which she held in her hand. I thought what strange and marvelous words she was saying. They were from the first Psalm. I shall never forget those words, for they followed me from that day to this. My heart began to accuse me and I slipped into church and stayed until the service closed. As I went away I mused with my heart, I said, 'Indeed a great and marvelous thing had befallen me that day, for did not that white missionary tell me all my heart?' and I knew she had never seen me before.

"I went back to church the next Sunday, and before I left I gave my heart to God and found Jesus as my Saviour. It was then that I found the remedy for my bad temper and everything else that was wicked in my heart. A few months later I received the Holy Spirit, who burned out that old root of sin and bitterness. I have never wanted to kill a person since. I have preached to people until they have gotten so mad that they wanted to kill me. I never carry anything in my hand but my Bible, and yet my enemies will run from me.

"Now you have my story. It is a long one, but when I was full of Satan and walking in darkness, you said I was bewitched, and the witch-doctor said he had a remedy to deliver me, but he lied. Then I discovered that the only witch there was, was living in my heart, and the only remedy to deliver from him was the blood of Jesus. You laugh and call me a crazy preacher. Oh, the hardness and darkness of the hearts of my people! Won't you take this Lord that found me and gave deliverance." All heads dropped to the ground, faces down in prayer, while he gave an appealing altar call, and a number of raw heathen made their way to the center of the ring and gave their hearts to God and started for heaven, and they are still on the way. Praise the Lord forever!

In this the year of 1936 Joseph and Emma are still in the work and as loyal, and on fire as they ever were. Pray for them and their family of three fine boys.

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Part 39

A DISGRACEFUL INTERRUPTION ON CHRISTMAS EVE

From: hdm0216.txt, Stevens' M. E. History

As most of the churches in the city were shut, during its occupation by the British [during the Revolutionary War], the congregations of John Street were unusually large, notwithstanding the declension of the membership of the Society... Occasionally some of the more important men of the army, from mischief; perhaps, rather than malice, interrupted their humble worship. "Upon a Christmas eve, when the members had assembled to celebrate the advent of the world's Redeemer, a party of British officers, masked, marched into the chapel. One, very properly personifying their master, was dressed with cloven feet and a long forked tail. The devotions of course soon ceased, and the chief devil, proceeding up the aisle, entered the altar. As he was ascending the stairs of the pulpit, a gentleman present, with his cane, knocked off his Satanic majesty's mask, when lo, there stood a well-known British colonel! He was immediately seized and detained, until the city guard

was sent to take charge of the bold offender. The congregation retired, and the entrances of the church were locked upon the prisoner for additional security. His companions outside then commenced an attack upon the doors and windows, but the arrival of the guard put an end to these disgraceful proceedings, and the prisoner was delivered into their custody."

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Part 40

HOW NATHAN BANGS BACKSLID AS A YOUTH

From: hdm0189.txt, "The Life and Times of Nathan Bangs,"
by Abel Stevens

The rock upon which I was wrecked was the fact that I did not make known my new condition to any one, nor seek to associate with those who could instruct me, from their own experience, in the ways of godliness. Having failed to confess Christ, I 'grieved the Holy Spirit.' I gradually lapsed into negligence, and began to hanker after my old pleasures. I evaded my conscience even in prayer; as an example, I may state that I was invited to a Christmas-eve ball about this time, and actually, on my knees, asked liberty from God to attend it; saying, with Naaman, 'The Lord pardon thy servant in this thing.' I went, but, alas! what trouble of conscience I felt while leading off the dance!" He attempted to drown his anguish by ardent spirits, and by plunging into the gayest hilarity of the evening, but he could not. "And though I continued," he adds, "for more than four years in this state, I did not lose my convictions, nor did my desire to serve God ever become extinguished."

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Part 41

WHY ABSENT FROM WORLDLY COMPANY AT CHRISTMAS

hdm0515.txt, "Holy Ghost Messages," by Charles H. Stalker

The Holy Ghost comes in as a reality, and He is sure to do something that none of your relatives think He can do. You are the odd one, they talk of you as an absentee, they point to your picture on the wall. "Yes, they used to be here at Christmas and at Thanksgiving, but they went to a meeting and got something, and they have never been like us since." You are looked upon as a curiosity, you had better go so far away that they cannot see you. Do not look on the same dates, because we cannot sit around and count our friends on our fingers when the world is dying for the message that brings life.

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Part 42

"ALTHOUGH" AND "YET"

From: hdm0158.txt, "The Christian's Secret,"
by Hannah Whitall Smith

Habakkuk 3:17-18 "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: 18 Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation."

In many of our store windows at Christmas time there stands a most significant picture. It is a dreary, desolate winter scene. There is a dark, stormy, wintry sky, bare trees, and brown grass and dead weeds, with patches of snow over them. On a leafless tree at one side of the picture is an empty and snow-covered nest, and on a branch near sits a little bird. All is cold, and dark, and desolate enough to daunt any bird, and drive it to some fairer clime, but this bird is sitting there in an attitude of perfect contentment, and has its little head bravely lifted up towards the sky, while a winter song is evidently about to burst forth from its tiny throat.

This picture, which always stands on my shelf, has preached me many a sermon. And the test is always the same, and finds its expression in the two words that stand at the head of this article, "Although" and "Yet."

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Part 43

NELLIE'S CHRISTMAS GIFT

From: hdm0463.txt, "Thrilling Stories," by Julia A. Shelhamer

Some years ago, while conducting a series of meetings in Michigan City, I was asked to preach to the convicts in the State prison. I sat on the platform with the governor of the prison and watched the prisoners march in -- 700 men, young and old. They marched in lock-step, every man's hand on the shoulder of the man before him. At the word of command they sat down. Among that number there were seventy-six lifers," men who had been committed to prison for life for the crime of murder.

After the singing I arose to preach, but could hardly speak for weeping. Disregarding all the rules of the prison, in my earnestness to help the poor, fallen men, I left the platform and walked down the aisle among them, taking one, and then another by the hand and praying for him. At the end of the row of men who were committed for murder sat a man who more than his fellows seemed marked by sin's blighting curse. His face was seamed and ridged with scars and marks of vice and sin. He looked as though he might be a demon incarnate if once aroused to anger. I placed my hand upon his shoulder and wept and prayed with and for him.

When the service was over, the governor said to me, "Do you know you have broken the rules of the prison by leaving the platform?" "Yes, governor, but I never can keep any rule while preaching. And I did want to get up close to the poor, despairing fellows and pray for them, and tell them of the love of Jesus the Savior. 'He came to seek and to save that which was lost. This Man (Jesus) receiveth sinners and eateth with them.'" (Luke 19:10; 15:2.)

"Do you remember," said the governor, "the man at the end of the line in the lifers' row, whom you prayed with? Would you like to hear his history?"

"Yes," I answered, gladly.

"Well, here it is in brief. Tom Galson was sent here about eight years ago for the crime of murder. He was, without doubt, one of the most desperate and vicious characters we had ever received, and, as was expected, gave us a great deal of trouble.

"One Christmas Eve, about six years ago, duty compelled me to spend the night at the prison, instead of at home, as I had anticipated. Early in the morning, while it was yet dark, I left the prison for my home, my pockets full of presents for my little girl. It was a bitter cold morning, and I buttoned my overcoat up to protect myself from the cutting wind that swept in from the lake. As I hurried along, I thought I saw somebody skulking in the shadow of the prison wall. I stopped and looked a little more closely, and then saw a little girl, wretchedly clothed in a thin dress; her bare feet thrust into a pair of shoes much the worse for wear. In her hand she held, tightly clasped, a small paper parcel. Wondering who she was, and why she was out so early in the morning, and yet too weary to be interested, I hurried on. But I soon heard that I was being followed. I stopped, and turned around, and there before me stood the same wretched-looking child.

"'What do you want?' I asked sharply. 'Are you the governor of the prison, sir?' 'Yes, who are you, and why are you not at home?' 'Please, sir, I have no home; mamma died in the poorhouse two weeks ago, and she told me just before she died that papa (that Tom Galson) was in prison, and she thought that maybe he would like to see his little girl, now that mamma is dead. Please, can't you let me see my papa? Today is Christmas, and I want to give him a present.'

"'No,' I replied gruffly, 'you will have to wait until visitors' day,' and started on. I had not gone many steps when I felt a pull at my coat, and a pleading voice said, 'Please, don't go.' I stopped once more, and looked into the pinched, beseeching face before me. Great tears were in her eyes, while her little chin quivered with emotion.

"'Mister,' she said, 'if your little girl was me, and your girl's mamma had died in the poorhouse, and her papa was in the prison, and she had no place to go and no one to love her, don't you think she would like to see her papa? If it was Christmas, and your little girl came to me, if I was governor of the prison, and asked me to please let me see her papa to give him a Christmas present, don't you -- don't you think I would say yes?'

"By this time a great lump was in my throat, and my eyes were swimming in tears. I answered, 'Yes, my little girl, I think you would, and you shall see your papa, and, taking her hand, I hurried back to the prison, thinking of my own fair-haired little girl at home. Arriving in my office, I bade her come near the warm stove, while I sent a guard to bring No.37 from his cell. As soon as he came into the office he saw the little girl. His face clouded with an angry frown, and in a gruff, savage tone he snapped out:

"'Nellie, what are you doing here; what do you want? Go back to your mother.' 'Please, papa,' sobbed the little girl, 'mamma's dead. She died two weeks ago in the poorhouse, and before she died she told me to take care of little Jimmie, because you loved him so; and told me to tell you she loved you, too -- but, papa' -- and here her voice broke in sobs and tears -- 'Jimmie died,

too, last week, and now I am alone, papa, and today's Christmas, papa, and -- and I thought, maybe as you loved Jimmie, you would like a little Christmas present from him.'

"Here she unrolled the little bundle she held in her hand, until she came to a little package of tissue paper, from which she took out a little fair curl, and put it in her father's hand, saying, as she did so: 'I cut it from dear little Jimmie's head, papa, just afore they buried him.'

"No.37 by this time was sobbing like a child and so was I. Stooping down, 37 picked up the little girl, pressed her convulsively to his breast, while his great frame shook convulsively with suppressed emotion.

"The scene was too sacred for me to look upon, so I softly opened the door and left them alone. In about an hour I returned. No.37 sat near the stove, with his little daughter on his knee. He looked at me sheepishly for a moment, and then said, 'Governor, I haven't any money; then suddenly stripping off his prison jacket, he said, 'Don't let my little girl go out this bitter cold day with that thin dress. Let me give her this coat. I'll work early and late; I'll do anything, I'll be a man. Please, governor, let me cover her with this coat.' Tears were streaming down the face of the hardened man.

"'No, Galson" I said, 'keep your coat; your little girl shall not suffer. I'll take her to my home and see what my wife can do for her.' 'God bless you,' sobbed Galson. I took the girl to my home. She remained with us a number of years, and became a true Christian by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ."

Tom Galson also became a Christian, and on a subsequent visit to the prison the governor said to me, "Would you like to see Tom Galson, whose story I told you a few years ago?" "Yes, I would," I answered. He took me down a quiet street, and stopping at a neat home, knocked at the door. The door was opened by a cheerful woman, who greeted the governor with the utmost cordiality. We went in and then the governor introduced me to Nellie and her father, who, because of his reformation, had received pardon, and was now living an upright Christian life with his daughter, whose little Christmas gift had broken his hard heart. --Anon.

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Part 44

BRESEE'S CHRISTMAS LOVE-FEASTS

From: hdm0263.txt "Life Sketches
of P. F. Bresee and W. C. Wilson

The Christmas Love Feast was one of Dr. Bresee's favorite forms of worship, and one in which he took a special and personal interest. During his lifetime he held twenty-eight, all of which he conducted personally. Never at any time did he permit hindering circumstances of any nature to prevent him from attending, nor from being there on time. The first Love Feast was held in the old Tabernacle in Pasadena, and for the next seven years the services were held at Dr. Bresee's church, wherever he happened to be the pastor. When the Nazarene Church was founded it became a general service for all of its members within reach of his church.

As a usual thing these services were held on Christmas morning, unless Christmas came on Sunday, in which case they were postponed to the following day. The purpose of these services was always the manifestation of Divine presence and the glory of God in the edification of believers and the salvation of those out of Christ. We quote the opening words of December 25, 1913: "Now, brothers, sisters, this morning this Love Feast would not amount to that much [snapping his fingers], only that the Divine Christ, the very God, whose name is now Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace, comes to take up His abode in our hearts. If the very God is here, He will make this a marvelous time. If He is manifested, I mean, in the human hearts, He will make it a marvelous time. With His absence this would be nothing. There is not anything worth while in this universe with the Divine Christ absent -- nothing worth while at all." Such was the purpose for which these services were conducted.

Dr. Bresee had no program, but left the service to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Feast of Love was opened with prayer and a victorious song service. Then bread and water, sweet tokens of love, were partaken of by all the congregation in the accustomed way. Following this part of the service the doctor would either exhort briefly or call for testimonies, which he would intersperse with exhortations. The testimony meetings were conducted in various ways. He never failed to call on those who had attended the first Love Feast. Often he would ask those to speak who had been in the way for sixty years, then for fifty, forty, and so on. Later he gave an opportunity for anyone who wished to tell of the power of Jesus' blood. Dr. Bresee was always careful to keep a firm hand on the meeting, lest some error should creep in. If anyone spoke too long he would say, in his kind, gentle manner which we remember well: "Brother, give your testimony, and give someone else a chance." There was always present a beautiful spirit of liberty, for truly where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. Shouts of victory and songs of praises were mingled with the testimonies, and hearts were drawn into close contact with the Divine Christ. When the time came to close, it was the doctor's custom to call the saints up around the altar and there, with hands upraised, they prayed till heaven opened and the glory of God came down in sweet and lasting blessing.

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Part 45

MY ARREST AND RESCUE

From: hdm0387.txt "Striking Illustrations"

by H. C. Morrison

It was during Christmas week that I was placed under arrest and dragged into court. I was a very small boy, in my fourteenth year; I would be fourteen years of age the tenth of the coming March. I was caught in the act; there was no excuse, there seemed to be no help or hope. I was guilty, I was thrust into the prisoners' dock, the gate was slammed, and a big policeman leaned on the gate, and seemed to look at me with a degree of satisfaction at the thought that he had me, and that I was sure of punishment.

I felt utterly helpless; I could not even weep, I had wept all the tears out of my system; I was dry and emotionless, except I was crushed to the very earth with a sense of my guilt and

lostness. The judge was in his big chair but I did not dare look at him. I had no hope for mercy, and I knew that justice would be my ruin.

The courthouse was packed with people; they were gazing at me, as I crouched in the corner of the dock, with looks of accusation which seemed to say, Judge, give him the full benefit of the law and save society from further trouble. Finally, the clerk announced the opening of the court and my case came first. The judge asked the clerk if the boy had any one to represent him. Represent was a new word to me; I supposed my representative was to be my executioner. The clerk answered that I had no one. The judge then said to a lawyer within the bar, I appoint you to represent this boy. The lawyer arose and walking slowly forward, picking his way among the chairs, approached the dock, pushed the policeman to one side, opened the gate and stepped inside the dock. I, withered with fear, crouched closely in my corner, and with eyes wide open with horror, gazed up at my lawyer. He had a wonderful face; it was strong and calm, full of kindness and marvelous beauty. I noticed a tear hanging on his eyelashes; that tear helped me wonderfully. He sat down and slipped his arm around me. It seemed that my very bones had dropped out of their sockets and I was scarcely breathing below my collar button. My attorney drew me up to him; the pressure was so gentle, and yet so strong, it seemed to restore and readjust my bones, relax my nerves, and I commenced to breathe more deeply. Stooping down his silken beard brushed over my suntanned face, and placing his lips close to my ear, he said, "My little friend, are you guilty?" I could not have lied to him if it had been to save my life. With trembling voice I answered, "Yes sir, I am guilty of much more than they know about." "Well," said he, "do you not think it will be best for us to confess judgment and throw you on the mercy of the court?" I did not know what it meant to be thrown on the mercy of the court, but I felt sure that if he would throw me I would alight in the best place there was for me, and I at once answered in the affirmative. My lawyer gave me a gentle pat on the head, and stood up facing the judge.

He said: "Please your Honor, it has been my privilege to practice for many years in your Honor's court, and I have been glad to notice that when the ends of justice can be secured, and society can be protected, it has been your Honor's prerogative to show mercy. I thank the court for appointing me to plead in the interest of this little boy. He confesses his guilt. His heart is broken, he is full of contrition; he has been an orphan from his infancy and is dependent and moneyless, and begs for compassion."

I reached out my soiled, lean fingers and caught hold of the skirt of my attorney's coat. I clung to him with the feeling that if I would hold onto him he would pull me out. I thought his speech was finished but it was a mere introduction. A deep stillness fell upon the great gathering of people and his mellow voice rose until it filled the great room with a most marvelous appeal. He spoke of orphan children, of their loneliness, of their unprotected condition, of the temptations to which they were subjected, of their desolation, like lambs without a shepherd in a world full of hungry wolves seeking to destroy. He spoke until the harsh people softened, old men groaned aloud. He spoke until the tears trickled down the policeman's cheek and looking kindly at me he whispered to know if I did not want a drink of water. I was too busy clinging to the coat-tail of my attorney, gazing into his wonderful face, and listening to his marvelous words, to want anything else. I was breathing deep, new life and hope were creeping into me. I was falling desperately in love with my lawyer.

My attorney said, "Please your Honor, if you in the spirit of mercy, will dismiss the charges and set the lad free, I pledge myself to become his guardian, to see to it that he has a home and protection. I will look after his education and I promise to give to society a good and useful citizen.

I could scarcely keep from crying aloud for joy. It seemed my heart would burst within me for gratitude. I felt as if they would let me place my ragged shoes upon the bench upon which I sat, and throw my ragged coat sleeve about the neck of my attorney and kiss his cheek one time, they might take me out and hang me, and I would die shouting.

In the midst of his wonderful address my attorney, instead of addressing the judge as "Your Honor," said, "My Father." This shot through me. I saw that if the judge had appointed his own son to plead for me it was more than likely that he would heed his pleadings and show me mercy. Men were weeping all over the courthouse. I had both hands full of the skirts of the coat of my lawyer; the policeman had laid aside his cap, had gotten out his handkerchief, and had buried his face in a flood of tears. It was a powerful moment in my trial; my attorney had reached his climax. He exclaimed, "My father, this child for whom I plead is none other than my brother." I saw at once that if the judge was the father of my attorney, and the attorney was my brother, then the judge was my father also. I could restrain myself no longer. I gave a great cry of joy, leaped out of the dock, rushed up into the judge's stand and flung myself upon his bosom. He embraced me with a long, tender pressure that seemed to make me through and through a new creature. Folding me in his arms he stood up and said, "Rejoice with me, for my son who was dead is alive, who was lost is found." The entire crowd in the courthouse broke into tears and laughter. The people embraced each other; they all seemed to want to shake hands with me. They congratulated my attorney, and we laughed, and wept, and shouted together.

I hardly need tell you that the courthouse was a Methodist Church, that the trial was an old-time revival, that the Word of God arrested me and brought me, convicted and guilty, to the bar of justice; that the eternal Father was the Judge upon the throne, and that the Lord Jesus Christ was the attorney who pled my case, won my pardon, and secured my eternal salvation.

I look back with fondest memory to that great occasion when bowed and burdened with guilt, bound with sin, Jesus Christ undertook for me, broke my chains, swept away my guilt, and at the throne of the universe secured for me a full and free forgiveness, a blessed and glorious pardon, and revealed the blessed fact that the great God -- the Judge of all the world -- was, and is, my Father in heaven.

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Part 46

WHY FATHER BOUGHT NO CHRISTMAS GIFTS

From: hdm0137.txt "H. Robb French, Pioneer, Prophet and Prayer
Warrior," Compiled By Anna Talbott McPherson

The French children were a bit puzzled by some of the privations that befell them that first winter in their new home. Why did Father not go to town and buy Christmas presents for them as he had done back in Lawrence?

"Why, Father ...?" little Robb finally was courageous enough to ask. "Why don't you go to town for presents anymore?"

Father smiled and reached into his pocket. He pulled out two pennies. "This is all I have, Son. This is why."

When Christmas came, Will and Robb each received a pair of trousers which their aunt had made from some old clothes. For Frances there was only the broken piece of an old tablet and a sweet potato. A tear slipped down her cheek in the first shock of her disappointment, but she quickly brushed it away, for she knew that Father and Mother had done the best they could.

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Part 47

WHY CHRISTMAS OF 1904 WAS DIFFERENT IN WALES

From: hdm0951.txt, "When God Stepped Down From Heaven,"

by Owen Murphy

(Memories of the great Welsh Revival of 1904, gripped the people. They remembered the amazing scenes of those historic days; meetings being held day and night, and churches packed to capacity, while thousands turned to Christ. Because of lack of patronage, theaters and saloons were closed. Thieves and murderers surrendered to the Lord, and police courts were idle. Sins were confessed, and old debts were paid. Work was forgotten, and frequently meetings would last for days at a time. Christmas, 1904, was the first real Christmas many children in Wales -- and even men and women -- ever had! Instead of being spent in saloons, as formerly, hard-earned wages were used for groceries and toys. The poverty of former days had been replaced with joy and plenty, for Christ had been invited into thousands of homes. Virtually the whole of Wales was on its knees on Christmas Day. That Revival lasted about four years, and then swept through England, Ireland, parts of Europe, and even crossed the oceans to Australia and America, changing the lives of thousands.)

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Part 48

HOW ONE CHRISTMAS GUEST MADE IT TO HEAVEN

From: hdm0129.txt, "We'll Get to That Later,"

By Irl Parker Maxey

John Davidson was dying. There was no doubt about it. He was lying under an oxygen tent struggling to breathe. Standing beside his bed I reached under the oxygen tent and took hold of his hand. Without opening his eyes he said, "It's the preacher. I knew you would come." Then, as I continued to hold his hand he began to exalt Christ in such magnificent, beautiful, heavenly

language I stood totally amazed. Here was a man in his mid-fifties, a man who had not gone beyond the third grade, a man who had been saved only a very few weeks. In oratorical language he was exalting Christ equal to an Apollos. When he finished he gasped a time or two and was gone. His soul took its departure to a better world where there is no suffering. How did this come about?

In 1957 in the fall of the year we moved from Scottsbluff, Nebraska to Odessa, Texas. I had worked hard in cold weather to get the church property in Scottsbluff where we had pastored for a number of years in top shape for the next pastor. The long hours plus the cold weather had left me physically worn and sick with a bad cold.

On arriving at our new pastorate I immediately went to work getting acquainted with all the people, started a door-to door calling program and took on the burden of a building program that had been planned by the former pastor to enlarge the parsonage. Under this load and with my physical strength already at a low ebb, I was soon struck down with a high fever. Coming home from calling one Wednesday evening, instead of going to mid-week prayer meeting, I went to bed. My fever raged out of control and we called a doctor. He never got to me until late Saturday night. He diagnosed me as having "what was going around," gave me some "sugar coated pills" and took the last ten dollars we had.

The next day, Sunday, my fever went higher than ever. Wife phoned the doctor and he ordered us to his office. Upon examination (remember, I had in previous years been given up to die with pulmonary tuberculosis), the doctor was afraid and said I would have to go immediately to the hospital if I wanted to live. With no money, no insurance and being married to the best R.N. one could find anywhere, I talked the doctor into letting my wife treat me at home under his directions.

After two weeks, in spite of all the care Wife could give me under doctor's orders, my fever continued to soar every day to dangerous heights. The church people were praying desperately. As a last resort the doctor ordered me either to go to the hospital or face death there at home.

The hospital was overcrowded and I was put on a bed in one of the hallways. It was mid-afternoon and my temperature was dangerously high. By the time they were able to move me to a semi-private room around 8:00 p.m. my temperature was normal and although quite weak, I was completely recovered. I had been put in a room with this man, John Davidson, who was afflicted with asthma. He had been living in Ohio but because of his severe asthmatic condition the doctor had ordered him to a drier climate to avoid death. With a suitcase or two containing all his possessions, besides a smaller bag containing his medicine and personal papers and valuable items, he started hitchhiking to Arizona, planning to find a place to live and work in that warmer and drier climate.

He had caught a ride at Midland, Texas twenty miles east of Odessa with a man who said he was going on west and would take him to where he was headed. When they arrived at Odessa the driver said to John that he had several stops to make in Odessa but would take him to the bus depot where he could relax and wait until he came back to pick him up. He told John he could

leave his suitcases in the car as they would soon be going on. John got out at the depot taking with him only the bag with his medicine and personal items. That was the last John ever saw of the man. Later on it was discovered that this man had robbed many hitchhikers of their possessions in the same manner. John waited in the Greyhound bus depot until near midnight, when he suffered a severe attack of asthma. Thinking he was either dead drunk or on drugs the police were called to come pick him up. When the police came, not knowing exactly what was wrong, they took him to the hospital where he was immediately admitted.

I was put in this room with John after a previous patient was dismissed from the hospital. At the time I was moved to the room with John at 8:00 p.m. he was fairly well recovered from the severe attack of asthma enough where we could talk together. He related to me his loss and present predicament. I witnessed to him of the grace of God. He was deeply convicted and gave his heart to the Lord then and there. He had never been saved-although in his middle fifties.

The next day I was dismissed from the hospital but kept calling back to visit and pray with John. In a few days he was well enough to leave the hospital. Since he had nothing and no place to live, the church rented a furnished house trailer, stocked it with food and turned it over to him. It was around the Christmas season. John began immediately to attend church and would testify to the saving grace of God, weeping and expressing his thankfulness to the church and his love to God. At last he had found what he had been wanting and hungry for all his life and promised that when he got strong enough he would go to work and repay all the church had done on his behalf. But that was not to be.

We had John at our house for Christmas and put some gifts under the tree for him. It was a moving experience for all of us. A day or two later I stopped by his trailer. One look told me I had better get him to the hospital immediately. His condition began to deteriorate quite rapidly. We saw to it that John was never left alone. Someone from the church was by his bedside continuously. It lasted only for a day or two and then early one morning around 5:00 a.m. I got a call from the hospital. When I arrived John was under an oxygen tent. I reached under the tent and took his hand. Without opening his eyes, he said, "It's the preacher, you have come." And then, as I have already related at the beginning, he, an unlearned man, began to magnify Christ his Redeemer in heavenly language of which I have never heard the equal in all my life. When he finished he gave a short gasp or two and was gone. There is no doubt he made it to a better world. The mortician was called and they took his body to prepare for burial.

I went to his trailer and found among his personal items the name of a sister living in Ohio and was able to make contact with her by phone. I related to her the news of John's salvation and subsequent death. His loved ones, the few he had left behind, were poor people and not well physically and would not be able to come or give any financial aid to help bury John's body. They instructed me to do what I could toward his burial and to bury his body there in Texas. Then his sister shared with me this story. Their mother had raised them to believe in God. She was a praying saint of God and had often prayed, "O God, please don't let my boy, John, die and go to hell."

In answer to this mother's prayers God, by the providence of sickness, got me into that dying man's room to bring to pass his eternal salvation.

John's body was laid to rest in potter's field in a cemetery in Odessa, Texas.

Truly John's sickness was not unto eternal death but unto eternal life. He had gone to be with Jesus and to join his mother in that City with foundations whose Builder and Maker is God.

You who have unsaved loved ones, do not cease to pray for them in faith believing! God has those prayers and tears bottled up and will work through His divine providences to bring the answer!

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Part 49

O. HENRY'S "GIFT OF THE MAGI"

From: hdm1516.txt, "Providential Irony,"

By Duane V. Maxey

Elaborating a bit more on "cruel ironies," consider briefly the facts of O. Henry's fictional short story, "The Gift of the Magi." In the following, I will present a brief overview of those facts, but please know that in so doing HDM does not endorse short hair for women -- I merely state the facts of the story:

Here is its essence: During an earlier era, Della and Jim, were a happy, but financially strapped, young couple living in a city flat. Each wanted to buy the other a desired gift: -- she desired to buy him an expensive fob for his gold pocket watch -- he desired to buy her a set of beautiful hair-combs for her lovely, below-the-knee-long hair. But as Christmas Eve approached, neither of them had the necessary funds to make the purchases. Della contrived to sell her hair to one who bought such, thinking that it would soon grow back and that she would thereby be able purchase Jim a handsome fob for his gold watch -- and thus she did. When Jim returned after work that night, he was shocked to discover that Della's hair had been cut. She attempted to console him with the thought that it would soon grow back, and forthwith she presented him with her dearly-bought Christmas gift -- the expensive fob to go with his gold watch. But, to her surprise and disappointment, Jim told her that he had sold his gold watch to buy her the desired set of combs for her long hair! So, there they sat with their dearly bought Christmas gifts: -- he with an expensive fob but without a watch to which it could be attached, and she with a beautiful set of hair-combs and no long hair in which to place them!

Thinking in terms of violated scriptures instructing against short hair for women and the wearing of gold, one might consider the irony of O. Henry's story to be more of a "payback" irony than a "cruel irony," but as considered by O. Henry it was more like the latter. Even taking the story in the light of scriptural injunctions, we might think of it as but a foretaste of the "cruel irony" that shall be visited upon the wicked when evil men and women discover how satan has tricked them into selling their souls for the fun, fame, and fortune of sin, only to be left with (1) no world in which to experience sin's enjoyments beyond death; (2) with nothing whereby true eternal pleasures can then be obtained; (3) with no way out of damnation's dilemma; and (4) with eternity

to regret their foolish purchases and wail in remorse over the "cruel and eternal irony" brought on them by satan's deceptions!

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Part 50

WHY CHRISTMAS OF 1953 WAS SPECIAL TO ART MORGAN

From: hdm0700.txt, "I. Parker Maxey, More Than a Brother to Me,"
by Duane V. Maxey

[My brother, I. Parker Maxey, was instrumental in the salvation of Arthur Morgan while Art was in jail. Here is Art Morgan's tribute to my brother after Parker's sudden death. -- DVM]

Now it's Friday and many tributes have been given. I will not attempt to add to them, but I will read to you this letter to "my old friend".

My Dear Friend,

I remember when our friendship first began. My mind went back to Scottsbluff, Nebraska. You know, that was over 44 years ago. You didn't have much to work with when God placed me in your care. Just a 27-year-old drunk and on my way to hell.

Christmas Day, 1953, marked the change in my life. God gloriously saved me and placed me in your charge. You never seemed to weary of the many nights to come when I got you out of bed. I needed help. My old habits had been beating on my door. The devil fought hard. We prayed harder. You always said, "You're going to make it, Art". God always came through as I learned to pray.

I remember soon after, when polio struck two of my children. I was devastated. You were undaunted. Prayer warriors around the state of Nebraska were called. God healed my children.

I had a call to preach. I studied hard. When the time came for me to deliver my first message, I just knew I was ready. It lasted a long seven minutes. I was sure I had misunderstood my calling, but you said I had done just fine.

After six and a half years, I was careless and became a cast-away. I'm sure I hurt you and Edith and also many others; for this I am sorry. You never gave up on me!

After 23 years this prodigal came back home and was forgiven. This homecoming would never have taken place if again, you and Burney Loftin had not made that trip in 1971 to the hospital where I lay dying. You two again, went down on your knees and reminded the Blessed Jesus that I was not ready to meet Him. He gave me time. Eleven years later, sweet victory again. Thank God and many others who were faithful in prayer for me.

These last fifteen years have been full and wonderful. You and I have been able to share much with each other, pray together, and worship together.

Well, old friend, its time to go. Tell my mom and dad that I'll be along in due time.

Today is Friday but Sunday is Coming!

Your dear friend,
Art Morgan

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Part 51

PRESERVED AT CHRISTMAS-TIME

From: hdm0888.txt, "Illustrative Sketches,"

by Duane V. Maxey

HOOD RIVER TO PORTLAND ACCIDENT in about December of 1976:-- My pastorate in Portland, Oregon began on my 35th birthday, June 4, 1972, and I left in 1977. The accident about which I now write occurred during that period of time. It was the Christmas Season, and I had planned to visit with my Mother and Aunt in Parkdale, above Hood River, Oregon. Mother was remarried to Walter Watson, a Nazarene minister. Uncle "Mac," Finley McNaughton, had retired from the U.S. Forest Service, and he aunt Jean bought a pear ranch with a spectacular view of Mt. Hood in Parkdale, above Hood River. I planned to drive the 70 miles or so from Portland to be with them for a short visit.

I was driving a Volkswagen Van that had a poor tire on the left rear wheel. By the time I got to Hood River that evening, there was quite a snowfall already down and it was continuing to snow. Finally I decided to abort the trip on up to Parkdale. I called and notified them that I was returning to Portland, and then started back -- snow still coming down.

As I crossed a bridge over an inlet from the Columbia River -- a bridge that had a bend to the right -- suddenly! the left rear of the VW Van swung left, and I began to skid broadside, perpendicular to the roadway, at perhaps 55-60 miles an hour -- and it was no laughing matter. That VW Van had a narrow wheel-base and the body was built rather high on that narrow wheel-base. Browsersiding down that concrete roadway at the speed I was, with nothing but a low barrier at the edge, there was a real danger of starting into a roll and/or flipping off into the dark waters of the Columbia below.

For quite a long distance that Van shot down that bridgeway. I uttered a quick prayer. I kept my front wheels turned left, and managed to keep the Van from going into a spin. It was Freeway, so there was no oncoming traffic, and there was nothing close behind me, but that Van continued on and on in its broadside skid, until at a point where the right side of the roadway sloped right, my forward momentum ceased and I shot front-bumper-first toward the low guard-rail overlooking the Columbia. I hit it, but by that time my speed was slow enough and my angle such that I did not flip over the rail into the dark waters below. -- Whew! I forget what my words of thanks were to the Lord, but I was very glad to be out of that one still alive! without any injury, and with only minor damage to the vehicle.

When I reached my apartment back in Portland, I opened my Bible, there was a portion of Scripture that I have never forgotten -- one that led me to believe that I may have come extremely close to death: Job 29:13 "The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me..." Judging from this, I would have died if God had not kept His hand on the rig as I rocketed broadside down that bridgeway!

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Part 52

HE NEVER SAW CHRISTMAS

From: hdm0482.txt, "Illustrations and Experiences,"
by R. G. Flexon

The Sunday night service was over. I was standing at the door of the church in Staunton, Virginia. A young man who had once known God, a student in a world renowned Bible school, now a backslider, home on vacation from the school, was going out of the church. As I shook his hand, I pled with him to get back to God.

He replied, "What God requires is too much to pay."

He walked to his car and started for Clifton Forge, Virginia, where he was to visit relatives on Christmas day. He never saw Christmas day. Just before he reached Clifton Forge, his car left the road, plunged over an embankment and into a river. Two hours after he had said, "What God requires is too much to pay," he was answering to that God. He was in eternity. Swift judgment.

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Part 53

BREngle WAS CONVERTED ON CHRISTMAS EVE

From: hdm0022.txt, "The Guest of the Soul,"
by Samuel Logan Brengle

Seventy years have passed over my head, fifty-seven of which I have spent in the service of my Lord, and forty-three with The Salvation Army; and the experience and observation of these years confirm me in my conviction that revivals are born, not made, and that God waits to be gracious and aid and answer prayer.

I was converted one Christmas Eve at the age of thirteen, and I have never looked back, though I side-stepped and faltered a bit at times in my early years. Immediately I joined the Church, yielded loyally to its discipline, kept its rules, and though I had not the Blessing of a Clean Heart I felt keenly that I must not prove false or do anything that would bring reproach upon the Church or the cause of Christ. When I was fifteen years old, my mother slipped away to be with the Lord, and I became homeless for the next twelve years, with no one to counsel me; but this loyalty to the rules of the Church safeguarded me.

For five years I taught a Sunday School class, and at the age of twenty-three I became a pastor, with four preaching places on my circuit, in three of which we had blazing revivals. Although not sanctified, I preached all the truth I knew with all my might, and believed what I preached with all my heart, and God blessed me, for He always has blessed and ever will bless such preaching.

When He gloriously sanctified me my knowledge and keen perception of truth were greatly enlarged and quickened, and my preaching became far more searching and effective. And now for forty-seven years God has been giving me revivals with many souls. This has been the glad and consuming ambition of my life. Place, promotion, power, popularity have meant nothing to me as compared with the smile of God and the winning of men to Him. Hallelujah! And this has enabled me to give myself wholly and effectively to my job without thought of what my job would give to me; and I shout Amen to my Lord's word: "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts xx. 35).

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Part 54

SOME THINK JOHN WESLEY WAS SANCTIFIED ON CHRISTMAS

From: hdm0724.txt, "Symphonies of Praise,"

by Floyd William Nease

John Wesley, whose Journal for May 24, 1738, records his conversion, writes for Tuesday, December 25, 1744, after a deepening experience of grace in the preceding days, "I felt such awe and tender sense of the presence of God as greatly confirmed me therein, so that God was before me all the day long. I sought and found Him in every place and could truly say when I lay down at night, 'Now I have lived a day.'" O my brother, O my sister, there is a life where with

"Heart made pure and garments white
And Christ enthroned within,"

You can "live a day," a week, a year, a life time, forever, in the harmony of purity of heart and the assurance of heavenly security.

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THE END