

## Chapter 13

# Stops and Steps

The reluctance and fear, the conviction of unworthiness and insufficiency had melted away with the success of my first sermon – a sermon prompted by the faith and insistence of the elders of the little Methodist Church. The feeling that this was the right thing to do, that this was the path in which God had been leading me since I first felt *His Hand* on my shoulder, grew in me and built a sensation of confidence in the work.

The little group, which was on fire for God, was seeking green pastures and refreshing streams to satisfy the hunger and thirst of their souls. In a short while a small number of sincere Christians had begun a work in which the full Gospel<sup>3</sup> was preached. This group graciously appointed me to teach the adult class. The fellowship was precious and fruitful. It was here that our commissary work among those hardest struck by the Depression was started.

It would be but natural to think that this period should have been the richest and happiest of my life. I had found my work in God and felt equal to it. I was in a fellowship of earnest Christians who had given me their trust and a position of respect. It was also about this time that our third child, Harry, was born. Another blessing from God, a more personal one, was placed in our hands for nurture and guidance to brighten and further enrich our lives. I should by all measure have been among God's happiest creatures.

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<sup>3</sup> The Full Gospel: The belief that the gifts and manifestations of the Holy Spirit were not just for the historical church in the Book of Acts but are for believers today as well. (JHG)

In spite of this, the darkest tunnel of my life was entered at this time. In a way, it is difficult to describe. God saw fit to hide *His Face* for a season. I seemed to be forsaken by both God and man. But I have realized in my life since then, that we all go the way of our prayers. I know now that I was running ahead of God in many directions. In my enthusiasm, in my newfound confidence and eagerness, I traveled part way down many byways that branched away from the “highroad” and wasted my effort and substance in ways out of the will of God.

It is so easy for a young and enthusiastic Christian to become swallowed up by many religious groups and practices which are not always the ways of the Lord. It is hard to keep young and eager feet straight and steadfast on the narrow path, and to ignore the tempting forks in the road which seem to promise much, but which lead but to dead ends. I want to say a word of warning here to young Christians who find themselves in this position.

Stay within the shelter of the Fold, and every time you hear someone say, Lo, here is Christ, or there, go yet not after them, but try the spirit and see whether it be God. (*1 John 4:1*)

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From the beginning of my pregnancy, it seemed that God cut me off from fellowship, and I surely became a “prisoner of the Lord.” These were dark days, filled with sorrow and heartache, and I surely drank the dregs. There was born in my heart an understanding of the Scripture: “In sorrow and in pain shall ye bring forth your children.” (*Gen. 3:16*) I had experienced the pain, but never before the sorrow of which He spoke. It was a year of virtual blackout until it seemed that the foundations of everything were crumbling. How to extricate myself from the slough of despondency, I did not know. But I realized when all else fails, when there seems no way out, there is yet a Way. So I cried out to God in my dilemma. As an answer, He spoke to me these words: “I will take your feet out of the net.”

I have thanked God many times, whenever I look back over that year of darkness and suffering, that in His mercy He stopped and quieted me before Him. God has His ways of slowing us down from our headlong travel in the wrong direction, away from His grace. Pressure is a tool or method. And, a firm, gentle, steady pressure, sometimes scarcely felt but not to be denied, is one of God’s sure methods. I am reminded in years past how the milkman, when leaving

his wagon to deliver our milk, would drop a heavy weight attached to a rein on his horse, so that the animal would not stray too far away or too fast, for the pressure of the weight held him still. And so it is with us:

“Some through the waters,  
Some through the flood,

Some through the fire,  
But all through the blood;

Some through great sorrow,  
But God gives a song

In the night season  
And all the day long.”

I discovered the truth of His Word that declares “I being in *the way*...the Lord led me.” (*Gen. 24:27*) In the depths of my confusion, pain and sorrow, God applied His firm and gentle pressure which began to keep me still, to keep me from wandering too far or too fast from *His Way*. As always after the storm, there came a day of calm and sunshine, and of glad release as He again made me to know His love and His gentle leading.

“Out of my sorrow,  
Darkness and night,  
Jesus, I come!  
Jesus, I come!  
Into the glorious  
Light of Thy love,  
Jesus I come to Thee!”

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Our son, Harry, was born in 1930.<sup>4</sup> From the beginning of his life, he seemed to know all the answers appertaining to the fullness of God.

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<sup>4</sup> At the time this chapter was written, Harry Monville Beall was 22 years old. His mother believed that “during the year of travail, a seed was planted in his soul that would bud out to the glory of God and the help of humanity.” (JHG)

From a very tender age, God had given him a message in song. From the time he was barely able to walk and talk, souls would find Jesus in our home as he sang to them out of his little heart. One wonders how anything so wonderful could come from such sorrow and darkness, but God works everything according to the counsel of His own will. God's ways are as far above our ways as the Heavens are above the earth.

One learns, some early, some late, not to question His ways which are above and beyond our understanding, but to love and trust Him. The methods by which humans attempt to extricate themselves from difficulty, pain, and sorrow which seem so logical and reasonable are often times without result. Then, when we have exhausted our powers and know not which way to turn, God works in mysterious ways His wonders to perform.

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Not immediately, but little by little, the Lord led me with gentle pressure back from the byways to the straight and broad highway to His love. The birth of my son Harry was living evidence that God meant me well and had not forgotten me. Six weeks after he was born, God gave me further knowledge of His fostering when He awakened me in the night and made me to know that He was calling my brother, Bernard, home. By all human reason and expectation, such an eventuality was not to be thought of. Bernard was only twenty-seven years of age, working in Detroit in his own business and perfectly healthy from all indications except for a somewhat sensitive stomach. It seemed unbelievable that anything serious could be wrong with him, but I knew the Lord had spoken. Then in the morning we received an appeal to come quickly, Bernard was gravely ill.

We rushed to his bedside. He had a stomach attack in the night and was in pain, but those with him and he himself had not realized the seriousness of it. So, he had delayed calling a physician until morning. When the doctor arrived and examined him, it was found that an ulcer had ruptured and peritonitis had already set in. The doctor informed us privately that after eight hours such a condition was invariably fatal.

Nevertheless in the hope that there might be some chance, we rushed Bernard to Providence Hospital where they opened his stomach and then closed it, having found that there was indeed no hope. During the week that ensued, he was unable to take food or water. His suffering was so intense my heart broke for him. In his pain he

completely forgot that I had a six-week-old baby and insisted on my being with him constantly.

After the year of darkness and sorrow I had been through, this seemed to be one more burden placed upon my flinching shoulders. My brother was of another faith, the one we had been raised in as children. From his own testimony, I knew that while he was a good boy and very religious, he had never yet been truly born again. Yet I felt so insufficient for the task that faced me in the short time remaining - somehow to get the Truth to him! I knew I must try, and I prayed every day and all night that God would help me to help him.

Finally came the last day- the last night. The doctor told us it was just a matter of time until the poison would reach his heart and he would be gone, but I knew the Work was not yet done. While my brother, according to his faith, clutched and prayed over a crucifix in his hand, I went to a corner of the room. There I made a covenant with God. Earnestly I beseeched the Lord that if he would cause Bernard to have the experience of being born again and would make me to know that he had, I would take my three children and strike out for Him.

God in His mercy answered my prayers and gave my brother a vision and revelation of Jesus. He died in perfect peace. Satisfied that God had heard and answered my prayer, my faith and confidence were restored, and I knew that the Scripture was true:

“I will never leave you or forsake you. . . but having loved you, I will love you to the end.” (*Heb. 13:5; John 13:1*)

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God gave me yet another evidence that He had restored me to the Way from which somehow I had strayed. One night I was called to the bedside of a woman who was dying of cancer. This was again during the years of the Great Depression. The woman’s family had lost their home and had not the means for proper medical or nursing care. Nor were they even able to buy the necessary medication to relieve her pain.

In her despair and desolation, the poor woman cursed and screamed with pain. There was no repentance in her heart, but only resentment that this suffering should be visited upon her, who was as good as anyone else and did not deserve it. She had a terrible horror of the potter’s field - a fear that she would be buried near a fence where people

would walk over her body. In her misery and torture, practically beside herself, she raged and ranted against everything and everybody.

A friend of mine, who was this woman's neighbor, came to me one particular night through a bad snowstorm to ask me if I would go with her to where the sufferer lay. She felt I would be able to help her. No one else had been able to do so, and they were convinced that she was close to the end. When we arrived at the place where this poor woman lay, I was startled and appalled at what my eyes saw of her utter despair and helplessness. As I stood there gazing down at the ranting, raving sufferer, the Lord directed me to read a certain portion of the Scripture to the dying woman.

As I began to read, my friend told me she was amazed and taken aback for she felt that the chapter I read could have no possible bearing on the woman's situation. But it was the Lord speaking, and He used it and blessed it. The woman broke into tears and began to confess her sins. As she asked for God's mercy and forgiveness, I saw the "peace of God which passes all understanding" come to her. Her testimony was: "I have such peace. I don't care now where they bury me. Even if they throw me out into the streets, I have made my peace with God and He has forgiven me."

Yet again in a short space of time, I had been given the grace to witness God going out in search of one that was lost and bringing that one home. This happening meant more to me than anyone would realize because I knew that now I was truly out of the tunnel. God had again laid *His Hand* upon my shoulder for service.