

## MR. I. C. HERENDEEN'S EXPERIENCES

(Transcribed from tape made in the 1970s by **Lawrence and Amy Nelson** of Chapel Library)

Well, I've been asked (as Bro. Nichols said) to tell how the Lord led me from an ardent dispensationalist and premillennialist to the doctrines of grace and to a different understanding of prophecy.

We were married April 24, 1907 and immediately went to Buffalo, New York to live. While there (without going into the details) I got in touch with an old man from Lewisburg by the name of **Bro. A. F. Cole**; he was carrying on a small tract work. He was then 81 years of age and he was looking for a young man to take over. Well, it so happened that I was the man. And so in the year 1915, we moved from Buffalo to a little place at Swengel (13 miles west of Lewisburg) and took over this tract work. The tracts were all free. We couldn't get them folded, so I had to hire some girls to do the folding. We sent them out all over the world (free of charge), paid the postage ... and sent out some by freight. Different ones would write in for supplies to distribute them at **Billy Sunday's** services and **Gipsy Smith's**, and we sent them out free of charge. I never knew where the money would come from to pay the printing bills and the transportation charges, but we never failed to be able to pay the bills on time. I've always made it a point to pay every bill when it was due — the Scripture says to "owe no man anything." And if you are engaged in the Lord's work, and He has called you to it, you can depend upon His furnishing the necessary money. And He never failed.

While talking about this, it might be helpful to your faith if I told you one or two experiences I have had in my days. I was visiting **Arthur W. Pink** in Spartanburg, South Carolina in March 1917 — now I had published two or three books of his before that; the first one I published was *The Divine Inspiration of the Bible*; the next one was *Why Four Gospels?*; and then later I published a 400-page book called *The Redeemer's Return* (a book that was dispensational premillennial from stem to stern; but we both held that view at that time) — well as time went on, he wanted to get into itinerant ministry, and, without going into details, he later left the **Northside Baptist Church** in Spartanburg, and moved to **Swengel**. But before that he had me to build him a bungalow there where he could live and be a base while he was out in itinerant ministry. Well, in 1919 they moved to Swengel; he wasn't there very long before he went to the Pacific Coast and was gone about nine months. Then he returned, but then later on he went to the Pacific Coast again, and was busy up and down the coast in ministry; then later he went to Australia for a couple of years.

Well, how Pink got into itinerant ministry was — **Arno C. Gaebelein** had been publishing a magazine called "*Our Hope*" and I had been taking it for, I suppose, 20 years. This was along about 1915 or 1916 ... I noticed a couple of articles in that different issues of that magazine by **A. W. Pink** and had no idea who he was. But the first article was entitled "The Philosophy of Spiritualism," and since I had received a couple of inquiries about spiritualism, when I read this I thought it would be profitable to reprint it and circulate it, and I did. Let me inject right here: Arthur Pink was saved out of spiritualism and Theosophy, and when he went into it he had been in the very depths of it.

Not many people who are in spiritualism ever get saved, but the Lord saved him out of it. So when I printed this tract, it came from the printers and I took some of them on a trip to New York, and back through Patterson, New Jersey, and around for a couple of weeks; then when I returned to Swengel, lo and behold, there was a letter on my desk from Arthur W. Pink, Birchfield, Kentucky. Well, in that short time a copy of this tract had fallen into his hands, and he was quite pleased that I published it. So we began to correspond, and the more we corresponded the more we found that we had in common, and we were drawn to each other.

Gaebelein had written and told Pink that he had more calls to minister the Word than he could meet, so Bro. Pink wanting to go out and preach in itinerant ministry wondered if Mr. Gaebelein could manage to give some of those calls to him. As I understand it, Mr. Gaebelein assured him that he could. On the strength of that, Pink had moved to Swengel. Mr. Pink wrote the book *Gleanings in Genesis*, which Gaebelein published. But later on Gaebelein found out that Pink was a strong Calvinist (and Gaebelein wasn't; he was dead set against it), and contrary to his promise he never turned one single meeting over to Mr. Pink. So that left Pink high and dry. But, as I say, in his correspondence he received invitations to minister the Word on the Pacific coast, so he got out into itinerant ministry after all.

Well, while I had visited him in Spartanburg, we were talking and he surprised me. He said, "Bro. Herendeen, I want to write a book on '*The Sovereignty of God*,' and I want you to publish it." In those days I couldn't figure out what he would write about — "sovereignty of God" — what would he find to say about that? So he discovered that I was ignorant of the truth. When I returned home, in his first letter (I'll never forget it!) he wrote to me he started out by quoting John 6:44, "*No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.*" And he underscored the word, "CAN" — "NO MAN CAN COME TO ME EXCEPT THE FATHER DRAW HIM." Well, friends, I can't tell you how that verse struck me like a shot! I had been reading the Scriptures so long, but never saw that verse before — well, it created a great hunger in my heart to know what it meant. And so when the manuscript for the book came, you can believe that I devoured it. And when I would talk with friends and they would stump me with questions, I'd go back and read Pink's book again. Now this was when Pink was a young man — he was three years younger than I; he was 66 years old when he died on **July 15, 1952**.

Well, I published that book (*The Sovereignty of God* by Pink), and the Lord was gracious in answering prayer and giving me more light on the subject — and I was brought out, and we rejoiced together. And that was wonderful! Why hadn't I heard about that before? Well, I'll tell you, when we first married we attended the Methodist Church there in Buffalo. And a returned missionary (Mrs. Byrd) was a member of the Plymouth Brethren there, meeting in an assembly hall, and I became acquainted with her. Then she began to deal with me, and tried to show me the Brethren were the proper people to fellowship with, and not the denominations. In my ignorance, we started attending the services there. And you know how Arminian and how dispensational the Plymouth Brethren are! And, of course, they had different speakers from the United States and from abroad. And they were all of the same stripe; I swallowed it all, and thought surely it was scriptural.

I became acquainted with a very dear friend, a Yale graduate and YMCA secretary, **Edwin**

**Monroe.** He came to me one day and said, “You know I’ve gotten hold of a wonderful Bible course, and I want to start a class and want you to be a charter member of the class.” I asked him what course it was, and he said, “*The Scofield Bible correspondence course.*” I said, “Edwin, I don’t know anything about this course, but if you recommend it I’ll join the class.” Well, you know I had never studied the Bible to speak of, but the first lesson was on the Nature of the Scriptures, and the second on the Truth of Inspiration of the Scriptures (I was carried away!), then on Salvation and Rewards, Lost and Found, the Seven Dispensations, and so forth. So I became indoctrinated, and knew nothing else. Then in March 1913, we moved from Buffalo to take up this tract work in Swengel, and of course I didn’t get any further along with the Scofield course — I have the books at home, showing the study and the work I put on them. And so I held a Scofield class in Swengel. Then I went to Philadelphia a couple of times and heard Dr. Scofield speak, and also went to the YMCA and heard and met him there, and had a short conversation with him.

In the middle of 1924, we were invited to move to Cleveland, Ohio, knowing a printer there ... and my wife’s people lived there, and I thought I’d go there and carry on my mail order work and open a book store too. So we did. We were there five and a half years. We would have stayed there had it not been for the stock market crash in Oct. 1929. And on that account, I had to get out. We had seven children and I had a heavy expense of all kinds. I was paying \$125.00 a month rent there, and had two helpers ... plus nine of us to feed and clothe and buy school supplies. So I found out that some people had lost all their savings, and was told that some literally pulled the hair out of their heads when they found out they had lost everything. Some lost everything through the banks, etc. But through the goodness of the Lord I was dealing with the Erie County Bank and it wasn’t destroyed.

Later on, after the crash, I was released from my lease in the building, and decided to return to Swengel; and it was better to go back there as that address was known all over the world. And when you establish a new address, people lose track of you. While I was in Cleveland, one day a copy of Philip Mauro’s magazine, *The Last Hour*, fell into my hands. I don’t know how. I knew he published it, but didn’t want it at first. But in this copy of the magazine he had an article purporting to show that “the church age” was not the parenthetical dispensation that the dispensationalists say it is. And when I read it, you know, I was shaken. I had not the slightest idea there was that much to say on this subject! Well time went on, and I forgot it. Then with the stock market crash we returned to Swengel.

And then Pink returned to near Swengel, for the second time. We were out walking one day, and when we got back we stopped in front of the house and were chatting, when he, out of the blue, said, “Bro. Herendeen, have you ever given much thought or study to the subject of the millennium?” Well, I said, “Yes, I have somewhat, more or less. Why do you ask?” He said, “I wondered if you had. You know, I don’t know whether there is any room for an earthly millennium or not, and I don’t think there is.” I said, “Well, why do you say that?” Pink replied, “In my meditation of John’s Gospel on Lazarus, it says He will raise him up at the last day. And in my mind I linked it up with Hebrews 1:2 where it says, ‘God hath in these last days.’ Where is the room for an earthly millennium?” Oh, to question the millennium — that really was something! He says, “Think it over. We’ll talk about it later.”

Well that millennium was before my eyes all the while, and I couldn't get any where until finally I recalled that Peter in his second epistle didn't say, "We look for the millennium," but he said, "We look for new heavens and a new earth." And then I thought, "Isn't it strange that if there is to be an earthly millennium, such as the dispensationalists teach, that Christ Himself never gave a hint about it, nor did the evangelists — you would have thought He would go into that subject at some length. Well, when we met again, Pink asked, "How far did you get with the millennium subject?" Well, I said, "This is what has come before me." And we both agreed at that point; he was not prepared to give it up himself, but was just beginning to get light on the subject. And so was I. Well he moved away, and he was so busy that he didn't get a chance to write much and so we didn't have any more contact on it for a while. But I wanted to know who was right and who was wrong. So I got in touch with Philip Mauro, and later came to know him very well, and stayed in his home. He was a mighty power for good in my life, and helped to support the work. He gave away his whole fortune, and eventually went back in the law business again. I got all his books, but the one that impressed me most at that time was *The Gospel of the Kingdom*. I read it and re-read it. Then he would get hold of tracts and other booklets and forward them to me, and I got help from them. So I began to be more certain that I had been wrong all the while, and that I needed to get set right. I was most desirous of knowing the truth — now you know that a lot of dispensationalists are not so desirous — and when I began to talk with them about my new views [*laughter*], it wasn't so pleasant! I was getting out a new catalog at the time. You know, in those days, we couldn't go up to Williamsport to a religious book store — in those days they weren't in existence — and so if you wanted religious literature at that time you had to write to Loizeaux Brothers or Revel or Moody, etc. Brother Cole had a lending library, and he (like Bro. Nelson) would send out books on loan, free of charge. And people would read some of those books, and say, "I'd like to have my own copy." So I said one day, "Why don't we put in a supply of books?" And we did.

Then I was reading *The Gospel of the Kingdom*, I think, for the third time, and I remember so well (my wife does too!), sitting in the living room, I said, "Mother, I don't know about anybody else, but I feel that I have solid ground under my feet now and I think I know where I stand. I'm convinced that I have been wrong." Well she said, "Then are you going to believe one thing and be teaching another?" Well I said, "By the grace of God I'm not!" So, as I was getting out our catalog, I put in a few pages of a plea to the reader to re-examine the millennial teachings in the light of the Scriptures. I said, "Don't take man's word for it, but follow the Scriptures and prove all things for yourself." So I sent the catalog out, and then the brickbats began to fly! Oh, I received some of the nastiest letters! I remember the students down at Dallas Seminary began to send me cards and letters saying, "Take my name off the mailing list immediately! We thought the Bible Truth Depot was sound, now we found out different and we are not going to patronize it, and we're going to tell our friends about it." Well, that began to affect the financial end of the work, and my income went down, down, down. So I had to do something to support my family — I began to sell Knapp shoes all around this area, Lewisburg and vicinity. I sold a good many pairs of shoes. Then gradually, as I sent out this literature, first one here and one there began to get their eyes opened and began to encourage me and that gave me more boldness to stand for the right. Mr. Gaebelien himself wrote me a very harsh letter; and I received quite a few of them. But, the Lord honored my stand, and we began to come back; the work began to pick up again (you see, before that, I had been in touch with the dispensational crowd almost altogether) — but

now I received encouragement from here and there. So I got on my feet again, and was publishing a different line of literature, entirely a different line of literature!

Just to show how the Lord honors faith, Pink wrote this quite large work on *Exposition of Hebrews*. I had been dining with Mr. Herman Baker of Baker Book House of Grand Rapids. He was in Sunbury one day and invited me to come and have dinner with him. And we were talking and he wondered why I didn't publish this work on Hebrews — I said, "Mr. Baker, it was entirely beyond me financially." So he suggested we publish it together. I agreed. It was to be published in three volumes (quite large volumes), and Mr. Baker asked, "How many copies would you want?" I told him, "I'd want a thousand anyhow," not realizing how large a work it would be, what it would run into in finances. Then he said, "Three large volumes would have to sell for \$17.95 a set," and I had ordered a thousand sets! Well, I raked and scraped and saved what I could in order to meet the invoice when it became due. Finally the due date was drawing nigh, and I didn't have all the money. I was on my knees begging the Lord; I said, "Lord, I want to obey Your Word. I want to owe no man anything. I want to pay that bill on the due date." Then I received a letter from a lady down in Chattanooga, Tennessee — I hadn't met here but knew of her. And I had lacked \$1500.00 having enough to pay the bill, and if I was to pay it on time, I had to pay it within the next day or two. So, this morning the letter came from this lady, and inside was a check for \$1500.00. She said, "My father has died and turned his business over to his wife, my brother and myself, and my brother wanted my share, so I sold it to him. Enclosed is a tithe of what I received."

Back while I was in Cleveland, it was nearing the holiday season and I had ordered quite a few Bibles — Scofield Bibles, mostly [*laughter*] — and I was lacking \$2,000.00 dollars. I don't know whether you have heard of the D. M. Stearns Foundation in Philadelphia, but it was established by a Lutheran preacher so that people could send money for mission work anonymously. Somebody (to this day, I don't know who it was) had sent them \$2,000.00 — and they forwarded that to me! They opened the letter by saying, "Let us rejoice and be glad and give honor unto Him!" And inside was a draft for \$2,000.00 — just the amount I needed, and to this day I don't know where it came from.

I have had different experiences. I published one edition of *The Sovereignty of God*, and was lacking \$500.00 the day the bill came due, and the Lord sent it in. You know that's strengthening to faith. I just want to rejoice and praise the Lord — what a faithful God! I used to publish a tract called, "*The God Who Counts*." We had a small account one time (when the children were small) with a department store near Swengel. We had seven children, three boys and four girls. I wanted to pay that bill, but I couldn't. The time was drawing short, and in spite of my pleading with the Lord the money didn't come in. It was \$52.00 and some few cents. And I said, "Lord, I need that money to honor Your Word." You can't guess who it came from! Up in New York State, near Buffalo, the Plymouth Brethren had a meeting and I knew them all, of course; the secretary/treasurer was none other than **Don Reiner** of Swengel, and it seems they authorized him to send me the offering one Lord's Day and that money order was for \$52.15, just what I needed!

I had followed up on the study on prophecy, and the more I studied the more convinced I was that I was now right. And, of course I had quite a bit of opposition from different ones who tried

to turn me from it, but the Lord deeply impressed upon me that it was the truth and I was rejoicing in it. And so I have gone on to this present day, and the Lord has been pleased to use my humble efforts in sending forth literature of the right kind. The Lord has used that to correct the understanding of many, some of whom are in this room this afternoon.

I published the first edition of *The Sovereignty of God* but I had much trouble in selling it. Seemed nobody wanted it back in 1918, but finally I succeeded in disposing of the edition of 2,000 copies. But when I left the work of **Bible Truth Depot** (12 years ago) it was my best seller, and I believe it is today. It has been published by **Baker Book House**; **Don Reiner** has published it, and it was published by **The Banner of Truth Trust** in England. But I have asked different preachers, “How come you got hold of the truth of God’s sovereignty?” They’d say, “Well, somebody put Pink’s book in my hands.” I’ve had them tell me that time and time again. And the conferences at **Carlisle, Pennsylvania**; **Ashland, Kentucky**; **Birmingham, Alabama**, and other places, have resulted from the influence of that book! Well that’s the story ... about 12 years ago I had reached my 75th birthday and the work was getting to be too much for me, so I knew I had to quit. I didn’t know who or where to turn to get someone to take over the work. Well, I turned to **Don Reiner** who had been helping me some, so I told him, “Don, I have got to quit. Would you like to take it over?” So he did, and has been carrying it on ever since. I helped him for a time, but then I had to completely quit.

But, you know, my heart was in that work; I looked forward to it every day. Oh, it was just wonderful — the letters we received. Bless your heart, I had been in touch with dear Brother **Robert McCaul** for some few years, don’t know how long. In my few travels around the country, whenever I stopped to call on these people I had been corresponding with, I found the choicest spirits, just wonderful, because we were of one mind, interested in the same things. The Lord has given me friends all over the country — people on the West Coast urged me to come out and visit them, but I wasn’t able. And so I had to give it up, to my regret. But I praise the Lord that I can look back over the years and thank God that they weren’t wasted years. I made many mistakes, and realize that, but my whole heart desire was to serve the Lord and to serve Him to His praise and to His glory, and I would appreciate it if you would remember me in your prayers as the Lord brings me to your mind.

**“Lord, we thank Thee for Thy wonderful Word. We thank Thee for ever putting it into our hands, this volume of inspiration given us from Heaven wherein Thou hast made known Thy mind and Thy will unto us. Now give us the heart and determination by Thy grace to obey Thy Word, to walk in obedience to its commandments. And our Lord Jesus has said, ‘If ye love me ye will keep my commandments’ — not that we *ought* to do it, but we *will* do it! So, Lord, Thou dost value obedience above sacrifice, so make us willing and desirous of knowing Thy Word better so that we will know better what Thou wouldst have us to do. And then, Lord, cause us to be doers of Thy Word and not hearers only. Now bless these few feeble and humble remarks to the good of Thy people here; encourage their faith; cause them to not hesitate to trust Thee, for Thou dost never leave us nor forsake us. Thou wilt never let us down, Lord. We know this from personal experience. We know too, Lord, that the more we give the more we get. Thou hast said, ‘Give and it will be given unto you.’ And if we give to Thee, Lord, Thou wilt open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing we will not be able to receive. And give us the joy of giving. What a privilege it is to give back unto Thee that which is Thine own. Now, make us faithful in serving Thee, Lord, and give us one heart and one purpose in this matter, and we’ll be careful to give Thee all the praise. In Christ’s worthy Name, Amen.”**