

STILLWATER, PA.

On April 1, 1969 I had an experience that can only happen once in a lifetime, the funeral and burial of my earthly father.

In Dec. 1959 we buried mother, and Dad lived by himself in one end of the house where my brother-in-law lives. He kept house and did his own cooking and it did not look like usually when a man lives alone. It was always immaculate. This was a matter of principle with him, in all of life. He was a good man.

He did not live as though life consisted mainly in financial gains. He had a much higher goal than this; hence he never accumulated and abundance of wealth to leave to his his off-spring, but what he did leave was much more than material gains could ever amount to. He trained us to respect constituted authority. And the Word tells us that if we train a child in the way that he should go, when he is old he will not depart from it. This training must begin in the cradle, the child must learn the hard painful way that one cannot have his own way in this life at the expense of others. When a child is old enough to be taught, then this is too late to train; this must begin before he can reason. Many fail in this, hence we have a generation of delinquent children to contend with. But when father punished for any offense, he would not bring it up again, it was forgotten.

In 1924 he was 35 years old, and was ordained to the ministry, and in 1942 he was 53 and was ordained bishop; the figures were just reversed. He preached the gospel for 44 years, and he certainly ought to have known the way to gain the favor of God. But he never claimed to have the assurance of eternal life, he claimed the scripture does not support this theory. He was a strong believer in keeping the status-quo, just like our forbears have kept it. And according to Jeremiah 35 this has much virtue, and it was honored by God in those days, and the children of Jonadab were never to want a man to stand before God forever, because they kept the commandments of their earthly father.

Dad preached many a funeral sermon, but the time came when his body was in the coffin, and someone else preached the sermon. But he knew this time was coming, and he was prepared for it, as far as earthly arrangements were concerned. He never wanted publicity, and his funeral was so ordered. He wanted the local ministers to preach, and did not wish to have word sent to his good friends, lest they come and the local ministry would want them to take charge. His life was very well ordered.

He never spent much time in sickness, until life was about to adjourn, then he had cancer of the lymph glands, and it was soon over for him. He expressed a desire to be buried out in the field beside mother, and his wish was granted.

John R. Renno

STILLWATER, PA.

July 11—Numidia Mennonite Bible School was started two years ago, by men who had a vision, without which people perish. It used to be a high school building but was sold to the Lutheran church located right beside it. It is under lease to the Mennonite Messianic Mission for ten years, with the option to buy. Ten thousand dollars was invested to repair and make suitable, with dormitory and kitchen and balcony.

Every year over the 4th of July weekend we have a Bible Conference. This year it started on Wednesday, July 2nd, at noon. Five speakers every day, brought Gospel messages, with the emphasis on sanctification and a holy life, rather than evangelism, as is so popular in evangelical circles. Now evangelism was not neglected, but it was pointed out that many are so excited about going forth to witness that they forget the message. Evangelism is conspicuously absent in all the epistles to the church. The emphasis is on a holy

life, and good works, and if these are in their proper perspective then evangelism will follow as a natural sequence. True evangelism is not sentimentality drummed up by the flesh, it is in keeping the all things.

The conference is sponsored by the Eastern Mennonite Church, which is a large segment that has seceded from the Lancaster Conference, because this conference is alledgedly too much in sympathy with the World Council of Churches.

These meetings were well attended with three meals being served daily for those who lodged there. There is no charge for anything. Everything is paid for by free-will offerings, which were lifted once a day. On Sunday, July 6, about 600 people were fed at noon and evening. But this is about a capacity crowd, and every year the crowds get larger. It is a real blessing to sit and listen to good preaching, that is if you like going to church all day every day. Much good has been accomplished and fellowship between services is a vital and necessary part of these meetings to provoke one another to love and good works.

Bible school is held here for youth for 12 weeks, beginning Dec. 1. A working knowledge of the word of God is vital for those who will make their calling and election sure.

John Renno

STILLWATER, PA.

Oct. 21—For a long time, more than five years, I have planned to write this article concerning the pathos of old age.

I am already 45 years old, which is over half a normal lifetime. When I was but a young man I heard an elderly man, a wordling, say that old age is pathetic. I will never forget that statement. What makes it so is human nature. We want to live. We are afraid to die. We try to belie our age, for age means that death is closer, so we say, "you're not old until you think so."

Now I will grant that the mind has much control over the body. This is what keep the Divine Healing campaigns going. But actually, we are afraid to step over into the unknown. Why else will a man spend all his wealth to keep living just a little longer, when he knows death will eventually hold sway?

Can the pathos of age be prevented? Not as long as we are human. We are thinking all of our waking hours. TV, radio and recorded music have come to entertain us and to prevent serious thoughts, but they do not satisfy. I personally have abandoned radio and recorded music and never had television because they are com-

petitive. I want to think, and think clearly.

When I think of the past, my thoughts have to do with people. Where are the men who were old when I was young? They are just about all gone! The men whom I looked up to, whom I honored and respected, who guided me and help shape my life. They are no more.

"Hope springs forever in the human breast!", says the proverb, but old age is without hope. Hope has to do with the future. Old age has no future except the grave.

The rebellious youth of today are laying up for themselves an awful harvest of wild oats, and what is sown must be reaped. There is no alternative . . . another reason why old age is pathetic.

We are told man is a free moral agent, but I doubt this. If he were free he could control or prevent old age. He would have a say as to the place of his birth, his parents, his environment and other things that determine what he is and what he will do. We are all subject to sickness, sin and death, whether we choose to be or not.

Now, lest some throw up their hands in horror, let me hasten to add that these views are strictly original with me and concern life only as I see it here on earth, not beyond.

Life is short, death is sure. Let us then be up and doing, with a heart for any fate. Still achieving, still pursuing, learn to labor and to wait. Learn to live with ourselves.

John Renno