

This is evening time, March 2nd, 1987.
To wit I am beginning a venture, the
writing of a diary to cover the coming
year of our lives.

The inspiration for such an under-
taking is the inner desire to do it and
the frequent urging of our children to
attempt it.

The immediate spur is the
consciousness that we (Rachel & I) are facing
a wholly new phase in our home life. A
month ago I celebrated my 50th birthday -
a year and a half ago I had undergone
heart by-pass surgery. Recovery seems to
have been good but much of the vitality and
urge to accomplish things has left me. Tho
we are active each day, serving our
E.F. Church in St. Paul as visitation pastor,
it is not with the enthusiasm of past
years. We are growing older.

We (Rachel & I) are so happy to still
have each other. We ~~see~~ hear quite regularly
these days of friends of past years being
called from their earthly activities to into
the Lord's presence. "Absent from the body,
present with the Lord" (2 Cor 5:8) God in His
own time and way takes eventually from
each of us the life He gave us and we
depart.

Rachel has not been feeling in the best of health since last Thanksgiving time. There have been several visits to our doctor, Dr. Roger Johnson, and X-rays taken and some tests. This morning she had a Cat-scan which the doctor ordered. The results of which we shall know in another day or two.

A week ago Rachel had a session with the doctor wherein he removed from her chest area a quart and a half of fluid. The scan today was ordered in an attempt to discover the cause of the fluid. She is tired. This week should give us the information we need.

We know that we are approaching the end of the road, as it were, and we find our thoughts going back to so many events of our past year. We shall try to recall some of them here in this diary or we proceed.

It will be a record of God's constancy to us. Our year has been spent in the Christian Ministry. We have sought to be true to the teachings of God's Word. One fact which has been so prominent in our thinking has been that which teaches us that "all things work together for good to them

that love God" (Rom 8:28). God has indeed
worked out so much in our lives for good.
We have sought to live the Gospel we
preached. The sense of failure weighs
heavily upon our hearts at times. We should
have been so much more Christ-like in life
and so much more effective in service.
But our hearts have been committed to
serving God and the congregations He called
us to serve and it is a source of
satisfaction to us that all our years have
been in Christian service.

A diary may contain both trivial
matters and the more serious or significant.
~~both~~ Whether the weather is a trivial matter
or not, it can be noted that we have
been so blessed with an open winter and
mild weather. We have never had so
pleasing a winter season as this
has been. The Southern States have
seemed to us most desirable but we
have not felt free to seek residence
there. St. Paul was Rachel's childhood
home and here she has her sisters and
so many friends of past years. Here, it
seems, we shall remain a bag or God
permit us to be together.

3/3/87 We have waited today for a phone call from Dr. Roger Johnson as to what the Scan test which Rachel underwent yesterday might have revealed. She seems so tired. But the doctor has not called.

This afternoon Rachel did visit the Eye Clinic where Dr. Holman examined her eye. It was a week ago yesterday that she had her second cataract removal. About a year ago her cataract on her right eye was removed. This ^{last} week's operation removed the cataract on her left eye. The doctor's evaluation was very favorable. The eye should continue to heal.

We have felt the strong support of the family these days. Paul, Betty, Tom and David have all called and spoken encouragingly to us. So have Rachel's sisters: Dee, Judith and Esther. Friends from the Church call, too. It is so good to know that we do not need to face our days alone.

Following the clinic appointment we drove to Rosedale shopping mall where we bought a cup of De-Cafe and a donut for each of us at Dayton's coffee shop.

So often when Rachel and I have been out eating, we have stopped at some restaurant for an afternoon "pick-up".

There have been other times when either of us may have been troubled for some reason or other that we have gone out, as we say, for a cup of coffee. Relaxing, we have talked freely and openly about what may have been bothering us and found a great release and strength in the love and understanding we have thus shared.

Since leaving our church in Seattle in 1975 we have done considerable interim ministry: Bay City, Michigan, Muskego, Wisconsin, Big Lake, Minnesota, Milaca, Minnesota, Trade River, Wisconsin — these are some of the F.T. Churches we have served. Earl was for about a six-month term. Also we have served as Visitation pastor at the F.T. church in Kenosha, Wis. and in the same capacity here at our T.C. Church in St. Paul.

Hundreds of calls have been made in homes and hospitals. On many of these calls Rachel has been beside me. She has always been ready to serve whenever I have felt I needed her with me, and has added to the effectiveness of my work on each occasion. We have been a team thru all our years — always together.

3/4/87 The one absorbing consideration that has occupied our mind this week has been that of Rachel's health. It was something like eight years ago now that Rachel underwent an operation for her right breast removal. A biopsy had revealed a malignancy - a small lump on the breast which Rachel herself had discovered. For these years since the operation she has felt well.

It is these last days in which she has not felt well that we have visited Dr. Roger Johnson. We expected to receive his diagnosis today. However, he was not ready so we have an appointment for noon tomorrow. He will give us his findings then.

Our weather continues unusually mild - 54° today at mid afternoon. We are thankful to God for the mild weather and the open roads.

Rachel & I visited Mrs Ida Anderson. She is one of our church Ladies who broke her hip in a fall two or three weeks ago. She is now walking with her walker. What marvellous things are being accomplished by our medicine these days. I have had a rather favorite theory in the back of my mind for years: that for every malady there is a remedy. Some day a remedy for

course will be found. God is a God of grace—
there is a remedy for sin. There are
remedies for sin consequences. "Where sin
abounded grace did much more abound."

3/17/88 The doctor gave us a report of Barb's
physical condition today. The fluid which was
removed from her chest area last week
contained cancer cells. The scan revealed
that there was no tumor below the diaphragm
area. Two spots ~~was~~ appeared on her right
lung area. The doctor prescribed medicine
which he feels might ease the fluid problem.
She will take a pill twice daily and in
a month or two she should experience
more comfort and relief.

We feel relieved to write. As he so often
say: "It could be worse." We also feel concerned.
Long ago we committed each other and our
lives to God. We do so again in this
instance, believing that we are safest in
His hands. We are privileged to ask of Him
whatever we desire. But we do finally
say "thy will be done." So we continue to trust
Him who has been so trustworthy in days past,
and will continue to be. We do feel low in
spirit to write. But we shall still praise Him.

3/8/87 Saturday p.m. - We have had such wild weather - up in the sixties today. It was such a good day to work the car which I did directly after breakfast. David and his family left this noon for a week in Washington D.C. so I drove them to the airport. Before coming home I visited one of our members Mrs Dorothy Anderson, in St. Joseph's hospital. This afternoon it was grocery shopping and the evening hours are for reading and preparing our hearts for worship tomorrow.

I have missed dreadfully need to prepare for the Sunday sermons which for so long occupied each Saturday. There has been a feeling of emptiness. The preaching ministry was always my main burden, feeling as I did the responsibility of "feeding the flock of God".

Concerning burdens, each person must be given a find his burden. A beautiful exposition of burdens is to be found in the first few chapters of Numbers. The transposition of the wilderness tent is the matter under discussion. Each of the three sons of Aaron and their descendants are allotted their particular burden. We cannot fulfill any measure of life or service unless we have a burden to bear. It is futile to be without a burden.

3/10/87 The events of today have been quite ordinary. Poorest work this morning. Rachel ironed. She has been so faithful in caring for the household duties — how I do appreciate her. This afternoon Rachel visited Dr. ~~Brown~~ Holman for an eye examination. She had a cataract removed two weeks ago. All's well. After this we called on Esther Ahlquist in her nursing home. It is a blessing to visit her — she seems to exude cheerfulness.

This evening we watch Billy Graham — a re-broadcast of his northern Florida crusade last summer. The first time we were in a Graham crusade was in New York at the Madison Square Gardens. A great wave of emotion swept over me as I viewed for the first time the response to the invitation — scores coming down the aisles, awe and wonder and the sense of the Divine Presence deeply affected me. The World's Fair was on in New York and our National Conference was held in Ocean Grove, N. J. That summer.

Then when we ministered in Oak Lawn Billy Graham held his Chicago Crusade, the meetings being held in McCormick Place with the final service in Soldier's Field. Over a hundred thousand were in attendance the last Sunday afternoon.

God has used Billy Graham in an unusual way this past generation. He has been preserved from scandal, has been so well accepted by all strata of society, and has the respect of the nation. He has spoken to more people than perhaps any man in history. He has been true to his calling which has been to preach the Gospel as an evangelist. Now greater than the centuries has been the influence of a host of great preachers.

3/20/87 Today is the first day of spring and this week we have seen the return of the robbers from their winter in the southland. I remember how my father looked for the return of the birds in the spring and seemed so glad to report the sighting of the first robin in the spring. Father seemed to have a true delight in aesthetic things. He loved music so much. It was his delight to hear Esther play Schubert's Marche Militaire which he often asked her to play. He often sang to himself - in Swedish - some of the hymns we all sang in church those years. Dental care was much neglected those days. When the time came for my father

to have his teeth extracted and he to secure his so called upper and lower dentals, he had all his teeth extracted at one time. It was a most painful experience. I can see him now, pacing the floor in pain and discomfort. But as he walk he sang - The Swedish hymn he loved so much. One of the hymns he sang was: "Vi bo ej här" - we do not live here, meaning our true home is in heaven.

This week the whole Evangelical world has been saddened by the resignation of Evangelist Jim Bolker and his wife January as head and director of P.T.H. The reason given: a moral indiscretion of a few years ago - an affair with his secretary, which is now come to light. The incident will bring much reproach to the Church of Christ. Jerry Falwell has graciously answered the call to take over as director of P.T.H.

4/1/87 A diary should record the significant events of the day. But this has been a day of nothing significant: a few errands run, some reading, a phone call or two. Yet, is our significance to be only measured by our activity? How can we first "be" what we should in order that we might "do" what we should?

Rachel and I are exceedingly gratified that her medicine is seemingly having a gracious healing effect in her body. She seems so much improved. If I were a Pentecostalist I would be throwing my hands upward and shouting "Praise the Lord". But I am not a Pentecostalist. Yet God knows our sincere gratitude. May He grant us grace to see the time we still have left together spent to the best purposes.

Some measure of joy has filled my life of late — there has been so much depression than past years. By disposition I have not been exuberant and enthusiastic. Is this part of an inherited weakness? Is it to be viewed as a cross to bear — to be taken up daily? A temptation to be overcome? God knows. When the load occasionally lifts, it is a blessing indeed.

4/9/87

This has been a beautiful spring day - sunny - in the 70's. We saw our first dandelion of the season in bloom - and the trees and bushes are blossoming budding out. The coming of spring brings an uplift to the spirit.

How deeply affected we are by so many things - so many of them over which we have no control. The weather: it is always better when the sun shines. Relationships - our reactions to what is said and done to us. Our health: our moods are so often a reflection of our biological state.

Ought we as a principle be always "on top" of the ourselves - in complete control of our emotions and moods? Is depression a malady which yields to a self-cure? Is this what is meant by self-control as being a "fruit of the Spirit"? Is the "down mood" a sin against God?

But surely it is true that within limits we can, with God's help, change mood and attitudes. Where the discipline is beyond us we can find grace. "as thy days - so shall thy strength be" - one day at the time.

Can it be that one element in what is called "the sufferings of Christ" to which we are to be conformed is the bearing of our natural

infirmities with grace and patience? Bearing with patience those elements we have inherited or for reason or another we are called upon to bear? Intemperament, Physical conditions, Social or economic restraints, To bear these gracefully — is this being a partaker of His nature? A part of taking up our cross daily to follow Him? These things are not particularly oppressions of an enemy from without rather a burden from within — Theologically a remnant of the fall. Added to this is the temptations of the sin which does so easily beset us "Oh to be like Thee blessed Redeemer, Oh to be like Thee pure as Thou art, Come in Thy sweetness — come in Thy fulness, Stamp Thine own image deep on my heart".

4/10/87 Friday - have watched "Washington Week In Review" and "Wall Street Week" which we have been in the habit of watching Friday nights. The news seems to be all on the pessimistic side — disturbed relations with Russia — etc.

This afternoon Rachel and I and

Judith and Esther had lunch with Addie Snyder at her invitation at her wilder home. I have tried to visit our shut-ins on a regular routine and it seems as tho God has blessed many of these visits. The old Civil War song says: "many are the hearts that are weary toilers, waiting for the war to cease". Tho we are not engaged in a Civil War, there are still many weary hearts amongst us.

I have had a very serious fault to wrestle with for years. It is the fault of comparing myself with others. The comparison is hardly ever in my favor. It has seemed to me that others have been so much more successful and fruitful. I know I ought not do so. Every man has a God appointed place to serve and God-given gifts to employ — assuming they are committed Christians. But the comparisons are subconsciously made. We each stand before a Judge, who is more righteous than even our own conscience. I need grace to leave the matter in His hands.

Rachel seems much improved in health these days and I am most thankful. God is good.

4/11/87 Sat p.m. - This has been a typical Saturday for these retirement years - up at seven - having breakfast, and the morning walk (3 miles). Then - pressing some trousers, writing some letters and lunch. The mid. day nap has become a habit with us now. - After this out to Baker's Square - a restaurant for a sandwich. Tomorrow is Palm Sunday.

I have begun again the reading of the Book of Job - the mysteries of suffering - the activity in the world of the Spirit - suffering within the will of God - the eternal conflict between good & evil, God and Satan - the majesty and dignity of man that our life can be the arena of such significant conflict - Job unburdening his heart to God with his complaints and God's patience and forbearance - the failure of human friends to comfort - we do not see things as God sees them.

We had lunch on Wednesday with Marvin and Jane Anderson - both about our age. Marvin has been much used in singing the Gospel throughout his entire adult life - blessed with a strong voice - blessed in his singing to many hearts. Of late the invitations to sing have not come as frequently as in the past. Marvin wonders why and finds it hard to accept the fact that the years of his most active

Ministry as part — That congregational
tests have changed — That the young do not
always appreciate the old. His wife Irene
is suffering from Alzheimers disease —
advancing quite rapidly.

The declining years are often the
hardest and cruellest of life. The Andersons
have one daughter, living in Tucson — They
feel so very much alone. We speak often
on the phone and have lunch together every
other week or so. They love the Lord deeply —
She long for the "olden days". But there is no
going back — never — always forward. We
shall always need something that calls us out
into the future — our future.

May 25-88 — This is Tuesday p.m. We yesterday
returned from a week-end with Paul and
his family — attending graduation exercises
for Eric at Sinclair College — Sinclair is a
liberal arts college with the emphasis on "Liberal."
The Baccalaureate Service was a disappointment.
There was no inspirational message
presented — no mention of the name of God.
Eric graduated on Monday with about 500
other graduates — again no mention of
God — only a social gospel speech.

It was good to be with Paul and his family -
There has been a growing detachment
from each other - Mom and I grieve
over it - perhaps it is part of "a man
shall leave his father and his mother and
cleave unto his wife." We liked to see
the very good rapport that Paul and his
family have with each other.