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July 2011 - Newsletter

Dear Friends and Family,

Rodney and I are getting settled-in at our home here in Proctorville, Ohio. The move has been quite a task. Our garage is bulging with things we don't have room for any longer. Our home is a bit smaller than our previous one. But God is good and we don't need all the things we don't use so we are down-sizing!

Our subject this month is: It is No Secret

THE FATAL SLEEP

Our story, actually happened to a United States soldier during the American Civil War.

"I thought, Pastor Allan, when I gave my Bennie to his country, that not a father in all this broad land made so precious a gift. I'm sure the dear boy slept only a minute, at his post. Bennie never dozed over a duty. How prompt and reliable he was! I'm sure he fell asleep only one little second. He was so young, and so strong. Why, he was as tall as I, and only eighteen, and now they shoot him because he was found asleep when doing sentinel duty! Twenty-four hours to live. Where is Bennie now?"

"We will hope that his heavenly Father has spared him," said Pastor Allan soothingly.

"Before leaving to join the army, Bennie said to me, 'I should be ashamed when I am a man, to think I never used this great right arm for my country when

it needed it!' Holding his arm out before me he continued, 'Palsy this arm rather than keep it at the plow!' I told him, "Go then, my boy, go, and God keep you! God has kept him, I think, Pastor Allan!" And the father repeated these words slowly, as if, in spite of his faith, his heart doubted them.

"He has kept him like the apple of His eye, Mr. Owen; doubt it not," Pastor Allan replied.

Little Blossom was listening, She had not shed a tear. Her anxiety had been so concealed that no one noticed it. She occupied herself with household cares. Now she answered a gentle tap at the kitchen door, opening it to receive a letter a neighbor brought. "It is from him!" was all she said.

It was like a message from the dead. Mr. Owen took the letter, but couldn't open the envelope with his trembling fingers. He held it to Pastor Allan with the helplessness of a child. The minister opened it, and read as follows:

"Dear Father, When this reaches you, I may be dead. At first, it seemed awful to me; but I have thought about it so much now, that it has no terror. They say they will not bind me, nor blindfold me, but that I may meet my death like a man. I had thought it might have been on the battlefield for my country; but to be shot down like a dog for nearly betraying it, to die for neglect of duty. Oh, Father, I wonder the very thought does not kill me. But I shall not disgrace you. I am writing you all about it; and when I am gone, you may tell my comrades. I cannot now.

"You know I promised Jimmie Carr's mother I would look after her son; and when he fell sick, I did all I could for him. He was not strong when he was ordered back into the ranks, and the day before that night, I carried all his baggage besides my own on our march. Toward night we went on a double-quick. The baggage began to feel very heavy, but everybody else was tired too. As for Jimmie, if I had not lent him an arm now and then, he would have dropped by the way. I was all tired out when we came into camp. It was Jimmie's turn to be sentry so I took his place; but I was too tired, Father. I could not have kept awake if a gun had been pointed at my head; but I didn't know it until it was too late."

"God be thanked!" interrupted Mr. Owen reverently. "I knew Bennie was not the boy to sleep carelessly at his post."

"Our good colonel tells me today that I have a short reprieve, so I am writing to you. Forgive him, father. He does only his duty; he would gladly save me if he could. And do not lay my death up against Jimmie. The poor boy is brokenhearted and does nothing but beg and entreat them to let him die in my stead."

"I cannot bear to think of Mother and Blossom. Comfort them, Father. Tell them I die as a brave man should, and that, when the war is over, they will not be ashamed of me. God help me; it is very hard to bear. God seems near and dear to me, not at all as if He wished me to perish forever, but as if He felt sorry for His poor, sinful, brokenhearted child, and would take me with Him and my Saviour in a better life."

"Tonight in the early twilight I shall see the cows all coming home from the pasture, and precious little Blossom standing on the back stoop, waiting for me; but I shall never come. God bless you all. Forgive your son. Bennie."

A deep sigh burst from Mr. Owen's heart. "Amen," he said solemnly. "Amen."

Later that night the door of the "back stoop" opened softly. Out glided a little figure. She seemed to be flying down the footpath that led to the road by the mill. She turned her head neither to the right nor to the left, but now and then looked toward heaven with folded hands, as if in prayer

Later, the same young girl stood at the Mill depot, watching the coming of the night train. The conductor, as he reached down to lift her into the car, wondered at the tear-stained face that was upturned toward the dim lantern he held in his hand. A few questions and ready answers told him all. No father ever cared more tenderly for his own child, than that conductor cared for little Blossom. She was on her way to Washington to ask President Lincoln for her brother's life. She had stolen away, leaving a note to tell her father where and why she had gone. She had brought Bennie's letter with her. She believed no good, kind heart like the President's could refuse to be melted by it.

The next morning they reached New York, and the conductor hurried her on to Washington. Every minute, now, might be the means of saving her brother's life.

In an incredibly short time, Blossom reached the capital and hastened to the White House. The President had just seated himself to his morning's tasks, when the door softly opened. Blossom, with downcast eyes and folded hands, stood before him.

"Well, my child," he said in a pleasant cheerful tone, "what do you want so bright and early in the morning?"

"Bennie's life, please, sir," faltered Blossom.

"Bennie? Who is Bennie?"

"My brother, sir. They are going to shoot him for sleeping at his post."

"Oh, yes." Mr. Lincoln ran his eye over the papers before him. "I remember. It was a fatal sleep. You see, child, it was at a time of much special danger. Thousands of lives might have been lost for his negligence."

"So my father said," replied Blossom gravely, "but poor Bennie was so tired, sir, and Jimmie so weak. He did the work of two, sir, and it was Jimmie's night, and not his; but Jimmie was so tired, and Bennie never thought about himself, that he was tired, too."

"What is this you say, child? Come here; I do not understand." And the kind man caught eagerly at what seemed to be justification of an offense.

Blossom went to him. He put his hand tenderly upon her shoulder, and turned up the pale anxious face toward his. She told her simple straightforward story, and handed Mr. Lincoln Bennie's letter to read.

He read it carefully. Then, taking up his pen, wrote a few hasty lines and rang his bell. Blossom heard the order given, "Send this dispatch at once."

The President then turned to the girl and said, "Go home, my child, and tell that father of yours that Abraham Lincoln thinks the life of his son far too precious to be lost. Or wait! Bennie will need a

change after he has so bravely faced death; he shall go with you."

"God bless you, sir," said Blossom; and who shall doubt that God heard the request?

Two days after this interview, the young soldier came to the White House with his little sister. He was called into the President's private room, and a stripe was fastened "upon his shoulder."

Mr. Lincoln then said, "The soldier that could carry a sick comrade's baggage, and die for the good act so uncomplainingly, deserves well of his country."

Then Bennie and Blossom made their way to their Green Mountain home. A crowd gathered at the Mill Depot to welcome them back. As Farmer Owen's hand grasped that of his boy, tears flowed down his cheeks, and he was heard to say fervently, "The Lord be praised!"

In spite of the fact that Bennie had been guilty of a serious error, his guilt was forgiven. His mistake was made because of weakness. His repentance was deep and sincere. It was obvious that saving this young man's life was a safe risk and that the country would be better off with him than it would without him.

How God longs to be able to say the same in judgment about each of us! He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. He will not, however, take the risk of endangering the security of the universe by saving a person who would bring in sin and sorrow a second time.

HEALTH NUGGET

Health Effects of Coffee and Caffeine

About 1 in 5 Adult Americans consume over 350 mg of caffeine per day, a level sufficient to produce dependency. A 5 oz cup of coffee contains between 60 - 150 mg of caffeine. A cup of tea has 35 - 60 mg, depending upon the variety used, the way it is prepared and the strength of the brew. A cola has 30 - 55 mg of caffeine per 12 oz can. Surge, Jolt, and Water Joe contain about 55 - 70 mg caffeine per 12 oz can and are intended to provide a buzz. Caffeine is considered a psychoactive drug since it

stimulates the central nervous system and alters mood behavior. These effects may be experienced in adults after as little as one cup of coffee or 2 cans of cola. This stimulated "high" is usually followed by a depression or "low."

Adverse effects include: insomnia; tremors; nervousness; irritability; headache; elevation of blood fatty acid levels; elevation of blood pressure and/or serum cholesterol levels; irregular heartbeats and palpitations, and increased risk of cardiac arrhythmia and heart attack; increased gastric acid production and aggravation of peptic ulcers; increased heartburn; increased symptoms of PMS; increased risk of bladder and rectal cancer; higher risk of the birth of a low-birth-weight child; and increased urinary calcium losses.

In addition, use of tea and coffee reduces the non-heme iron absorption of a meal by 40 - 60%, thereby increasing risk of anemia. It worsens performance that involves short-term memory. It causes a worsening of fine motor coordination due to an increase in hand and arm tremors.

Children are drinking excessive amounts of cola beverages. As many as 1/3 of children consuming high levels of caffeine manifest hyperactive behavior typical of caffinism. A young child consuming one can of cola may receive a caffeine jolt equivalent to an adult receiving 4 cups of coffee.

New research finds a strong connection between the coffee consumption and serum homocysteine levels, a risk factor for cardiovascular disease. One or more cups of coffee per day increases interleukin-6 and C-reactive protein levels and other markers of systemic inflammation which are considered risk factors for cardiovascular disease.

Regular users of caffeine, who try to quit, may experience increased anxiety, headache, irritability, and fatigue during the first few days of abstinence. Caffeine is considered an addictive drug, and its regular use can lead to dependency.

With so many questions regarding the safety of caffeine, the use of tea, coffee and cola beverages cannot be encouraged. Small children and pregnant women especially should avoid caffeine-containing foods and beverages. Winston Craig, MPH, PhD, RD

FROM KATIE'S COOKBOOKS

Rodney loves the following Ice Cream Recipe so much he insisted that I share it in this newsletter. You will need an electric ice cream maker. If you don't already have one you can probably find a reasonably priced one at Wal Mart Stores.

Katie's Own Banana Pecan Rice Cream

Blend all together in a blender:

2 cups cooked brown rice
¾ cups cashews
1 cup water
½ cup turbinado sugar (unrefined sugar)
1 ½ Tbsp vanilla
2 bananas
½ tsp salt
½ cup rice milk (can use walnut or soy milk)

After finished blending Add:

1 cup chopped pecans (or nuts of your choice)

Process this mixture in your ice cream maker according to directions on your maker.

You can experiment with various fruits and nuts.

Who says vegetarian/vegans can't have ice cream occasionally?

Rodney and I never eat regular ice cream from the grocery store. If you read the ingredients that are in most of them you will see why. We just don't want to put all those harmful ingredients into our system.

Congratulations to Charlotte Pauley!

Charlotte Pauley lives in Danville, WV. She is quite a bible student! She successfully completed not just one, not just two, but three Bible Study Courses! In addition to our regular Bible Study Course Charlotte completed a course on the Book of Daniel and one on the Book of Revelation.

She earned three award certificates for her faithfulness in her Bible studies. Her last certificate was issued this past May, 2011.

It is such a blessing to us to have serious bible students like Charlotte.

Congratulations Charlotte! May God bless you and be with you always. May the things you studied about be a blessing to you.

Keep in touch! We love you Charlotte!

Katie and Rodney Armstrong
Cleaver of Truth Ministry

If any of you would like to learn more of what the Bible says and how prophecy given in ancient times affects us today you can take the Bible Studies also. We offer them free of charge to anyone who is interested. Just let us know and we will be happy to mail them out to you pronto! The Bible is your only text book. That is where you find your answers!

We'll be back with you next month. Until then may God bless each one of you.

Remember God loves you and so do we!

Rodney and Katie

