

caught a number of oversized bluegills, while Al and Venna fished at their favorite spot on the lake, a mile or so farther to the north.

The only harm done to me by my ducking was that my farewell present watch from Trinity Congregation had become waterlogged and refused to run until Son Albert had opened and dried it out, when it again ran and kept time as good as though it were new.

About a month after we had come to Uncle Doug's for a visit, Al and Venna left for the state of Oregon, where they visited with Venna's married son. For she had been married long before she and Al had married each other. In the meantime, mother and I enjoyed our stay at sister Gertrude and Uncle Doug's home. I went fishing every day to a spot below the dam on the river of skulls called in the Spanish language, Calaveras River, because, according to legendary reports, a large number of Chinamen's skulls had been found in that river who had been murdered in the gold rush days by cut-throat white men and robbed of their pokes of gold dust. This River had been placer mined for many years, before the dam was ever built. And even after it had been built, a barge had operated on the lake for a time, power dredging the old riverbed on a percentage basis, on a lease from the City of Stockton, and had reportedly taken more than a hundred thousand dollars worth of gold dust from the old river bed.

My fishing spot below the dam was a boulder strewn stretch of water in which bass, bream, bluecat and carp congregated in the fast flowing overflow water from the lake. I brought home so many fish day after day that we practically lived on a fish diet, eating fish noon and night, twice every day, except Sunday, when he had a change of diet in the form of red meat of some kind. Nobody knows but I myself how I now miss that Calaveras River.

We had been lured to California by Albert and Venna, and by Uncle Doug and Aunt Gertrude with the solemn promise that the trip was to cost mother and me nothing at all. Al was to take us to California, Uncle Doug and Aunt Gertrude were to bring us back. All the time we were there, Uncle Doug would talk about the various routes which we would take on our way back home. He was going to get three weeks vacation from the City of Stockton, and he would take off an extra week or so while Al and Venna would keep the fort at the lake for him. So we were to travel at leisure in Uncle Doug's Cadillac, up the west coast of California, through Oregon, and into the State of Washington, to the city of Wenatchee, where Jean Reynolds, a married daughter of Uncle Doug and Aunt Gertrude, and her family lived. There we would stop for a number of days and see the Rock Island, the Grand Coulee, and the St. Joseph's Dams. Mr. Reynolds was superintending the building of St. Joseph's Dam at the time.

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From Wenatche, Washington we were then to make our way east, through Spokane, Washington, and thence east through Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, into Iowa, where we were to stop at our daughter Ruth's home for a day or two, and then turn south through Missouri, Arkansas and to our home in Houston, Texas. That was the route Uncle Doug always harped on.

When at last the time of his vacation arrived, Uncle Doug did take us in his Cadillac to Wenatche, Washington, where we were the guests of Jean Reynolds and her family for three enjoyable days. Then, because the Cadillac performed so erratically, Uncle Doug called off the rest of the trip and returned to Valley Springs, where he took us to Stockton on the next day and bought railroad coach tickets on the Santa Fe Railroad to Houston, Texas for mother and me instead. On the next morning, he and sister Gertrude set out for Los Angeles, California, where they spent the balance of their vacation with their oldest married daughter, Mrs. Ellen Ellenson and her husband. For further reference, my description of our trip to and From Wanatchee, Washington to Valley Springs may be inserted at this place.

A day after Uncle Doug and Aunt Gertrude had departed from Valley Springs for Los Angeles, Al and Venna took us to Stockton where we boarded a Santa Fe fast passenger train for Houston, Texas, where we arrived on a Saturday morning, after a most enjoyable vacation.

XVII

CONTINUATION OF OUR YEARS

IN RETIREMENT

I have failed to mention before that during my retirement in Houston, I often helped other pastors while they were sick or on vacation by preaching for them in their pulpits, while they were away. I remember preaching at Free Port for Pastor Lenhardt several times, and a number of times I helped Pastor Sanders of Westfield. For five months I took care of Memorial congregation at Katy, after that congregation became independent of Pattison, and was instrumental in calling for them the Reverend David Herman as their first resident pastor. Also, I helped out Pastor Stratman of St. Matthew's congregation for an entire year in assisting him on Communion Sundays.

I preached at least one or more times in Tomball, Klein, Wharton, Pasadena, Galena Park, Wharton, Cypress, Hallettsville,

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Lincoln, Manheim, and in the following Houston congregations: Ascension, Bethany, Bethelmen, Immanuel, Our Savior, St. John, and St. Mark.

In October of 1955, I was called to preach the 60th Anniversary Sermon for St. Paul's of Yorktown, Iowa. Surprisingly, that congregation paid me the first-class railroad fare for both mother and me, and gave me a twenty-five dollar tip besides for my sermon. We were the house guests of Pastor and Mrs. Schroeder of Yorktown, for our four day visit with the congregation. That sermon was one of the last ones I preached, for it was during that time that I developed, or better learned to know that I was afflicted with diabetes.

The first symptoms were much like that of a heart affliction. Pains in the muscles of my chest with a shortness of breath, noticeable especially after a walk. Increased hunger and an unslackable thirst, with urination about once an hour. At the same time, I was developing cataracts in both eyes. My eyesight became distorted and I was unable to correct the condition by the change of glasses.

Daughter Helen persisted that we should come to Chicago for an operation for my cataracts. It was during the time that we went to the eye specialist that her husband, Dr. Joseph Simons, who was giving me a clinical test discovered sugar in my blood and urine. Reservations had already been made at the Cook County Hospital for room and bed when this discovery had been made, but these reservations were canceled when Dr. Zekman learned about my diabetic condition.

Luckily for me, the discovery had been made almost at the beginning of the affliction. I was put under dietic and medical treatment at once by Dr. Simons and it was fortunate again that I did not need to take insulin shots. Dr. Simons gave me four Orenase tablets a day to begin the control treatment. This dosage of five grain tablets, after a few days, was reduced to three tablets a day. After about a year, I found that two tablets a day were sufficient to keep my blood and urine sugar free. The dosage now, in 1961, has been reduced to one tablet a day.

I have had some side effects at such times as when I did not watch my diet close enough: some nervousness and sleeplessness, with itching on the skin on the inside of my thighs and on the calves of my legs. In my diet it is necessary that I avoid all manufactured sugar and most of the starches. I am allowed lean meats, all I care to eat, eliminating the fat. Also, I may eat all vegetables and fruits, except those which contain too much sugar or starch. No cakes and pies are in my diet, no candy and alcoholic drinks. I may

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have coffee and tea without sugar and fruit juices. My weight has settled down to a nearly constant level, ranging between 180 and 190 pounds.

I have been surprisingly free of colds and flu since I have been under Orenase medication. I have plenty of pep but am totally free of sexual urge. Diabetes has damaged my memory; I can no longer remember names of persons, places and things when I want to talk about them. When I no longer need to remember them, this memory of names, places and things return. It is for this reason that I do no longer preach. No matter how well I would memorize my sermon, when the time came to deliver it, my memory would fail me.

I was able to drive my car until my 75th birthday came along. To celebrate it, my son Edward took me out to the Cypress Creek, on the Stuebner Airline Road. We parked the car on the north side of the bridge and walked down to the creek, following it eastward for about half a mile. There we found a promising pool and we fished it for some time in the company of another man and his boy. The other man began to catch Crappie, while Edward and I had not even a nibble. We soon found that the fish did not want our worms nor our shrimp bait; they wanted minnows. The other man was using minnows with much success. He told me to put a minnow on my hook, offering me the use of his bait bucket.

With this change of bait, I soon had a crappie for my stringer. A second one soon after. Then, as often happens to fishermen, the fishing stopped. Not a single bite for the next half hour or so. The other fisherman and his son left the pool for a better one. Soon after, I did the same, and it was while on the search for a better fishing hole that I broke my ankle.

It had drizzled on the day before. The water's edge along the creek was very slippery. Edward had warned me of that fact. I had a fall once before the accident happened, without ill effects. I became careless. Crossing a small ditch, not more than eighteen inches wide and not very deep, I slipped with both feet just as I was crossing it. Both feet sliding together to the center of the ditch, with my heavy body thrown off balance, I fell almost straight down on top of my feet.

There was a flash of darkness in my eyes, and I knew at once that I was badly hurt. For I had no strength left to even try to get up on my feet. I was lying at the very water's edge and began to pull myself up on the creek bank a little farther, but found that I could not do so. The other fisherman and his son were right there by me. They tried to raise me up, but I was too heavy for them, so the man

told his boy to run and call Edward. When they came, they took me by my arms and told me to try to stand on my feet, thinking that I had just wrenched my ankle. For a moment I stood, and then another bone cracked and down I went. It was then that I realized that my ankle was not wrenched, but broken.

Edward arranged with the other fisherman that he should stop at Klebs store, at the junction of Stuebner's Airline, and the Bammel Road, and call the County Emergency Corps to bring men and a litter to carry me out of the brushy woods along Cypress Creek to the bridge where our car was parked, and also to have an ambulance there to take me to the Heights Hospital in Houston.

The man, who was about to go home, gladly did this for us. Within a half hour, a Deputy Sheriff and some others with him, came along, followed within minutes by Highway Patrolmen, while in the distance we could hear the siren of the ambulance speeding to the bridge on the way from Houston.

The attendants of the ambulance arrived shortly after, bringing along an aluminum litter, on which they laid me after one of the ambulance men had strapped my leg to a board so that my ankle should be kept from dangling while I was being carried. Then eight to ten men picked up the litter and carried me up the creek bank, a little way north, and then west, for at least half a mile more to the road. There I was transferred to the ambulance and I was given my fastest ride to Houston with the ambulance siren screaming all the way.

At the hospital, it was found that Dr. Sears, who was our family doctor, was away on a case in which the patient was suffering from serious heart trouble. He was unable to leave that patient. He recommended a substitute physician. When he arrived at the hospital, he had an x-ray taken of the ankle. After examining the x-ray picture, he said that he would not touch it because all three bones of the ankle had been, not only fractured, but splintered as well. He recommended that we call a bone specialist by name of Dr. Joseph Barnhardt.

It was getting dusk when he finally arrived at the hospital. He looked at the x-ray photo and told me that he would have to cut into the ankle and peg some of the splintered bones. When he learned that I was a diabetic, he changed his mind and set my leg the best he knew how and put my leg in a cast up to my hip. He put me to bed in the ward, along with two other patients, and told me to lie straight on my back and not move my leg all night.

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I was in the hospital four days and it was indeed a new experience which I made there. On the fourth day, I was put into a wheel chair and an orderly pushed me around through the aisles. When the doctor arrived to see me, I asked him when I could go home. He answered, "today, if you want to go home!" I left for home that very evening. An ambulance took me home.

Edward, in the meantime, had fixed my bed at home after he had braced it with a kind of sailor's ladder, by means of which I could pull myself up into a sitting position at any time I so desired to do. For nearly three months, I wrestled with that cast. It was cut off at the knee, after I had worn it to my hip for about a month. Only they, who have had to stay in bed for months with their limbs in a cast, can know what a torture that is and even they cannot adequately describe the discomfort.

It was necessary for me to report to Dr. Barnhardt once a week for about four months. The first two times this was done by the use of an ambulance. After this my daughter-in-law, our son Lorenz's wife, took me there again and again until at last I was discharged. Another x-ray picture revealed that two of the broken bones were knitted together exactly right, but the fragments which should have been pegged on the third bone broken did not knit together, but were hanging loose in the gristle surrounding the cup in which the foot was hinged to the leg bone. I could walk again, and though the ankle swelled, sometimes to almost double that on my other leg for almost a year, and still swells some to this day when I stand on my feet for long periods of time or sit without elevating the leg, I am able to get around and walk with the aid of a cane for long distances, if necessary.

This ankle fracture of mine has changed my life a great deal, and not all of it for the better. I haven't driven a car since it happened, not so much as a dozen feet. Not that my foot is not strong enough to do so, but because I am afraid that I could not act quickly enough in an emergency. If I were living in the country, I would drive anyway but not here in Houston, where the traffic situation is what it is.

Not being able to drive has also put an end to my fishing days, and that hurts indeed. I have been fishing but once in more than two years, and that was when our son Edward took his vacation last year in June. We then spent two weeks at Fulton Beach, near Rockport, on the Gulf Coast. But he will not get a vacation this year because of his change of employment, and that means that I may never go fishing again.

I had to sell my car for a song, drop my club membership at the Atascocita Country Club on Lake Houston, because I have no way

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of getting there. No Houston bus line goes out that far. Also, I had to forego the pleasure of picking dewberries this year, though they were especially plentiful and extra large this year.

Our son Edward does his best to make up to me this loss of former pleasures. He has taken us on various trips in Texas, when his time permitted it. Once he took us to the Texas Hill Country at San Marcos, and back home again through San Antonio. On another occasion he took us to LaGrange for a visit and a church service at my last congregation in the service. On still another trip, he took us by train, going there and returning by car, for a few days visit at Port Isabell and on the way home through Corpus Christi, Texas. He has taken us to all the worth-while movie shows. We will never be able to show him all the appreciation that is due him for his thoughtful kindness.

XVIII

A LETTER OF LONG AGO WRITTEN TO OUR CHILDREN IN DECEMBER, 1949

LaGrange, Texas
December 15, 1949

To our Dear Children:

God bless you: He lead you into and keep you in true faith in the Christ Child, who was born in Bethlehem in this season, some 1949 years ago, to be our Saviour from sin, death, and the power of the Devil. In Him, may God grant you all a very joyous Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year.

You know already that I am not happy about the church life of some of you. My attitude in this matter, however, has undergone a change within the last few years. Not, indeed, as though now I condone your way of life: far from it, but I have learned to blame myself for your separation from church. Somehow I have failed you as a Christian father. It is not clear to me in detail, just in what respect I have neglected your spiritual up-bringing, but my conscience tells me, "You did not do all that you could and should have done to bring up your children in the fear and admonition of the Lord." I am making this confession today, because I may not have the opportunity to make it at some later time.

I know that God, for Jesus sake, has forgiven my short-coming, and I am asking you to forgive me also wherever I may have failed you. I pray you, in Jesus name, not to let my neglect of you stand in the way of your eternal salvation, nor to be the cause of your separation from God and your Saviour Jesus Christ and His Church.

I was brought to the conviction of my neglect of your up-bringing by a poem which I read some time ago, which herewith I am passing on to you for your guidance in the bringing up of your children. The heading of this gem of poetry is:

THE LOST SHEEP

"'Twas a sheep, not a lamb, that strayed away
In the parable Jesus told,
A grownup sheep, that had gone astray
From the 90 and 9 in the fold.
Out on the hillside, out in the cold,
'Twas a sheep the Good Shepherd sought;
And back to the flock, safe in the fold,
'Twas a sheep the Good Shepherd brought.
And why for the sheep should we earnestly long,
And earnestly hope and pray?
Because there is danger if they go wrong,
They may lead the Lambs astray.
For the Lambs will follow the sheep, you know,
Wherever the sheep may stray.
When the sheep go wrong, it will not be long
Till the Lambs are as wrong as they.
And so with the sheep we earnestly plead,
For the sake of the Lambs today:
If the Lambs are lost, what terrible cost,
Some sheep will have to pay."

Author Unknown

It is not only of my responsibility as a father to you that I am thinking, but I am equally concerned about your and your children's eternal welfare. Dear Children, God loves you, even more dearly than mother and I love you. God loves every one of you so dearly that at this season some 1949 years ago, He sacrificed His Only Begotten Son for your sake. He sent Him into the world, conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, and put under the Law by his Circumcision, to be your substitute under the Law. And the Christ Child, born 1949 years ago, fulfilled all righteousness for us.

He became obedient unto His Father unto death. Yes, He died for all. And by His obedience and death, He has atoned for my sin and for yours. That is why St. Paul, speaking of that atonement of Christ, declares: "There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. For the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin." So, if only in true sorrow and contrition, you acknowledge and confess your sin, God is faithful and just to forgive your sin and to cleanse you from all unrighteousness.

It is therefore my prayer and that of your mother that you may all believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and through Him have eternal life, even as this is the good and gracious will of God. For Jesus says, "This is the will of Him that sent me, that whosoever seeth the Son and believeth on Him may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up on the last day." Yes, God and our Saviour would have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. "For there is one God and one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all."

Since no man can say that Jesus Christ is the Lord, except by the Holy Ghost; and since again, the Holy Ghost only operates in them that use the Gospel and the Sacraments of our Lord Jesus Christ, even as St. Paul says in Romans, chapter ten, "That is the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God raised Him up from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. . . For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call upon the name of the Lord in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? . . . So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."

And since the Bible teaches that FAITH cometh by HEARING the WORD of GOD, therefore we pray that YOU, Lorenz and Annie and Donald and Patsy; and YOU, Albert and Venna; and YOU, Helen and Joe and Marcia and Diane and David and Peter; and YOU, Gertrude and John and Jack and Susan and Nancy; and YOU, Ruth and Edward and Joe and Barbara and Jimmie and Virginia and Kathy and Thomas; and YOU, Lloyd and Laverne and Bob and Bill; and YOU, Eunice and Robert and Scott and Terry; and YOU, our youngest son, Edward, continue and rededicate yourselves to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by which, and by which alone, God the Holy Ghost calls, enlightens, sanctifies, and keeps us with Jesus Christ in the true faith.

It is for this reason that Jesus said: "Blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it." And again he reiterated, "If ye

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continue in my Words, then are ye my disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. "

Loving you all and praying for your temporal and eternal welfare,

Your parents,

Martha and Otto Bahr

P. S. You will please excuse the corrections and additions which I have made in this copy of my letter written now nearly twelve years ago. Since that time Eunice got married and has now two strong and healthy sons. Also Lloyd and Laverne have another son. And Ruth and Edward also have another daughter and another son. These we now include in our confession and prayer of December, 1949.

Nor have we seen the fulfillment of our prayers as yet. However, we shall wait upon the Lord. For we know that it is His good and gracious will that all men come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved. So we shall continue to pray and to plead at the Throne of Grace, that our prayers and hopes shall be Yea! and Amen! in the world without end, into which we shall soon be translated.

XIX

WHAT WE OWE TO OUR CHILDREN

We state here with hearts filled with gratitude that all of our living children have done much, since our retirement, to make our last years on earth pleasant and filled with happiness and contentment. I have already stated that our son Lorenz and our grandson Donald spent much time and labor in the building of our present garage, and in remodeling the kitchen. And that our son Edward has spent much money, labor and time in remodeling the utility room, and in plaster boarding both kitchen and utility room, besides insulating the attic and furnishing the wiring needed for air conditioning, two of which he furnished, free of cost to us, in our home.

Also, I want to state here that our son Lloyd also helped at times with the building of the garage and the remodeling of the kitchen. In addition to all this, our son Lorenz, when we had that abnormally cold weather in the late winter of 1951, replaced all the frozen pipes in and under our home, and he and Annie were responsible for a free

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will resolution of all of our children, made at the time they celebrated our forty-eighth wedding anniversary. The resolution was that all of them would send us cash contributions monthly and as regularly as they saw themselves able to do so. This resolution was well kept by nearly all of them, and we are herewith stating the annual sum which each of them sent us, either in cash or kind, throughout the past five years.

Since we are contemplating to sell our timber acreage, donated to us by Grandfather Fred and Grandmother Caroline Bahr, we shall no longer expect any further monetary help from them. And we also desire that after we are both on the other side of the grave, that before any division be made of the residue of our estate, if there be such, that first of all a portion of WHAT WE OWE TO OUR CHILDREN be returned to them--each child's proportion be a percentage, if not the full share, of its contribution: the full share if there be enough to cover it. If and when each child, or its heirs, have received full return of their contributions to us in the past five years, should anything be left, this is then to be divided share and share alike among all of our eight living children, or their legal heirs.

In the account given below there may be some mistakes, because we did not always write down immediately the sums sent us. But in the main, these figures are correct and ought so to be considered by all of our children, for the sake of peace and harmony.

Lorenz and Annie contributed \$75.00 for 1957; \$80.00 for 1958; \$150.00 for 1959; \$125.00 for 1960; and \$20.00 for 1961, up to June the 10th. What we shall yet receive in 1961 we will accept as gifts, since they are no longer bound by their resolution of 1956. The total for Lorenz is \$450.00.

Al and Venna contributed \$75.00 in 1957; \$185.00 in 1958; \$115.00 in 1959; \$80.00 in 1960; and \$45.00 in 1961. The total for Al is \$500.00.

Helen, Joe and children contributed \$310.00 in 1957; \$283.00 in 1958; \$320.00 in 1959; \$377.00 in 1960; and \$110.00 in 1961. A total for Helen and family of \$1,400.00.

Gertrude and John contributed \$40.00 for 1957; \$55.00 for 1958; \$75.00 for 1959; \$60.00 for 1960; and \$20.00 for 1961. A total for Gertrude of \$250.00.

Ruth and Edward contributed \$40.00 in 1957; \$80.00 in 1958; \$130.00 in 1959; \$75.00 in 1960; and \$25.00 in 1961. A total for Ruth of \$350.00.

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Lloyd and Laverne for 1957 contributed \$70.00; for 1958, \$70.00; for 1959, \$50.00; for 1960, \$40.00; for 1961, \$20.00. A total for Lloyd of \$250.00.

Eunice and Robert contributed in 1957 \$65.00; in 1958, \$95.00; in 1959, \$250.00; in 1960, \$65.00; in 1961, \$30.00. Total for Eunice is \$505.00.

Edward's contributions for 1957 were \$255.00; for 1958, \$257.00; for 1959, \$382.00; for 1960, \$295.00; and for 1961, \$221.00. A total for Edward of \$1,410.00.

As I stated before, we want these contributions repaid to each one of our living children, or to their heirs, after mother and I have passed away, if there is enough money left in our estate to do so. If there is not enough to pay each the full sum which they have contributed, a proportionate percentage should be returned to each.

Should there be anything left in our estate after these returns have been taken care of, then the balance is to be divided among my children or their heirs, share and share alike for each child.

We desire that our funerals be as simple as possible. We want no pomp and show. The coffins should not be of metal, nor costly. The price should be in accordance with our means. Our Missouri Synod Pension Department has arranged that I should receive \$500.00 towards my burial from the Pension Fund. There is no such arrangement for mother's funeral. But I am carrying two life insurance policies for a thousand dollars each, one with the Northwestern Life Insurance Company of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and one with the Lutheran Aid Society of Appleton, Wisconsin, out of which her funeral expenses should be covered.

It is our desire to be buried in Rest Haven Cemetery, where my parents own an eight grave burial plot. We do not want our children to spend any money for tomb stones. If there is enough of our estate left to do so, they may provide our graves with bronze or other metal markers, bearing the dates of our birth and death, and sunk at the head of our graves, flush with the ground.

XX

OUR PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

For ages mankind has tried to answer three basic questions, namely these: "Whence are we?" "Why are we?" and "Where do we

go from here?" Our answer to these questions are not the answers of the worldly wise of our or of any other age. We do not believe that we are the creatures of a blind chance. We are too fearfully and wonderfully made to be the result of mere chance. Nor do we believe that we are the product of a billion year process of evolution.

The laws of nature show that this world's creatures are subject, not to a progressive, but rather to a regressive development. The improvement of species of plants or of animals always requires the careful planning and handling of a superior intelligence. A man may indeed cross a female horse with a male ass to procreate a mule, but he is unable to get the mule to reproduce its own kind. Horticulturists have, by skillful crosses, improved the apple and the peach from its wild state into a variety of improved strains, but they are unable to fix the seeds of these improved varieties so, as that they will reproduce their own varieties or strains. The seed will always revert back to its original wild state.

It is for this reason that mother and I, on the question, **WHENCE ARE WE?**, do not believe the answer of atheistic scientists and evolutionists, but we believe the Word of God in the Bible, which in its very first chapters tells us that man and all creatures are the handiwork of Almighty God. Our confession and belief, based on the written Word of God, is that of Dr. Martin Luther who declared in his Small Catechism: "I believe that God has made me and all creatures, that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses; also clothing and shoes, meat and drink, house and home, wife and children, fields and cattle, and all my goods; that He richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life; that He defends me against all danger, and guards and protects me from all evil; and all this purely out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me; for all which it is my duty to thank and praise, to serve and obey Him. This is most certainly true."

On the basis of God's own infallible Word, we also believe that God created man in His own Image, that is, man knew God and was perfectly happy in such knowledge, and also that man was without sin and any fault in the beginning. But man lost this image of God soon after his creation. Of his own free will, he chose to disobey God's Holy Commandment, in spite of God's warning to the contrary. This fall of the first man is also recorded in the very first chapters of the Bible. And since by the fall of Adam and Eve, our first parents were corrupted, all their children after them were also conceived and born in sin. God's Word tells us this in Romans 5:12. There we read, "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death hath passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

For this reason, we read also in Psalm 14:3: "They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." We must agree, therefore with St. John who declares in I John 1:8: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." The very fact that all men die, proves that all men have sinned and come short of the glory of God. For, says St. Paul in Romans 6:23: "The wages of sin is death." Yet, in spite of his sinfulness, man should not despair, for in the Gospel of St. John we read in chapter three, verse 16: "God so loved the world that He gave His only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Again it is written in Galatians 3:13: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us."

Even in the Old Testament sinful man was told about his redemption from sin through Christ. For the Prophet Isaiah declared unto the children of Israel in the 53rd chapter of his book of prophecies, "Surely, He has born our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was buried for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed." Indeed, "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin," even as it is written in I John 1:7.

And because this redemption of sinners by our Lord Jesus Christ is so plainly described and taught in both the Old and the New Testaments of the Bible, therefore we again believe and confess with Dr. Martin Luther: "I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His Holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, that I may be His own, and live under Him in His Kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, even as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true."

The answer, therefore, to the question, "Why are we in this world and life?" is simply this: "We are here to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling." Not as though we could earn or merit our salvation by our own work or doing. No indeed! St. Paul warns us against such a supposition, saying, "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast." See Ephesians 2:8 and following. However, we are here in this world to diligently employ our time of grace, in the seeking after faith in Christ.

Since we cannot even believe in Christ or come to Him by our own reason or strength, we must employ the means of grace which God has ordained to bring us to faith. These means of grace are God's Word and the Sacraments of our Lord Jesus Christ. St. Paul in Romans 10, verses 8 and following, declares of the Word of God: "The Word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is the Word of Faith which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture saith, whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all, is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on Him, in whom they have not believed? and how then shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! . . . So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."

When on the first Pentecost Day, after Christ's Ascension into Heaven, many of the Jews who had heard Simon Peter's sermon, were pricked in their hearts and asked the Apostles: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter said unto them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

We see, therefore, that the Bible teaches clearly that the preaching of the Word of God and the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and Holy Baptism brings the gift of God and the Holy Ghost into our hearts, and He works in us, both to will and to do after His good pleasure, even as it is written in the Epistle to Titus, chapter 3, verse 5: "He saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost." And as again it is written in I Corinthians 6:11: "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God." And in Romans 15:13 we read, "The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost."

And since the Bible so clearly teaches that it is God the Holy Ghost who, through Word and Sacrament, works faith in our hearts, therefore mother and I again believe and confess with Dr. Martin Luther: "I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Ghost

has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith; even as he calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith; in which Christian Church He daily and richly forgives all sins to me and all believers, and will on the last day raise up me and all the dead, and give unto me and all believers in Christ eternal life. This is most certainly true. "

Yes, mother and I know the answer to the third question universally asked by man; the question, "Where do we go from here?" We, and all men are headed for ETERNITY. And in ETERNITY there are but two places where resurrected mankind will spend it: HEAVEN and HELL. For thus it is written in St. Matthew's Gospel, chapter 7, verse 13: "Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; because strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

Our Lord Jesus, speaking of these two places in ETERNITY in His parable of Dives and Lazarus, reveals the difference between the two places by saying of both these men: "And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom; the rich man also died and was buried; and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivest thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted; and thou art tormented."

Yes indeed, it matters WHERE you go from here! For one of the two places in ETERNITY is indeed a place where there is peace and joy at the right hand of God forever; but the second place in ETERNITY is indeed a place of HORROR and TORMENT. The prophet Isaiah says of this place of eternal horror and torment in the 24th verse of the 66th chapter of his book, "Their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh."

If you ask, when shall all this take place?, the Bible answers, On the great day of the resurrection of all flesh. For so says the Lord Jesus in John's Gospel, chapter 5, verses 28 and 29: "The hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice and shall come forth: they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection

of damnation." And if you ask, Who are they that have done good?, the Lord Jesus answers your question in the Gospel of St. Luke, chapter ten, verses 38-42. There you are told of the Lord's visit with Martha and Mary. Both of these sisters endeavored to do good unto the Lord: Martha by serving the Lord with a meal, and Mary by seating herself at Jesus' feet, in order to hear the preaching of His Word and Gospel.

The Lord Jesus had this to say about their efforts to serve Him: "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." We see from this reported incident in the earthly life of our Saviour that the best good thing sinful man can do to please Him is for man to take time to hear His Word and Gospel. That, dear children, is why mother and I are so seriously concerned about your CHURCH GOING.

It is true that no man earns eternal life in heaven by his going to church; he only gives the Holy Ghost the opportunity to call, enlighten, sanctify and keep him in the true faith with Jesus Christ. There is, and there can be, no faith without hearing the Word and Gospel of our Saviour Jesus Christ, as I have said to you elsewhere. But if you do not go to church, if you do not hear preaching of the Gospel, you are standing in the way of your own salvation by hindering and resisting the efforts of the Holy Ghost to bring you, and to keep you in the faith.

In short, refusing to go to church to hear preaching and the Word of God will surely damn you on the last day, when Christ comes to judge the quick and the dead. On that great day of resurrection, mother and I, who have here in this time and life gone to church, will stand before the Son of God to hear what He has to say; and you will stand before Him also, dear children. On that day all of you will hear His words. What will he say to you, then? Will He welcome you and us and say, "Come unto me, ye blessed of my Father! Inherit the kingdom which has been prepared for you."? Or will He say to us, "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

Think on these things, dear children: "Where do you go from here?" Will you go into everlasting punishment with the devil and his angels? Or, will you go with Christ and all the righteous into life eternal? Mother and I know in whom we have believed. We pray that you believe in Christ also, and that with Mary of Bethany you will learn to sit at his feet to hear His saving Word and Gospel. Amen.

OUR MARRIED LIFE

Mother and I have had a happy and blessed married life together. Never did a man have a more faithful helpmate than the one I have had in mother. She faithfully stood by me through happy days and evil ones. The small success that I have had in my ministerial life is due, next to God, to her faithful and encouraging counseling and support.

That we successfully raised nine children and kept them in food and clothing in spite of inadequate salary paid me by most of my congregations was entirely due to her self-sacrificing spirit, and labor, and frugality. She cheerfully lived and worked for her family, all the days of her life. She denied herself many things, just so she could do something for her children and me.

She not only overlooked and forgave me for my many failings and shortcomings, but also, she told me in these years of retirement that she had no regrets, and no desire to have lived otherwise. This has made me very happy, for sometimes I felt that her married life could have been far happier had she married one or the other of her many suitors. May God bless her forever for all that she has done for me and for our children.

All that Solomon had to say of a virtuous woman in his Proverbs, chapter 31, is true of mother. "Her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life. . . She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness. She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children rise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her."

Yes, may God reward her for all that she has done to make our marriage a success and to bring up her children to be God fearing and respectable people.

CONCLUSION OF

OUR FAMILY HISTORY

Bahr Family

During my life span of 77 years, I have witnessed many changes in man's way of life. On the farm, where in my boyhood days, the farmer broke his ground with a wooden beam fourteen or sixteen inch plow, pulled by a yoke of oxen, he now uses a multi-horse power tractor, pulling a gang of from four to six 16" turning plows. The one mule cotton or corn planter has been displaced by a four row all steel planter drawn by a tractor speeding up to fifteen miles an hour. The cow trail cross country roads meandering through the Texas Prairies have been substituted by two to eight lane super paved highways. The twenty-five mile trip to the market from my childhood home in north Harris County, which required eight hours one way in a covered wagon drawn by a span of mules is now made in less than a half hour in a one-top pickup truck.

The fast trotting horse and buggy to Houston, requiring three and a half hours of fast driving has been displaced by the auto, which travels 60 and 70 miles per hour. We saw our first airplane in El Paso, Texas on an occasion when a number of planes undertook the first flight from the Atlantic to the Pacific Coast. It took the best of them several days to make the flight, and now some fast planes can cover the same distance in less than four hours.

When the Spanish-American war was fought, we marveled at the destruction wrought by so-called Gun-Cotton, and now we have the Hydrogen Bomb which in a moment can destroy a city of many millions in a moment. The greatest change has taken place in the cost of living. In my boyhood days a family of six or seven could get by on a hundred dollars cash in a year. Now it requires fifty times as much and in some places even more.

My grandparents on my mother's side spent three months in crossing the Atlantic Ocean in a sailing vessel. This year one of my daughters and her husband and two daughters crossed the same ocean from New York to Paris in a little more than five hours.

In 1894 my father sold dressed hogs to butchers at the market on Preston and Prairie for three cents a pound and that with the head removed, but it had to be included in the deal, though its weight was not taken into account. Now I have to pay the butcher 39¢ for spare-ribs, from which most of the meat has been pared away.

In 1908 we could still buy T-Bone steak in Giddings, Texas for 15¢ a pound. Now we pay six times as much and more for the same quality. A 49-pound sack of Tidal Wave Flour cost 90 cents at Henke and Pilot's store some seventy years ago. Now the same store charges 90 cents for a 10-pound bag.

Bahr Family

At the age of seventeen I paid three and a half dollars a week for board and room in Houston and now we have to pay as much for a single steak dinner.

Indeed, things have changed in my lifetime. In the fall of 1937, my father deeded a hundred acres of timberland to his four boys valuing at that time \$25.00 an acre. Last year my brother sold part of his holding for \$600.00 an acre, and we sold ours on the last of June this year for \$500.00 an acre, although it is one half mile off any road.

The sequel of this Our Family History will have to be chronicled by someone else. Why did I write this History at all? Not indeed because I considered it extraordinary in any way, nor yet to glorify myself or my family, for we are just ordinary folks. Nor was this written for publication. It was written simply to give our children and children's children an account of how wonderfully the Triune God has led us through this world and life, and blessed us in our poverty. All praise and glory be to Him, now and forever. Amen.