



Lovely Lord of the Lord's Day

19. Uncle Takes His Gun to Church

The chain reaction on one lone man's first taking his stand for the light of Christ.

A rumor had gone around town. A tent was to be pitched in the area, and the ministers who were to speak at that tent were Sabbath keepers. But the rumor carried with it much more than this; it suggested that the people who were in charge of the tent might be dangerous.

There was an air of expectancy when the tent came in on the wagon and the helpers began to erect it in the area where my grandmother Highby and my uncle LeRoy lived.

Grandmother Highby was a godly Methodist, but my uncle LeRoy was not a Christian. Perhaps out of curiosity more than anything else he decided to attend the meetings which were to begin the following Sunday night. Uncle LeRoy had a good shotgun, and he was a good marksman. Hence, on the first night he stood at a distance of perhaps one hundred feet, his gun at his side.

As Uncle LeRoy stood there outside the tent, the neighbors entered apparently unafraid. They took seats after receiving songbooks.

In a few moments a gentleman walked onto the platform and at the same time a lady sat down at the piano. The gentleman asked people to open the songbooks and then led the audience in singing some good old-fashioned gospel songs.

After perhaps fifteen minutes of singing, a minister stepped onto the platform and, after another song, he prayed. Soon he was preaching from the Holy Bible. Uncle LeRoy decided after that service that it would not be necessary to take his shotgun with him. He had discovered that these Sabbath-keepers were not at all as rumor had pictured them.

Most of us Christians know that rumor, gossip, and tale-bearing are instruments of the evil one. They are calculated to precede the actual facts, so as to prejudice the mind. By this means it is often difficult for the hearer of false rumor to accept truth. The preconceived opinions have clogged the channel of the heart and mind. This is why the court selects jurors who have not formed an opinion before the presentation of facts, so that the jurors will not reject the facts.

Yet tale-bearing is indulged by tens of thousands of professed followers of Christ. Instead of going directly to the one concerning whom they have heard some questionable rumor, Satan causes them to whisper what they have heard to another and still another. In some cases it is years before the truth is known. This is one reason why it is so important for all who love the Lord not to listen to "tales." Jesus Christ has commanded us to go to him alone if we have some question concerning the behavior of another.

Lovely Lord of the Lord's Day

Quite frequently dishonest people spread tales as Satan did in heaven. The Bible speaks of the "multitude of thy merchandise," "the multitude of thine iniquities, and "the iniquity of thy traffick." It was thus that Satan "defiled" his "sanctuaries." This traffic is still tale-bearing. He is "the accuser of our brethren," and he was a liar from the beginning. (Ezekiel 27, 28)

It was Satan who accused a man by the name of Job. Even though Satan could find no fault in him, he refused to acknowledge that Job was motivated by any principle other than selfishness. Therefore he continually accuses both God and man. God rebuked Satan for his accusations against Joshua the high Priest. And He rebukes all today who while professing His name engage in evil speaking. God's plan for settling misunderstandings is made very plain in the Scriptures. Also He has a plan by which the innocent may be protected. He says, "Debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself: and discover not a secret to another." He specifically commands. "Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people: neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbour: I am the Lord."

As an example of the unworthy rumors which even Christian people often circulate, I recall a minister whose fellowship I had come to appreciate. He was of another church, but we had enjoyed Christian fellowship together.

One day we were discussing a certain denomination. He made a statement that I knew was not factual. So as kindly and as diplomatically as I could, I corrected him. Whereupon I received a shock.

He replied with a scoff. "It does not make any difference whether this particular thing is true or not—they are guilty of so many errors anyway."

I thought to myself, so the fact that a man is in error gives us the authority to accuse him of things of which he is not guilty! To the upright Christian there is no question as to the source of this philosophy!

Back to Uncle LeRoy; he was naturally surprised that the ministers conducting this series of meetings were not dangerous men as rumors had indicated. Instead, he sensed the presence of the Holy Spirit as the meetings continued.

And this was not all. He observed that not merely was the spirit of the ministers Christlike, their sermons were all directly from the Bible. They gave Bible proof for every doctrine. My uncle finally decided to dust off his old unused Bible and double-check everything that was presented. As night after night the meetings continued, Uncle LeRoy discovered that not once was there an exception to this principle—these men always used the Bible. They did not twist texts of Scripture; their explanations were simple; there was no difficulty in following the thoughts.

But when the ministers presented the question of the New Testament Sabbath, my uncle was to receive the biggest shock of all. It was that the glorious resurrection of our Lord is to be memorialized not by keeping a day, but by the sacred rite of baptism and the new life.

Among those who had innocently kept the wrong day was my Methodist grandmother. A more devoted Christian could not be found anywhere. She really kept Sunday. No button could be sown on a garment on that day. God recognized and honored her love and her faith. As stated elsewhere she was in no way a lesser Christian because she had misunderstood which day of the week was the true Sabbath.

When Uncle LeRoy heard the Bible truth regarding the weekly Sabbath, he was of course amazed. Many sincere men and women, upon hearing or reading this truth, find it almost incredible.

Uncle LeRoy was a backslider, but he was sincere. He had lost his hold on God, but he was possessed of an integrity that would not be swayed either by emotion or rumor; he would hear it through; he would study it through.

Lovely Lord of the Lord's Day

It was not difficult for Uncle LeRoy to find all the texts of Scripture which deal with the first day of the week in the New Testament. There are only eight, and the ministers in the tent opened their Bibles and read each one. This gave Uncle LeRoy the opportunity of seeing for himself what these texts of Scripture teach.

He discovered that most of these texts refer to the events on the very day on which Christ was resurrected. But he also found to his utter astonishment that far from celebrating Christ's resurrection that day; His disciples did not so much as believe that He had risen.

He also discovered that the reference to the first day of the week in Acts 20 was not to a regular worship service but to a farewell service on a Saturday night with Paul "ready to depart on the morrow". And to the rumor that this must have been a celebration of the Lord's resurrection, Uncle LeRoy discovered that the breaking of the bread does not make a day a Sabbath. In those days they broke bread every day from house to house. The institution of the Lord's supper, took place, not on a Sunday, but the night before Christ was crucified. Being crucified on a Friday, Christ instituted the Lord's Supper, the holy communion, not on Sunday, but Thursday night.

Uncle LeRoy also learned for the first time in his life that Bible days begin in end at sunset, not at midnight as the civil day does. God said, "from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your Sabbaths." Leviticus 23:32. The "even" is when "the sun did set" Mark 1:32.

Therefore Uncle LeRoy saw that a midnight service as recorded in Acts 20, could not possibly have been conducted Sunday night, but actually Saturday night. Paul had preached that day in all probability as his custom was. He was to leave the next morning. They had a farewell service that night. This amazed my uncle. Here he found Bible facts never before revealed to his sincere mind. There was no mention of Sunday sacredness anywhere in the Bible.

Another text was read at the tent. Nothing pertaining to the first day was overlooked. It was 1 Corinthians 16:2. My uncle clearly saw that these ministers were not handling the word of God deceitfully;" but as Paul stated, "but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." 2 Corinthians 4:2.

It was seen from the reading of this text of Scripture, that the apostle Paul was going up to Jerusalem. He wished to take with him a gift for these poor brethren. So he asked each brother to "lay by him in store" a certain sum each Sunday morning. Uncle LeRoy clearly saw that this was not a church gathering, it was rather the setting aside of a certain sum of money "As God had prospered him."

Jesus said that we will have the poor with us always, and the Holy Word of God declares, "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again." Proverbs 19:17. Again it says, "He that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he." Proverbs 14:21.

In harmony with this principle of God in the days of Israel, the poor were to be privileged to glean the harvests of their brethren.

I recall back in my Sabbath-keeping father's home that this principle was conscientiously followed. We had in our home what was called a "first-day offering box". In this box each Sunday morning my Christian farther placed an offering for the poor. It helped us to remember that "He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor." Proverbs 22:9.

How can a man represent a generous Maker and still be stingy with his poor brother? It is true that oftentimes the poor need counsel on how to save money, how to be frugal, and how to economize more than they need money. But this attitude of generosity is part of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I recalled how my father opened his ledgers to see how God had prospered him the week before and then remembered the poor.

Lovely Lord of the Lord's Day

So Uncle LeRoy came to study the last text of Scripture which many Christians suppose to refer to the first day of the week. He was surprised to find that the first day of the week is not even mentioned. The text is Revelation 1:10. "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day." Uncle LeRoy discovered that this text does not say which day of the week is the Lord's day. He would have to turn to other texts to discover to which day the text of Scripture refers.

Sure enough he found many texts of Scripture that show that the Lord's holy day is the seventh. It is in both the Old and the New testaments. In the Old Testament Scriptures the Lord calls the Sabbath, "My holy day". In the commandment He says that the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord, and in the New Testament Jesus declared that He Himself is "Lord of the Sabbath."

More than this, Uncle LeRoy discovered that there was no text of Scripture that calls any other day, "My holy day" or "The Sabbath of the Lord thy God." So that makes it easy to locate the holy day.

The word 'Sabbath', Uncle LeRoy learned, means 'rest'. He discovered that the New Testament is not silent as to which day is the rest day. "For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works." Hebrews 4:4.

Uncle LeRoy could praise the Lord that he had not been prejudiced by the untrue rumors to such an extent that he did not listen. He was like the Bereans of old. Of them we read; "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." Acts 17:11.

What is the memorial of Christ's resurrection? Uncle LeRoy was not long to wait. The Scriptures are very clear on how this glorious event is to be memorialized. The apostle Peter under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit states in the simplest language what God's memorial of the resurrection really is: "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:" 1 Peter 3:21.

Uncle LeRoy read from the pen of the apostle Paul, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Romans 6:3-6.

To the Colossians Paul stated the same truth: "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." Colossians 2:12.

And to the non-Christian who was giving his heart to Christ in the jail at Philippi, Paul explained the way of salvation through Jesus Christ. He then baptized him with his own hands.

Philip, the evangelist, was led by the Holy Spirit to follow the same procedure with the eunuch after he had preached unto him Jesus.

"And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing." Acts 8:36-39.

The apostle Paul also baptized those who had at one time been baptized previously, but had now received glorious new truth.

Lovely Lord of the Lord's Day

The minister at the tent had done what was commanded by the Lord: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." 2 Timothy 2:15.

There was no confusion now. Uncle LeRoy saw that the seventh day of the week is the Sabbath of the Lord, memorializing the creation of the world and God's rest that followed. Baptism by immersion is the memorial of Christ's resurrection from the dead and our rising to newness of life.

To say that Uncle LeRoy was delighted with the simplicity of the Bible truth is not exaggerating. He wanted everyone to know what he had learned. When he hurried over to Grandmother Highby's home, he told of the wonderful things he had heard at the tent. But Grandmother had not attended the meetings. She had not seen with her eyes the Scriptures read. She had not heard with her own ears the words of truth so simply uttered. It was impossible for her at that point so much as to understand Uncle LeRoy's enthusiastic response.

Consequently, when Uncle LeRoy began to tell her what he had learned, and not being versed yet in the correct way to share it, Grandmother was turned off. She did appreciate deeply Uncle LeRoy's change of life. He was actually a new creature in Christ Jesus. Old habits of sin had gone. His whole personality had changed. Yet Grandmother, had not passed through the night-by-night experience which had been Uncle Le Roy's.

Uncle Le Roy should have been instructed on how to share what he had learned. He should have been told to move wisely and sympathetically and humbly. But in this enthusiasm he probably said a lot of things that sounded like sanctimony. I do not profess to know all he told Grandmother, but I do know that after she had heard several hours of this "preaching," she decided that it was enough.

Whenever she saw him coming toward the house, she got up from her chair and made her way upstairs as quickly as her feet would carry her. She gave orders that she was not to be disturbed. This would give her quiet from a new man in Christ Jesus, whose enthusiasm over Bible truth she misunderstood.

But my grandmother, as stated earlier, was a devout child of God. She had walked with the Lord much longer than had Uncle LeRoy, and while she was upset at his overly enthusiastic approach and wanted to avoid it, she did not want to avoid the truth. In her upstairs room she studied and prayed. At first I think it was mostly in the hope of straightening out Uncle LeRoy. Then failing to find the texts of Scripture that she thought were there in the Bible, she began to study for herself.

How happy she was that no one could disturb her or understand the trauma through which she was passing in her attempt to find the texts of Scripture that she felt sure were there. The more she searched the more apparent it became that the text she was looking for was not in the Bible.

As the weeks passed, Grandmother Highby began to come to some conclusions too. Being a woman of deep integrity, she would not assume a thing to be scriptural unless she could find it in the Holy Book once it had been challenged. So her search continued.

Finally, after weeks of earnest prayer and searching, Grandmother came to the same conclusion as had Uncle LeRoy. When she announced her findings to the rest of the family, including her teen-age daughter, Emma, they also studied prayerfully. There was nothing left for her and the children to do but to follow the light of truth. The fact that her parents and grandparents had kept the first day of the week for centuries had no bearing since she had discovered the mistake that had been made.

"But I said unto their children in the wilderness, Walk ye not in the statutes of your fathers, . . . I am the LORD your God; walk in my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them." Ezekiel 20:18.

Now Grandmother and her daughters were to pass through a similar experience with Grandfather Highby as Uncle LeRoy had had with her. Grandfather was a most industrious man. He was a noble and honest

Lovely Lord of the Lord's Day

man. Yet it was years before he saw the light, but when he did, he yielded to the sweet voice of conscience and was baptized.

In the meantime Grandfather Highby took a strong stand against his children going to a Sabbath-keeping school. He was adamant in his decision not to give them financial support. He told Emma, a beautiful and dedicated nineteen year-old lassie, that if she went to any other school he would finance her. Then with solemn voice that spoke for itself, he repeated, "If you go to that Sabbath-keeping school, you will pay your own way."

As Emma prayed earnestly over the matter, she felt that the Lord would take care of her if she launched out by faith and started going to the Sabbath-keeping school at Rome, New York. The Lord who had worked such miracles in the life of Uncle LeRoy could support her in the area of finances. So she made her decision, left home, and entered the school that trained Christian workers.

Not too long after entering this school, Emma came in contact in her classes with a young man studying for the ministry. His name was Charles S. Coon. He had recently lost his wife and had left his little boy Arthur with his grandparents while he returned to prepare for the gospel ministry.

As the weeks came and went, Charles and Emma became acquainted. Emma felt that this completely dedicated man who had become interested in her should not be repulsed. It seemed that the Lord impressed her to continue the friendship. Gradually the friendship in Christ matured into courtship and finally into marriage. I am the seventh son of this union.

As I have stated in other works, Mother placed her hands on her abdomen before the birth of us boys and dedicated us to the work of God.

Father, though having received a ministerial license from the New York Conference, decided against going into full-time ministry. He feared that his rapidly growing family would be neglected if he traveled as most ministers of that time did. He felt that it would be unfair not to stay by his children. He must teach them the way of the Lord. And that he did.

I do not recall one day in all my sixteen years at home that Father failed to call his children around for family worship morning and night and often at noon. He spent much time with the Lord in Bible study and prayer. We boys have repeatedly gone out to the barn where Father was working and unbeknown to him, heard him praying aloud to the God he loved and worshiped. How earnestly he prayed that the Lord would keep him and his family true to the cross of Christ.

What an active participant was Mother. In other works we have related how she led us to the cross of Christ as she related the gospel story. How our hearts burned within us as she pictured the life, the agony, and the death of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. How the Holy Spirit burned her messages into our very souls, as she exclaimed again and again. "You have a very special mission in life." That message with her earnest countenance made an impact that we shall never forget.

Then came the dream of my drowning brother and God's midnight call to me to enter the ministry—to save souls to the cause of Christ. In other works I have related how, after that experience, I have walked down country roads burdened for the salvation of the occupants of those homes. Later I worked the streets of cities, pleading with God to help me to help people find the precious Lord Jesus who suffered, bled, and died that we might live—and who is now in glory land interceding for us before the throne of the Majesty on high.

Five of us brothers became ministers of the gospel. Today as we look back—those of us who are still living—we thank our Lord from the depths of our hearts that Emma Highby, as a nineteen-year-old lass, refused to be dissuaded from attending a Christian school. How we praise God that she would not, could not, yield even to the entreaties and then the hardening of a father, who up to that point had not yet

Lovely Lord of the Lord's Day

known the Lord. How our hearts go out to God in gratefulness to each one along the line that led Emma Highby to make her decision for Christ.

We do not know the name of the minister who pitched that tent so many years ago. But what a joy it will be to meet and greet him and his associates in glory land! What a thrill to go trooping through the gates to the New Jerusalem washed in the blood of the Lamb. "in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him." Colossians 1:16.

Little did Emma Highby dream that so many of her sons would be serving as ministers of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Little did she dream when making that decision for Christ that tens of thousands would be learning of Jesus Christ through her sons.

And little do you, dear reader, know what may be the fruit of your decision to go all the way with Jesus Christ. No one in this life can know the ever-widening effects of one life completely surrendered to our Lord.

I invite you, dear one, trembling one, frightened one, to look to my Jesus, who died a cruel death that you might have life. I invite you to surrender all to Him at this moment. Fall at His nail-pierced feet and cry out.

"All to Jesus I surrender,
All to Him I freely give."

When my father passed away, we sons of his (all but one who had passed away) formed a circle around his grave. We held hands. We knelt in solemn consecration and dedication. We yielded afresh our lives to meet him in glory land. Mother was then in the circle. She lived for many years after his passing. She was almost 102 years of age when she passed to her rest awaiting the call of the life-giver. What a great reunion day when we meet again! By God's grace it won't be long.

Dear Lord, we cry out with the apostle Paul, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:" Philippians 1:6. We ask believingly that this promise will be fulfilled in each of us, and we return thanks that we have received in the precious name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

REWARDING SAVIOUR
Oh, rewarding Saviour.
Praise belongs to Thee;
Faithful Thou Creator
For redeeming me.

Thou hast turned our forebear's
Hearts to follow on
In the law of Jesus,
God's beloved Son.

Ne'er could persecution
Crush their spirits brave,
Nor could condemnation
Their allegiance wave.

Give us strength to follow,

Lovely Lord of the Lord's Day

So that by Thy grace
We may meet in heaven-
See our Saviour's face.

Reflection: We, the authors of this book render heartfelt praise to our Lord for giving the courage and strength to Emma Highby, later Emma Coon, for remembering her Creator in the days of her youth." We suggest that you, our readers, whether in a prayer circle or all alone, give, either for the first time or in rededication, your heart completely to the Lord. As you do this, you will receive a rich reward.

Seven Great Bible Facts:

1. Our Lord warns His followers, "Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people" (Leviticus 19:16).
2. This is because "the words of a talebearer are as wounds" (Proverbs 18:8).
3. Those to whom the talebearer wishes to confide are told to "meddle not" "He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets: therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips." Proverbs 20:19.
4. If we have differences between ourselves and another, Jesus tells us to go and tell him alone. "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. " Matthew 18:15.
5. The Ethiopian eunuch, after accepting Christ, said, "See, here is water: what doth hinder me from being baptized? And he, [Phillip] baptized him." (Acts 8:36-38)
6. "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:" (1 Peter 3:21)
7. While we are to honor our parents in the Lord, yet we must never permit any human authority to keep us from following our Lord, for we must obey God rather than men. (Acts 5:29)