

EMANUEL NYCE CASSEL

by Grandson Carl C. Cassel

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Between 1953 and 1957 my Gramma Cassel did two things for me that have left a marked impact on my life. The first is that she promised to pray daily for her grandson in ministry. I valued her promise and received great help through it. When she died in 1957, I wondered who would pray in this way for me now. I was pastor to her daughter, Lulu Wismer, at that time. When Aunt Lulu learned of my need and promised to accept the burden of her mother's promise, my heart rejoiced and my ministry was benefitted. The second thing Gramma Cassel did for me in those years was to offer me a box of sermons, sermon outlines and other notes accumulated over the years by E. N. Cassel, my grandfather. I accepted that box joyfully, but did not investigate its contents until the call came to prepare for today. I am thankful for that call. In that box I discovered about 900 pages of hand and type written notes and clippings. I also discovered things about my Grandfather I never knew.

Personal Life

Later simply known to many in the Mennonite Brethren in Christ as "E.N.," my Grandfather, Emanuel Nyce Cassel, was born into a large family November 10, 1875, in Hatfield, Pennsylvania. He learned to work in leather and worked as a saddler. Little more is known of his early life except that in school he progressed far enough and well enough to attend West Chester Normal School for a short time. On May 15, 1897, he was married to Ida Alderfer Price of Vernfield, Pennsylvania. They lived in Harleysville, Pennsylvania, and attended Indian Creek Church of the Brethren in Vernfield. They had eight children; three of them died in infancy or early childhood. Those who lived longer were Lulu Pearl (1899), Byron Clifford (1906), Harvey Alton (1908), Herbert Price (1913) and Willard Emanuel (1919).

Emanuel's time at West Chester Normal School was likely between his public education and his marriage. No information is available about his reason for attending West Chester or his reason for withdrawing. However his testimony is that during that time a retired Presbyterian pastor was used of God to bring a new and deeper understanding of the gospel to his life. It is likely that Jacob H. ("Rose Jelly Jake") Moyer also had impact on Grampa. One Sunday the Cassel's participated in communion (one report said feet washing, but it could have included both) with these Mennonites. Word of this got to Vernfield before the Cassels arrived for evening worship. This displeased the leaders of the Indian Creek Church and resulted in Emanuel and Ida being called before the church council. They were asked to confess the sin of participating in this way with this strange church. They walked what is today Route 63 outside Indian Creek Church and discussed the issue. The church council told them they should accept the discipline by sitting for a time in the part of the church designated for such people and later acknowledge their sin. They could not bring themselves to conclude that they had sinned;



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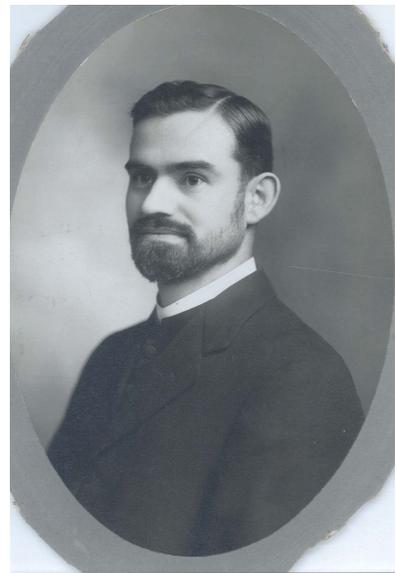
therefore could not confess sin. At that juncture they were dismissed from church membership. Those influences brought Emanuel and Ida to worship with the people of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ (forebearers of Bible Fellowship Church) in Graterford. There is report that another factor in this event was Grampa's desire to preach, but the Indian Creek Church was not in need of more preachers. Whatever the real reason, the Cassels began to worship with the Mennonites in Graterford. With this move from Church of the Brethren to Mennonite Brethren in Christ came other changes. One of the changes was a new emphasis on plainness of dress. There is a picture of them most likely taken prior to their marriage and thus when they were part of the Church of the Brethren which characterizes their style of dress in contrast to what most of us knew them to practice. There is another similar change. The MBC people came to have a relationship to A. B. Simpson and the Christian and Missionary Alliance. In Simpson's efforts to bring the gospel to new places and countries, he asked people to send him jewelry which he could sell to support missions. My father remembers his mother wearing an iron cross inscribed with "Iron for gold for Jesus' sake." Gramma Cassel had sent jewelry to the Alliance and received the iron pin. The shift of churches had wide spread impact.. The change also impacted their understanding of the gospel; more of that later.

Involvement with the Mennonite Brethren in Christ

Emanuel and Ida Cassel were received as members of Graterford Mennonite Brethren in Christ. On August 3, 1900, Presiding Elder, C. H. Brunner, gave E. N. Cassel certification of his being an approved worker in the church of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ. The 1900 Annual Conference held in Reading, Pennsylvania, in September, listed E. N. Cassel as a delegate from the Graterford / Harleysville Circuit. This is the first record of his participation in the Annual Conference of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ. A letter to Grampa from H. B. Musselman dated October 1, 1900, asked him to assume the responsibility of being pastor of the congregations at Blandon and Athol by October 14. An apartment had been rented in Athol (near Douglassville) for \$3.00 per month. Grampa and Gramma moved there with their year old daughter and began ministry. At Annual Conference in 1901 E. N. Cassel expressed to the brethren the nature of his call to preach and was granted Annual Conference license. He was ordained at Annual Conference in 1904. In this way E. N. Cassel initiated service to our Lord in the Mennonite Brethren in Christ which he continued more than fifty years. He retired in October, 1951.

During these years he served the following churches:

Blandon and Athol	1900-1902
Hereford and Zionsville	1903-1904
Zionsville	1904-1905
Spring City	1905-1907
Allentown	1908-1909
Coopersburg	1910-1914
South Allentown	1915-1920
Graterford and Harleysville	1921-1924



1931	Reading	1925-
	Spring City and Royersford	1932-1945
	Walnutport	1946-
1948	Nazareth and Northampton	1949-1951



Soon after he began to serve as a pastor, E. N. Cassel was called upon to accept responsibilities at the Annual Conference level. He served on the Board of Examiners for the Reading Course (the educational program of the church) for 47 years, on the Board of Missions, the Executive Board and nine times was elected Vice-Presiding Elder. In his history of our church, Dr. Harold P. Shelly states: “He [E. N. Cassel] served on most of the key committees and boards in his day” (The Bible Fellowship Church, p.232).

The Importance of Preaching and Teaching God’s Word

The primary purpose for this presentation is the examination of the emphases and style in the preaching of E. N. Cassel in the ministry of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ. How did he understand the gospel? How did he present what he did? What was on his mind? What sources were helpful to him?



The material from my Grandfather includes 817 messages in either outline or full text form. This seemed at first to be a large collection of sermons, but further reflection demonstrated that there were many more. In fifty years of ministry E. N. Cassel probably preached each year at least forty Sundays both morning and evening. That means that he preached about four thousand messages in his ministry. If that is true, we have less than one quarter of his material. Indications of when any of these notes were made or sermons preached are almost totally absent; consequently little opportunity is given to identify growth or change in the preacher.

As a transition from the historical specifics of the life of E. N. Cassel to his message and methods, listen to the introduction to one of his messages (AH-18):

- “There have been four marked periods in my Christian experience.*
- (1) When I accepted Christ as my personal Saviour*
 - (2) When I was brought to see that the entire Bible was the very Word of God.*
 - (3) When I consecrated my life to God.*

(4) When I got hold of the truth, and the truth got hold of me, of the personal, visible, glorious imminent return of our Lord.”

He was introducing a message on the personal implications Christ’s return, but he gives us a sketch of his spiritual autobiography. His relationship to God was personal, under the instruction of the Bible, a full surrender to God and with awareness that this life is not all there is because Jesus is returning personally, visibly and gloriously. The Bible is a solid place from which to minister God’s Word.



At Retirement

The responsibilities and demands on those who teach and preach the Word of God appears in a short statement hand written on a scrap of paper, but preserved with a quotation mark at the beginning and none at the end with no evidence of source (L-1):

“To expound the Word of God correctly, spiritually, and interestingly is the first task of the Christian minister. There are few who can do it.”

In a message on Jonah E. N. Cassel (M-3a rev) quotes the Lord’s instructions to Jonah: “Go, preach to Nineveh the preaching that I bid thee” (Jonah 3:2 KJV). He then comments: “Declare the whole counsel of God! Preach the preaching that I bid thee. These are our marching orders.”

Of the messages we have, 693 were based on a text or texts written at the top of the first page of notes; some of these were careful expositions of the texts and others were more topical developments of the text’s theme. In addition there were 97 more messages without a text stated at the beginning of the message; these messages usually included verses of Scripture at each of the divisions of the message. Also 27 messages had no texts included in the notes. Often one might surmise easily what texts might have influenced those messages; other times one might have a much more difficult time deciding the basis of the message.

Why did E. N. Cassel Preach?

Because, he would say, the Bible is God’s message to mankind. Citing texts at the beginning of most messages was typical of E. N. Cassel’s approach to preaching. Often he indicated in the notes that the text was to be read; then he introduced the theme of the passage; then stated his outline and developed it. In these messages he used 51 of the 66 books in the Bible. The Gospel of John was used most frequently—49 times in the material available to me; the Psalms were used 41 times. The next most used books were the Gospel of Matthew (36 times), Gospel of Luke (34 times), Romans (35 times), Hebrews (33 times). Those not used in these materials are: Ruth, 1 Chronicles, Esther, Lamentations, Hosea, Joel, Obadiah, Nahum,

Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Malachi and 2 and 3 John. Most all of these books offered passages supporting some of the sections of the topical messages.

A number of his messages state clearly his basis for such use of Scripture. One series of messages is five pages typed on both sides (Y-21-Y-25) entitled “All About the Bible---Its Origin.” Here Brother Cassel speaks of God’s revelation prior to his giving Scripture, how the Bible came to be written, origin of the name “Bible” and “Scripture,” original languages and the work of copying and translation. Throughout this material deep respect and acceptance that all God has said in Scripture is clear. In a message on “Understanding the Will of God” (L-15) he says: “All that God has to say at the present time He has said through the Scripture. If he would speak again he would say what He has already said. Therefore any voice not in harmony with the Scripture is not of God.” A message on Psalm 119:9-16 entitled, “How To Study the Bible,” (AL-5-AL-6) is presented in five parts: (1) Recognize the Bible as God-breathed; (2) Receive the Bible in the Spirit; (3) Receive the message into your own life; (4) Retain the character of a learner; (5) Rightly divide the Word of truth. In the light of these convictions it is not surprising to hear Grampa, in a message on Jeremiah 15:16 (M-7), say that finding God’s words is work; eating those words is appropriating them for personal sustenance—taking up into our being the words of God, and the result brings joy.

This material leads to the conclusion that Grampa used the whole Bible as his source of God’s message to his people.

How Did E. N. Cassel Preach from the Scripture?

He always expressed the desire to say what the Bible said. He had three basic ways to accomplish this. First, his most frequent approach was to expound a verse or a short series of verses in each message with little or no apparent connection between one Sunday’s message and the next. Second, he developed topical messages either by use of the concordance for recurring words or by developing a theological theme. Third, He produced series of lessons on continuous passages of Scripture. One such series is on 1 and 2 Thessalonians typed and obviously connecting each passage to the next (X-1 to X-15). He worked through Revelation 1-3 (P-1 to P-9c) describing our Lord Jesus Christ and the messages he sent through John to the seven churches. In 1909 he wrote for the Gospel Banner the exposition of the International Uniform Sunday School Lessons. This was a series on Acts.

Let’s look at some of his messages. I have attempted to use Brother Cassel’s spelling, punctuation and abbreviations as he did. I have tried to select messages that present in a balanced way his basic concerns for his people and the issues of his day.

First, Textual Expositions

Galatians 2:20 – The Christian Life and Its Seven Powers (AJ-24-AJ-25)

We know no better description of it than in the text.

Here are the seven powers of the Christian life.

- I. *The Reason of it.* – “who loved me and gave himself for me” *The love of Christ (that is, Christ’s love for me) constraineth us.*
- II. *There is a Reckoning* – “I am crucified with Christ.” *Forgiveness, justification, sonship, life everlasting all flow from the cross of Christ.*
- III. *The Resurrection Life* – “Nevertheless I live.” *The life now is eternal and consists in the inflow and outflow of the Savior’s life.*
- IV. *The Renunciation of the Old.* – “Yet not I.” *is as essential as “nevertheless I live.”*
- V. *This life is to be lived now.* “The life which I now live.” *Things will not be better for us in a year’s time if we neglect the present.*
- VI. *This life is lived “in the flesh.”* – “The life which I now live in the flesh.” *We may be weak without wavering; we may suffer without sin; we may grow old without growing cold.*
- VII. *The Restoration of the life of Christ in His people.* “But Christ liveth in me.”
His Spirit leads us. His Word dwells in us. His power rests upon us. His name we fear. His joy and peace remain with us.
This is the life for every Christian.

Comment: Notice the careful use of the text in each part of the message; it is truly an exposition of the text. Notice also the focus on Christ’s death and the believer’s death with him as a present experience of eternal life begun now.

Titus 2:11 – *The Grace of God* (AN-42-AN-43)

In the 9th and 10th verse, Paul is speaking of what we call the everyday life and conduct.

What is the meaning of Grace – God’s favor, God’s gift.

There are just three main verbs in this passage which will enable us to realize what this grace is.

- I. *Grace Appearing* – *This is grace as the sunshine, given under the figure of a great light bursting forth and dispelling the darkness. The old dispensation was comparatively dark and shadowy, but now we have the light.*
- II. *Grace Bringing* – *God brought salvation. He did not merely send, but “His own arm brought salvation.” Lord Jesus Christ was “God manifest in the flesh, bringing salvation.” Think–God Himself bringing salvation.*
- III. *Grace Teaching* – *The word means very much more than teaching–disciplining training. The School of Grace is more than a school, it is a training ground. If it does not train or discipline, there is something wrong, not with the grace but with our attitude to it. What is this training – It is threefold: denying ungodliness and worldly lusts; living soberly, righteously, godly; looking for our Lord’s return. This implies expectation.*

The verse starts with the appearance of grace and it ends with the appearance of glory. Is this grace ours? Has it entered into our heart and life. Is it a personal matter with our souls.

Comment: Again there is careful use of the text. Again he gives emphasis to grace and change in behavior for those who experience it.

*Ephesians 1:3-14 – The Security of the Believer or The Sum of Our Blessings in Christ
(AL-7-AL-8-AL-9; See also X-2 and X-19)*

The greatest thing we can know and realize is the nature of the blessing in Christ which have thus become ours.

The First Blessing (vv.4-6) Chosen In Christ.

When we were chosen. Not even before we were born or were regenerated or before the earth was created, but before the world was founded.

What purpose? That we should be holy and without blame (or blemish).

Why did God love us so? According to the good pleasure of his will. To the praise of the glory of his grace. Not saved merely for my own sake, but for His own sake therefore He will keep.

The Second Blessing (vv. 7-10) Redeemed In Christ.

Not enough that God should have chosen us, but he went further and made that choice operative thru the cross. Our sin must be taken out of the way to make His choice effectual. Redemption is more than forgiveness; we are now his friends.

The Third Blessing (vv.11,12) Inherited in Christ

This is a property transaction these verses bring to our mind. First, God chooses us to be His own possession, then He redeems or buys us back to Himself, and then we become His inheritance. We do have an inheritance, but we become God's inheritance. The ground of my assurance is not my inheritance in God, but His inheritance in me.

The Fourth Blessing (vv.13,14) Sealed in Christ

In the first place, He has chosen us in Christ to be his possession, not for what He has seen in us as we are by nature, but for what He has purposed for us in His Son. In the second place, He has redeemed or purchased us, not with corruptible things, etc. In the third place, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat (Luke 22:31). To protect Himself God has taken possession of what belongs to Him. He has put His Spirit within us as our keeper, and by whom we are "sealed" as His "unto the redemption of God's own possession unto the praise of his glory. The sealing means (1) a finished transaction; (2) ownership; (3) keeping.

Comment: Brother Cassel's explanation of the various parts of the text is apparent. Notice the initiation of the whole process of salvation by God and the security of the believer. It is interesting to find these elements in the preaching of a man from Church of the Brethren and Mennonite origins.

These messages demonstrate a clear concern to declare the content of the text of Scripture. The messages chosen to illustrate E. N. Cassel's approach to preaching are in my judgment typical of the content of the majority of his work. He is concerned about the helplessness of the sinner, the initiation of salvation by God, the substitutionary work of Christ, the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing the work of Christ to the experience of his people resulting in holiness of life for them.

Although this message clearly communicates that God is sovereign in salvation, it was apparently not a loud emphasis in his preaching. When Bible Fellowship Church had adopted the Articles of Faith now in the F&O, my father's response to hearing his pastor preach on God's

sovereignty in salvation caused him to say that what he was hearing was different from what he had been hearing from MBC/BFC pulpits all his life. My father had sat under Grampa's preaching until he was married in 1929. Dad asked his pastor for some time to study and digest what he was now hearing. Dad's study brought him to accept and eagerly teach that new sound.

Textual structure with topical development

Genesis 1:14-19 *God Work In This Age. The Sun, Moon, and Stars (AP-8, AP-9, AP-10)*
In this age the Holy Spirit's work is with three great objects. (1) His chiefest object is to glorify Christ. He shall glorify me (John 16:14); (2) His object is the forming and building up of the Church; He calls to eternal life those who were ordained to eternal life (Acts 13:48); (3) His work is the sanctifying of believers; we are changed into the same image by the Lord the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:18).

These three great objects of God's work in this age are well typified by the two great lights and the stars also, and in presenting their ministry to the earth.

I. The greater Light to Rule the Day. Malachi 4:2 uses the sun as a type or figure of Christ—the Sun of Righteousness. The sun is absolutely necessary; Christ is necessary to the life of the believer.

II. The Lesser Light To Rule the Night. The moon is a fair type of the church; she is to be a faithful witness of Christ to the world during the night of His absence. To the extent to which the moon reflects the light of the sun, she is “a faithful witness in heaven” (Psalm 89:37). There are seasons when a cold black shadow is seen to steal across the face of the moon and to extinguish her light. It is the dark shadow of the world which has come in between her and the sun. A worldly Church cannot be of any benefit to the world.

III. The Stars Also. There is one sun and one moon as there is one Lord and one body (Eph.4:4,5). But of stars there is an innumerable host representing the individual believers. You are the light of the world; therefore let your light so shine before men.

Comment: A message on creation? Hardly. A message on redemption and the church? Yes, but it is not clear how such a message comes from Genesis 1. The parallels between sun, moon and stars, on the one hand, and Christ, the church and the believers is interesting, but hardly found in the text. Of great interest is again the prominence of the Holy Spirit and another reference to God's ordaining people to eternal life.

Micah 5:7,8 *Dew and Lion (AQ-13, AQ-14)*

The two-fold mission of Christianity is symbolized in these words by the dew and the lion. The dew builds up; the lion tears down and destroys.

I. The Dew

(1) The work of the dew is silent: character, that works silently as the dew, and we need to magnify; prayer is greater than character and reaches farther;

Communion with God: a person in communion with God cannot be overcome.

(2) The work of the dew is gradual. It takes training, patience, endurance to grow into a full Christian.

(3) *The work of the dew is through a wide diffusion of particles. There are thousands, perhaps millions of drops, that does the work. Every member should be a drop of dew, intent upon its mission.*

(4) *The work of the dew is persistent. The sun rising upon the dew dissipates it, but it does not dissipate the beauty it has painted on the lily nor the strength it has given to the cedar. After you are dead, Christian parent, your character, your prayer and communion with God, are going to live in your children.*

II. The Lion

The lion with its mighty strength is just as important as the dew. The Christians need to be bold as the lion. There are some things you can never reach with the dew. There are some men that you have to deal with in the spirit of the lion.

John the Baptist – dew with most people; lion with Herod

Nathan – went to David as a lion after David's sin.

John Knox had great power with men. He was the dew touching others; but in the presence of "Bloody Mary" he was the lion. Luther was as the dew in contact with the people in his every day character and conversation, but when he stood in the presence of the Pope he was a lion.

The Christian Church should be lion as well as dew. Jesus was the Lamb and the Lion.

Comment: Micah speaks of the remnant of Jacob being both dew and a lion. The double kind of ministry—quiet help and blessing coupled with bold confrontation and strength--by the people of God is valuable for us. Is this use of the text similar to the use of sun, moon and stars in the Genesis 1 message or is it a recognition of connection between "the remnant of Jacob" and "the Christian Church"? Is either connection conscious? Or unconscious?

The Borrowed Axe or Lost Power 2 Kings 6:1-7 (AQ-15, AQ-16)

Let us see what lessons we may learn from the man who lost his axe.

(1) *He lost his power for service: without our effort the axe head is useless formality; so the presence of the Spirit of God is essential to service.*

(2) *He lost his power while working: so intent on felling the beam, the man did not sense the axe head coming loose; to be so carried away with the desire for doing as to be forgetful of the spirit in which the thing should be done is dangerous. Any uprising of pride and self-interest in the heart while doing service for God is a slackening of the axe-head of spiritual power which may end in total separation if not attended to at once.*

(3) *He lost what was not his own: in me, that is in my flesh, dwells no good thing. All power is given to me*

(4) *He was painfully conscious of the loss: wait to be endued with power*

(5) *He immediately appealed to his Master: take it to the Lord in prayer*

(6) *He had it miraculously restored: he got it where he lost it; he got it through a miracle.*

Comment: The givenness of our strength to carry out our tasks and the ease with which we might lose it come through clearly. In the context of the whole of Scripture the emphasis is

correct. How does it proceed from this text? Is the text teaching the lesson as applied? Is the text an illustration of biblical truths taught in other places?

These messages show us a different approach to the declaring of God's Word. Here Brother Cassel used structure from Scripture, but filled that structure with material from other parts of the Bible. This method brings interesting illustrations and applications of God's truth, but it is less direct in demonstrating clearly that the content comes from the portion of the Word being expounded.

Word Study Topical Messages

Cannot (AG-17, AG-18)

This is absolute, immutable and unchangeable! "Cannot" in the Bible means "cannot" and that is all there is to be understood about the matter.... When the Bible says, "Cannot," that is just what it means. We will consider a few of the cannots of the Bible.

God—cannot lie Titus 1:2

The Scriptures cannot be broken John 10:35

Himself he cannot save Matthew 27:42

A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit Matthew 7:18

Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God John 3:3

Ye cannot serve God and mammon Matthew 6:24

They that are in the flesh cannot please God Romans 8:8

Read Galatians 5:16-26 Let it be remembered that when God says cannot, there is not reversal. So abide by the Word of God.

When God says "cannot," we cannot, but calling attention to Galatians 5 includes the "works of the flesh" and "the fruit of the Spirit." We must see in this that God can and does enable what man cannot do. Salvation is of the Lord.

Comment: This approach brings the listener to hear the truth of God. This method does not produce as unified a presentation as messages developed from a single text, but it brings God's truth to people in interesting ways.

Some additional messages in this format

Greatest Things AP-19 reverse

Seven Remarkable Falls Z-17

Five Nows AF-5

Seven "I wills" Q-3

Four "Withouts" S-4

Four Looks AN-45

Fourth, Topical messages on doctrinal themes

The person and work of the Holy Spirit is a theme E. N. Cassel preached about frequently. (See A-25, M-10, S-9, Y-2, AK-7, AR-4 &5, AF-10.)

The Personality of the Holy Spirit Y-2 to Y-5

The doctrine of the personality of the H. S. is of the highest importance from the practical standpoint. If we think of the H. S. merely as a power or influence, our thought will be, "How can I get more of the H. S.;" but if we think of Him as a divine Person, our thought will be, "How can the H. S. get more of me?" The former conception leads to self-exaltation; the latter conception to self-humiliation, self-emptying, and self-renunciation. There are four lines of proof that the Holy Spirit is a person

I. Characteristics of the Holy Spirit – knowledge, feeling and will.

II. Acts of the Holy Spirit – searching, speaking, crying out, praying, testimony, teaching, guiding.

III. The Office of the Holy Spirit – "another comforter" – such office is possible only for a person.

IV. Treatment of the Holy Spirit – these things can be done only to a person: rebelled against, grieved, done despite unto, lying to, blasphemy against.

The "communion of the Holy Ghost" (2 Cor. 13:14) means fellowship, partnership, comradeship. Do we know this personal fellowship, this partnership, this comradeship, this intimate friendship of the H. S. Herein lies the secret of a real Christian life, a life of liberty and joy and power and fullness. To surrender one's life in all its departments entirely to His control, this is true Christian living.

Comment: Coming from his background in Church of the Brethren and Mennonites, it is surprising to find the emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit in our salvation. The observation of the contrast in our lives of the Holy Spirit being an influence or a person is instructive.

Holiness Hebrews 12:14 (AI-17 to AI-22)

The text opens up a subject of deep importance. That subject is practical holiness. It suggests a question which demands the attention of all professing Christians—Are we holy? Shall we see the Lord? In this hurrying, bustling world how do we stand in this matter of holiness?

I. What is true practical holiness—what sort of person are those whom God calls holy?

(1) being of one mind with God as we find His mind described in Scripture

(2) shun every known sin and keep every known commandment

(3) strive to be like our Lord Jesus Christ

(4) follow after meekness, longsuffering, gentleness patience, kind tempers, governing of his tongue

(5) follow after temperance and self-denial

(6) follow after charity and human kindness

(7) follow after a spirit of mercy and benevolence towards others

(8) follow after humility

(9) follow after faithfulness in all the duties and relations in life

(10) follow after spiritual mindedness

II. Some reasons why practical holiness is so important

(1) Because the voice of God in Scripture plainly commands it

(2) This is the one grand end and purpose for which Christ came into the world.

(3) Holiness is the only sound evidence that we have a saving faith in our L.J.C.

(4) Holiness is the only proof that we love the L.J.C. in sincerity

- (5) *Holiness is the only sound evidence that we are true children of God.*
- (6) *Holiness is the most likely way to do good to others.*
- (7) *Our present comfort depends much upon our holiness*
- (8) *Without holiness on earth we shall never be prepared to enjoy heaven*

III. A word of advice to all who desire to be holy.

You must begin with Christ. Christ is our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification.

Parents cannot give it to their children. Man cannot produce it in himself.

Ministers cannot give it you by baptism. Holiness comes from Christ.

Comment: This message and the message on sin must be compared to the one on The Carnival of Death. How did Brother Cassel put these together? How should we?

A man who understood Scripture in a similar way was L. L. Legters. Grampa invited him to preach to his people repeatedly. Dr. Legters worked with Cameron Townsend in establishing Pioneer Missionary Agency. This organization was dedicated to translating God's Word into languages where it was not available; it was also involved in developing means of writing in those languages so God's Word can be translated into it. As you probably know that organization today is known as Wycliffe Bible Translators or Summer Institute of Linguistics. From E. N. Cassel's daughter, Lulu Wismer, I received copies of five small books by Dr. Legters. Each of these books published between 1930 and 1937 focuses on the importance and need of the work of God's Spirit in the living of the Christian life. My Aunt Grayce Hottel Reed has fond memories of Dr. Legters teaching in churches where my other Grandfather, F. M. Hottel was pastor.

Sanctification *John 17:17; 1 Thessalonians 4:3 (AB-8 to AB-12)*

The subject of sanctification is one which many, I fear, dislike exceedingly....Some people set up a wrong standard of sanctification, and failing to attain it, waste their lives in repeated secession from church to church, chapel to chapel, and sect to sect, in vain hope that they will find what they want. In a day like this, a calm examination of the subject, as a great leading doctrine of the Gospel, may be of great use to our souls.

What does the Bible mean when it speaks of a "sanctified" man? Sanctification is that inward spiritual work which the L.J.C. works in a man by the H. G., when He calls him to be a true believer...separates him from his natural love of sin and the world, puts a new principle in his heart, and make him practically godly in life. The instrument by which the Spirit effects this work is generally the Word of God...." 1 Cor. 1:30; Eph. 5:25,26; Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 2:24; Col. 1:22. Let the meaning of these five texts be carefully considered. If words mean anything, they teach that Christ undertakes the sanctification, no less than the justification of His believing people.

1. Sanctification is the result of that vital union with Christ which true faith gives to the Christian. John 15:5

2. Sanctification is the out come and inseparable consequence of regeneration.

1 John 2:29; 3:9-14; 5:4-18

3. Sanctification is the only certain evidence of that indwelling of the Holy Spirit is essential to salvation Romans 8:9

4. Sanctification is a thing which will always be seen. Luke 6:44

5. Sanctification is a thing for which every believer is responsible. Matt 16:26
6. Sanctification is a thing which admits of growth and degrees. John 17:17;
1 Thess 4:3; 2 Peter 3:18
7. Sanctification is a thing which depends greatly on a diligent use of Scriptural means.
By “means” I mean Bible reading, private prayer, regular attendance on public worship, regular hearing of God’s Word, etc. I find no record of any eminent saint who ever neglected them....Let men call this legal doctrine if they please, but I will never shrink from declaring my belief that there are no “spiritual gains without pains.”
8. Sanctification is a thing which does not prevent a man having a great deal of inward spiritual conflict. Gal. 5:17. I commend to you the careful study of the seventh chapter of Romans. I am quite satisfied that it does not describe the experience of an unconverted man, or of a young and unestablished Christian; but of an old experienced saint in close communion with God. None but such a man could say, “I delight in the law of God after the inward man.” Rom. 7:22
9. Sanctification is a thing which cannot justify a man and yet it pleases God.
Rom 3:21-28; Heb.13:16; Col 3:20; 1 John 3:22
10. Sanctification is a thing which will be found absolutely necessary as a witness to our character in the great day of judgment. John 5:29; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 20:13
11. Sanctification is absolutely necessary in order to train and prepare us for heaven

The notion of a purgatory after death, which shall turn sinner into saints, is a lying invention of man, and is nowhere taught in the Bible We must be saints before we die, if we are to be saints afterwards in glory.

Comment: This message is important in the light of the discussion that was the basis for the separation of the Pennsylvania MBC from those to their west. The western brethren had an emphasis on sanctification which included an eradication of sin from the lives of believers now. A majority of our brethren saw sanctification as a process begun by the Lord at regeneration and never complete in this life. The length and carefulness in the way this message is developed indicates a seriousness about it.

Further recognition of this aspect of our salvation comes through in another message.

In a message titled The Christian’s Warfare (AB-4), E. N. Cassel gives this testimony:

“ When I was converted I made this mistake: I thought the battle was already mine, the victory already won, the crown already in my grasp. I thought that old things had passed away, that all things had become new; that my old corrupt nature, the Adam life, was gone. But I found out, after serving Christ for a few months, that conversion was only like enlisting in the army, that there was a battle on hand, and that if I was to get a crown, I had to work for it and fight for it.”

Sin 1 John 3:4 (Y-16 to Y-18; See also W-1)

A right knowledge of sin lies at the root of all saving Christianity. Dim or indistinct views of sin are the origin of most of the errors, heresies, and false doctrines of the present day. I believe that one of the chief wants of the Church is a clearer, fuller teaching about sin.

I. Definition of sin

Sin, in short, as the Scripture saith, is “the transgression of the law.” The slightest outward departure from God’s revealed will and character constitutes a sin, and at once make us guilty in God’s sight....A man may break God’s law in heart and thought, when there is not visible act of wickedness....A man may commit sin and yet be ignorant of it, and fancy himself innocent when he is guilty Lev. 4:1-35; 5:1-14; Num 15:25-29 Sermon on the Mount Matt. 5. When we make our own miserably imperfect knowledge and consciousness the measure of our sinfulness, we are on very dangerous ground.

II. The Origin and Source of Sin

Created “in the image of God” innocent and righteous at first, our first parents fell from original righteousness and became sinful and corrupt. And from that day to this all men and women are born in the image of fallen Adam and Eve, and inherit a heart and nature inclined to evil. Rom 5:12; John 3:6; Eph.2:3; Rom 8:8; Matt. 15:19.

III. The Extent of Sin

Genesis 6:5; Jer. 17:9; Isa. 1:6 Sin is a disease which pervades and runs through every part of our moral constitution and every faculty of our minds. Sin may be hid under a thin covering of courtesy, politeness, good manners, and outward manifestations, but it lies deep down in the constitution.

I am convinced that the greatest proof of the extent and power of sin is the pertinacity (sic) with which it cleaves to man, even after he is converted and has become the subject of the Holy Ghost’s operations. So deeply planted are the roots of human corruption, that even after we are born again, renewed, “washed, sanctified, justified,” and made living member of Christ, these roots remain alive in the bottom of our hearts, and we never get rid of them until the earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved. Sin, no doubt, in the believer’s heart has no longer dominion.

IV. The Guilt, Vileness, and Offensiveness of Sin.

Jer. 44:4; Hab. 1:13; Ezk. 18:4; Rom. 6:23; Rom.2:16 No proof of the fulness of sin, after all, is so overwhelming and unanswerable as the cross and passion of our L.J.C.....Never till the hour when Christ comes the second time shall we fully realize the “sinfulness of sin.”

V. The Deceitfulness of Sin.

You may see this deceitfulness in the wonderful proneness of men to regard sin as less sinful and dangerous than it is in the sight of God....Exhort one another daily, lest any be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin (Heb. 3:13). I am persuaded the more light we have, the more we see our own sinfulness; the nearer we get to heaven, the more we are clothed with humility.

We need not be afraid to look at sin...if only we look at the same time at the Almighty medicine provided for us in the salvation that is in Jesus Christ. Though sin has abounded, grace has much more abounded.

Added note: 1 Jn 1:8, 10 The fact of indwelling sin is to be admitted.

Comment: Sin's length, depth and breadth in all people comes through clearly. It is not external-behavior and words-it is also attitudes and motives. Its power is never overcome without God's work in us, but even that work will not be complete in this life.

The Carnival of Death Matt 26:14-15 AD-19 to AD-24

Silver looked good to Judas, so good that he decided to trade off Christ for thirty pieces....He sells and therefore loses all he might have gained. He sold his Christ....Let us look at what might be the selling price some are putting on J. C., bearing in mind that the thing which draws you away from him is your selling price.

1. *Earthly Desire.* Riches are all right when used right, but God does not want an account of your pocket-book, but that of your soul. Matt. 6:33 Luke 12:16-21.

2. *Fleshly Desire.* Desire to satisfy the lust, passion or appetite. I want to say here I am for everything the Devil is against and against everything the Devil is for. No amusement is innocent that drives the soul away from God. If amusements themselves are not a sin, they may very readily cause sin. They steal one's first love for the Savior and begin to distract your attention and callous you to the leading of the Spirit.

Rum – "No drunkard shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven" (1 Cor. 6:10). You can't be a drunkard until you take your first glass, and many a drunkard got his start in the home.

Cards – Cards were invented for the amusement of an idiotic king. The card pack is the infidel's dictionary, the blasphemer's lexicon and the harlot's handbook. Card playing is nothing but a form of gambling.

Theater – It has proven detrimental to spiritual growth. As an institution it is unclean. Both place and plays are bad. Never will I look upon the one who tries to impersonate my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Actors say the theater is a bad place: McCready, Edwin Booth, Mr. Duvas, Dr. J. M. Bulkey, Anna Held. The Poolroom is bombarded by movie-mad youth. Movies are artificial. Religious pictures are but a trap for the innocent.

Modern Dance. Theologians and churches have spoken against dancing for generations. The very fact that the dance question worries a Christian shows you there is something wrong in it. Play "Safety First" and give God the benefit of the doubt. Dancing was an act of worship in Old Testament times, but it wasn't any of the hugging business that permeates the dance today. Man has made secular what God ordained religious. The dance is The Carnival of Death to Spiritual Life. The dance is a Carnival of Death to Health. If this activity is for exercise, what purpose does the hugging serve? Take sex out and you have ruined the dance business. The dance is the carnival of Death to Modesty. The dance in thousands of cases has been a Carnival of Death to Virtue.

Sister, next time you go to a dance, first read Colossians 3:17 and then get on your knees with your own open Bible and tell God you are going in His name and for His glory, and then give him thanks for the privilege. Then if you can, get up and go without condemnation, go and enjoy yourself and be troubled no more.

Comment: This message sounds much more like the kind of message we might expect to hear in the first half of the twentieth century from a man of Grampa's background. The specific identification of alcohol, cards, gambling, theater and dance as attractive, but controlling and condemning sins is clear and expected. These can be attractive and dangerous practices.

Careful examination of some parts of this message show the real issue: what is said about Earthly Desire and Fleshly Desire are difficult if not impossible to gainsay. A realization of God's being God of creation as well as redemption would open a more positive consideration of some amusements. The problems our generation sees with that generation's condemnation of attractive but dangerous behavior are not just problems with Church of the Brethren and Mennonite teaching. Those attitudes prevailed in the perspective in much of early twentieth century Bible believing Christianity. As our generation experiences deterioration of standards, we need to face with Proverbs the warnings that some attractive things lead to hell.

Signs of Christ's Speedy Coming M-11; M-11a

We believe that the coming of our Lord is to be personal and premillennial, and also that it is imminent. We must distinguish between the Rapture and Revelation. Let us consider what are the evidences for us to believe that His coming, the Rapture, is near.

1. The Prevalence of Travel and Knowledge Daniel 12:4 Lots of both everywhere

2. Perilous Times 2 Tim. 3:1 physically, politically, socially

3. Spiritualism 1 Tim. 4:1 modern spiritualism (fraud and deception in hiding) Christian Science. These are a cloud of darkness; the end is near.

4. Apostacy 2 Thess. 2:3 The day of the Lord (Revelation) shall not come, "except there come a falling away first."

5. World-wide Evangelism Matt. 24:14 Gospel preached to all nations; then the end.

The church is the present agent for world evangelization, but she may be caught away at any moment. Then the tribulation saints...will become the agents, for God will always have a witness in the earth. Later Israel may be converted.

6. Rich Men James 5:1-3; Isa 5:8,9

7. Israel Jer 30:11 R.V. God's sun-dial

They are the generation which pass not away. Israel shall be restored to Palestine and no more be pulled up out of their land (Amos 9:15; Luke 21:24). If Israel is beginning to show signs of national life and is actually returning to Palestine, then surely the end of this age "is nigh, even at the doors."

Comment: Messages of this type are important for two reasons. First, the prominence of the teaching that Christ will return to earth in a body at the end of this age was characteristic of the early history of MBC. When I was pastor in Allentown, I announced a series on Matthew 24 and 25. Two new men began to attend. When I learned about them, I discovered that they were part of the old Mennonite Church in Zionsville. They stated their reason for coming to this series of messages this way: our brethren who left their church a concern about the second coming of Christ which their church did not have then. They said that their church still had little or no concern about this doctrine. Second, the shape of this teaching about Christ's second coming is significantly influenced by dispensationalism. That emphasis probably came to our people from the Scofield Bible and similar sources. Remember the quote from E. N. Cassel given at the beginning of our study about the impact on his life of accepting the teaching about Christ's personal return. Our generation also needs to be kept aware that this life is not all there is; and the outcome of our battle is assured. Jesus shall reign!

These outlines seek to show E. N. Cassel's basic methods he used in preaching the Word of God, but they also introduce us to the basic themes of his preaching. Most of those themes were similar to the themes of many who preached the gospel in his generation; but there is also an emphasis on the Holy Spirit, grace, holiness and God's working in salvation that is frequently absent from many other presentations from that day.

At least this one of our early fathers was not simply repeating doctrine and using methods derived from his church(es); he was seeking to listen carefully to the Scripture. It is hard to know if he was alone or if others were of similar mind. One clue that there were others urging the open study of Scripture and the declaring of what that study found is in a letter from W.G. Gehman to E. N. Cassel dated January or February 4, 1941 (9 or 10 months prior to Brother Gehman's death):

Dear Bro. Cassel,

Greetings in Him.

Am I correct in my belief when I say that mortality or immortality refer only to the body and never to the spirit or soul?

Was Adam the first created with a mortal or an immortal body? If you can, give me Bible proof for your answer. I sometimes think I have the answer Scripturally, then again I'm a little doubtful.

Was Adam the last, or Jesus Christ's body which God prepared for Him and in which he dwelt for 33 yrs. a mortal or an immortal body? To me it is very important to know in order to have an understanding about the sin and salvation question.—full salvation. Maybe I am exercising myself in matters too deep.

I certainly hope that the Lord will give you messages to write and that you will write them for the Gospel Banner. I really believe that Bro Yoder yearns for good original articles and not so many selections. And why don't you and some of the other brethren write? Is it not awful to have so many of the good columns of the Banner filled with such poetry as we get? More than one full page was published on Eddyism in the last issue. This thing should be stopped. We object to such selections as Whateman's (?) article and Butler's article from his Editorials and some raw stuff against eternal security, but why don't we use the better method of putting in some thing better and crowding this other stuff out—the expulsive power of a new and better affection method of procedure?

Well, it is 4 a.m., and I couldn't sleep just now, so I'm letting my pen go freely venting my feelings.

I'm writing off and on and will send articles from time to time as the Lord will direct me. I can't stand some things any longer and not murder my convictions. I don't think all the other brethren are beyond redemption on this line and beyond receiving and accepting the light from the Lord.

Very truly yours and His,
W. G. Gehman

Several clauses catch my attention.

“If you can, give me Bible proof for your answer.” Brother Gehman is saying that he desires biblical support for his understanding of salvation and how that affects other things. What

Scripture says shall be the foundation for his opinions or the basis for his teaching. The depth of his concern seems to be emphasized when he says toward the end of his letter that he must speak out or “murder my convictions.”

“I don’t think all the other brethren are beyond redemption on this line and beyond receiving and accepting the light from the Lord.” He thinks other brethren are open to new ways of understanding God’s Word. Is this a way of speaking about breaking with the ways this group of men had been thinking about and expounding God’s Word? I seriously wonder and rejoice that he thought others would be open.

“...the better method of putting in some thing better and crowding this other stuff out—the expulsive power of a new and better affection method of procedure?” His reasons for calling his brethren to new study and new writing was simply to have new material to crowd old material out of the Gospel Banner. He thinks that the new material will be better.

So there were at least two brothers who were open to fresh approaches to Scripture and the teaching of the people of God.

Other Themes in E. N. Cassel’s preaching

- a. Prayer AK-12; AQ-1;H-1; H-2; H-4; H-8; L-4
- b. Women and Marriage R-7; R-12; B-10; D-18; H-11; K-6; K-5
- c. The believers attitude toward war A-27; B- Considerable discussion went on at the time of World War I about the place God’s people should have in such a conflict. Mennonites were basically pacifists; some MBC men were conscientious objectors and some were non-combatants.

Although these files have no message E. N. Cassel preached about the issue, there are pamphlets on this issue.

As World War II approached my father received a letter from Grampa Cassel about the war. In it my Grandfather urged my father not to serve in the military if called. Grampa closed the letter by stating that Dad’s decision would depend on how much of the love of God had been shed abroad in Dad’s heart.

Grampa never raised with my Dad the issue of his son’s response to the letter.

- d. Work I-6
- e. Messages on the seasons of the church year. Christmas A-20a; AD-12; AD-14, Easter G-17 rev.; G-20 Ascension A-22
- f. Pastor/People relationship X-8; X-12; U-8; U-10; U-12; C-11; M-3a; AK-30

Sources quoted and used as illustrations by E. N. Cassel

a. Original languages of the Bible – Although Brother Cassel was not trained in either Hebrew or in Greek, he on a few occasions gave evidence of some acquaintance with them. This evidence was not extensive, but it was accurate and humble.

Examples: Greek for “church” is ekklesia – his use of it as the gathering of called out people is correct (V-4).

Greek for “sanctify” is hagiazo-- Thayer’s Lexicon says this word means “to render or declare sacred or holy, consecrate. . .to separate from things profane and dedicate to God, consecrate.” Grampa may over state things a little, but he is close when he said: “The Greek word for sanctification literally means, “take the earth out of us. The same power that can take sin out of the heart can keep it out. Conversion is a birth, sanctification is a death.” (AH-32)

Greek for “eternal” is aionios - (Z-1) This word is from the Greek word aion, which is the same as the English word ‘eon’ or ‘age,’ and it has been said that this word means age-long, that is a punishment that reaches through a definite period, but not necessarily through eternity. But the same word precisely is applied to life in the other section of the verse: “but the righteous unto life eternal.” Though the word is translated “everlasting” in the first part of the verse, and “eternal” in the last part of the verse, it is the same original word in both; and if the word means age-long as to punishment, does it not mean age-long as to life? And if that be the case, then if there is no guarantee (sic) in this verse here for the everlasting punishment of the wicked, there is no guarantee here for the everlasting life of the righteous.

Hebrew for “abundantly pardon” is in Hebrew “multiply in pardon”(AH-10). It means that God will multiply pardon as the offenses were multiplied. God forgives freely, fully, eternally.

Hebrew for “gift” and “burden” is the same word (AD-1). Understand this the Psalmist says—whatever thy God lays upon thee, thou must lay it upon the Lord.

b. Sources used

(1) People quoted

Preachers --Spurgeon (U-11rev); R. A. Torrey (AM-5); McConkey (AM-11) Rugh (AM-12), McQuilken (AM-13); Alford, Mueller, Wilcox (D-4), Wesley (N-1c); Horatius Bonar (K-14); N. H. Wolf (AL-22); C. H. Brunner (H-11)

Missionaries -- John G. Patton (U-1); Edward Payson Scott (V-4a)

Historical figures --Irenaeus (P-1), Jerome(P-2), Calvin, Luther (AK-14), Bunyan (AK-14); Carlyle (R-1); Lange (P-1a,rev), Newton (R-11rev); Andrew Fuller (Y-7), J. Edwards (D-22); H. Alford, Wilcox, George Mueller (D-4); Sir Walter Scott (AL-5); John Greenleaf Whittier (F-11)

(2) Other sources - Westminster Confession; Nicean Creed (W-2), Augsburg Confession (D-4),

c. A number of pamphlets were preserved; they are similar in form and print (See File J). The author or editor is difficult to identify. It may be Charles Reitzel, Bible teacher, Altoona, PA? But who is he?

What do we learn from all this?

1. E. N. Cassel studied Scripture in the light of the needs of his day. He grappled with texts of Scripture, sought to understand what was taught and then attempted to declare those truths in his preaching. He declared clearly the need of learning of our sin and Jesus Christ as the only means of salvation. That this needed to be an inner work of grace brought through the death of our Lord and his resurrection applied to us by the work of the Holy Spirit is different from the tenor in many Church of the Brethren and Mennonite preachers in his day. Salvation is not moral change brought on by human effort. Salvation is God's bringing dead sinners to life by the work of his Spirit. However moral change of both inner attitudes and behavior change is part of salvation as the Holy Spirit does His work and believers take their responsibilities seriously.

2. Although coming from Church of the Brethren background, he came to be convinced that repentant sinners who flee to Jesus can also have assurance of salvation and will be kept by our Savior forever. Assurance of salvation became so precious that in her last few years, Gramma Cassel asked her son (my father, Byron Cassel): Do you think my father (Grampa Price) was saved? Dad reminded his mother that going to Grampa Price's house on Sunday afternoon was like going to church again. Gramma remembered his praying loudly in his barn after lunch on regular work days and his ending the prayer frequently--if not always--saying: "... and in the end save us." She wondered if people were saved if they had no assurance of salvation. She had traveled a long way theologically and wondered about those she loved who did not see these truths.

3. The issue of sanctification was discussed frequently between the Pennsylvania Mennonite Brethren in Christ and those west of us. E. N. Cassel's emphasis was clearly not legalistic (these things we must do to receive or keep out salvation) nor eradicationist (if we are serious enough about obeying God, eventually in this life we will not sin anymore--entire sanctification).

The frequency of his preaching on sanctification and related themes indicates that it was an issue in his day. The understanding of sanctification prevalent in his day among our people emphasized, on the one hand, eradication and on the other, a recognition of indwelling sin (at salvation, sin's rule in our lives is broken, but its presence is not removed until we see Christ). While I served as pastor of Bethel Church (Allentown), Brother Wilson Wieand, who was 98 years old when I met him in 1962, told me: "Some of the brethren taught that once we are saved we do not sin any more, but I don't think so." Brother Cassel and Brother Wieand were of the same mind on this matter.

4. This study confirms in my mind that we were and are the Bible Fellowship Church. Great change has come to this group of people since 1857. This change has come primarily through the study of and obedience to the Bible as the Word of God written. Let us be like our forebearers in seeking to listen carefully to all that God has said and in seeking to walk in the

way of obedience to what we hear our God say. That may call us to be different from them as they were different from their forebearers. But if so, it will call us to please our God best we can--as they did.

5. When my father was graduated from Collegeville High School, he gave a speech because he was valedictorian. His father, E. N. Cassel, did not attend the graduation because that was Prayer Meeting night. We may question that decision and rightly so, but it does illustrate some of the commitment to God that has brought change to the church were so many of us have learned the gospel.

[The materials written and typed by E. N. Cassel are in the files held by the Historical Committee of BFC. The locations of specific items in the files are by letters (A, B, etc) combined with a numeral identifying pages in each file (1, 2, 3, etc.). Example: A-13 or AB-5. The letters "rev" indicate the material being discussed is on the reverse side of that item (P-6rev).]