

The
AUTOBIOGRAPHY
of
Herbert W. Armstrong

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In this booklet we present
the early chapters, reprinted
from the first installments appearing
in *The Plain Truth*, beginning September, 1957,
of *The Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong*.
Succeeding installments, it is hoped,
may be reprinted in later booklet editions,
and, when *The Autobiography* is finally completed,
the entire Autobiography published as a book.

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PREFACE

SHOULD the story of my life be published? Would this be *right*? For years I felt it would not. I said, "God has called me to preach His Gospel, not to talk about myself."

I even refused, for several years, to let anyone take my picture. Finally a radio listener changed my mind. He wrote that he had a *right* to know what the minister he listened to looked like, and something about the man.

"When you attend church or an evangelistic meeting," he said, "what would you think of the minister if he hid behind the pulpit and let you hear his voice only? Wouldn't you be suspicious he had something to *hide*? Wouldn't you distrust such a man? When Jesus preached to 5,000 people, and other crowds, did He hide Himself? Did Peter hide his face when he preached—did Paul? **WHY SHOULD YOU?**"

The examples of Jesus, Peter and Paul settled the question. Since my hearers cannot see my face over radio, I have not been averse, since that listener's letter, to having my picture published occasionally—when it serves a purpose beneficial to the readers.

Paul Told Life Story

The Apostle Paul was a man of God. He was inspired of God to tell Christians to be *followers of him* (I Cor. 11:1). We are, therefore, commanded to follow Paul's example, as he followed Christ.

The Four Gospels record for us the life story—or those portions of it *helpful to us*—of Jesus. Paul told the story of

his own life twice—of his formative years and rearing and education—his conversion, and ministry. These accounts of his life were inspired by God to become **PART OF GOD'S WORD TO US.**

In the story of Jesus' life, and of Paul's life, we find much that is of great value and benefit to us, today.

The Old Testament is replete with the accounts of the life experiences of many men—Abraham, Joseph, Job, David—many others. Also the experiences of the nation, Israel. All these *life experiences* are written for **OUR ADMONITION**, today! (I Cor. 10:11). They are helpful to Christians.

It is impossible for one to write a personal account of his own experiences without using the personal pronouns, "I", "my", "me", "mine", etc. Lest I be accused of this, the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to use the personal pronoun 33 times in 21 short verses of the 22nd chapter of Acts, and 19 times in 10½ verses in Acts 24.

I Profited by Others' Experiences

While still in my 'teens, I was much impressed by reading the autobiography of Benjamin Franklin. It had great influence on my life. Since, the life experiences of many other men have been of great value.

Many people merely exist. They have never really *lived*! Perhaps the want of reading the interesting, exciting experiences of those who have lived a fuller life is one of the reasons. But influences exerted by certain men by personal contact, and the reading of unusual experiences of men who have *really lived*, played their part in carrying me thru a life of

experiences that have not been exactly drab or dull.

Looking back on a life well filled with action, effort, travel, and experience, it has seemed to me that I have *really lived!* Life to me has been exciting, fascinating, dynamically interesting. There have been fears and worries—disappointments, discouragements, frustrations, yes—but also there have been satisfactions and the exhilarating *thrills* of successes hard won, after paying the full price! But life has never been a bore. It has been *too filled* to think of seeking hobbies or pastimes.

Often I have felt the detailed story of it might be helpful to my two sons. There was never time to write it, just for them. But, finally, it has seemed that it might be interesting, helpful, encouraging, inspirational, beneficial, to a large portion of the readers of *The PLAIN TRUTH*, as well as, I hope, to my sons.

In the hope that it may be, in the words of Paul, truly edifying to many, and a means of bringing you in an inspirational way the very Gospel, as you read of how God brought it to me, I am now writing this life-story in successive installments.

As you've heard me say repeatedly, a thing worth doing is worth doing well and thoroughly. I shall not skim thru those early formative years, in order to hasten quickly to the time of my conversion and induction into God's ministry. The experiences of those years laid a foundation. I know now that God was then leading me thru the experiences that prepared for the ministry of Christ later.

INTRODUCTION

WHERE is the one TRUE Church today?" That was the question that haunted my mind in 1927.

That is the question that perplexes thousands today.

I had just emerged from an unsuccessful six months' intensive research in an effort to prove that "all these churches can't be wrong." Like most people I had been sure that the teachings and practices of these many large denominations were based on the Bible.

Late in 1926 that assumption had been rudely challenged. My wife had accepted a belief, and entered on a way of life and practice, contrary to the orthodox teaching and custom. To me it was religious fanaticism. To me it carried the stigma of disgrace. It was humiliating—and I was proud. What would all my friends think? What would my business associates say?

Unable to shake her from it by reason or argument, I was angered into the most determined study of my life. I set out to *prove, by the BIBLE*, that "all these churches couldn't be wrong." Although I had been reared in one of them, I had never really studied the Bible.

Disillusioned and Confused

I entered upon this intensified night and day study with zeal. I was determined to drive this religious fanaticism out of my home.

But, as I began studying into the plain, simple statements of the Bible, I was dumfounded! I soon began to make the disheartening discovery that the teachings of my Sunday School days were mostly at total variance with the direct and plain "thus saith the LORD!"

I began to realize that I had been taught largely the exact OPPOSITE of what the Bible says in plain language.

I became confused—all mixed up. My head was swimming. All my foundations seemed to be crumbling beneath me. Simultaneously, I was making an in-

tensive study of the "scientific" hypothesis of evolution, comparing it with the creation narrative in Genesis. The evolutionary doctrine began to appear plausible and convincing. Doubts assailed me.

Was there a God, after all? What *could* a man believe?

Gradually, as these months of 12 to 16-hour days of study progressed, the truth began to emerge that the beliefs and practices of these large and respectable church denominations were not based primarily on the Bible—but quite largely the very opposite of plain and simple Bible statements.

The plausible evolutionary pronouncements of Science, I saw, refuted the Bible and threw it out the window.

What was I to believe—the popular and highly respected churches, or Science, or the Bible? Or must I lose all faith in everything, and fling up my hands in despair?

It was a frustrating dilemma.

But I refused to give up until I found the real answer. Now I was *determined* to find the TRUTH! I was aroused!

"Oh God!" I cried out, "if there *be* a God, *reveal* yourself to me—give me irrefutable PROOF of your existence—give me PROOF of whether the Bible is really YOUR inspired Word and revelation to mankind—reveal to me WHY I was put here on earth—WHAT I am—*what* is the purpose and destiny of life—what's it all *about*!—It seems I've lost my way. Open my eyes and SHOW ME THE WAY!"

Then I remembered my mother's annual spring housecleaning days. At first everything was more upset than ever. Hidden dirt and waste appeared. All was clutter, dirt, confusion. But Mother never got discouraged. She simply cleaned out all the dirt and waste, put everything

back where it belonged, and then it was all in order and clean.

I realized I was undergoing a mental, philosophical and spiritual housecleaning. I was uncovering a lot of religious dirt—hidden error and superstition I had taken for granted because I had heard it, been taught it, or read it. And when all this "dirt" was discovered and swept out of mind, then order and peace and serene faith would appear for the first time.

It didn't come easily or quickly. It took effort, zeal, determination, patience, and a willingness to confess and get rid of error and to accept truth. But in due time the effort paid off.

I *did* find absolute and scientific PROOF that God Almighty exists, and actually RULES the universe! I *did* find PROOF—many proofs—that the Holy Bible, in its original writings, is the very inspired and direct revelation from God to mankind. I *did* find the ONLY firm and sound basis for FAITH, and source of TRUTH! I *did* find the PURPOSE of life, its destiny and THE WAY!"

And I found that Jesus Christ had said: "*I will build my CHURCH!*"

He did build it. Somewhere that one and only true Church had to exist today. But WHERE WAS IT?

WHERE Was the True CHURCH?

These months of vigorous study had astounded me with the realization that the teachings and practices of the large, popular, powerful, organized churches were NOT based primarily on the plain and clear teachings of the Bible. The real SOURCE of their beliefs and customs had to be looked for elsewhere. Nor were they carrying on the real WORK and MISSION of Christ. I could find no resemblance between them and the orig-

inal true Church I found described in the New Testament.

Yet, somewhere, there had to exist today the real Body of Christ—the spiritual organism in which He dwelt in Spirit—the human instrumentality fused with His Truth and His Spirit, which HE USES to carry on GOD'S WORK!

But WHERE COULD IT BE?

I was to be many years in finding it.

Actually, like almost everybody else, I didn't know, then, *what* to look for. I had first to learn how God Himself, thru His Word, describes this one Church—what it is like—what it does and does not do.

Until this challenge that angered me into intensive Bible study, I had always said, like thousands of others, "*I just can't understand the Bible.*"

The real story of this search for the one True Church begins much earlier. I'm afraid it can't be made fully and interestingly clear without giving you first the background leading up to it.

Thousands have long wanted these details, many of them exciting, of my past life—the original years of preparation, my conversion, how I came to leave a business life and be plunged into the ministry, the years of struggle, opposition, persecution, experiences with ministers and churches, miraculous answers to prayer, and the start and growth of this present worldwide work of God.

For years I have felt that it should be written. But there never seemed to be time. On occasion, I have written very brief high-spot summaries of portions of this history—but never have the real human-interest close-up personalized details been filled in.

Even my own two sons, now both ordained ministers tremendously busy in the great work of God, have never heard from me much of the experiences I have

lived thru, and, for the past 40 years, shared with their mother.

When I was along in the late teens, I was thrilled and highly intrigued by reading Benjamin Franklin's Autobiography. It made such impress upon me that I later read it completely thru again, and then still later, even a third time.

Franklin's Autobiography was written to his son. I have often felt that I should write the life experiences that have come to me for the benefit, and, I hope, encouragement and inspiration of my sons.

I hope you won't find it dull. The experiences I'm now going to tell you have never seemed dull to me.

CHAPTER I

written July, 1957

I DON'T think you'll be much interested in boyhood experiences. Yet a few of them did bear influence on what was to follow.

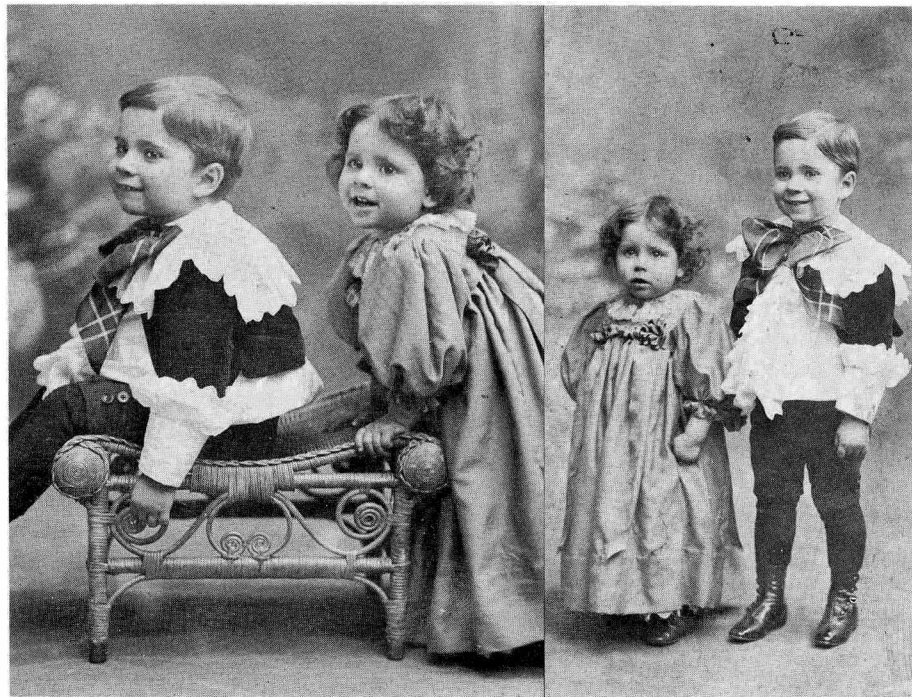
My earliest recollection is of a house where we lived on West Harrison Street, in Des Moines, Iowa.

I was born July 31, 1892, in a red brick two-apartment flat on the northwest corner of East 14th and Grand Avenue, in Des Moines. Of course I don't remember that, but my mother, now in her 92nd year and still happily *enjoying* life, as God intended, says she does! A friend in Des Moines a few years ago jokingly remarked that I had become famous too late. That flat has long since been torn down and replaced by a filling station.

But I do remember a few events, between ages 2 and 5, in this cottage on West Harrison Street, near 14th. My father's parents lived next door in a larger house to the east, and I remember scampering over there to sample the delicious apple pies my Grandma Armstrong used to make.



This is a family photo of Herbert Armstrong with his father and mother, and his sister, Mabel. How differently they dressed when Mr. Armstrong was a boy!



Typical childhood scenes showing Herbert Armstrong playing with his sister, Mabel. He was about 3½ years old when the photos were taken.

I remember my Great Grandpa Hole, then somewhere between 92 and 94, often taking me up in his arms—and the tragedy that occurred when he fell down the stairs, and died.

I started kindergarten at age 5. I can still hear the mournful clang of the school bell, one block south.

Swearing Off Chewing

It was at this advanced age of 5 that I swore off chewing tobacco. This is how it happened. A ditch was being dug in front of our house. This was quite exciting. In those days I spent most of my time out in the front yard watching. Ditch diggers in those days universally chewed tobacco. At least these particular diggers did.

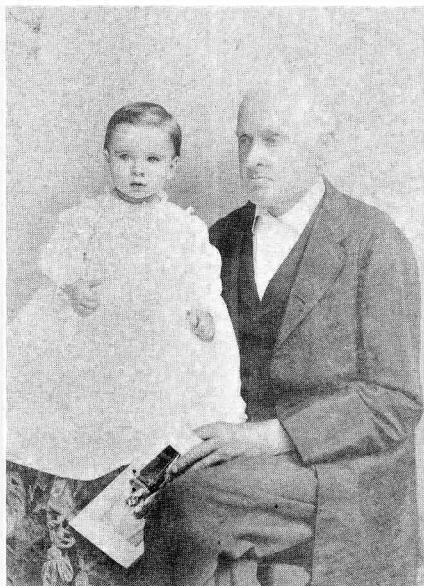
"What's that there?" I asked, as one of them whipped a plug of tobacco out of his hip pocket, and bit off a corner.

"This is something good," he answered. "Here, sonny, bite off a chaw."

I accepted his generosity. I can remember distinctly struggling to bite off "a chaw." That plug was really tough. But finally I got it bitten off. It didn't taste good, and seemed to have a rather sharp bite. But I chewed it, as I saw him chew his, and when I felt I had it well chewed, I swallowed it.

And very soon thereafter—a minute or so—I swore off chewing tobacco for LIFE!!! I say to you truthfully, I have never chewed since!

This was very shortly after the days of the old horse-drawn street cars. The new electric trolley cars had just come in—the little dinkeys. I remember it well. The conductor on our line was Charley, and the motorman was old Bill. The most fascinating thing in the world in those days was to park myself up at the front of the long side seat, on my knees, so I could look thru the glass and watch



Here is Mr. Armstrong at the age of one year with his great grandfather Hole, age 92!

old Bill run that car. I decided then on what I was going to be when I grew up. I was going to be a street car motorman. But something in later years seems to have sidetracked that youthful ambition.

I do remember, though, that my father had a different idea of what I would be when I grew up. I was constantly pestering him with questions. I always seemed to want to know "WHY?" Or "HOW?" I wanted to UNDERSTAND things. At age 5 I can remember Dad saying (I called him "Papa" then—he became "Dad" later at the same time that other boys' male parents had their names changed from "Papa" to "Dad." I remember he didn't like the change, but I was more concerned with what boys my own age thought than with my father's opinions)—anyway he said: "That youngin is always asking so many questions he's sure to be a Philadelphia lawyer, when he grows up."

A Spanking in School

At age 6 the family moved to Marshalltown, Iowa, where my father entered into a partnership in the flour milling business.

I remember the events of those days at age 6 much better than I do those of age 56. The mind is much more receptive, and the memory far more retentive, in the earlier years. Believe it or not, every baby learns and retains more the very first year of life than any year thereafter. Each year we learn and retain a little less than the year before. Few, however, realize this fact. For each succeeding year, the total fund of knowledge increases. We have what is learned and retained this year, *in addition* to what has been the cumulative knowledge of all past years. Writing up these early experiences brings this forcefully to mind. Occurrences are coming back to me in my mind, now, as I write, that I have not thought of consciously for years.

At Marshalltown we virtually lived from that flour mill. Almost every evening for supper—the evening meal didn't become "dinner" until years later—we had corn meal mush and milk. Distinctly I can hear my father, now, giving evidence of a small amount of Scottish-Irish in his ancestry, by calling it "mursh and milk." When he needed to silence me, with his strong, clear deep bass voice, he commanded sharply, "Hursh!"

Breakfasts at Marshalltown consisted of either or both of fried mush, and/or buckwheat cakes. Dinner, today called lunch, was largely bread and gravy, made from "a dime's worth of round steak," and, as my mother always instructed when sending me to the butcher-shop, "tell him to put in plenty of suet."

I went to school in the first grade in Marshalltown. One day the teacher called me to the front of the room and gave me

a good spanking with a ruler. What for, I do not remember. The one thing I do remember, vividly, is trying to save face before the other children, as I walked back to my seat near the rear of the room. With my back to the teacher, I tried to make a face and laugh for the benefit of the "kids." So far as I can remember, that is the only time I was ever spanked or severely disciplined in all my school years.

It was also at Marshalltown, at age 6, that I had my first "girl friend." I remember only part of it. It must have been some kind of children's exercises at a church function. A little girl my age—her name, I well remember, was Velma Powers—and I, had some kind of a part or act, opening or shutting a curtain between two rooms. Whatever happened to Velma after age 6 I have never heard.

"Haw Goodie"

After a year or so the family moved back to Des Moines. My father bought, or built, a house some three or four blocks north of the place on Harrison Avenue.

It was while we lived there that my brother Russell was born, when I was 8. In front of our house was a very thorny hawthorn tree. Neighbor boys and I built a little one-room "house" up in the branches of that tree. It was great fun climbing the tree, and entering into our little wooden "house," where we were private and out of sight of our parents.

We named the tree and the tree-house "Haw-Goodie." I suppose it was because we liked to eat the haws—the little red berries of the tree.

When my little baby brother was a few months old we moved to Union,

Iowa, where my father went into partnership in a hardware store.

The "Pigeon Milk" Hunt

One day I wandered into the town job-printing shop. I must have been on one of my usual information-seeking forays, asking so many questions that ways and means had to be thought up for ridding the printers of the nuisance.

"Say, sonny, I wonder if you'd run an errand for us," asked the printer. "Run over to the grocery and ask them for a pint of pigeon milk."

"What's it for?" I asked. "Why do you want it?" I always had to understand "WHY?" and "HOW?"

"To grease the presses with," explained the printer.

"How'll I pay for it?"

"Tell 'em to charge it," was the answer.

At the grocery store the grocer explained:

"Sorry, bub, we're just out of pigeon milk. They carry that now at the jewelry store."

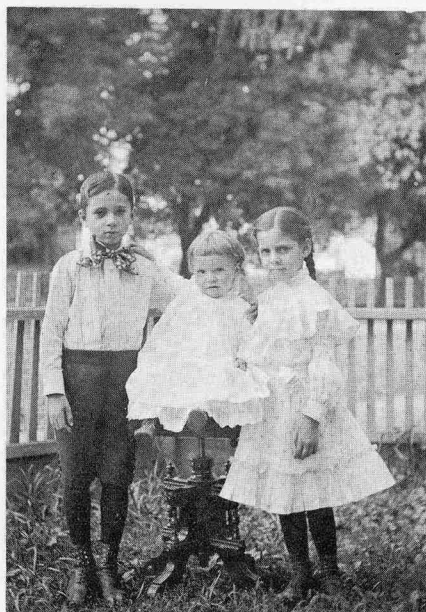
From the jewelry store I was sent to the furniture store, and then to the dry-goods store, then to the drug store, and after almost every store in town I went to my father's hardware store. Dad explained that I had been chasing all over town on a fool's errand. Anyway I added to my store of knowledge the fact that pigeon milk is not to be found in stores. And I didn't think it was a more foolish errand than the one a rookie sailor was sent on when his ship was anchored at Pearl Harbor. Older sailors sent him to a dour Commandant on shore to get the key to the flag pole—and he got thrown in the brig.

Our barn in Union was badly infested with rats. I determined to do something about it. I obtained a large cage rat trap

at the hardware store, and almost every morning I had a number of rats in the trap. When God says, thru Jeremiah, that the heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, he meant mine, as well as *your* heart. I took some kind of fiendish delight in gradually drowning those rats in the rain barrel, by lowering the cage into the water. I don't recall having received the severe whippings for this I should have had. Probably my parents didn't know I did it.

I remember a birthday party my mother had for me on my 9th birthday, probably because a picture taken at the party has remained in the family box of old pictures.

Another milestone event that lingers vividly in memory was the turn of the century. *That* particular New Year's Eve was a once-in-a-lifetime event. Then and there I formed an aversion to



This photo shows Herbert Armstrong at age nine with his sister, Mabel, and younger brother, Russell.

Church "Watch-nights" on New Years' Eve.

I couldn't see any fun, at 8½ years, in having to sit quietly in Church from about 8 o'clock until midnight, unable to get up and play or run around, just quietly "watching" the old century out and the new century in. Some thirty years later I was to learn that God had set the beginning and ending of years and centuries otherwise. We were only watching the passing of a humanly calculated point of time, anyway. I only knew that it was a droll and dismal evening for me. I went to sleep once or twice, only to be awakened.

Back to Des Moines we moved again after a year or so in Union, this time near East 13th and Walker. No events worth recording occurred until we had moved into a new house my father built on West 17th at Clark, when I was 10 and 11 years old.

Learning to Swim

While living there, I began to play football on our grade-school team, learned to skate and to swim.

Two or three of the boys I ran around with at that time, most of them a year older than I, took me one day to the "bathing beach" on the Des Moines river. There was a diving barge out in the river where the water was deep enough for diving, and a couple of ropes stretched tightly about even with the surface of the water from the shore to the barge. I would go out to the barge holding on to the ropes, for I had not yet learned to swim.

One day two of my companions got me out almost to the barge, where the water was well over my head, pulled me loose from the rope, and yelled at me that I had to swim, or sink.

With my life at stake, I plowed des-

perately into the water with my arms and legs, and managed to keep above water until I churned my way into water shallow enough to stand on the river bottom. That's how I learned to swim.

In those days the automobile was in its earliest infancy—mostly built like the horse-drawn carriages, hard solid rubber tires, steered by a stick or handle rather than a wheel. We often called them horseless carriages. My father was always jolly, and he loved a joke. It was while we were living in this house that he called out to us:

"Hurry! Come quick! Here goes a horseless carriage!"

Seeing one of these early automobiles was a rare sight. We came running to the front window. A carriage was going by, drawn, not by horses, but a pair of mules. Dad's strong bass voice boomed forth in hearty laughter.

The two boys I "palled" around with mostly in those days were Harold Cronk, who lived across the street, and Clayton Schoonover, who lived a block or two away. We played baseball, football, marbles, and other games together. We dug a cave over in "Cronky's" yard. Then, from this cave, we dug a tunnel five or six feet long, that led into a second cave. We had shoveled out all that dirt thru the tunnel and first cave. The only entrance into the second cave was to crawl thru that tunnel, and it was too small to admit the passage of an adult. Thus, the second cave was a hide-out from parents. Altho I had sworn off from chewing tobacco at age 5, it was back in this second cave at age 10 or 11 that I learned first to smoke.

Learning to Smoke

Boys will do idiotic, crazy, foolish things. How boys that age ever live into maturity I have never been able to under-

stand, except that God must provide an angel for every little boy to preserve his life from violence and accidental death.

The only ventilation in that second cave came thru the tunnel and first cave. I don't believe we ever smoked more than once or twice back in that cave—just for the novelty of doing a forbidden thing—and I don't remember, now, whether we had real tobacco cigarettes or some other kind. I do remember once smoking corn silk down on "my cousin's farm"—which of course belonged to my uncle. I'm sure every man raised on a middle-west farm remembers the same experience. Actually I don't remember that smoking ever became a habit until age 19, and never a heavy habit—but it was not broken until my conversion.

Wrestling became a favorite sport in those days. These were the days of Frank Gotch, Farmer Burns, Zbysco, and others, when wrestling was a real sport and not a fakery show. "Clay" Schoonover's older brothers had set up a real wrestling mat, and they taught us all the main holds. I think I loved ice skating perhaps more than any other sport, however. I had learned to take wide, sweeping strokes in a style so that my body would sway way over, from one side to the other, using the force of gravity to help propel forward. There was a rhythm and sort of thrill sensation to it that was enjoyable.

During these days I did a great deal of bicycle riding, developing big calf muscles on both legs. By this time my father had invented the air-circulating jacket idea around a furnace, and had gone into the furnace manufacturing business, with a small factory on East 1st or 2nd Street. I worked summer vacations in the factory.

I had a sister, Mabel, two years younger than I. She died, at age 9, in this house.

Dad soon sold that house, after my sister's death, and built another new house back on the south-west corner of 14th and Harrison, only about three doors from the place where we lived from the time I was a few months old until age 6.

After my sister's death my mother prayed earnestly that God would give her another daughter. When I was 12, that daughter was born, and a half hour later her twin brother, Dwight Leslie. My mother, incidentally, is a twin. Her name is Eva, pronounced with the soft "E" to rhyme with the name of her twin sister, Emma, who is not now living.

Also incidentally, my younger brother Dwight is mainly the composer of the new Bible Hymnal now being prepared for the publishers, which we hope to have published within the next six months. He has composed some 38 or 40 new hymns, the music set to the Psalms or other Scriptures. In this Hymnal also will appear some 50 or 75 of the old favorite hymns known and loved by nearly everybody, insofar as their words are Scriptural. The words of so very many favorite hymns are not. Also there will be included a number of very old hymns from an old Presbyterian Bible hymnal, with the Psalms set to music. Many of the most beautiful old hymns nearly everyone knows will be published with the old unscriptural words replaced by the words of various Psalms. GOD Himself gave us the WORDS to sing. The Psalms are SONGS!

Early Religious Training

I think it is time, now, to explain what boyhood religious training was mine.

Both my father and mother were of solid Quaker stock. My ancestors came to America with William Penn, a hundred years before the United States became a nation. Indeed I have the genealogy of my ancestors back to Edward I

of England, and thru the British Royal genealogy, back to King Herremom of Ireland who married Queen Tea Tephi, daughter of Zedekiah, King of Judah. The Bible then carries the genealogy back to King David, and on to Abraham, and indeed back to Adam. My mother is something like a third cousin to former President Herbert Hoover, who also is of Quaker ancestry.

From earliest memory I was kept regularly in the Sunday school and church services of the First Friends Church in Des Moines. Apparently there are several branches of the Friends Church, like most other denominations. I never knew much about any of the others, but the one in which I was reared from a baby was *not* one of those quaint and unique meetings where everyone sits still until the "Spirit moves him" or twiddles his thumbs.

We had a Pastor just like most orthodox Protestant Churches. The style of service was almost identical with that of a fundamentalist Methodist, Baptist, Christian, or Presbyterian church.

From earliest boyhood I was in a boys' class, and we all sort of grew up together. I can't remember when I first knew those boys. I guess we were all taken there as babies together.

Anyway it was interesting, some ten years ago, to learn what had become of most of them—for I had drifted away from church about age 18, and had gotten completely out of touch. One of them was Dean of Student Personnel at San Francisco State College, with a Ph.D. from Yale. I contacted him, and he gave me considerable and valuable assistance and counsel in founding Ambassador College in 1947.

Another, who had been perhaps my principal boy-hood chum thru those early years, was a retired retail furniture mer-

chant, who had enlarged and successfully maintained the retail establishment founded by his father. Another was a successful Dentist. The son of the Pastor of my boyhood days, had died, apparently early in life. Another had become director of a large relief agency in the Middle East. On the whole, the boys of that class had grown to become successful men.

For some little time during those church years—perhaps a stretch of three to five years—I had the job of "pumping" the pipe organ. We had in the church a small pipe organ that was not electrically powered. A long handle protruded out the right hand side near the rear. This side of the organ was placed in a corner, and a draw-curtain hung in front of the handle. When I was pumping the organ bellows I was hidden behind the curtain.

My father was, all thru these years, the main bass in the choir. He had a deep bass voice of unusual quality and power. He could reach down to low "C" with sufficient volume to fill a large auditorium. All thru those years, too, he sang in the church male quartette. I think it must have been the best male quartette in Des Moines, for they were in constant demand to sing at various places all over the city. The high tenor was proprietor of Des Moines' leading photographic studio. The second tenor was president of an insurance company. I don't seem to remember the occupation of the baritone.

Several in my family seem to have inherited good voices from my father. In my case it never turned out to be a singing voice, and has been used only in speaking. My brother Dwight has inherited a special musical talent for composing, beside playing the violin and piano. My elder daughter sang for years on

The WORLD TOMORROW program, and has been heard around the world. My other daughter has a good voice but never studied music. My two sons both have unusually good speaking and singing voices, but only Ted has taken training for singing. He now speaks on the radio program about a third of the time, and often listeners cannot tell at first whether they are listening to him or to me.

A few years ago in New York I procured several original phonograph records of Caruso's voice, one personally autographed by him. On hearing them I recognized the same identical voice *quality*, or *color*, that was my father's, except his was in the lower deep bass range. I have often felt my father might have become a really great singer had he received proper training. I'm sure many hundreds who heard him believed the same.

Spark of Ambition Ignited

At this point I think it better to skip over the remaining boyhood days, and come to age 16. Between ages 12 and 16, beside school, I had many Saturday and vacation jobs. I carried a paper route, was errand boy for a grocery store, special delivery boy for a dry goods store, spent one summer vacation as draftsman for a furnace company, and there were other odd jobs.

But at age 16, during summer vacation, I obtained my first job away from home. The job was waiting on tables in the dining room of a semi-resort hotel in the next town east of Des Moines, Altoona. There was an electric line—an interurban street car—that ran out thru Altoona and on east to the little town of Colfax. This Altoona hotel served food of a standard that attracted many guests from Des Moines.

The owner was a single man of perhaps 45. He complimented my work highly. Soon he began to tell me that he could see qualities in me that were destined to carry me to large success in life. He constantly expressed great confidence in me, and what I would be able to accomplish, if I were willing to put forth the effort.

The effect it had on me reminds me of an experience my wife has related when she was a little girl. She was in her father's general store. A man came in, placed his hand on her head, and said:

"You're a *pretty* little girl, aren't you?"

"I'll thank you," spoke up her mother indignantly, "not to tell my daughters they are pretty! That's not good for them."

Promptly little Loma ran to a mirror and looked into it. She made a discovery. She decided the man was right, saying to herself approvingly: "Well I *am* pretty am't I?"

I had never realized before that I possessed any abilities. Actually I had never been a leader among boys. Most of the time I had played with boys older than I who automatically took the lead.

But now, for the first time, I began to believe in myself. This hotel owner aroused ambition—created within me the DESIRE to climb the ladder of success—to become an important SOMEBODY. This, of course, was vanity. But he also stimulated the WILL to put forth whatever effort it would take to achieve this success. He made me realize I would have to study, acquire knowledge and know-how, be industrious and exercise self-denial. Actually this flowered into grossly over-rated SELF confidence and cocky conceit. But it impelled me to *driving* effort.

Returning to Des Moines, I began to spend extra hours outside of high school

at the city library, mostly in the Philosophy, Biography, and Business Administration sections. I began to study Plato, Socrates, Aristotle and Epictetus. It was at this time that I first read Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography*.

My first date with a girl took place at about this time—a date to escort a next-door neighbor girl in my class in high school to some school function. At that stage I was pretty much in awe of girls, and felt awkward in their presence. It has always been a puzzle to me as to why so many boys around that age are afraid of girls, ill at ease before them, and yet girls seem not to be shy or bashful in any way in the company of boys. For the next 8 years I continued to date this girl on and off, but never did I put my arm around her, kiss her, or, as they would say today “neck with her.” (It was called “loving up” in those days.) It just wasn't generally done in those days—or, if it was, my eyes had not yet been opened to the practise.

I went to North High School in Des Moines. Its total enrollment was only 400 then. In high school I went out for football, and for track, and played a small amount of basketball in the gym. In football I played end or half. I weighed only 135 in those days, and was too light to make the team, but I went along in a suit with the team to all of its home games, usually played in the Drake University Stadium. In track I went out for the mile run, but never was entered in the state meet. The best time I ever made was 5 minutes flat, on the Drake track, where the annual Drake Relays, nationally famous, are still run. Even then I fainted at the finish line. Today the world's best runners get over the mile under 4 minutes!

I was just an average student in school. I remember the botany teacher once

compared me to a sponge.

“Herbert Armstrong,” she said sharply before the whole class, “you are just like a sponge. You never study your lesson, you never contribute or give out anything in class. You just sit there and *soak up* what the other pupils recite, and then when final exams come along, you always get close to 100%!”

I never did apply myself in school until the awakening at age 16, and even then I became much more absorbed in outside studies of subjects of my own choosing in which I was more interested. But I remember that always I was able to get above 90% (they graded on the percentage basis in those days) in all final exams—and often 98% or 100%. I did real heavy cramming the 24 hours before the tests.

But as yet there had been no definite GOAL in life set. At the tender age of 16 the idea of fixing a definite objective—of finding the true PURPOSE of life—occurs to few minds. Ambition had been aroused. I was *burning* with DESIRE to go somewhere in life—to become a success. But exactly *where* that “somewhere” was, or precisely *what* constituted the “SUCCESS” I was to achieve, had not as yet crystalized.

Just how the urge took hold of me I do not now remember, but the next summer, having finished two years of high school, I was imbued with the idea of becoming a school teacher.

The Teaching Career Blow-up

A little investigation revealed that a Teacher's Certificate could be obtained by passing a County Teachers' Examination. I was able to obtain copies of exam questions of past years. Thus familiarized with the nature and trend of the questions, I spent the first weeks of summer vacation “boning up.” There were a

couple subjects I would be required to teach which I had never taken. One of these was physiology. Procuring text books, I drove myself thru a rapid self-taught course of study on these subjects, beside a refresher course of all other subjects.

The Teachers' Examination was passed, with the usual grade high in the nineties.

Next, I obtained permission from my parents to visit one of my cousins who lived on a farm down in Warren County, south of Des Moines. That provided opportunity to search for a school teaching job. I learned of a certain country school where the teacher had not yet been hired for the coming fall, and quickly arranged thru the Chairman for a meeting with the school board, all farmers.

At this meeting I seemed to qualify in their eyes in every way but one. They were very skeptical about the ability of a 17-year-old to maintain discipline over 18 and 19-year-old boys probably taller and much huskier than I.

But by this time I had become exceedingly self-confident and cocky. There was a ready answer to that, or any other objections.

"I intend to introduce an athletic program," I said. "At North High, in Des Moines, I have had training in football, basketball, track, tennis, under the best coaches. Out on the playgrounds I'll be one of these boys, coaching them in sports they have never played. I know how to get along with fellows my own age. They will like me, and there won't be any disciplinary problems. Besides, if one of them does get smart, I began to learn wrestling at 11 years of age, and I'll have a hammer-lock or some other wrestling hold on the fellow before he knows what happened to him, and he'll

yell out quick submission. I can throw a fellow twice my size."

The school board seemed tremendously impressed with this show of self-assurance. They hired me.

Came fall, and the day I was to take the train from Des Moines for the school teaching job. I shall never forget that morning. Up bright and early, I packed a suit-case, and started down the stairs.

But squarely in the middle of the stairs at the bottom, blocking passage, was a 210-pound man I didn't *dare* try to throw with any wrestling holds!

"Just where do you think you're going, young man?" came the sharp, stern, and very commanding deep bass voice of my father.

I told him then about my school teaching job. I think I had been afraid to mention any of this to my parents before.

"You march right back up stairs, and unpack that suit-case," ordered that authoritative bass voice, "and don't let me hear any more of this tom-foolery about dropping out of high school to become a teacher at your young age. You're going back to high school this fall."

And thus the school teaching career was atom-bombed 36 years before Hiroshima and Nagasaki got the treatment.

But it was not long until a concrete life-GOAL was formed.

CHAPTER II

written September, 1957

AT AGE 18 I found a book in the library, titled "Choosing a Vocation." It took one thru a self-analysis, and a survey of various vocations, occupations and professions, to place the candidate where he best fit. It turned out that I would probably be most successful in the advertising profession. This,

to me, was one of the truly exciting, thrilling professions.

It happened that an uncle in Des Moines was the most prominent advertising man in the state. The place to begin, in the advertising profession, he advised, was the want-ad section of a daily newspaper. This was the freshman class of the advertising school. He assigned me to one year in the want-ads. He advised that I get a job on the Des Moines Daily Capital, published by Lafe Young, Senior United States Senator from Iowa.

I did not ask The Capital if they needed any help. That was too negative—might have resulted in being turned down. I went straight to the manager of the want-ad department, told him I was entering the advertising profession, and had decided to join his staff because it offered the best opportunity to LEARN, and to advance. I got the job. The starting salary was \$6 per week.

I had no conception, then, that the advertising profession was not, after all, to be my final life profession—or that *this* experience was merely the preliminary training needed for the ultimate bigger job in God's ministry. But I think GOD knew, and planned it that way!

In those days I had developed a very excessive case of swelled-head. I was snappy, confident, conceited—yet *sincere*, and intending to be completely honest.

On this want-ad job I soon became known as a "hustler." On the street I hurried—walked rapidly. I was a dynamo of energy. Of nights I studied. Books were procured on advertising, on psychology, merchandising, business management, and English. All the leading trade papers were subscribed to and dilligently read—primarily "*Printers Ink*," and "*Advertising & Selling*," the

two leading trade papers of the profession.

My uncle directed the training in learning an effective *style* in writing. Constantly I studied the writing style of a man named Hopkins, chief copy writer for the Lord & Thomas Advertising agency. This man reputedly drew a salary of \$50,000 a year, writing all the ads for Quaker Oats, Pepsodent, Palmolive, Blue Jay Corn Plasters, Ovaltine, and others. His rapid style, unique, yet plain, simple and easy-to-read ads *built* multi-million dollar businesses for those firms.

Also my uncle started me reading Elbert Hubbard, with his two magazines, *The Philistine* and *The Fra*—primarily for ideas, writing style, vocabulary—altho he cautioned me against Hubbard's religious philosophies. Later I was to become well acquainted with Elbert Hubbard.

The "Goat Work"

The first day in want-ads I was started out, bright and early, on a job they called "the Goat Work," with a young man now ready to graduate from that job.

This job in the newspaper business might be compared to "boot camp" in the Marines. It is a most undesirable, tough, breaking-in job. I soon learned what it was.

We each armed ourselves with a copy of the previous night's paper, a want-ad blank, and a pencil. Then we started out afoot. We headed up the hill on West Fourth and Fifth Streets—the rooming house district.

"I'll stop in at a couple of rooming houses," said my predecessor-instructor, "just to show you how to do it; then I'll go back to the office, and you're on your own."

Stepping boldly up to the first room-

ing-house door, he rang the bell. The landlady opened the door, instantly recognizing the folded newspaper in his side pocket and the want-ad blank in his hand.

"NO!" she snapped decisively, before he could say a word, "I don't want to run any want-ads."

"But *lady*," my instructor put a foot in the door being slammed in his face, "you know Mrs. Jones down in the next block, don't you?"

"Never heard of her!" Of course not. Neither had the boy with me.

"Well, Mrs. Jones put her ad in the *Capital*, and at least a dozen men came trying to rent the room. The reason you didn't get results is that you put your ad in the wrong paper."

But by this time the madam had managed to dislodge his foot and slam the door.

This same procedure was repeated at the next house.

"Well—" said my want-ad buddy, happily, "that shows you how to do it. Hope you sell a lot of ads. So long—see you at the office."

Finding a More Effective Way

But it didn't seem that he had demonstrated how to do it—but rather, how NOT to do it.

I waited until he was out of sight. I hid both the newspaper and the want-ad blank in my inner pocket, covered with my overcoat. Then I walked briskly up to the next rooming-house door.

"I hope you haven't rented your room yet," I smiled as the landlady opened the door. "May I see it?"

"Why, certainly," she smiled back, opening wide the door.

I trailed her to the second-floor room. No doors were going to be slammed in my face.

"Why," I smiled, "this is a delightful room, isn't it?" The landlady beamed expectantly. I whipped out the want-ad blank and began rapidly writing.

"Here!" she exclaimed suspiciously, "what are you doing with that want-ad blank?"

But she could not slam the front door in my face now—nor did she appear big enough to attempt throwing me out bodily.

"Now look," I said calmly. "This is a lovely room. Do you know why your want-ads have not rented it for you? The want-ad solicitors have told you it was because you put it in the wrong paper. You know that's bosh as well as I. The reason you didn't rent your room is that *you are not a professional advertising-writer!*"

By this time I had the want-ad written—at least two or three times longer (and costlier) than the average.

"Listen," I continued, "imagine *you* are a young man reading all the room-for-rent ads, looking for a room that is going to be your *home*. Now think how all those other ads are written—then listen to this, and think!—which room would YOU go to see, and rent?"

I read the ad, which certainly made the room sound very desirable. In fact, its glowing terms probably flattered her. She just *couldn't* resist seeing that flowery description of her room in print in the paper.

"Why, I'd certainly want to rent *that* room, instead of those ordinarily described in the want-ads," she replied. "That *does* make it sound good." She bought the ad—as large as three ordinary ads.

And the ad did rent her room!

That was the first advertisement I ever wrote that was printed. But I had already

been diligently studying text books on advertising writing. God *begins* whatever He does thru human instruments in the smallest manner—and a want-ad is the smallest of ads.

Today, we purchase full page advertising space and, with advertising technique, publish the *non-commercial* GOSPEL message. This procedure, as this is written, involves one leading sectional farm paper. But it is anticipated, God willing, that soon full page and double-page messages will be published in many farm papers and other magazines, and in Reader's Digest in many languages in many nations all over the world. This is becoming a *most* important DOOR which the Eternal God is opening for the preaching (Mat. 24:14) and publishing (Mark 13:10) of the true Gospel of the Kingdom of God into all the world for a witness unto *all nations*.

And thus the twenty years of experience in the advertising profession, starting with this want-ad, was preparation for a mighty work.

After an energetic morning I was back at the want-ad office about 1 P.M., the dead-line for getting ads to the composing room. I had a large handful of ads.

"Much-a-Welcome"

Soon I thought of a faster, more pleasant way to sell *more* room-for-rent ads.

The rival papers were *The Register & Leader*, and *The Daily News*. The News didn't count as a want-ad medium, but the "R & L" as we then called it was the city's big want-ad medium. Today *The Des Moines Register* is recognized by many as one of the nation's ten great newspapers. In 1924 I was offered the job of advertising manager of *The Register*, and refused it—but that's getting ahead of the story.

The "R. & L." printed perhaps three or four times more room-for-rent ads than *The Capital*. Rooming-house landladies had become smart. In order to prevent newspaper solicitors annoying them on the telephone, or prospective roomers turning them down on the phone before actually seeing the rooms, they usually gave the street address, *only*, in their ads.

I knew that the "information" office of the telephone company indexed according to street addresses, as well as by name, but the information operators were not supposed to give out names or numbers for a given street address.

So I called the information office, and first engaged the operator in a jocular conversation. After a while I persuaded her, this once, to give me the name of the rooming-house landlady at a certain street address.

"Well MUCH-A-WELCOME" I said jokingly.

"Oh, you're entirely welcome," she said.

"No!" I came back, "I'm not welcome—I said *you're* much-a-welcome."

She was a little confused at this 18-year-old kidding.

"Well, what am I supposed to say, then?"

"Why, *you're* supposed to answer, 'you're entirely OBLIGED!'"

She had a good laugh. That joke sounds about as "corny" as Iowa's tall corn, now—but it certainly got me results with that information operator.

Next morning I called "information," and said, "This is Much-a-welcome" again! It brought a friendly laugh. I was, in my self-confident conceit, what some call a glib talker. Somehow I managed to talk this information operator into giving me the names and telephone

numbers of every room-for-rent want-ad in the morning paper that we had not carried the evening before.

Always I ended by saying "Much-a-welcome," and she would laughingly reply, "Oh, you're entirely obliged." Silly, perhaps—but it got me the names and telephone numbers I wanted. Quite a telephonic friendship was struck up with this information operator. Often I wondered how old she was—what she looked like. I never knew. It did not seem appropriate to suggest a face-to-face meeting. But this daily morning procedure continued until I was promoted to the Real Estate department.

Getting Ads by Phone

Once I had the names and telephone numbers, they were called by phone.

"Good morning. Is this Mrs. Smith," I would start off, cheerily.

While I was only a boy of 18, and appeared rather immature when calling on these prospects face to face, I had inherited a strong bass-baritone voice from my father, even lower-pitched than now, and appeared quite mature on the telephone. I discovered, even then, 47 years ago, that I was possibly more effective audibly than visually. Indeed, this was the first prelude training for radio preaching that was to follow, beginning 24 years later.

"I wonder," I would continue the telephone conversation, "if you would describe your room to me." While getting the description, prompted by repeated questions from me, I was rapidly writing a very descriptive want-ad. Then I explained that she had not described it well enough in the morning-paper ad to cause anyone to really want to walk out to see it, and told her that I was an expert ad-writer, and quickly read the ad that would tell enough about the

room to cause prospective roomers to want to see it. I explained that the reason she had not been getting results was the fact her ad was written so inexpertly.

A large majority of these hastily-written telephone ads were sold. The rooms were usually rented—unless they failed to live up to the description after prospective roomers called to see them.

Soon we were carrying more room-for-rent ads than the "R. & L." Whenever one of our rooming-house customers had a vacant room, they automatically called for me on the telephone, and soon rented the room again.

My First Display Ads

It was not long until I was promoted out of the room-for-rent columns, and into the Real Estate section.

But first came a challenging test—the toughest of all. The Want-Ad manager, a young man (older than I) named Charles Tobin, had an ambition. He hoped to increase his salary to a point that would enable him to wear a fresh-laundered shirt every day. Immediately, that became one of my ambitions, too. The assignment he gave me was to sell a special section on the want-ad page, of single-column *display* ads to the second-hand furniture dealers.

These stores were all owned by a type of men who did not believe in advertising, and valued every penny as if it were a million dollars. To me, this was an unpleasant task, because so many of these stores were dirty and dusty and musty, cluttered and ill-arranged—an unpleasant atmosphere to enter.

Here, again, however, ads were sold by *writing the ads*, and making attractive-appearing lay-outs. These were the very first display ads I ever had printed. I remember staying up until midnight

studying a book on advertising and selling psychology. It took the combination of all the selling psychology, attractive advertising lay-outs and copy, and persuasive personality I could muster to accomplish that assignment. But it was accomplished—a total of about a third of a page or more, as nearly as I can now remember.

During this “special number” crusade, I encountered a somewhat handicapped Jewish boy of about my age, the son of one of these “used furniture” merchants. The store owner was delighted to learn that I had some influence over his backward boy. It seemed like a responsibility that had come to me, to encourage him to go back to school, to study hard, and to begin to believe that he could be a success some day, and to start working, and *fighting*, even against sluggish impulses of self, to make something of himself. For some months I continued occasionally to drop in at this store to give this lad another “pep talk.” It seemed to be doing good. I hope the progress continued, but after about a year lost contact.

The \$2 per Week Lesson

But after “putting over” this special number, I was given a Real Estate beat, and the salary raised to \$8 per week.

I was put on a regular “beat,” calling daily on a certain number of Real Estate brokers to pick up their ads. Here again, I started writing ads for them. Results were increased. More and more the dealers on my route began using large ads in the *Capital*, using less space in the “R. & L.”

It was on this job that I became known as a “hustler.” I walked at a pace that was almost a run. It was drive, *drive*, DRIVE!! all morning long—until the 1 pm deadline. Then the afternoons were spent in the office preparing form solic-

tations, to which were attached clipped want-ads from the other local papers, or even those of other cities, which were mailed out. Thus I learned to sell want-ads by mail. This knowledge landed an important job, later.

It was not long until Ivan Coolidge, then want-ad manager over at the “R. & L.” asked me to drop over and see him. He offered me \$10 a week if I’d leave *The Capital* and join the *Register* staff. Later on, Ivan established an advertising agency of his own in Des Moines, which, I believe, gained some prominence—but he was unfortunately cut off somewhere in mid-life by premature death.

I told Ivan I wanted to consult my uncle before giving him my decision.

“So,” chuckled my Uncle Frank, with the wisdom of a Ben Franklin, “the opposition is beginning to *feel* the pressure, eh? Want to hire you away from the *Capital*—willing to pay \$10 a week to stop the competition, are they? Well, now listen, Herbert. A little encouragement once in a while is very helpful. It shows you are making good. You can get some inspiration out of it to provide incentive to keep driving yourself on. But I’ve noticed that there has been a tendency in some branches of our family to keep shifting around all the time from one thing to another—never staying with one thing long enough to make a success of it. There’s a good deal to the old adage, after all, that a rolling stone gathers no moss. One of the great success lessons you need to learn is persistence—to stay *with* a thing.

“Now suppose you quit the *Capital* and go over to the *Register*. You wouldn’t *learn* any more about the advertising profession over there than you’re learning where you are. The only advantage is the \$2 per week. You’d probably blow

that in, and ten years from now you wouldn't remember having had it. I think the time has come for you to pay the \$2 a week to learn the important lesson of staying *with* a thing. Every week, when you draw your \$8 at the *Capital*, remember you are paying the extra \$2 you might be getting at the *Register* as the price of that lesson, and I think you'll remember it."

I had started out to spend *one year* in want-ads at the *Capital*. The temptation had come to weaken and get off that schedule.

I took my uncle's advice and stayed on the schedule.

Learning Rules of Success

Thus, at the early age of 18, some of the seven important rules of success were being learned.

The first success rule is fixing the right GOAL,—avoid fitting the "square peg in the round hole." I was yet to learn the real PURPOSE of life, or the one true supreme GOAL. Actually I had set out on a wrong goal—that of becoming someone "important," achieving business success for the purpose of making money. But at least I had made the self-analysis and the survey of vocations to find where I should fit *within* the realm of business, the field of this goal. At least, ambition had been kindled. And, tho little realized at the time, all this experience was building the necessary foundation for the vocation God was later to call me into.

The second success rule is EDUCATION—fitting oneself for the *achievement* of the goal. I was getting, *not* mere impractical and theoretical class-room book education, but the *combined* education of book study at night and practical experience in the day-time. And even here, the self-education being received was pre-

cisely that required properly to fit one for the big and real calling which was later to come from God. It was the preparation for this present work of God, without which this work today could never have become a success.

The third rule of success is good, vigorous HEALTH. Food plays a major part in this, and I was not to learn of the importance of food and diet until I was 37 or 38 years old. But I *had* learned the importance of sufficient exercise, deep breathing, frequent bathing and elimination, and sufficient sleep.

The fourth rule, *drive*, putting a constant *prod* on oneself, seems to have come naturally as a result of the ambition that had been generated at sixteen. There was always the sense that I *had to hurry!* I was learning to plunge into a task with dynamic energy.

The fifth, *resourcefulness*, or *thinking about* the problem at hand, also, was unconsciously being developed by experience. For example, the experience on the "goat work" job, and then in *finding a way* to get in room-for-rent ads faster by telephone, was an example of learning this rule by experience—*thinking thru*, and applying initiative, to a *better way* of solving a problem. Most people do such a job just as they are shown, without ever applying thought or resourcefulness to the activity.

And now, the sixth rule, *perseverance*, never quitting when it appears to everyone else one has failed, was being learned at the very low price of \$2 per weekly lesson.

In 1947, and again in 1948 this present great work of God appeared hopelessly to have failed. It seemed everyone else *knew* we had come to the "end of our rope." It has happened many times. But that \$2 per week lesson learned at age 18, coupled with FAITH in God, ac-

quired much later, turned a seeming hopeless failure into a world-wide ever-expanding success.

The seventh and most important rule, *Divine Guidance*, I was not to learn until much later. Nevertheless, I can look back now and marvel at the way every step of experience in those early years was a step toward preparation for the work to which God later called.

God has a way of *training*, long before their actual call, those whom He proposes to call to a *special* mission. Moses was trained in the king's palace for his later mission. Daniel was trained at Nebuchadnezzar's palace. Paul was trained for his ultimate mission while actually running the opposite direction, persecuting Christians. Peter Waldo was trained in business life, before his call, in the middle ages.

The First Side-Step from the Goal

But now came a big mistake in judgment.

As the scheduled year of training in daily newspaper want-ads drew to a close, a flattering offer came. And this time I failed to seek out the advice of my uncle Frank who had wisely steered my life so far.

On *The Daily Capital* staff was a book critic, Emile Stapp, who edited a Book Review department. Her desk was on the second floor adjacent to the want-ad and display advertising section. She had, apparently, observed my work, noted I was energetic and produced results. She was a sister-in-law, as I remember, of W. O. Finkbine, one of two millionaire brothers who owned and operated the Green Bay Lumber Company, with lumber yards scattered all over Iowa; the Finkbine Lumber Company, a large lumber manufacturing company in Wiggins, Mississippi; and operating a

17,000-acre wheat ranch in Canada.

Miss Stapp lived with her sister, Mrs. W. O. Finkbine, "out on the Avenue," as we called it—meaning the millionaire residence street of Des Moines, West Grand Avenue. I doubt very much that all the residents of that fabled street were millionaires, but at least so it seemed to those of us who were of ordinary means in Des Moines.

One day, near the end of my year at *The Capital*, Miss Stapp told me she had spoken to Mr. Finkbine, and I was being offered the job of Timekeeper and Paymaster at the big lumber mill in southern Mississippi. I was first to work a short period in the company's commissary store, managed by her brother, whose name I believe was Mr. Hal Stapp.

The job sounded flattering. The prospect of travel to far-off southern Mississippi had alluring appeal. I succumbed to it, going off on a tangent from the planned advertising career. This was to teach me a stern lesson by cruel experience about hewing to the line.

The First Meeting with a Millionaire

Before leaving, I was to go to the office of Mr. W. O. Finkbine for a short talk of instruction. I shall never forget my visit to the headquarters offices of this lumber firm. I met also Mr. E. C. Finkbine, President of the corporation. W. O. was Vice President.

It was my first experience meeting millionaires. It made a terrific impression. I was awed. There seemed to be something in the appearance and personalities of these men that simply *radiated* POWER. It was instantly apparent that they were men of higher caliber than men I had known—men of greater ability. There was an expression of *intensity* and of positive, confident *power*, which seemed to radiate about them, and af-

fected one who came within proximity of it. I could see that they were men who had studied, used their minds continually, dynamically, and positively.

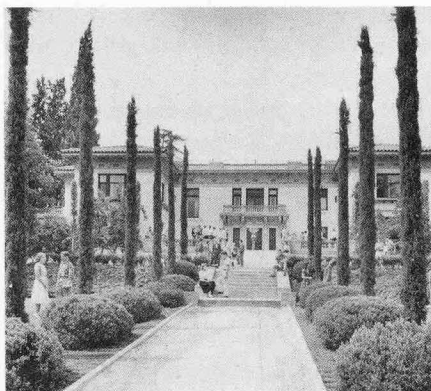
Of course I was over-impressed, due to the plastic susceptibilities and inexperience of youth. A very few years later I began meeting so many millionaires that they began appearing quite ordinary, after all—just HUMAN!

I was taken into the private office of W. O. Finkbine. He wanted to give me a little general advice before sending a young man so far away from home. I have never forgotten what he said.

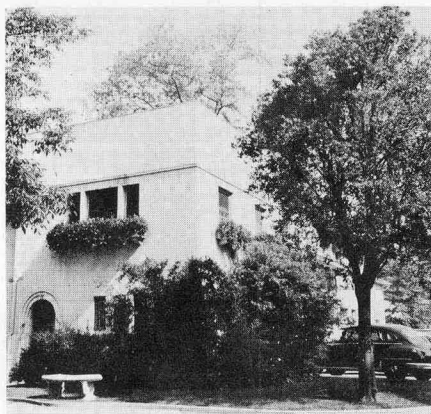
"We are going to send you down with the manager of our Canadian interests," he said. This man's name I do not remember now. It was early January, and he was going down to Wiggins for a vacation, and to inspect the company's operations there, during the off-season in Canada. I had never been farther from Des Moines than Omaha and Sioux City. It was a THRILL to look forward to the trip, first to seeing Chicago, then the deep South.

"First, I want to give you some advice about travelling," said Mr. Finkbine. "Most people look upon it as an extravagance to ride in the Pullman cars on trains. They are wrong. As you're starting on your first long trip from home, I want to impress on you the importance of always travelling in a Pullman car, except when you simply do not *have* the money to do so.

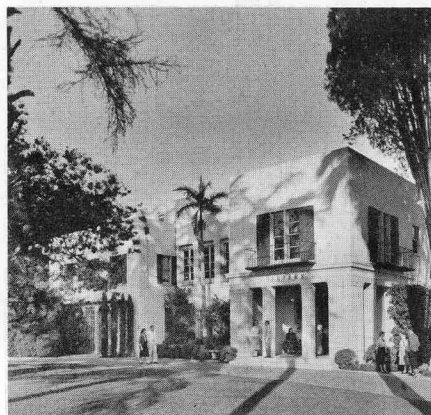
"First of all, especially at your age, we are influenced by everyone we come in contact with. On the Pullmans you will come in contact with a more successful class of people. This will have more influence than you can realize, now, on your future success in life. Then in the Pullmans it is not only cleaner, but safer.



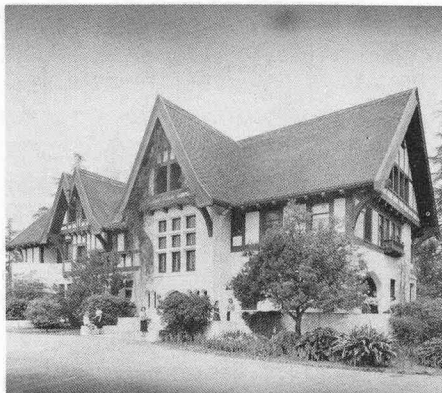
Ambassador Hall



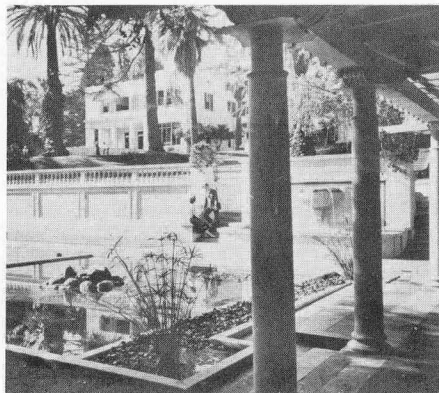
Administration Building



Ambassador College Library

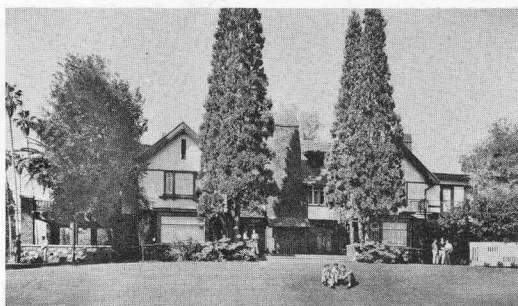


Mayfair, Girls' Dormitory

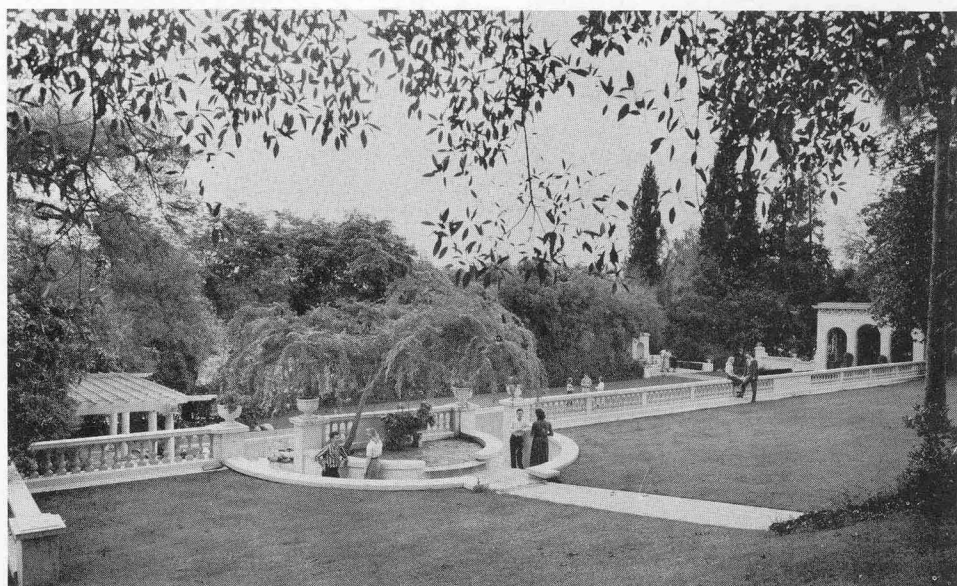


Pergola in Lower Gardens

Mr. Armstrong's experiences in his formative years provided the all-important groundwork for the later founding and developing of Ambassador College shown on these two pages.



Manor Del Mar, Men's Dormitory



Ambassador's beautifully landscaped grounds with Tempietto, where graduation exercises are held

"Now," he continued, "whenever you stop at a hotel, the same principle applies. Always stop at the *leading* hotel in any city. If you want to economize, get the minimum-priced room, but always go to the *best* hotel. You are among more successful people, which will influence your own success. The best hotels are either fire-proof or more nearly so—always safer—worth the little difference, if any, in cost as insurance against accident or fire. You are a young man, just getting started in life. Try to throw yourself into the company of as many successful men as possible. Study them. Try to learn WHY they are successful. This will help you learn how to build a success for yourself."

I did not disdain his advice. There have been many times in my life when I did not have enough money to travel on Pullman cars, or stay in the best hotels. Under such circumstances, I have travelled as I could afford—and I have travelled a great deal since that eventful day in early January, 1912—in fact a goodly portion of my life has been spent in travelling, as you will see as this autobiography progresses.

Since we moved to Pasadena, ten and a half years ago, I have learned that these Finkbine brothers later retired from business, and moved to Pasadena. Very often, these days, I drive past the home where W. O. Finkbine lived in retirement, and died. One lesson in life he apparently never learned. When a man decides he already has achieved success, and retires—quits—he never lives long. I expect to stay in harness as long as I live—in God's work until Christ comes, unless He cuts short my life before that time. But I hope, and somehow believe, that God in His mercy will grant me the matchless privilege of living to see that most glorious event of all earth's history.

Introduction to the South

We boarded a Pullman car in Des Moines one night—my first experience riding in one. I think I was too excited to sleep much, wanting to see as much of the scenery as possible—especially my first glimpse of the great Mississippi River as we crossed it between Davenport and Rock Island.

There was a cold blizzard on our arrival in Chicago next morning. The ground was covered with snow. We went over to see Michigan Avenue. I was thrilled. We went thru "Peacock Alley," a very long and narrow lobby, nationally famous, in the Congress Hotel, and walked thru the tunnel under the street connecting it with the Auditorium Hotel. I think we visited the Stock Yards, taking the first ride in my experience on an "L" (Elevated train).

Later that morning, we boarded the famous all-Pullman "Panama Limited" on the Illinois Central Railroad at 12th Street Station. Going into the diner for lunch and again for dinner was an exciting experience—I had never seen the inside of a diner before. It was a new experience to learn about tipping waiters, redcaps, porters, bellboys — but my companion was an experienced traveller, and this initiation into the "ropes" of travelling was under good tutelage. I learned fast. Night came all too soon, and this time I slept soundly in my berth.

Early next morning the train arrived in Jackson, Mississippi, where we changed for a local train on the "G. & S. I." Line.

This was the strangest experience of my life. We had left Chicago in below-zero temperature and a blizzard. I had gone to sleep that night somewhere near Cairo, Illinois. And now, this morning, after a brief sleep, here it was,—SUM-

MER! I had never seen southern negroes before, and in those days, nearly 46 years ago, they were quite different from the colored people I had known up north.

We had lived next door to a colored man when I was 9 years old, in East Des Moines. He was very prominent, and, as we understood, wealthy. Once every year he held a famous "Possum Dinner" at his home, attended by the governor and other prominent men, and always a place at the table reserved for the President of the United States, who was invited by the Governor—but of course, never came. One such dinner was given while we lived next door to him. I well remember that, after the "feast," he brought over for us President Theodore Roosevelt's plate of roast 'Possum! That is the *only* time I have ever eaten a King's or President's food—but I shall never forget it! It was so greasy, I couldn't take the second bite!

But here in Jackson, Mississippi, it seemed that there were more colored people than white on the streets, and they were utterly *different* from any people I had seen in the north—and, for that matter, than southern colored people today. Today the colored people of the south are comparatively well educated, on the average, but then very few had been privileged to receive much, if any, education. I was especially attracted to the dresses of the colored women — screaming bright in loud colors—such as a bright yellow or orange, clashing with a loud purple.

Arriving in Wiggins, I found a room in town, some little walk from the commissary store and the lumber mill, just outside of town, and was quickly introduced to my job in the store. Saturday night was the big night at the store. The mill employes were paid Saturday eve-



Shown here are Herbert W. Armstrong's grandparents, Nathan and Lydia Armstrong, his father Horace Elan Armstrong (standing, left), his uncle Frank (center), and his uncle Walter (standing, right).

ning, and thronged the store. I was broken in immediately as "soda-fountain jerker."

One of the first men I met was a colored man I shall never forget—whose name was Hub Evans. One of the men in the store brought him around to me.

"Hub," he said, "Tell Mr. Armstrong how many children you have."

"Thutty-six, suh," replied old Hub, promptly and proudly—"hope t' make it foty 'fo Ah die!"

I was not just amused—but intensely interested.

"Tell me, Hub," I responded, "how many wives have you had?"

"Only three, suh!" Hub was a proud man. But because I was from "up noath" and new, and friendly, I was to have a show-down with him later with my job at stake.

The New Job

After not more than a very few weeks, I was transferred over to the mill office as time-keeper and pay-master. Later I learned that only a short time before, this job had been shared by *three men*, and all of them men of ability—one of whom was now the town's leading real-estate dealer in Wiggins, another was now the company's bookkeeper, and the third the assistant manager of the company.

The company was logging timber off a big tract east of Wiggins. It had its own railroad, by which the logs were brought in to the mill. About 350 negro men were employed, beside various department managers and top-ranking skilled employes, all white.

As mentioned above, these negroes of 46 years ago had received little or no education. I do not believe there was a man of this entire force who could write his own name. All statements were signed with an "X"—"His mark." This was a legal signature.

I learned at once that the colored employes had to be paid three times a day. Yes, that's what I said—three times a day—morning, noon, and night. They had never been trained in the handling of money. Had they been paid only once

a week, they and their families would have starved before next pay-day, for they were nearly always "broke" before Monday morning.

But the company paid them in *cash* only on Saturday night. At all other times, they were paid in trade-checks on the commissary store — good only in trade. Again, had they been paid in cash, many of them, or their wives and children, would have starved, for they would have immediately gambled away their cash by "shooting craps," before they could get to the store to purchase food.

Also I was instructed, before starting the job, that no negro could be paid a single nickel more than he already had earned. If he were, and he were able to figure it up and know it, he would drift off to the next town and get a job in some other mill, rather than come back on the job and work out anything he had already been paid.

Consequently, all department managers had to turn in their time-books to my office twice daily—noon, and night. I had to keep the record on the books of the exact number of hours, and rate of pay, of each man, kept current up to the half-day. This was *some* bookkeeping job!



Mr. Armstrong in front of Mr. Stapp's residence in Wiggins, January 1912



Here you see Mr. Armstrong at the age of 19, seated in front of the depot at Wiggins, with the town's real estate agent and child. The agent previously carried one third of Mr. Armstrong's job at the mill

I sat up to a high counter, on a high stool, behind a wire cage across the rear of a large, plain room. Employes came into this room, and up to the window in this wire cage.

Saturday afternoons, I had to have the exact time worked by every employe figured to the very nickel, with all deductions of checks on the commissary store subtracted, and the net balance due each employe, to the nickel. Then I had to figure, by a special process of figuring in which I was instructed, exactly how many nickels, dimes, quarters, half-dollars, dollars, \$5 bills, etc., were needed to make each pay-envelope come out exactly right. Then came the trip to the bank. I had to draw out the exact amount of the pay-roll, in these precise amounts of each denomination.

Then it was a rush back to the office, and get the correct amount in each pay-envelope with each employe's name on it. This was a fast and furious rush job.

The negro employes all lived in a special colony of company-owned houses—or, more accurately, shacks. They were of unpainted wood, and, as nearly as I remember now, no plaster on inside walls.

Strange Experiences

It was necessary to collect the house-rent—pardon me, I mean shack-rent—on a regular daily basis from the employes' pay, even before paying them any checks on the company store. That, too, had to be calculated and subtracted.

Occasionally on a Sunday I would, in company with one or more companions, stroll out thru this section of company shacks for negro employes. Here and there would be a group of colored men "shooting craps."

One Sunday I found a wedding was about to take place. I went inside the house where it was to be held. I found wall-paper had been pasted over the unpainted bare wood boards. It was very colorful wall-paper — the color comic sections out of Sunday newspapers!

I wanted to get some kodak shots of the wedding, so I asked them to have the wedding on the front porch. They gladly obliged.

Often on a Monday morning, two or three department managers would report to me that they were short a certain number of men. It was then my job to take the revolver the management had

always lying on the counter beside me, and go out into the district of the company shacks, and round up the missing employes. I soon learned that if any employes had any of Saturday night's cash left by Monday morning, they wouldn't come to work until it was all spent.

Usually I found the needed employes out doors in a little group "shooting craps." I had to brandish the revolver, and herd them back to the mill about as one would herd cattle. This was a strange experience for a 19-year-old from "up north"—but it was my job as I had been instructed in it.

Another experience that caused me to wonder was this: Very frequently while I was there some employe would come to my office for a permit, which I had to sign, so he could go to the doctor. Each time the employe had been in an accident — nearly always self-inflicted deliberately. Occasionally one of those men would deliberately have a finger cut off, in order to obtain several days' lay-off from work *at full pay*. Some of them would gladly sacrifice a finger for several days' idleness on full company pay!

The Crisis Brewing

One day the manager of the mill, Mr. Hickman, called me into his office.

"Herbert," he said, "I hate to say this, but I see trouble brewing that's going to cost you your job, unless you handle the situation when it comes. You've come down here from the north. I know it may not seem exactly right to you the way we have to keep negroes in their place. But if we didn't we couldn't live here. They are not educated, and they are not trained in emotional self-control. It's absolutely true that if you give one of them an inch, he'll take a mile. Perhaps someday, when the colored people of the

south become educated, things will be different.

"But these negroes know that you are from the north, and that you mean to be friendly to them—and that's all right, as long as you make them keep their distance. But I sense that something is brewing—I don't know just what, or when it will strike—but it will be soon. They are going to put you on the spot. They are going to try something. They are going to see if they can break you down—and if they do, we'll have to get you out of here fast to protect your life. If you once give them the upper hand, you'll be in danger.

"Somehow, sometime soon, they will try to defy your authority. If you let them get away with it, you'll be worth nothing to this company any longer."

I was really frightened. Not at what the colored men might do — I didn't fear that—but at the prospect of being "fired." To me, the idea of being "fired" would be the biggest disgrace that could come. The fear of being fired *really* alerted me—spurred me on to a determination that, no matter what came, *I had to master the situation!*

It was not long in coming.

Teen-age Bravado

A few days later, during noon-hour, a large crowd of negro men led by Hub Evans started coming into my office. There was an office rule that all negroes must take their hats off in the office and no smoking was allowed.

Old Hub came in with a cigarette hanging disdainfully from his insolent, sneering lips, his hat slanted cockily on one side of his head. He started boldly right down the center toward my window. The other men sidled rapidly down the side walls of the room, their hats off and without any cigarettes. This was it!

In a flash, I knew my job was at stake. This was all the inspiration I needed.

"Hub Evans," the words came, teenage bravado-like, sharp, staccato, and loud, with stern authority, *"take that cigarette out of your mouth, and snap that hat off your head!"*

Old Hub only grinned more insolently, and took another step forward. But before he could take a second step, my hand was on the revolver, and I levelled it at his head.

"I won't tell you again, Hub!" I snapped sternly and loudly, "I'm counting THREE, then I'm SHOOTING your hat off, and your cigarette out of your mouth—ONE, TWO—"

I never got to three.

For a brief minute, old Hub Evans turned WHITE, and RAN out that front door like a frightened deer, leaving hat and cigarette behind him on the floor.

The others were all now awe-struck.

I continued to brandish the revolver.

"Now, CLEAN OUT OF HERE!" I thundered, "every one of you! And don't you come back, until you come back obeying company rules!"

There was almost panic as they piled up over one another trying to rush out.

The crisis had come—and been met!

I still had my job!

A Fish Out of Water

But not for long.

I was a square peg in a round hole. I had fixed a life GOAL in the advertising profession, where self analysis had shown I fit. Already the lesson I had paid \$2 per week to learn had been forgotten, or overlooked temporarily. The glamor of getting to travel to far-off southern Mississippi, combined with the flattery of being offered such a job as a result of my record during that year in want-ads, had momentarily blinded me to my

previously fixed purpose. Of course, *travel* is an important phase of education—so this 6-month side-tracking was not wasted time.

Even to this day I frequently find myself digressing, temporarily, from the fixed subject during a sermon. But these temporary digressions usually have proved to be more valuable to the hearers than the planned material, and I do always seem to get right back on the main beam. It was like that in this early experience. I think now that God saw to it that I was soon yanked back on the main track. But lessons were learned in this southern Mississippi detour which became part of the training for the *real* purpose God had for my life.

I have mentioned that this job combined the work previously done by three capable men, now risen to more important jobs. It was not the kind of work into which I fit. It was, as we say, out of my line. I was a fish out of water. A square peg in a round hole.

In order to keep up with the job, due to inadaptability and resultant slowness, it became necessary to work nights. I established a system. I worked alternately one night until ten, the next until midnight, rising at 5:30 every morning. Time had to be taken out to walk the one or two miles from my room to the mill, and also to walk over to the boarding house where I took meals. I kept awake on the job nights by smoking a pipe—my first habitual smoking. In just six months this overwork and loss of sleep exacted its toll, and I was sent to the hospital with typhoid fever.

Escape from Death

But during this six months in Wiggins there were a few social events. One was a pre-World War I encounter with a German, in which I narrowly escaped

being shot to death.

I took meals at a boarding house out near the mill. The daughter of the landlady was an attractive southern brunette near my age, whose fiancé was away at college. I had a few dates with her—but, I think, quite unlike most dating today. There was no “necking” as today’s youngsters call it. Indeed I had never yet kissed or had my arms around a girl. It just wasn’t done, then, on the universal scale of these post-war days. Two world wars have brought greater social and moral changes than most people realize—and all bad.

Oh yes,—now I remember that girl’s name. Couldn’t think of it when I began writing about her in the paragraph above. It was Matti-Lee Hornsby. I do not remember whether there were any movies in Wiggins in those days. If so I’m sure they must have been closed on Sundays, and I had no time when it could have been possible to go on any other day. The few dates I had were on Sundays, and consisted of walking and of conversation.

That kind of date would seem pretty “dull” to most 19-year-olds today, I suppose. I wonder if it isn’t because they have lost the art of interesting conversation. I have always found that a scintillating conversation can be far more interesting than a prefabricated day-dream in a movie or before a TV set—far more stimulating, enjoyable, and beneficial than the mind-dulling lust-inciting pastime called “necking.”

But more of the dating experiences later. I had not had a great many dates up to this time. One thing, however, sticks to my memory—whenever Matti-Lee became a little provoked with me, her dark eyes flashed and she snapped out the epithet: “YANKEE!” It was, of

course, half in fun—but I found that epithet was supposed to be insulting. I had never heard it before.

My parents had started me taking piano lessons when I was 8 years of age. For four long years my mother stood over me more or less frequently with a switch in hand to keep me on that piano bench. By age 12 I had learned that, to become a real concert pianist, one had to spend at least 8 hours a day practicing the piano. Besides, I was getting pretty big for my mother to whip. I haven’t taken a lesson since age 12, but have continued to play occasionally for my own enjoyment—*never*, I’m sure, for the enjoyment of others. Today I seldom find time for the piano—and one cannot play well unless kept in constant practice.

But in those early years the piano playing led to many temporary social contacts. There was a piano at the Hornsby boarding house. Actually, I think some of the “dating” took place around that piano—for I could really swing the rag-time and jazz in those days—but not any more.

One acquaintance made there was a young German. He must have been about 21 at the time. His father was a lumberman in Germany, and had sent the son to America to study American lumber methods. He was spending some few weeks at the Finkbine mill in Wiggins.

This German, whose name I do not remember, bragged at length on the superiority of German products, methods and systems. One day, in his room at the boarding house, he was demonstrating to me the superiority of his German-made revolver over a Colt or other American make.

In play, he pointed the revolver

straight at me.

"Don't point that at me!" I said, dodging.

"Oh, it isn't loaded," he laughed. "Look, if you're afraid, I'll point it away from you and show you."

He pointed the revolver a couple of feet to one side of me, and pulled the trigger.

It was a very superior weapon, all right. It drilled a hole completely thru the wall of his room, and let a little round ray of sunlight shine thru from outdoors!

My German friend turned white, and trembled in confusion.

"Why," he stammered in frightened embarrassment, "I was *sure* it wasn't loaded."

It is the gun "that isn't loaded" that has killed many people. And before I leave *this* little digression, may I respectfully suggest to all who read this that you teach—yes, really TEACH your children *never*, under any circumstances, to point even a *play-gun* at any person. The life you save *may* be your own!

In the Hospital

My stay in southern Mississippi was brought to a sudden and rude halt. By summer, weakened by overwork and loss of sleep in the desperate struggle to make good on a job I didn't belong in, a tiny typhoid germ, according to medical theories, found fertile soil. I became delirious. The mill officials, on doctor's orders, had me taken to the Southern Mississippi Infirmary at Hattiesburg. I entered there with the worst case in the hospital's history. I was unconscious for two or three days.

But just to be able to stay in bed, after that six months' grind with all too little sleep seemed *so good* that somehow I "snapped out of it" quicker, ap-

parently, than any other case they had ever had, and recovery was rapid.

One thing I want to mention here, for the benefit of a very large portion of my readers. It isn't often considered "nice" to talk about it, but constipation is called by some medical men "the mother of all diseases." A large percentage of people are plagued with it. For some two years I had been. Cathartics give only temporary relief. There isn't a cure in a car-load.

In the hospital I was forced to *fast*. Daily they gave me castor oil. UGH! I have never taken it since, but I can taste the nasty stuff yet! They fed me only lemon juice, and occasionally buttermilk.

When I left the hospital the constipation was cured. Fasting, on raw fresh fruits (no bananas), will cure it, if you will keep it up long enough. I did not undervalue the blessing of being rid of this thing. I appreciated it *enough* to be SURE that I kept regular. I have never permitted that condition to return. *That fact alone is responsible for a large part* of whatever dynamic energy I have been able to give to God's great work! One of the 7 basic rules of SUCCESS is GOOD HEALTH! I hope this is enough said. You can't overestimate its importance.

In the hospital I was the favorite patient of practically all the nurses. Most of them were just a few years older than I—but not so much that we did not enjoy a great deal of conversation while I was convalescing. My room became a sort of social rendezvous for the nurses. Often there would be five or six of them in there at a time. I really *enjoyed* this rest in the hospital—the release from that frightening responsibility of trying so desperately to keep up with a job in which I did not belong, getting ample rest and sleep at last.

But I have always believed in the admonition: "*Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy MIGHT*," even tho I didn't know it was in the Bible (Eccl. 9:10) until much later. I gave that job all I had. Now, in later life, there is some satisfaction in looking back on that.

The doctors told me I would have to return back north to protect my health. Thus, by forces outside my control, I was jerked out of this misfit detour job, and I had *learned*, now, the lesson for which I sacrificed \$2 a week the year before.

Arriving back in Des Moines, Iowa, I went this time to seek my uncle's advice. Now began my *real* advertising career. I think the story picks up in interest at this point.

CHAPTER III

written November, 1957

THIS detour was my first experience in real travel. But on this job I was the proverbial square peg in the round hole.

I had now learned my lesson—at least temporarily. Now I was going to get back on the main track—the advertising field.

Stopping off in Chicago between trains enroute to Des Moines, I went up to the Mahan Advertising Agency headquarters, and succeeded in getting a job. But since it was still more than two weeks before I could become active again, I went on out to Des Moines to spend the time at home.

Hiring Myself a Job

Naturally I went almost immediately to my uncle Frank's office.

"Well, Herbert," he said approvingly, "I'm glad you've got that bookkeeping fling out of your system, and are ready



Frank Armstrong, the uncle of Herbert W. Armstrong, as a young man.

to get back in the advertising field where you belong."

I told him about the job with the Mahan Agency in Chicago.

"No, Herbert," he said, seriously, "you're not ready for agency experience yet. Mahan is one of the major agencies, and it would be years before you'd even work up to being noticed by any of the top men, who are the only ones over there that could teach you anything. They wouldn't know you existed.

"Besides," he continued, "altho far-away pastures may look greener, often the best opportunity is right where you are. Now it so happens that on a national magazine, right here in Des Moines, are the two men that I regard as the two best advertising and merchandising men in the country. These fellows really know advertising psychology. They know *people*, and how to deal with them. They know merchandising and business *principles*. They specialize in finding

which business methods, selling methods, and advertising principles are successful, and which are not.

"They are two men over at The Merchants Trade Journal. It's a trade paper in the retail field—read by owners and managers of retail stores—but they circulate among *every* line of merchandising, and it's the biggest trade paper in the country, with a very large national circulation.

"One of these men is R. H. Miles, who is advertising manager, and the other is Arthur I. Boreman, manager of their Service Department, which is a sort of trade-paper advertising agency."

"Why," I interrupted, "I *know* Mr. Miles. He's a neighbor of ours."

"Well," continued my uncle, "go hire yourself a job. Don't let them turn you down. Over there you'll be in daily personal contact with these two men. You'll *learn more* there than anyplace in the United States. Don't forget, you're still going to school—you still have a lot to learn."

I walked briskly over to The Merchants Trade Journal offices, gained admittance to the advertising manager's office.

"Why, hello, Herbert," greeted Mr. Miles, surprised to see me in his office.

"Mr. Miles, I have decided that I'm going to join your organization, here in your advertising department. The doctors have told me I can't start work for two more weeks. I will report for work the first Monday in next Month!" This came out real snappy—very positively.

"You—you—WHAT!" It caught Mr. Miles' breath.

I repeated my affirmative statement.

"Well!!—so you've just hired yourself a job—is that it?"

"Exactly!" came the positive reply. "That's precisely it."

"Well, now—just back up a minute!" Mr. Miles began to recover. "You can't just come barging in here and hire yourself a job, just because you're a neighbor of mine. *We haven't any opening!*"

"Oh, that's all right! You've got two whole weeks to *create* an opening," I came back promptly, in full self-assurance.

"Now, look!" Mr. Miles was beginning to get a little impatient at this youthful aggressiveness. "It seems you don't understand plain English. I said, **WE DON'T NEED ANY HELP!**"

Now it was my turn to become a little nettled.

"Mr. Miles," I came back, more positively than ever, "I'm surprised at you. Isn't this a NATIONAL magazine? Isn't this an institution of *national* importance?"

"Yes, of course," he responded.

"Well then, do you mean to tell me that an organization of national scope and influence cannot—or is not interested in finding a way to create an opening for an ambitious, energetic young man like me? Do you realize that you probably don't get a chance once in several years to add a man of my caliber, my talents, and ambition and *will* to work to your staff! Why, you can't afford to pass up this opportunity. I'll *grow* with your organization—I'll develop rapidly into a very valuable man. *Of course* you can create an opening! As I said, I'll report for work the first Monday in next month."

"Well, I haven't the slightest idea what we'd have you do," Mr. Miles was beginning to weaken a little.

I became more cocky than ever.

"Oh, poppycock, Mr. Miles," I snapped, disgusted. "Hand me a copy of that lousy sheet of yours!" This was commonly used advertising terminology.

On the back cover I saw two or three small ads, want-ad style, advertising stores for sale.

"Do you call these want-ads?" I inquired.

"Oh, we don't have a want-ad section. We only solicit display ads. Occasionally a merchant decides to quit and sell out, and sends in a small want ad to sell his business."

"Well, I happen to know that hundreds of small merchants are going broke all the time, over the whole country. Now, supposing you had a full page, or even two pages of these store-for-sale ads every month. The rate for these small ads is a lot higher than the display rate by the page. One page of want ads would bring in as much advertising revenue as three or four pages of display ads, wouldn't it?"

"Well, yes," admitted Miles, rather reluctantly, "but we have no way of selling ads of that sort."

"And," I persisted, "if any advertising solicitor could put three or four pages of new business in *The Journal* every issue, he'd be worth putting on the staff, wouldn't he?"

"Well, I suppose so, but—"

"No 'buts' about it!" I was real cocky and confident by now. "I can put one or two full pages of want ads of businesses-for-sale in every issue of *The Journal*. One thing I've learned is how to bring in want-ads by mail. So, if I have to create *my own opening*, I can do it. I'll report for work the first Monday morning in next month."

"Well," came a last objection, "we can't pay you a very high salary. We couldn't pay you over \$10 a week."

"Who said anything about salary?" I rejoined. "I still live at home with the folks. I'm not coming up here for the salary I make *now*, but for what I can

learn, and the salary I *will* make, later. I'm *hired* at \$10 per week," rising and extending my hand. "All I ask is that you agree to *raise* my salary as fast as I earn it. See you in two weeks."

My First Display Ad

All this was along about July or August, 1912. I do not remember now, after more than 45 years, whether I was actually put to work on building a page or two of want-ads by direct mail solicitation; but it seems, in the dim distance of memory, that I did bring in a page or more of want-ads the first issue or two or three.

In any event, I was not long on want-ad work. I was assigned to the Service department, directly under A. I. Boreman. For some little time I was given routine office work, with a certain amount of correspondence to answer. For this work, I was given a stenographer and a dictaphone. During this period I remember breaking in a number of different stenographers. As soon as a new girl became experienced enough to be efficient, she was taken away from me, and a new green girl fresh out of business college assigned to me.

It was not long until I was given opportunity to start writing and designing display ads. As mentioned above, this Service Department was a sort of trade-paper advertising agency. We handled the trade-paper division of the advertising budget of manufacturers who sold thru retailers. As a rule the larger advertising agencies were glad to relinquish the trade-paper portion of any client's advertising. They were primarily interested in consumer media.

I shall never forget the first ad Mr. Boreman assigned to me to write and lay out. I have mentioned before that I had been studying every book on adver-

tising writing I could get hold of. I had studied books on Psychology, and on advertising-psychology. I had diligently read the trade journals in the advertising field—*Printers Ink* and *Advertising & Selling*. I had studied diagrams of design and lay-out of ads. But as yet I had received almost no experience in actually writing and designing the layout of an ad.

I do not remember at all the nature of the commodity or service or the name of the manufacturer I was to write about.

But I shall *never forget* Mr. Boreman's left-handed compliment when I laid the "dummy" and typed copy before him.

"Mm-hmm—well, Herbert, that's a pretty good ad," he drawled, slowly, examining it critically.

"Now, that headline, of course, will have to be changed," he continued. "You've used too many words. There's nothing in that headline that will catch the eye. The average reader will be scanning past it to something else. You have only the fleeting fraction of a second to *stop* the eye. There's nothing in your headline to arouse instant *interest* and create immediate suspense—nothing to make the reader say, 'Well, I never thought of *that*! I want to read that!' or, to say 'Now that's what I've always wondered about,' so he'll want to read on.

"The headline is not displayed right on your lay-out. Not enough white-space around the headline to create contrast between a bold, black, short headline and white space around it. Never be afraid of wasting white space around your headlines. Never *waste* white space around the text matter.

"Now next," continued Mr. Boreman, "your major sub-head above the text matter is all wrong. You must gain *attention*—stop the eye—in the main headline—but you must go on to arouse

interest and create suspense in the sub-head, if you are to win a reading for your copy. This sub-head is in the wrong place in your lay-out, the wrong size and kind of type.

"Now, coming to the main text matter—that opening sentence won't do, Herbert. It should have been indicated on the lay-out to be in larger type than the balance of the text-matter, and the first word should have started out with a large initial letter. Unless this opening sentence follows up the headings by cementing interest, and arousing more curiosity or suspense, no one is going to read past it. No, this first sentence will have to be re-written, just like the headlines.

"Now, these smaller sub-heads thru the text matter don't add anything. They must create additional interest, make the reader want to read what's under them. And they, too, are in the wrong kind of type. And this text-matter will all have to be re-written. It doesn't *hold* the interest, if you *had* created interest in the first place. It doesn't *arouse desire* for this thing you're selling. It doesn't make the reader—if he ever read this ad—*want* to buy this product.

"And then, finally, there's no emotional ending to arouse the reader to *action*—IF you had first stopped his eye and gained his attention, aroused interest, created suspense, made him actually *read thru* your ad, made him *WANT* what you advertise. The signature isn't right, either—and the border around the ad will have to be changed.

"But, outside of that, Herbert," he said encouragingly, "*that's a pretty good ad!*"

No, I shall never forget that experience!

That kind of encouragement was pretty hard to take—but *I learned more*

about how to write an ad in that one analysis of this first ad, than many copy-writers and lay-out men in big agencies have ever learned, or ever will learn! This one experience was well WORTH all the time I spent on the staff of the *Merchants Trade Journal*—and I was to be with them three years.

I went to work with a *will*, writing that ad all over. Practice makes perfect. It was two or three years later before I was probably able to write ads that actually STOPPED roving eyes, aroused instantaneous *interest*, created suspense, convinced the reader, and then moved him to action. It took time. But I was on the way.

A "Blue Ribbon" Patent

Not long after returning from the South, and starting with *The Merchants Trade Journal*, my father went out to Idaho, where he bought a small ranch near Weiser. The household goods were packed and stored, ready to be moved after he became located.

My mother, two younger brothers and sister, went to the home of one of my mother's sister's; on a farm some 25 or 30 miles south of Des Moines, for a visit. As soon as Dad was located in Idaho, they were to follow and join him there.

At this point I want to mention briefly a few facts about my father. About the earliest occupation of his in my memory was entering into the flour milling business in Marshalltown, Iowa, where we moved when I was six. I think that was a partnership deal. Then we moved back to Des Moines after not more than a year, and I do not remember what he did at that time, but probably he was connected, in some way, with the furnace business, as he was a great deal of the time later. Next, when I was eight, we moved to Union, Iowa, where Dad

was a 50-50 partner in a hardware store. Then back to Des Moines, and from then on Dad was in the furnace business until he moved to Idaho.

It has always been my understanding that my father invented the principle of putting a jacket around a furnace, letting the cold air in near the bottom thru large pipes, with the hot air circulating out from the top of the jacket to the various rooms of the house. My father had a talent for inventing things. Later he invented the air-circulator principle of the heating stove, using a jacket around the stove open at top and bottom. It sucked up the cold air off the floor, and circulated it as heated air out the top. He patented this, but never got it into any real production. When a big Ohio stove company came out with a stove of the same principle, with national distribution of their stoves, I went with my father to a top-rated corporation attorney who specialized in patents.

"This," he said, "is a 'BLUE RIBBON' patent."

"What's a 'blue ribbon' patent?" we asked. He replied by asking if we saw the blue ribbon tied to the left-hand side of the patent.

"That blue ribbon," he explained, "is the sole value of your patent. The paper it's printed on isn't worth anything—it's all marked up with printing." Dad had gone to a local lawyer who knew nothing about patents. He had sent it on to a so-called "patent attorney" he found listed in some directory in Washington, D.C. We learned, too late, that there are several such attorneys in Washington who are actually "quacks," and turn the writing of the patent over to some office boy. Dad's patent patented the specific details of how his stove was made—not the PRINCIPLE that produced a certain desired result. Had this patent been

properly written by a bona-fide patent attorney, my father would have been a millionaire, for these stoves were sold everywhere in great volume, and he could have legally received heavy royalties.

For quite some time past my father established and operated a furnace factory in Des Moines, manufacturing the "Armstrong Furnace." I devoted at least two summer vacations, as I entered the 'teens, working in the factory and as a helper installing furnaces in homes or new houses being built.

But after Dad went out to Idaho, and wrote to us that he had bought a ranch and was ready for Mother and the younger children to come on out, a serious problem developed.

I went down to the farm, but my aunt's husband had talked Mother out of going. Mother had never traveled. He frightened her about taking so long a trip. He convinced her that Dad ought not to stay out there, and probably would soon sell and come back—and why should she take so long a trip for nothing?

I won't mention this particular uncle's name, for I have nothing good to say about him. He was a socialist, politically, at first, but turned completely Communist after World War I. He was totally dishonest and utterly without heart or mercy. I had visited on their farm a week or two at a time on a number of occasions. On one such occasion, he was the only farmer in that part of the country who had hay. He had many times more than his own need. I was present when two neighbors came to buy hay. He asked about three times what it was worth. These men were astonished, dumbfounded!

"Why," they said, "we are your neigh-



This picture was taken of Mr. Armstrong and his mother, on the farm of her sister and husband, at the time described on this page.

bors. You know that price is an outrage."

"Sure I know," he replied, "and I also know you've GOT to pay my price, because there isn't any other hay anywhere around."

They paid it. Apparently he didn't believe in sharing the wealth, except in the voting booth.

Borrowing of a Loan Shark

After a while I found his mercenary motive in keeping my mother at his place, a virtual prisoner. I learned that my mother's mother, who had been a widow some years, had either given or loaned my father a few thousand dollars some years before, when it was needed in his business. My grandmother had lived with us most of the time, and this apparently was part compensation for her living expense. But this particular uncle was scheming to get that money

back from Dad, or what he would figure as his portion of it. He figured that if my Mother joined Dad in Idaho, he had kissed that money good-bye. It was cheaper for him to board my mother and children a few weeks, in the hope of discouraging Dad into coming back to Iowa.

But he had Mother, and even my next oldest brother, then 13, completely under his power, almost as if hypnotized. I knew that if I could get my 13-year old brother, Russell, away from that environment and influence a while, I could make him see the truth and swing him over to my side.

When my parents had moved out of their home in suburban Des Moines, I had rented a furnished room near Drake University. I managed to induce Russ, as I called him, to come to Des Moines and spend a week-end with me. There I did succeed in opening his eyes to what was going on. With him on my side, I went to a loan shark—the only way I had of raising the money for the train-fare to send the family to Idaho—and borrowed the money at an exorbitant rate of interest. Let me state here that I got it all paid back—but I learned a lesson about borrowing from loan-sharks—I was some two years a slave to that loan.

Next I purchased the railroad and Pullman tickets. Then Russ and I went down to the farm after Mother. I now told Mother that Dad needed her—that she was his wife and had a DUTY she could not neglect—that I had the tickets, and she was leaving that very night. My uncle threatened force to hold Mother. I told him I'd see a lawyer if necessary, and see what offense I could charge him with. I bluffed him out. We got Mother and the younger twins—Dwight and Mary—up to Des Moines. Mother was

terribly nervous. She was afraid she would get all mixed up changing trains in Denver. I gave Russ complete instructions, turned the tickets over to him, told Mother to let him manage everything. This responsibility was good for him. Responsibility suddenly thrust on one usually brings dormant qualities into action. Russ rose to the occasion. An hour after the train had steamed out of Des Moines, Mother's nerves calmed. Thereafter she enjoyed the trip *with* the children immensely.

Learning Effective Ad-Writing

For something like a year and a half I was kept in the Service Department of *The Journal*. There I received a most intensive and *practical* basic training in the true psychological principles of writing and designing advertisements.

It has always seemed to me that the advertising profession generally has "missed the boat." It's the same in many professions.

In the religious world most professional theologians have become entangled in a maze of conflicting man-made doctrines and customs. They have missed utterly the plain and simple revelations of the Word of God. Scientists get lost in a fog of theoretical postulates and hypotheses, until the "science" of yesterday becomes the laughingstock of today.

Likewise, the ad-men have progressed into a system of intricate display designs, complicated art work, and overly rhetorical text matter which, after all, doesn't really say anything or *do* anything to the readers—if *any*.

Take a look thru the advertising pages of a magazine or paper today. It's a confused, jumbled hodgepodge of fancy art-work, and small bits of text, artistically blocked off—usually in such a manner that no one reads it! Nothing

stands out to catch, *and stop*, the fleeting eye trying to get to the next *news* or *article* headline. Nothing snatches attention away from all surrounding matter. There's nothing to arouse instantaneous *interest* at the very point where the eye is drawn for that fraction of a second glance—nothing to *hold* that interest until it creates suspense sufficient to induce a reading of the text matter.

The ads I was trained to write, during those formative years between ages 20 and 23, always *got results*. Often they were more plain and simple in appearance than the more fancy, artistic, highly illustrated ads around them. But they *stopped* roving eyes—drew attention from surrounding matter—aroused and *held* interest—*convinced* readers, and moved them to *act*! THIS EARLY TRAINING WAS DESTINED TO SERVE A GREAT PURPOSE!

Today all that early training and the years of subsequent experience are being put into the production of full page ads which are selling, *not* a commercial product or service for profit, but GOD'S TRUTH, *without* price or profit.

The most important activity on earth today is *not* the feverish race of science and technology to produce weapons and forces that may DESTROY whole nations, but the fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy of Matthew 24:14 and Mark 13:10. This is the very WORK OF GOD! It is the resurrecting *out of the Bible*, of the very Message which GOD sent to mankind thru Jesus Christ—the Message that has been buried under an avalanche of pagan teachings and customs for 1850 years! It is the only *true* GOSPEL which, incredible tho it seem, most people even in supposedly enlightened America *have never heard*! Men calling themselves "Christian" have been proclaiming a

message *about* the PERSON of Christ—but not the Message Christ *preached*!

In Matthew 24:14 Jesus said that *this* Gospel Message of the now imminent Kingdom, or WORLD GOVERNMENT of God shall, *just before* the END of this age, be PREACHED in *all the world* as a witness to *all nations*. But Mark's account of this same prophecy puts emphasis on the fact it also shall be *published* to the world!

Until now, this Message has been going out with constantly accelerated power, by RADIO, followed up by printed matter to those who request it. But NOW that same Message is beginning to be PUBLISHED to the masses.

These full page ads have now started, every issue, in one important midwest farm paper. It is significant that this first farm journal used in publishing these powerful ads is America's *oldest*—it was also the *first* farm newspaper in this nation! Soon it is planned, God willing, that these ad-page Gospel Messages will appear in *many* farm papers, reaching many millions—and then other magazines, such as Readers Digest. This latter medium is published in many editions and languages in many nations.

These farm paper ads are *producing tremendous results already*! They are bringing a far greater mail response than any one super-power radio station! THIS NEW TECHNIQUE OF PUTTING THE TRUE GOSPEL MESSAGE IN POWERFUL ADVERTISING FORM IS DESTINED FROM THIS POINT ON TO BECOME PERHAPS THE MAJOR MEDIUM FOR COMPLETING GOD'S WORK ON EARTH FOR THIS AGE!

Overhauling and Simplifying a Vocabulary

For some two years I had been striving diligently to acquire a large vocabulary. Ever since I had read Elbert Hubbard's

boast of possessing the largest vocabulary of any man since Shakespeare, it had been a challenge! I was determined to acquire a greater! To be able to gush out a torrent of big words incomprehensible to any but the highly educated had appealed to intellectual vanity.

But Mr. Boreman changed all that.

"When you write advertising," he explained, "the purpose is not to impress the readers with your superior vocabulary. Your purpose is to *sell goods, services, or ideas!* The purpose of words is to convey facts, thoughts, ideas—a message! When 98% of people do not understand your words, they do not receive your message. They only become confused and turn to something *interesting*."

"Use only plain, simple words. Use words that even readers of no more than a third or fourth grade education can UNDERSTAND. Try to achieve good literary quality with a *large* vocabulary of common, simple words, and by the *manner* in which you weave those words into the sentence structure."

Immediately my vocabulary underwent an overhauling. Deliberately I began dropping out of my speaking and writing vocabulary all the big words not in common use. Every person has three vocabularies: smallest of all, his speaking vocabulary, consisting of the fund of words with which he is able to speak readily; next larger, his *writing* vocabulary; and largest, his *reading or listening* vocabulary. Everyone can *understand* many words which he may read, or hear spoken by others, which he could not readily use himself in conversation.

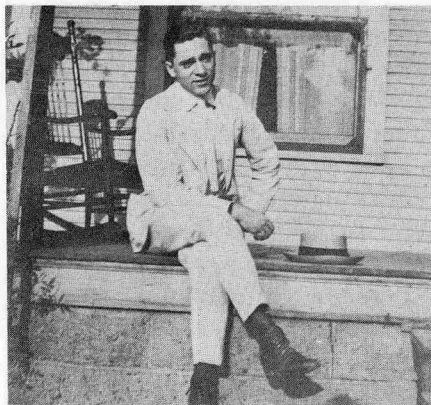
My effort, then, became that of developing ability to use the largest variety of words readily comprehensible by most people when heard or read.

But effective writing is far more than

memorizing a store of words. It is the manner in which those words are put together in sentence structure that determines effectiveness. So I was taught to study the matter of *STYLE* in writing. Immediately I set out to develop an effective style. It had to be fast-moving, vigorous, yet simple, *interesting*, making the message plain and UNDERSTANDABLE.

All this advertising instruction was the most valuable possible training for the real mission in life to which I was later to be called—God's ministry. It was a training such as one could never receive in any theological seminary. It was the most practical training *for preaching*, as well as for *writing* Gospel messages.

Some preachers seem to think they impress their congregations by their ability to use big words beyond the comprehension of the audience. Others succumb to the temptation to become too "scholarly," speaking *over* the *minds* of their hearers—but never plainly *into* their minds so as to reach their *hearts*. The same rules that attract attention, arouse interest, win conviction and stir emotions or hearts to *action* in advertis-



Mr. Armstrong, in his early twenties, was on a date when a girl friend snapped this picture.

ing accomplish the same results in preaching.

Another *most* important principle—I was taught to *avoid* the academic “outline” form of presentation. This is the manner in which nearly all ministers are taught in seminaries to organize their sermons. This is the one, two, three, a), b), c) form of outline. It is orderly and precise, but dull, dry, uninteresting to the congregation. Ministers using this type of presentation must limit their sermons to 20 or 25 minutes in church, or 5 to 15 minutes on the air. If these sermons were not surrounded by an elaborate program of music, ceremony and pomp, few if any would come to hear them. You hear a half-hour religious broadcast starting out with choir singing of hymns, then possibly a male quartette, and finally a 5 to 15-minute sermon during which a large portion of listeners tune to something else. Or, a whole hour broadcast in which the first 35 minutes is devoted to a program of music and reading of letters, with a 15 to 20-minute sermon following in the second half-hour.

The Way It's Usually Done

The customary form of sermon presentation, as taught in theological schools, seems to be something like this:

First, reading a single verse from the Bible—perhaps it is only a part of a sentence in between two commas—but the thought makes no difference. The verse is read only because it happens to contain a certain word. This word is the SUBJECT of the sermon. The word might be “endurance.” After reading this “text,” the minister will say something like this:

“My subject this morning is “Endurance.” There are four kinds of endurance. Now, first, . . .” and he proceeds to

expound what he has outlined so systematically under Roman numeral I. Under this he may modify this kind of endurance under capital letters A, B, and C, with more subdivisions of small 1, 2, and 3 under that. There is no connection whatever between his first category of endurance and his second, but next he proceeds to Roman numeral II, then III, and finally, when the audience has lost interest he hastens to say, “Now *finally*, and *briefly*,” as he proceeds to Roman numeral IV.

But in writing advertising, Mr. Boreman taught me always to *tell a story*—to make it *interesting*—and to tell it in *story form*. That is, first, put a question in the minds of readers they really *want* answered—or make a statement that is so unusual it either raises a question in the readers’ minds, or challenges them to demand an explanation and want to read on to get it. It must arouse instant *interest*. It must create *suspense*! Like a mystery play, it must not tell the reader the answer at the beginning. It must develop, rapidly, lucidly, increasing the interest, toward the final solution or answer. It must **HOLD** the interest until the story is told.

These same principles apply to a spoken sermon, or a Gospel-Message advertisement. The headline: “**WHY Does God Allow Wars?**” followed immediately by a slightly smaller-type sub-head saying: “If God is all-merciful, he wouldn’t *want* humans to suffer so, would He? And if God is all-powerful, He *could* stop all this anguish. *Then why doesn’t He?*”—this advertising head-line, or the same words at the beginning of a sermon or a broadcast, makes people say either: “I’ve always wondered about that!” or, “I never thought of that—say, *that’s interesting*—*I want to know the answer!*” I have

used this very beginning, in a full-page ad, in evangelistic sermons, and in the broadcast—and it has succeeded in getting the attention, arousing *interest*, and creating *suspense* to read on or listen thru, of MILLIONS of people!

I was taught in those early days to put a *story flow* into the text of an advertisement, holding the interest of readers to see how it's coming out. An ad of this nature may contain hundreds, or even thousands of words—and people will be glued to it until they have read it all.

I remember an incident that happened many years later.

This was in 1925, when I had established an advertising service of my own in Portland, Oregon. One of my clients was a laundry in Vancouver, Washington. I had a number of other clients in Vancouver—a retail clothing store, a jewelry store, a large drug store, and others. One of the banks had installed a new Safety Deposit Department, with new vaults and safety deposit boxes. The president of the bank called me in.

"Mr. Armstrong," he began, "we have noticed the attractive and compelling ads you have prepared for clients here in Vancouver, and we would like to retain your services to prepare a short campaign to announce the opening of our new department.

"Now," he continued, apologetically, "we think your ads are fine—they certainly stand out—they're interesting—but we have just one criticism. We think those ads you write for the laundry are too long—too many words. People won't read so many words in an ad."

"Well now, Mr. Jones," I replied, "in the first place, your advertising requires entirely different advertising treatment, because you have a totally different merchandising problem. The laundry is up against adverse public opinion, and sus-

picion as to laundry methods. Their problem requires what we call 'EDUCATIONAL ADVERTISING,' it must *educate* women to the true facts—it must change public opinion. This requires more words—totally different advertising treatment. But, as to whether people ever read so many words, I wonder if you remember an ad of a month ago, captioned, 'Is MOTHER Worth Saving?'"

"Why, yes!" he replied quickly. "Yes, I do remember that ad, very well. That was unusually interesting."

"How much of it did you read?"

"Oh, I read *all* of it," he responded. "In your opening sentences you aroused my curiosity, and I couldn't stop till I found the answer."

"Well, Mr. Jones, how many *other* ads do you remember reading in that same edition of the newspaper?"

"Why—why—" he stammered, "I—I don't remember reading *any* others."

"Exactly!" I had won my point. "That ad was the longest, wordiest ad in that newspaper—and yet it's the *only* one you remember reading, and you read it clear thru! Moreover, it is the *longest ad I ever wrote!*"

"Yes," he protested, "but that ad was *interesting!*"

"That's just the point," I concluded. "If what you write is sufficiently *interesting*—if it has created suspense, and *holds* the interest or even increases it as the reader is led along thru it—people will read it all the way thru, no matter how long.

"It is not a matter of *HOW LONG* an ad is, or *how many words*, it is altogether a matter of whether you have been able to catch readers' attention, arouse their interest, and *HOLD* that interest. How many words are there in a complete novel? Yet the book stores sell such thick books by the millions—

and people read them clear thru!"

That is the principle I was taught under Mr. Boreman and Mr. Miles, between ages 20 and 23.

Applying All These Principles Now

It applies to sermons or religious broadcasts, the same as to commercial advertising! I have found that far more people will listen to a solid half-hour all-speech broadcast applying these principles—a full half-hour **SERMON** over the air—than will listen to a 5- to 15-minute **DRY** talk that does not arouse their interest, surrounded and embellished by a lot of **MUSIC**. Many radio station managers want us to put **MUSIC** on our program. They know nothing of this different, dynamic, **INTERESTING** way of presenting a subject. They know only the dull, dry, totally uninteresting type of sermon material so commonly broadcast.

This is one reason that today "The **WORLD TOMORROW**" enjoys the *highest* rating of listener-interest of **ALL** radio programs in the 48 counties surrounding Wheeling, West Virginia,—the *highest* rating, according to surveys made over the Union of South Africa—the second highest of all radio programs at the same hour in the entire Chicago listening-area, and by far the largest of any religious program in Australia, and, as far as we know, in every other place in the world where we are heard.

THAT EARLY TRAINING, IN VOCABULARY, IN A RAPID, LUCID, FAST-MOVING, DYNAMIC WRITING STYLE, WAS THE VERY TRAINING NEEDED FOR THE WORK IN GOD'S MINISTRY! That's why, tho I knew nothing of it then, God was steering my formative years into a training I never could have obtained had I gone thru the customary universities and theological seminaries.

Also it was a training that makes it

possible of Ambassador College today to *avoid* the useless, impractical type training given in ordinary divinity schools! That's the reason you find the articles written by Herman Hoeh, Roderick Meredith, Garner Ted Armstrong, and others who are now Ambassador College graduates, so alive and so interesting! **THAT'S WHY GOD'S WORK REALLY MOVES ALONG, TODAY!**

But, to return to the story.

Mr. Miles had, perhaps, the snappiest, fastest-moving style of copy-writing I have ever read. Actually, I thought it was *too fast*—too many short, terse sentences. Long sentences tend to *slow down* the reader. Short sentences tend to speed him up. But when writing consists of nothing but a succession of overly-short, terse, staccato sentences, it becomes monotonous and unnatural. I strove for a style that gave *change of pace!* A proper balance between quick, short sentences, and occasional longer ones.

To hold a mass reading, writing should be reasonably crisp and lucid, not "dry" or slow. But a monotony of very short, terse sentences seemed to me to lack *sincerity*, and writing should, above all, be sincere!

In any event, this early training resulted in literally thousands of letters during recent years from radio listeners and readers of **The PLAIN TRUTH**, saying that the **TRUTH** is being made more plain, more clear and understandable than they ever heard it before! Today that early training **SERVES GOD**—and millions of people all over the world!

But there is another principle in advertising even more important than any of these. That is to be *honest*—to stick to the **TRUTH**! And this is *still more* important in preaching!

I attended many Ad-Club luncheons, and even the national Ad-Club conven-

tions, during the many years I spent in the advertising field. From the start I was much impressed by the Associated Advertising Clubs' slogan: "*TRUTH in Advertising.*"

But do you really know how much TRUTH there is in most commercial advertising today? If you knew *how little*, you'd be surprised.

Let me give you one or two terse examples at this point.

One is exposed in the December, 1957 *Pageant* magazine. The article is captioned, on the front cover: "DRY CEREALS—A \$300,000,000 *Hoax.*" It shows how the American public has been deceived into thinking these dry package breakfast cereals are nourishing health-giving food. They quote the slogans used in millions of dollars' worth of advertising: "The Breakfast of Champions," "High Protein for More Man Power," "The Tastiest Way to a Healthy Outlook." The article shows that these cereals contain, principally, fragments of dried starch—and practically *no food value*. The manufacturing process deprives the grains of their most important nutrients. The woeful effect on grain of the hulling, polishing, extremely high temperatures, and tremendous pressures, have seldom reached the public, says this article. These supposedly nutritious and energizing breakfast foods are compared in food value to straw.

Reader's Digest recently exposed many of the misleading statements and outright lies used in cigarette advertising.

I spent twenty years in the advertising field. I got to know advertising men. The average advertising man, preparing to write advertising copy, searches for what IDEAS or statements about his product will cause the public to BUY. It never seems to occur to most advertising men to check up and see whether the state-

ments or claims are true! If a certain claim or statement about the product will *sell* it, the ad man grabs it and sticks it in his copy with enthusiasm.

You will see, later in this autobiography, that when I became self-employed as a publishers' representative in Chicago, I built a business on CONFIDENCE. The advertising agencies, the banks, and the manufacturers with whom I did business came to know that I knew my field—I had the *facts* they needed—and that I was accurate and TRUTHFUL, and they could RELY on whatever I told them.

Another principle I was taught is this:

"A CUSTOMER is more profitable than a single sale." Win the confidence of a customer thru honesty and integrity, and *many* repeat sales will come your way without selling expense.

This principle, too, was ABSOLUTELY VITAL as a preparation for GOD's ministry.

One other ingredient is absolutely necessary, along with telling the TRUTH. And that is SINCERITY!

I Was Never Insincere

As I look back over preceding pages of this story of my life, I am afraid the things I've said about having been cocky and conceited may have led many to suppose I was insincere. I hope you have not drawn that conclusion. For I was never insincere.

True, I had swung to the opposite end of the pendulum, from a sense of inferiority, to one of supreme self-confidence. Actually, in my own mind, I was the most important person on earth! But didn't I, as a boy in late 'teens and early 20's, often meet very important men, far more important than I? Yes, of course. But I reasoned my way around *that!* In my reasoning, I was quite sure that *when* I reached the age of great and

important men, *then* I would be more important than they. The next step in my logic was to assume that, therefore, I *was* more important than they—age for age. This was utter conceit. It was error.

BUT I HONESTLY BELIEVED IT! To me it was the TRUTH! I was entirely *sincere*. Usually a bragging, conceited young lad who is cocky, is also an insincere flippant smart aleck. I was not. It seems I was, by nature, deeply sincere and in earnest, and altho excessively self-confident and snappy and cocky in manner, there was always with it a sense of dignity and earnestness. At least I *thought* I was right, and in my heart *meant to be*. There is good in all of us, as well as evil. Part of the good in my nature, I suppose, was natural *sincerity*—tho I have had to root out plenty of *evil*!!

Later, God had to take the self-confidence, conceit, and cockiness out of me. He replaced it with unbounded FAITH in GOD. I honestly believe I have more ASSURANCE for the future today than I had then—many times over. But today it is based on what GOD is going to do—not what *I* am able to do.

But God looks on the HEART. Errors can be corrected. Mistakes can be brought to mind, and acknowledged. *Sincerity*, love of the TRUTH,—those are the important things. David made mistake after mistake. He did wrong much of the time. But in his heart he didn't *mean* wrong, and always, when he "saw" it, he was willing to repent. His *heart* was right. That's why he was a "man after God's own heart."

All these are the principles I was taught under Mr. Boreman and Mr. Miles during the three years with The Merchants Trade Journal. I owe them much.

More and more I'm sure the reader will see how all this early business training was fitting me for the WORK OF GOD.

In the Service Department of The *Merchants Trade Journal* I was sent on occasional trips to places like Waterloo and Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Albert Lea, Minnesota, and others, selling ads I had prepared to manufacturers.

I remember vividly, at this point, a trip of this kind to Waterloo. I think it was a refrigerator account. I worked carefully on the advertising copy and layout in the hotel, then went over to see the manufacturer. This, I believe, was the first magazine display ad I ever sold.

What a *thrill* it was! As I walked from the factory back to the hotel, I was floating on air! Ah, sweet SUCCESS! It was elation! Thrills ran all thru me! But, since conversion, I have experienced deeper, more satisfying and *lasting* thrills of success in God's Work!

Playing with a Million Dollars

The *Journal* regarded a Waterloo department store merchant as one of the best merchandisers in the nation. His name was Paul Davis. There were two department stores in Waterloo—the James Black Company, and the Paul Davis store. The Black store was the older-established and larger, but the Davis company was catching up.

Then Paul Davis had a fire. His store was totally destroyed. The next time I was in Waterloo, after his misfortune, I found the Paul Davis store in temporary quarters in a two-story building in the middle of a block. It was only a fraction the size of the department store occupying a prominent corner that had burned down. At that time, Mr. Davis said he was planning to build a new building, larger than the Black Company store.

But on my next visit, some six months later, there was no sign of any new building activity.

"What happened to that big new quarter-block multiple-story building you were going to erect?" I asked.

"Oh, that!" Mr. Davis laughed. By this time he called himself my "second Daddy." "Well, I'm not going to build it for a while yet. I'm having a lot of fun. I have one cool million dollars, CASH, in the bank. It's the insurance money. It was no time at all until every manufacturer in New York knew we had that million dollars cash. Every time a manufacturer gets overloaded with some stock, or needs to raise some quick money, he comes or sends a representative out here to Waterloo. I am able to buy chunks of merchandise in this manner, by sharp trading, at far less than any competitors. Then I put on a BIG SALE. I take a small profit, cut the price way down, and the public simply streams into our little two-floor store here. We have low overhead. We have a small inventory, compared to what we carried in the bigger store. We sell fast, turn our stock *more times a year*. And the secret of success is not the total volume of sales,

but **TURNOVER**—the number of times you turn your stock a year—the number of times you make a profit on the same capital!

"I find that money *attracts* money! That's a principle of life. Don't ever forget it! Truly, 'to him that HATH shall be given, and to him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath!' I can do things with a million dollars cash I never dreamed could be done. *It's a lot of fun*. I'm enjoying it! No, I'm not going to put that million into a new store building right away. I'm going to keep it in the bank, and *working for me* a little while longer!"

Soon after this, I became "the Idea Man" of *The Merchants Trade Journal*. I was sent on long trips, either to the Atlantic Coast or to the Gulf of Mexico and back, interviewing merchants, business men and Chamber of Commerce secretaries, looking for IDEAS and material for articles in the magazine.

On one of these trips, a challenge from an angry merchant resulted in what I believe was the *pioneer* experience in all these surveys and samplings of public opinion. So far as I know, I was the originator of all these polls.

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