

# FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

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“As For Me and My House” Joshua 24:15

They had met each other at a respectable place and they were both from homes of God-fearing parents. At least such was the humble and sincere confession of each. Fact is, they were both from Protestant Reformed homes and belonged to the same congregation. Their parents faintly remembered the fateful year of “1924” and they had heard their respective grandparents speak of it with an earnestness which sometimes caused them to suppress a smile!

They were both young! Their spirits were young and gay. Sometimes it was even a bit difficult for them to maintain an attention-span in the Catechism class for an hour, without a few furtive glances at the clock which at that time just would not hurry! It was good to be alive! An overtone of haste reverberated in their veins. In a sense they were going places, but they had not too seriously and prayerfully considered the question “Quo Vadis?” It was just a bit bewildering and frustrating when their parents attempted to monitor their lives with a firm hand and allegedly more mature judgment. Yes, they were their parents, but then does not each live his own life?!

And, believe it or not, they were “in love”! No, they had not given too serious thought to its implications. There were really so many things to consider and it was really a rather bewildering experience. It was a rather storm-and-stress-time to pass through. Who was it that had characterized it as the age of “Trurm und Drang”? Yes, some German philosopher, who could write blithely about modern youth, the “Revolt of Youth” as a grey-haired man in his study, far from stress and strains of youth’s dreams. The old fogy! He did not feel the charm and joyous enchantment of her “hope chest” and what it meant for him: the girl of his dreams....

Yes, what did it mean?

O, Father had read the Bible at the table and it seemed that he deliberately read from the writings of Solomon, the king, the wise man, the muse. Did Solomon not say “Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth...” They rather felt relaxed when that was read. But when Father became rather solemn reading “...but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment...” it was a bit disturbing. A shadow fell upon their gayer mood!

They thought of last evening when after Catechism they had gone to the Café in joyous mood; they thought of the coin which they had furtively placed in the Jukebox and the songs and music they had selected. There was not much choice between the good and the bad, it was really between the bad and what was worse! But it had been a bit exhilarating; it fitted the joyous mood of two young people in love. And does not everybody love a lover? Father had just read the end of the Chapter from Ecclesiastes 11, “...for childhood and youth are vanity”. And in their more somber moments of reflection, they vaguely were aware that in their youthful joy there was still a bit of vexation of spirit.

It sounded a bit doleful, like the peeling of the death-knell!

Still, they feared the Lord in their own way. They did desire to confess His Name in the midst of the Church—and in the world! But to think ahead of the future in faith and hope in God, they had not yet so profoundly considered. That two lovers are brought together in God’s profound wise and providence, as with His own hand, was not yet a matter of reflection. They were too near to all that was happening in their lives to have any perspective of experience. But then there is the perspective of faith in the Scriptures which puts all things in focus and places also their being brought into its place in rather bold relief.

Yes, they remembered!

They had had a rather serious conversation with their Minister and Elder at family visitation concerning the word of Joshua, which he spoke to Israel at his farewell address “as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord”! They remembered that their Minister had been rather insistent and adamant that to “serve the Lord” was first of all a matter of serving Him as He has revealed Himself in His Word. And, coming to this point in the sermons, he would emphasize this so very, very much, too! He often warned against false doctrine and heresy and quoted John, who ends the first Epistle with “Little children, keep yourselves from idols” and he would insist that “we prove the spirits, whether they be of God”! For that is what the aged servant of the Lord, Joshua, had told Israel at Shechem. The idols of the heathen were not to be brought into the Sanctuary and false doctrine might not be smuggled into the church under the label of orthodoxy! And that nothing might be condoned in the church which conflicts with the structural truths of the Christian Religion, not even the theory of Common Grace though it have the approval of church counsels and decrees!

They were looking in a vague way toward asking to be admitted unto the Table of the Lord. Both were to put their feet together under the Table of the Lord, *before* they put their feet together under their own kitchen table! And both would vow to not reject all teachings concerning God, Christ, the church, salvation and the glory of God!

No, they had not yet read the “Form for the Ordination in Marriage” in the back of the Psalter. Wasn’t that a bit sad and morose for a wedding what had been read at a wedding recently which they attended? The minister had read with grave mien that ponderous paragraph at the very beginning of the Form, “Whereas married persons are generally, by reason of sin, subject to many troubles and afflictions...may also be assured of the certain assistance of God in your afflictions...!” Possibly they would not even hear too much of this on their wedding day. The sobering reality of the “afflictions” and the “cares of life” will bring their feet to *terra firma!*

Yes, they had been “in love”. But then it was something which they could still vaguely remember and not entirely forget. He would ever think of her as the wife of his youth and he would remain the young man of her dreams. But they both discovered something which they really knew before and somehow could not admit. He discovered that this beautiful girl with whom he had been “in love” was after all but a poor sinner, whom he had to learn to love with the love wherewith Christ had loved him. Fact is, there were times when he had to read once more the injunction of Paul “Husbands, love your wives, and be not embittered against them”. And she had to learn to obey her husband and to reverence him even as the church reverences Christ!

Yes, it is: as for me and my house!

The little ones will need to be taught at mother’s knee to pray, to obey! They will need to see this especially in the example of their mother and thus be in the *Kindergarten* of God! They must speak the mother tongue! And they must see something of the love and understanding of Christ in their father. They must learn the meaning of what it says: that thou mayest live long upon the earth!

Life is full of disillusionments!

There is a blessed disillusionment for youth, when the soap-bubbles of “forever blowing bubbles” break and when the pearls of the truth of godly fear become our portion, my youthful reader.

*Anno Domini*, 1964!

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