

How We Escaped

By Elmer Ellsworth Shelhamer and His Wife, Julia A. Shelhamer

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How We Escaped

**By
Elmer Ellsworth Shelhamer
and
His Wife, Julia A. Shelhamer**

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Chapter 1 HOW I ESCAPED

"Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowler: the snare is broken and we are escaped." -- Ps. 123:7. Satan has set snares for all of us from infancy, but especially if he foresaw that we were destined to do his kingdom damage. While we do not accept the doctrine of unconditional election, yet we do believe that some are chosen of God to magnify his Grace more than others. Not because they are worthy, or because He arbitrarily wills their success, but because He finds in them more cooperation than in others -- hidden soul-soil that responds readily to His matchless touch.

Personally, this unworthy scribe has nothing of which to boast. Why God should pick me out of a family of nine and thrust me out across the continents, to preach and publish the Gospel in various lands is a wonder of wonders. My godly father called me the "black sheep of the family." On one occasion he came running into the blacksmith shop when I was beating a horse and cried, "Are you killing the animal?" I replied, "No, I am only teaching him some sense, to stand still while I put this shoe on him." He answered, "I would not be surprised if I should live to see you stand on the gallows with a rope around your neck." Our school teacher resigned because I was uncontrollable. A seven-round fight with a man was the last thing that broke my parents' hearts, just before my conversion at the age of sixteen.

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Chapter 2

HOW I ESCAPED A DRUNKARD'S HELL

I well remember when on that sad, but glorious day when I returned home from town in an old sled half drunk on hard cider. How good God was to keep me from freezing! (A schoolmate did freeze to death because of drink and exposure.) When my wicked brother-in-law saw me and I declared I intended to seek religion, he roared and laughed, saying, "You are the biggest devil in the whole country and no one will believe you. I dare you to go up to the mourners bench you are half drunk and that is why you talk religion."

"No, I mean it," I said.

"Well, I will go with you!" But when the time came he backed out and later died unsaved, I fear.

When it became known that the worst boy in the community was seeking religion, the whole country side was stirred. One day I prayed five hours until my voice was gone and I could only whisper. After three days of seeking, I was powerfully converted. The change was as great as though the blazing sun had burst in at midnight. At first many said, "It won't last long, the change is too great; he won't hold out." But they changed their tune and said, "He can't hold in!" Blessed be God, it has held out now fifty-seven years. Anything that will stand every test that long is worth having.

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Chapter 3

HOW I ESCAPED DROWNING

When a tall lad of twelve, I thought I could swim "Crooked Creek" if others could. One boy swam it and I followed, but when halfway across I gave out, for it was as broad as a river. "What shall I do, turn around, or go ahead? My strength is gone! Here goes -- I will drop down and walk the rest of the way." When I did it was chin deep. Had I stopped two feet sooner I would have drowned, for later I learned that this was the treacherous "fifteen-foot hole." How good God was to let me, a sinner, escape!

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Chapter 4 WABASH RIVER

Years afterward some forty preachers, myself included, on a hot sultry day went swimming in the dangerous Wabash, at Terre Haute, Indiana. We were diving, plunging, and playing when I was suddenly seized with cramps. When I first disappeared, no one thought it serious, but when I came up and called for help, a general cry went out, "Brother Shelhamer is drowning! Lord, save him!!" I was caught in the mad current and carried down stream; more than one had drowned in this same bend of the river. A one-armed preacher kept up with me lifting me in the air till I caught a breath, then down again I went. I could hear two voices: Satan said, "I have you this time and will drown you! I have tried different times and in different ways to get you to backslide and failed, but this time I will let you go to heaven, but will put a stop to your getting others to go." O, the gloom of the watery grave that surrounded me! But amid the darkness I could hear those dear boys pray, "Lord, save him! Lord, save him!!" This gave me confidence and I said to myself, "These prayers can never drown!" Just, then an old leaky boat was pushed out and I seized it only to have it sink with me. "Don't get into it, hang on outside!" With chin on edge of boat I was taken ashore, where I lay on the bank while the faithful lads rolled me and pumped the water out. It was a narrow, but blessed "escape" for which I will ever praise God.

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Chapter 5

HOW I ESCAPED THE PRECIPICE

In hot August it was great sport in Armstrong County, Pennsylvania, to hunt raccoons. They ruin valuable corn. A dozen or more men and boys quietly drew near a deep timber or cliff, adjacent to a cornfield. Here we lay down about 9:00 p. m. and waited until the dogs struck a "hot trail," and finally treed the coon. There would be a mad rush and a certain brave fellow climbed the tree with a torch, to shake down the coon. Now we saw a fierce fight, with the result -- a dead coon.

On one of these occasions while waiting for the dogs to start something, I fell asleep and when I awoke my crowd was gone. I yelled and ran and stumbled, not knowing which direction to pursue. In my haste I did not realize how near I came to that hundred foot precipice with ten feet of water beneath. To this day I shudder when I see that perpendicular cliff and how nearly I took the fatal step. I never would have been found and my poor soul would have been lost forever! I escaped by the "skin of my teeth!"

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Chapter 6

HOW I ESCAPED MARRYING THE WRONG GIRL

With that powerful conversion, I quit not only sinful things, as swearing, drinking, dancing, tobacco, and cards, but also joking, flirting and wearing of jewelry. The thought of girls hindered secret prayer. When in church I became too self-conscious if I perceived that they were looking at me. I soon flung this to the winds for I was too young to even think of matrimony and could not afford to trifle with another's affections. Of course it was natural to love someone, especially a sincere Christian, since I had severed with one stroke all connection with the world.

When I left home and went a long distance to college in quest of an education, I surely had a battle for six months with homesickness and the only relief was to write each week to mother and to one of those fine girls.

Finally after getting the victory over homesickness, I decided I did not need the "creature love" of a fair maiden. So, I requested her to stop writing, for a while at least. I saw that this friendship might ripen into an engagement and mar God's first plan. It now began to dawn upon me that I was not only to be a preacher but perhaps a publisher. If so, I must have a companion my equal or superior intellectually and spiritually. She, should be able to sing and speak well in public, as well as be a good housekeeper. I never dreamed then that God was about to thrust me out without salary, to edit a paper and publish over fifty books and millions of tracts and pamphlets costing over \$75,000.00. Yes, I just escaped what many have fallen into -- a matrimonial snare that would have crippled me for life! Oh, precious young people, let me exhort you! Avoid haste! Seek Godly counsel!! Above all, insist on each having a rich sanctified experience!

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Chapter 7

A TRIP TO COLLEGE AND BACK

Shortly after my conversion, one evening while reading and sitting around the big fireplace, I ventured to whisper to mother that I felt God would have me become a preacher. She replied, "O, Sonnie, that is a hard life, sleeping in damp beds and eating cold victuals." I paused, then answered, "Would you rather I backslid and died a drunkard?" "O, no, if that is the way you feel, go ahead!"

The next big question was, where I should go to prepare. The only place I knew of was the Wesleyan Methodist Seminary, at Wheaton, Illinois, hundreds of miles away. My big, unsaved brother overheard the conversation and in disgust said, "The silly goose! He has never been away from home and will be back in three weeks!" "No," said mother, "give him three months!" Those were some of the best words ever spoken to me. For during the first six months or more, I often cried myself to sleep because of homesickness. I would have walked home since I did not have the fare (\$8.00), but for one thing: I could visualize myself entering the old, cozy home, dejected, and hearing my sneering brother say, I told you so! Here is the great preacher, just returned from college. After those awful months of loneliness I finally won the fight and my people did not see me for over three years. Now, when I returned home I was on top and in a different class. I did not feel proud, but God had lifted me up and given a saintly dignity and holy independence that I did not have before. What a narrow escape! Had I yielded to homesickness and returned too soon, I would have been sidetracked and missed God's first plan, as thousands of bright young people have done.

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Chapter 8

A STRANGE DOCTRINE

But how did I escape? Others fell into error while it seemed God had a special care over me. Only two weeks after I left home for College certain preachers came into that community and began preaching a strange doctrine. At first they taught the essentials, but reserved the "strong meat until the people could digest it. Then they became harsh and denunciatory toward those who did not readily receive it. The chief members of the church accepted it and the result was a "division" and "schism," the very thing they were denouncing.

They sent me their literature and later my own cousin came all the way west to "convert Elzie." I listened attentively, but the new doctrine did not appeal to me -- to "come out of all sects and at the same time form a more sectarian sect. Their members did not feel free to attend other services, except to "let their light shine." They could argue Scripture for hours, but took little interest in helping at the altar, unless it meant a new proselyte. It seemed to me that God's method was to take the narrow, sectarian spirit out of us, and make us lovable toward all of His saints, rather than take us out of a Holiness organization to form another, with a few tenants added. God in mercy did not let me return home until I could meet their arguments. When I did, a great revival broke out, but I had no cooperation from my former friends. They wept over me, they denounced me, and finally declared that I had rejected the "evening light" and had sinned against the Holy Ghost. They warned the people not to hear me, that I would have no more revivals; but after these many years, all their prophecies have failed. The thing that God hates in your church or mine, is sin and bigotry. The same accursed thing manifested itself in the disciples when they said, "Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name and we forbade him, because he followeth not us." Friend, you may be saved up to the point that you do not openly oppose those who are not of your little crowd, but you must go farther and bid him God's speed, if he is getting men genuinely converted. I fear few are saved to this extent.

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Chapter 9

HOW I WAS HEALED

It is easy to give up and die. I can look back and see many places I could have said "Yes" to death and gone to heaven, but I insisted on living. I am satisfied many people die before their time and others go through life grunting when they ought to be an inspiration in the earth. It is the devil's doctrine that "What is, had to be." Because my brothers and sisters died with consumption at a certain age, therefore I must go at about the same age. Absurd!

I well remember when at the age of twenty-two, a boy preacher and a thousand miles from home, I came down with that dread disease tuberculosis, which had taken so many of our family. When the doctor left my bedside, I overheard him say in the kitchen: "It is too bad to see a young man like that die, who wants to live and be a blessing." This aroused me and I whispered (for my voice was gone) to my attendant to bring a pencil. I sat up on one elbow and wrote to Rev. Osborn, whom I knew in an adjoining town: "Dear Fred, come over quick, I am dying." He came and for twelve hours prayed in an undertone in my room and in the adjoining one. I can see now why it required so long for him to create an atmosphere in which it would be easy to believe for healing. This was over fifty years ago and there were few then who believed and taught Divine healing. One reason why more are not permanently healed today is that they do not prepare the way by fasting, repentance, and prayer. Hence there is no atmosphere to inspire living faith; there is no well-grounded expectancy. Preachers are largely responsible. They should teach the people. Well, after twelve hours of praying down the healing power of God, I whispered, "Get a blanket, wrap it around me and lead me out to the other room," where I sat in a rocker by the fire. Here I entered into a special covenant with God: If He would heal me, I would go forth and preach, without fear or favor, everything I found in the Book. He quickened my mortal body, my speech returned, and I said, I am healed."

Next morning Fred went to the doctor, telling him he need not come to see me any more. Excitedly the doctor asked, "Is he dead?" "No, he is up and dressed." "Well, I must go and see him at once, for he must be out of his head." He came and, staring at me, asked what all this meant. I told him God had arrived ahead of him and healed me. After taking my temperature, he remarked, "This is wonderful! Your temperature last night registered one hundred and four and one half and now it is normal."

That day I walked up town, snow being a foot deep. Business men said I was crazy and should be in bed. I replied that I was healed, but they, as in the days of Christ, "laughed me to scorn." I gained seven pounds the first twelve days and have been going like a race horse ever since. I am satisfied that I would have died had it not been for the power of God prayed down. Lord, teach us how to pray!

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Chapter 10 MORE NARROW ESCAPES

"Through many dangers toils and snares,
I have already come; .
'Tis Grace hath brought me safe thus far,
And Grace will lead me home."

St. Paul spoke of being in "deaths oft." I have had at least a dozen close calls. Once in Damascus, Syria, I came within six inches of having my head split open. Another time in Shanghai, China, I came near going with double pneumonia. Another time in South Africa the missionaries gathered around my bed and held on in prayer until I was healed of ptomaine poisoning. Another time when some ruffians attempted to cut our big tent down, I rushed into their midst! They ran across the street and began shooting. At first I thought they were shooting into the tent, But the next morning I went out and leaned against the board fence where I had stood the night before and I could count the bullets in the fence, six inches on each side of my body. You see how near I went to heaven that night, but "a man is immortal until his work is done."

Another time, when I was going through Cincinnati to Pittsburgh, Pa. my train was late and I had to run to make connections. The B & O Railroad conductor was kind and let me pay full fare to the first big stop. He said I could hurry into the depot and buy a clergy ticket for the rest of the way. I did so, but the train started and when I tried to get on, the side doors were closed. What should I do? A great risk, but I decided to stand outside, on the lower step and hold on until we reached the next stop. Just then the conductor, passing from one coach to another, saw me although it was midnight. Of course he was angry, but let me in. It was zero weather and I fear my hands would have frozen in the next forty miles. Besides swinging around the sharp curves it would have been easy to have lost my grip and fallen to my death. God was good to an adventurous preacher.

This very morning, March 23, 1943, in Shreveport, La., I narrowly escaped. While running in a heavy overcoat to catch the bus with this copy for the printer, I fell and burst my trousers, skinning my knee as large as a silver dollar. The bus waited, but Satan sneered at me and said, "I will kill you yet." My answer is, "Not until my work is done." It is thrilling to feel that God has a peculiar care over us.

These are some of the physical escapes I have had. But there are others more subtle and damning. One is the "itching palm" for a little more money. It is easy to set aside the smaller calls and "feel led" to go where the crowds are larger (and of course the purse also). He who does this is likely to go a step farther and shave off some of the rough corners of the cross, so that he is not so plain and rugged as formerly.

Another snare is familiarity with women, especially pretty women. Wesley said, "Converse sparingly with women." It is sickening to see a married man honey around and have prolonged handshakes with the fairer sex. Personally I have had many snares set for me in the past fifty-five years. But it gives solid satisfaction to be able to look back and thank God that every home and hotel was left as pure or better than I found it. I would rather be branded as an extremist than be careless and indiscreet.

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Chapter 11

HOW I ESCAPED ANOTHER ERROR

It is easy to swing from one extreme to another. In so doing a person can oppose an error to his own hurt. Years ago when the Pentecostal movement first appeared, many good people embraced it, while others opposed. For the time being I stood neutral, though some of my best friends sought and professed their "Baptism." I took a special trip from Atlanta, Ga. to Los Angeles to study impartially the work and workers. At that time I was publishing a radical holiness paper and some of the zealous brethren sent me strong articles denouncing the new manifestation. When I declined to publish them, I was branded as Pro-Pentecostal. Later, I was invited to preach for them in the big stone church in Chicago and they published my sermon in pamphlet form, entitled, "Marks of Deep Spirituality." Later again, when in Johannesburg, South Africa, I accepted an invitation to hold a convention for the "Apostolics." Our dear Second Blessing people protested in strong terms, threatening to cancel all my calls with them.

Well, what is the safe position to take? St. Paul felt clear to preach to the circumcision and also to the uncircumcision. In my case, only one thought must actuate me; not self, or a little fame, but the Glory of God. The result was, the pastor and all his people humbled themselves and sought heart purity. They remarked, "This Holiness preacher from America is an enigma to us. He does not teach just as we do, yet he has a depth that we do not have, hence we are seekers.

Friends, it means much to be saved from needless prejudice. Wesley said, "Go not where they want you, but where they want you most. Go not where you can do good, but where you do the most good." I have found some very saintly souls among this people, but like nearly every new movement, they need balancing. For instance: Here is a hungry heart, who attends their services, humbles himself and receives a genuine blessing. He receives what he needs from God, but he also receives what he did not need from the movement. Every movement puts its imprint upon those who embrace it. We call it "psychic influence," and it can exist and operate among the most spiritual people. The leaders may not say a word from the pulpit, but mind over matter will cause the new adherents to ring true (perhaps unconsciously) to the standards held by its advocates.

This is why, after mingling for years among these dear people in Jerusalem and other centers, we felt clear to write our booklet, "Five Reasons Why I Do Not Seek the Gift of Tongues." The sure cure against formality on the one hand and fanaticism on the other, is the deep inward crucifixion of the "Old Man," and the constant infilling with holy love. I am satisfied had it not been for this I would have been swept off my feet years ago.

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Chapter 12

HOW I ESCAPED A SHALLOW EXPERIENCE IN HOLINESS

It is easy to stop short of the clear witness to heart purity. There are multitudes of people who are continually trying to quiet their fears relative to their true standing with God. As a boy preacher I studied books and men and thus received a high ideal of what it meant to be fully emptied of carnal self and filled with nothing but Divine Love. During those early years I professed to be wholly sanctified several times, but I now see that my instructors rushed me through and hence I stopped short.

After several, months of sweeping victory, I had doubts again whether I had the real experience. When I confided in others, yea, great men, they tried to quiet me by saying that I had the standard too high; that I was trying to get rid of human infirmities and Satan's accusations. But I replied that I was not troubled with things on the outside, but the inside. Such manifestations as impatience, retaliation, self-will, unchastity, foolishness, flirting and a dozen other things did not bother me for I had complete victory over everything; now I wanted deliverance from everything.

There were two deep hidden things that disturbed me, which God alone beheld; an inward love of human praise and on the other hand an unpleasant sensation when another eclipsed me. No one suspected such things in me, but it seemed if I had heart purity I would detest forever the empty praise of men. And if I did anything worthy of praise, I owed it to my lovely Lord and should feel deeply grieved if He were robbed of any glory. On the other hand, if another surpassed me, I should rejoice that God's Grace had accomplished more through him than through me. In short, a sanctified heart is supposed to be jealous for His glory, not for my own advancement. If I am always planning for His praise how can I ever accept any for myself? "How can ye believe which receive honour one of another and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?" Mark! He did not say who seek honour, but who receive it when it comes unsolicited. Under the searching light of God I found something within that received honour instead of quickly and gladly handing it over to my worthy Lord. This caused me to cry out, not for a blessing, nor for more activity, but for a mighty deliverance.

I was desperate to get a settled and satisfactory experience. I already had what most people professed, and yet it did not fully meet my expectations. My heart cry was voiced in an old song:

O God, my heart doth long for Thee,
Let me die! Let me die!
Now set my soul at liberty;
Let me die! Let me die!
Die to the trifling things of earth,
They're now to me of little worth;
My Savior calls -- I'm going forth;
Let me die! Let me die!

Oh, I must die to scoffs and sneers,
Let me die! Let me die!
I must be freed from slavish fears;
Let me die! Let me die!
So dead that no desire will rise

To appear good or great or wise,
In any but my Savior's eyes;
Let me die! Let me die!

When I am dead, then Lord to Thee,
Will I live! Will I live!
My time, my strength, my all to Thee,
Will I give! Will I give!
I'll work with Thee my Blessed Lord,
I'll be obedient to Thy Word,
I'll wield with power the Gospel Sword,
While I Live! While I Live!

Brethren, let me speak plainly! I am convinced that many of the modern holiness leaders are entirely too shallow in their altar work. They have the theory "down pat," and some of them preach it strong, but sad to say, spoil it all at the altar. They rush the seeker through to a profession by singing or shouting; and the result is, after the high tide dies down -- a dissatisfied soul. Then he concludes he has lost the blessing, or goes against his inward feelings and professes more loudly than before. Finally he wearies of this and decides he needs his "Baptism," and away he goes to those who will encourage him in his seeking. Do not censure this hungry heart; censure yourself, or those who "daubed him over with untempered mortar."

Finally I heard a mighty man of God tell his experience -- how he had preached and professed holiness for years without having it. But when the Holy Ghost revealed to him his depravity -- "The depths of pride, self-will and hell," (as Wesley taught) -- he cried out, "Let me die! Let me die!" He said he was three days confessing and deploring carnality, when suddenly the refining fire of God purified him through and through. When I heard this, immediately I said, "This is the Bible route -- the death route." "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified, (not happified, or consecrated) that the body of sin might be destroyed." The Holy Spirit took me through step by step until I came to the end of myself, when the death-stroke was given and the clear witness received from high heaven that the precious Blood did now cleanse from all sin. Hallelujah!

It was too bad that I did not get proper instruction sooner. And it is too bad today that many of our holiness evangelists fail at this important point. I fear that either they never died the death themselves, or they have gotten into a rut and cannot get out. O brethren, let us do thorough work, remembering that when we let seekers stop short, we are simply preparing more material for some sidetrack movement. Let us stick to the old main line of death to carnality and the infilling of the Holy Ghost. I submit to you that when we give souls time to go to the bottom, they will get such a fiery baptism that all imitations will look like fox-fire in the presence of lightning.

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Chapter 13

HOW I ESCAPED THE CHAIN GANG

I have been arrested and put in jail several times in various cities for preaching the Gospel in the open air, but now I speak of our third arrest in Lakeland, Florida. Here is where the city attorney tried to send me to the chain gang.

A Mormon Elder had challenged us for a debate on the public square and I accepted. The street was crowded from side to side and he was so badly beaten that he left town on the midnight train. For the time being we were very popular, men bowing and calling me Dr. Shelhamer. But I have learned that when one is swallowed too soon generally he is thrown up, for there was not enough salt and pepper used.

A year later we returned for a revival, whereupon the chief of police notified me that a new city ordinance had been passed forbidding open-air preaching. Accordingly, I visited the mayor several times and prayed in his office. He conceded that we did much good and thanked me for defeating the Mormon Elder. However, he said that his hands were tied and hence he could not grant us a permit. I inquired what he would do if the Salvation Army applied? He answered that that was their line of work and of course their request should be granted. To this I gently protested, saying that this was class legislation and contrary to our Constitution. Paul, Peter, Wesley, Whitefield, and many others since their day believed in open air preaching in order to reach the masses who do not go to church. Space forbids relating all about our arrest and false trial. Suffice it to say that we won the victory and now have a nice church, parsonage, and a host of friends in that city. If you desire to read the entire account, it can be found in our large book, "Sixty Years of Thorns and Roses."

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Chapter 14

HOW I ESCAPED FROM THE CASTLE OF DESPAIR

By Mrs. E. E. Shelhamer

At the age of eleven I felt the call of God to become a soul winner. At once my ambitions rose high, not for self but for God and the salvation of souls. I could see myself in the future doing great things to make the world better and my only thought was to prepare for the work God had given me to do.

But I found much to hinder. I had no money with which to go to school. My precious mother gave me a ten-dollar gold piece. This covered my train fare and my tuition for one semester at a seminary. But my board was to be paid by hard work. I often went hungry and did not have sufficient time nor strength for my lessons, so it was several years before I was ordained.

After I became a minister's wife, secular duties consumed most of my time and when the children came, this difficulty was augmented for we had no servants.

"Man works from sun to sun, But woman's work is never done."

I had expected to do so much for my Savior that a realization of facts as they were greatly depressed me. Had it not been for God and my dear husband I should have given up in despair. Indeed, I seemed to be imprisoned by four square walls and by duties too grave to be ignored.

Of course I loved my family and enjoyed taking care of them, and in a small way I was working for the Lord, yet there was the awful realization that God had called me to do something more and I was not fully obeying Him. It was only after much prayer and fasting that God undertook. The result has been the writing of ten books besides tracts and many articles for various papers. We give God all the glory, for on our two world tours of evangelism we met people in foreign countries who said they knew us because they had read our writings.

So many have asked how we managed to get things done, that I am venturing here to give a few ideas which I hope may help others who are as discouraged as I have been.

I can look back now and see that had I prayed more and exercised a more child-like faith, God might have used me more.

However, I fall far short of my goal and crave the prayers of our readers that as many souls may be saved through our humble efforts as possible.

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Chapter 15 HOW TO FIND TIME FOR STUDY

When we read a book we are apt to picture the author comfortably situated in a cozy arm-chair, away from all care and interruptions for hours at a time. It is supposed that the house is well equipped with competent servants, and that nothing remains for the author to do but to sit and write.

This is as it should be if the matron of the home is to help make the living by her pen; but if some of us waited for such favorable circumstances we would never get much done. Though we are not blest with plenty of spare time, still much may be accomplished if the few spare moments are carefully saved. A large number of those who have done the most along literary lines have been people with very little opportunity. Their ambition has overmastered their circumstances, and their determination won.

If one desires to have time for instructive reading or literary work, he will have to forego some things that many people think are essential to their happiness, such as fancy work, light reading, chit-chat, parties, extra dressing, and a dozen other things. If it is agreeable to the man of the house, the cooking may be done more simply, omitting cake and pie-making. Newspapers coming every day take about all the spare time most men have. If a weekly paper be substituted, the news will be more condensed and reliable, and will not cost so much time or money.

There are some things that will help one who is struggling to obtain time for study. The first is the thought brought out by Bishop William Pierce, when he said, in substance, that God is the author of knowledge, and the closer one lives to Him the wiser he will become.

The second is method. Write out a program for the day, and follow it if possible, planning to read a little at certain hours. This can easily be done where there are no small children, and even with these a written plan pinned upon the wall will help. For instance, such a list as the following has helped the writer to accomplish more than she could have done otherwise:

Breakfast at 7 o'clock; family prayer at 7:30; dish-washing, sweeping, etc., 8:00; fifteen minutes for Bible study at 9:30; dinner at 12:00.

Then I tried to be through with everything so that I could write or practice music by four o'clock, and by having an early supper I could read or write after the children were asleep for the night. Often the interruptions and cares have been such that I could not crowd any literary work into the day, and the only way to get it in was to ask some member of the family to read aloud while the others were finishing the meal or while I was working. It is a fine plan to let one read aloud after supper, while the others are washing dishes or sitting around the fireside sewing. When a baby is in the house one cannot always have quiet evenings, as some babies do not retire till late, and when this is the case, a woman who does all her own work will have to admit that she has no spare time.

Still there is hope. At such times I have been driven nigh unto despair for time to write and study, and many a time have I placed a book on the kitchen table, open and propped up, so I could catch a word now and then as I hastily passed by it to the sink or the stove. Many songs and Bible chapters have been memorized in this way, and short quotations have been learned from various books, and used when getting up articles or sermons.

When sewing, I often place a book or paper on a chair or table in front of me, so that a line may be read now and then. While holding the baby, sometimes one can read if the book is placed where the baby will not get it.

New tunes and poems will come into one's mind when doing such work as sweeping, as then one is not apt to be interrupted, and the mind is free. While riding on streetcar or steam-cars is a good time to compose.

Just now a little chubby form presents herself at my chair saying, "Up," and up she comes into my arms. She is soon comforted and rested, and asks to crawl down again. I could not deny her the privilege of being cuddled, for her little heart needs it, and books must come in later. I have really come to enjoy writing with a baby in my arms.

When I was a girl an old-maid was once entertained in mother's home. She noticed my strenuous methods for acquiring knowledge, and remarked that her way was to wait until all her work was done, and then to sit down and read. I much preferred her way, but God had not blest me with the time and opportunity she possessed.

While attending school, having to work for my board, time was so scarce, books were placed open upon one end of the ironing board while I did the ironing for a family of six.

When I had a home of my own, I saw that if anything along literary lines was accomplished it would be by planning and scheming, and the foregoing methods were adopted.

There were some who seemed to have no ambition above merely existing, and they loved to talk. They were a great trial to me, and I thought if they knew how much I needed and appreciated my few spare moments they surely would not stay so long. So I adopted the following method: All hand-sewing was left and put in a basket, which was kept in a convenient place. When the neighbors came in I begged the privilege of doing a little mending, or of working some button-holes while we talked. In this way the time went swiftly, and I found that the work-basket kept about empty, whereas before I was always behind. The best of it all was that it was done in the time that hitherto had been wasted.

A notebook is a fine thing to carry with one. Choose one small enough to go into your pocket or handbag. In this put passages from books which you wish to memorize, and in it write stray thoughts and circumstances which may be of use later. There are many times, while out away from the house, that this notebook may be taken out and read -- on the train, waiting for a friend or a car, your turn at the counter, and even at lectures or other public gatherings before the program commences. Many a time have I seen my sainted mother open her Bible at a place like that to improve her time, while others were chatting or gazing at the incomers.

Thoughts that are valuable sometimes come to one at very unexpected times. When busy all day, I have often been waked up at night by Divine inspiration to write a poem or article, which always leaves before morning, and is lost forever, unless I have obeyed my promptings and written it down at the time it was given.

Often a new thought comes while washing dishes or clothes, and new tunes come when rocking baby to sleep. For this reason I find it best to keep a pencil in my hair, lest a stray thought be lost. If I wait until there is time to stop work and write it down at the desk it usually never gets done. Any old thing will do to write it on -- a board, a paper sack, a pasteboard carton, a shoe box, or the under-side of a chair bottom.

At one time I was rushed, and could find nothing upon which to write my new subject, so with a pencil put it onto the under-side of a dinner plate. When a pencil has been unavailable, I have used a burnt match or a stick dipped in ink or paint. One time when moving, pencil and paper were packed away. A fine subject for an article presented itself. I had a fountain pen, however and quickly taking off my shoe, the subject was written upon its lining. My husband playfully said that after this people would want to be reading the lining of my shoes.

I have never accomplished much. Perhaps I would have done more if I had had a better chance, but what little has been done I owe first to God; second to my mother, who taught me to gather up the fragments (of time), that nothing be lost; and third, to my husband, who has encouraged me along the line of my calling.

How We Escaped

By Elmer Ellsworth Shelhamer and His Wife, Julia A. Shelhamer

Chapter 16

ESCAPE FROM DEATH

By Mrs. E. E. Shelhamer

For a number of years the writer has suffered -- only God knows what -- as a result possibly of too strenuous efforts for the salvation of the lost. My trouble seemed incurable without an operation, and to this I could not feel free to consent.

Though not at all able, I occasionally stole down to the great Los Angeles county hospital to pray with the sick and dying, for my own distress made me feel keenly for others, knowing by experience what some of them were suffering. After bending over scores of beds doing what little I could to help them, I have returned home and thrown myself across the bed nearly fainting from exhaustion. It would not be long however before I ventured out again for I could not bear to see those afflicted ones dying without God. I might as well confess that often I have refrained from taking my friends with me in the auto for fear of an accident, as I knew I was too nervous to drive, and rather than risk their lives I have taken the car out alone. I finally had to give up jail and hospital work, so delegated it to others and resigned myself to God's will, whether life or death.

I attended a number of wonderful divine healing services and was the subject of the prayers of a great many good people, still I suffered. I wanted to live to be a blessing to this sad world. There were millions of sick ones in the myriads of hospitals, many of whom were dying after being experimented upon, and who would take to them the news of Christ the Savior and the Healer?

I thought of the revivals I wanted to hold and the many prodigal sons and daughters I wished to try to persuade to arise and go to their Father. I thought of my family -- the little ones who needed a mother and so prayed for life and health though constantly saying, "Thy will be done."

This prolonged illness caused me to sympathize with the world of sufferers and I know a little of how it feels to lose hope, for while I was doing my best to help others I could feel the grim monster, Death, crowding me inch by inch off the earth. Finally I lost heart and felt compelled against my will to yield to his black relentless hand.

It was during this period of distressing thoughts and mental queries that my heart rose to heaven in one more cry of "Lord have mercy, what shall I do?" Imagine my surprise when the answer came clearly, "Write a book on Divine Healing."

Now, I am conscious of the fact that there are many fanatical people who flippantly and frequently declare that the Lord told them this and that, when often it is their own desire or imagination. The message I had just received was as foreign to any of my previous plans as might have been a command to go to Greenland. I said nothing of it to anyone. Sometimes it is best to keep things to ourselves for such impressions may come from the Lord, or from Satan, or from our own minds.

The fact is, I was in no condition to write a book on any subject, especially one on Healing, and besides, who would believe it when I myself was so sick? They would say, "Physician, heal thyself." I determined to test this impression and proceeded by the following formula which will help in most cases of indecision.

1. Forget it.
2. Be willing to do, or not to do, as God wills.
3. Say little, but pray much.
4. Refuse to act when bewildered.

If the conviction is of God it will return and grow as the days go by. If it is not of Him, it will diminish and finally fade away.

Still feeling that the Lord himself had spoken, I crept off alone and wrote a few chapters just to see how it would seem. Of course I wanted the manuscript burned in case I died and would not have it known for a good deal what I was doing. I began to get worse and gave up the work, wondering if after all I had not been mistaken.

Some days after this the Savior, who is my constant Companion, and whose comforting presence I could not live without, drew near and said in the gentlest tone, "And so you gave up writing, did you?"

I was melted to tears for I knew that it was He and said, "Yes, Lord, I did not feel that it was consistent to write on healing when I have failed to receive it myself." I wondered what He could say to that for I felt I had given Him a conclusive argument, but He always can out-wit human minds. In the gentlest voice He spoke again about as follows:

"Well, if it is my time to take you to heaven and this will be your last sickness, would you not be happier to have your life crowded so full of helpfulness to this dark world, that during the last months of your life you could write something that will keep others from suffering after you are gone?"

"Why, yes, Lord, of course I would, I never thought of it that way," I said bursting into tears. The work was resumed at once. My pen flew across the paper for the thoughts poured in so fast I had to write shorthand to keep up. My loving Lord seemed to be in the room with me and at times dictating every word, for He knew I was too weak to do much thinking. The next Sabbath I partook of the Lord's Supper. While I was kneeling at the altar thanking Jesus for the Atonement, He drew near and whispered, "I have come to heal you."

He revealed to me that He had suffered that I might be well. With simplicity of faith and deepest gratitude I accepted health from Him -- and gave my unprofitable life in a deeper consecration than ever, to live only for His glory. When the minister bade the communicants to "arise and go in peace" I arose in newness of life.

This was on the twenty-second day of March 1925, and it is wonderful how divine health has been imparted. At present writing I am engaged in revival campaigns and though up late every night and burdened with work and responsibilities, the Lord gives such marvelous strength and freedom from pain that I often stop and ask myself how it all came about. I cannot thank Him enough and feel like kissing His feet for condescending to heal such an unworthy one as I.