

Now

This book was written by Merikay McLeod, a 17-year-old girl in a Seventh-day Adventist Academy at Grand Lodge, Michigan. She attended Bible studies in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

“UN troops are moving into Iraq.

The new government which the UN set up there, collapsed today after a month of uprisings and riots. The troops are being sent into re-establish the democratic government, bringing peace to the small country and put down any further uprisings.

“The President, along with the government leaders of England, France, and Russia, signed a peace pact today at Paris, France. It is the first time in history that so many government leaders have agreed completely to a peace document. This is a big step to world-wide peace.

“The Supreme Court today finally passed the much-debated National Sunday-Sabbath Bill. The bill declares Sunday to be the one and only day on which all are compelled to worship. The President expressed approval of the bill, and during his peace talks in France, encouraged the other world leaders to pursue similar courses in their countries.

“And now for a look at the local scene. In Kalamazoo this week....”

The dial felt very cold as my hot damp hand turned it, stopping the TV announcer’s voice. Walking over to the window, I stared out unconsciously, while the words of Elder Brown came back to me: “The

National Sunday Law is the sign for the Christians to move out of the cities.”

Back there in Bible Doctrines class I had heard a lot about Sunday laws and the end of times, but I must not have thought this would really come. I seemed in a collapsed balloon, with everything pressing in around.

I could see all those charts Elder Brown had drawn, day after day on the board, showing the events of the end. There were two marks that were very close together, the National Sunday Law and the close of probation.

Doubt, fear, excitement whirled through my mind. What would happen? Where would we go? How soon would we leave?

Yet, it was so unreal -- like a dream. I just couldn't believe that it was here -- now.

“Alice, come to supper”, mother called.

In tense quietness I ate, wishing someone would mention the passage of the bill. But everything went like it always did.

In Bible Docs class I'd planned how I wanted things to work out when this time arrived. Father would be suddenly converted and as a united, Christian family,

we'd move to some secluded place.

I waited, but no one seemed to know what he was supposed to do or say. They didn't act as if anything was out of the ordinary.

Finally, unable to keep still any longer, I said, "You know the Supreme Court okay'd that Sunday Law today."

"No!", Ron gasped. "Really?"

"The time of the end is near", mother said, as she often did when something horrid happened. "We can see it all around us."

Dad didn't say anything. Mother and father really couldn't be that uninterested in something so vital and important. I decided to try again.

"You know what Mrs White says about the National Sunday Law."

Oh no. There was that look on Mom's face. I knew now that she would criticize anything I said. Lately, every time I mentioned Mrs White, or the Bible, mother got mad.

"No, what does Mrs White say?" she replied with a sign of here-we-go-again.

Overlooking her disgust, I went on. "She says we should move out of the cities, for the close of proba-

tion is near.”

“Where are we supposed to go?” asked Ron.

“Into the country or wilderness somewhere.”

“Just tell me, little miss Holy-joe, exactly where are you going to find any ‘wilderness’ around here?”

Mother’s cold words surprised me. Her reaction was completely different from that which I’d expected.

“Look up north”, Ron said quickly. “There are huge forests where no one would find us for weeks.”

Ron and I looked at each other. I never realised how interested in religious things he was. He had always seemed so careless and kiddish. But in the brief glance, I could see that he was interested.

The conversation stopped, for Mom and Dad’s cold, indifferent silence gave us no wish to continue the discussion.

Things are all wrong, I thought later, as I lay on my bed. How can Mom and Dad be so apathetic? Nothing is happening like it’s supposed to.

The week passed.

At church, Elder Jenkins had a stirring message on the close of probation. Everyone agreed with him.

People cried and gave hearty ‘amens’.

Now things were beginning to go the way I'd planned them.

But later as I walked out of church, I noticed people laughing and joking together like every other Sabbath. Some were talking of the new addition they were putting on their house, or the new piece of furniture they had purchased. Ladies were checking on what kind of cakes to bring to next week's church social.

I couldn't understand it. Can a person be moved by God, and forget so quickly?

As the days passed, tension grew. Finally, mother and father consented to our leaving home. They gave us permission to live in our lake cottage.

After getting settled, time passed quickly. Sabbath we studied all day and prayed. Never before had I felt such a need to ask forgiveness. For literally hours Ron and I petitioned our heavenly Father for the forgiveness of all the sins we could remember.

There was a heavy urgency pushing us.

Sunday, we went to our neighbours to give Bible Studies. Having never given a study before, we were nervous. But we decided that God would lead us to whom we were supposed to contact.

We met a very lovely family, the Cooks, who had heard of the Adventist beliefs and were interested in them. They accepted the message and although were never baptized by water, became Seventh-day Adventists by the baptism of the Spirit.

I called home during the week. Mother was the same as usual, no trace of anger or unhappiness. She thought we were going to come back and asked if we wanted Dad to come after us. I told her “No”, and urged her to join us, but she declined. She was not angry, only resigned to the fact that she couldn’t leave home or father.

I also phoned Elder Jenkins, hoping that he and his family would soon be moving. But, to my surprise, everything seemed to be the same as usual there too. Everyone was happy and friendly and no one was planning to do anything but go on just like they always had. Several times Elder Jenkins warned me to beware of becoming fanatical.

Oh, why did it have to happen? Why couldn’t it wait till I died so I wouldn’t have to be hurt by family and friends who rejected the call? Why must it happen now?

One day while we were eating, Mrs Cook came running into the house, “The Universal Sunday Law

has just been passed,” she cried. “Probation is almost closed.”

I looked at her. It couldn't be. Why, it was only the middle of July, just a few weeks after the National Sunday Law! The close of probation couldn't be that close ... not now!

But then I saw those charts of Elder Brown's again. The line designating the Sunday Law and one showing the close of probation seemed to get closer and closer together until they blended into one. Yes, the time had come; the time was now.

After deciding on going to the Smokey Mountains, we prayed, and then took off.

I wanted so desperately to go back and see mother, father, and the Jenkins, but Cooks said it was too dangerous, we had to find a place of refuge. As we drove down the expressway, past the green and white sign that said, 'Kalamazoo Next Exit', I felt strangely empty.

“There it goes”, I thought. “My home town, my family, my minister, my church. There goes everything.”

Then I looked over at Ron sitting on the other side of the back seat. No, not everything was gone. I had

Ron, my precious brother. I slid over and gave him a kiss.

“It’s just you and me now”, I whispered. “Just us.”

He looked at me. “Not quite”, he smiled. “We’ve got God.”

Mrs Cook turned on the car radio. Every so often we caught a news broadcast. They were all the same: wars, tornadoes, fires, crime, and now the Sunday Law. The Law, we learned, included a penalty of death for all those who failed to obey it. Within a week it would be permissible to kill us. Only one week and probation would be closed.

Sitting in the back seat, staring out at the swiftly passing countryside, I had lots of time to think.

I thought about my childhood friends, and early grade school teachers. I wondered if they had received and accepted the truth. I wondered if they were driving, like we were, to some place to hide. And my heart ached as I thought of how very little I had done to show them the way.

I thought about my church school teachers, and wondered if they were running, or if they were going on just like they always had. I kept wondering if, maybe, at the very last minute, Mom and Dad had left the city.

“Surely, they must have”, I thought. Elder Brown said that the saints would be the ones to flee. But maybe we weren’t saints. Maybe we were just doing all this running to try to convince ourselves that we were good.

Maybe we hadn’t been saved, but by running, were trying to prove to heaven that we deserved the seal of God. I knew that many would be deceived at the end. Maybe I had deceived myself into thinking I was saved, when I really wasn’t.

Maybe I was acting the way I knew the saints would act to convince myself that I was a saint. I’d heard of people lying so much, they themselves believed it. Maybe that was what I’d done.

The idea was terrifying, so I put it out of my mind, and thought only of God’s promises: “To him who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life that stands in the garden of God.” “He who is victorious cannot be harmed by the second death.”

The promises kept flashing through my mind as hope burned in my heart.

Ron was reading from ‘Steps to Christ’. He didn’t seem worried.

I thought then how much he had grown up in the last two months, how Christ-like and mature he seemed.

“It says here” said Ron, “that we must accept the promises of ‘Christ, not from feeling, but out of faith. He said he would keep us, and we must believe that He will.”

“Strange”, I thought, “that he should read that just when I needed it.”

The hours passed.

The news broadcasts were filled with wars, riots, mob actions in the big cities. Epidemics were breaking out in different parts of the country, and always there was news of the approaching date, on and after which, murder was condoned by law.

We finally reached the foothills of the Smokies, and to us they looked like heaven. Stopping for gas, we got out of the car to stretch.

The attendant wiped off our windows. Then he asked to see our ‘Permission to buy and sell’ card. We told him we didn’t have one, his face turned hard and grey. Quickly he walked into the station, picked up the phone and asked for the police.

We jumped into the car and took off.

Although the gas meter registered empty, the car ran perfectly.

Up one street and down another we drove. The

radio was on, and breathless, we listened.

Suddenly we heard the license number and description of our car, and an alert that we were dangerous criminals. I couldn't believe they were talking about us as I heard the list of crimes we had supposedly committed.

How could this be? How could something like this happen here, in the United States?

"Listen kids", said Mr Cook, "Grab what you can and get out. Take off as fast as you dare, but don't look suspicious. Its not safe for you to be with us."

"But...."

The car stopped and we jumped out.

For a moment we stood there, holding our Bibles and coats, and wondering what to do now.

And I had my roller bag. "How in the world did I get my roller bag?" I giggled nervously.

"I don't know, but we'd better get going."

Ron grabbed my arm, and we started up the street.

It was a peaceful, quiet, ordinary residential city street. Little children were playing, people were washing their windows, or watering their lawns. For a moment, I felt safe. Everything was alright.

Then we heard the siren.

We dashed up a small street and between two brick buildings. Behind them it was dark, and within a small paved street were several boxes and barrels.

“Why would there be something like this in a residential district?” I whispered.

“Listen Alice, will you stop trying to figure everything out and hide.” He pushed me under a box, and threw a pile of dirty, odor-filled rags on top of me. Hesitating a moment, he squeezed my hand. “I love you”, he whispered. “Don’t forget Romans 8:28.”

The box came down. There was complete silence. The rags and dust created an unhealthy, almost unbearable stench in the small enclosure.

I prayed continually... “Oh, if only I could know for sure that I was saved.”

I listened to hear Ron say it was all right to come out. An eternity of suffocating silence passed!

Then the box moved, lifted and cool wonderfully fresh air flowed in.

“Come on. It’s night.” Ron helped me up.

After praying for God’s continued protection, we cautiously started out of the alley-way.

We followed the highway, and as we got farther and farther from town our fears grew. Every time a car passed, we fell to the ground. Then we ran. Faster and faster we ran.

Down we fell, grasping the ground, and hoping no one would see us. As the car sped down the highway, we were on our feet again, running. My side ached and my legs hurt.

“Stop”, I cried.

“We can’t. Hit the ground, here comes another car.”

Exhausted, I fell to the cold earth, and with fear watched the headlights speed past.

“So this is what its like to be a criminal”, I thought.

“Now I know how it feels to be hunted.”

I lay there, not wanting to rise.

“Get up Alice”, Ron pulled me to my feet.

“Ron I can’t”, I protested.

“Cut it out! You know we have to go while we can. What happens when the sun comes up if you’re lying out here by the road? Now, we’re almost to the hills.” He pulled me into a trot.

“We have to go -- now.”

“That’s it. Everything was NOW. Now we had to run.

Now we had to fall. Now we had to hide. Why couldn't it happen next year or the next? Why did everything have to happen now?

At last we were in the hills. We worked our way back into a wood. In the east the sky was growing pink. We kept walking.

I didn't feel the hurt in my legs or the pain in my side so much. My feet no longer felt blistered and hot, just kind of aching numb. I wanted a drink of water. My throat was so dry, it hurt to swallow.

Finally -- exhausted -- we fell on the ground and slept.

When we awoke, I opened my Bible to the Psalms. Several verses in Psalm 27 were underlined. "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?... for in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion.... When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up."

I stopped. How could things like this happen? How could I just open my Bible and have the very verses I need come jumping out at me?

My heart went out in love to God.

Turning to 1 John 3, I read, "Behold, what manner of

love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God.”

A daughter of God! I was a daughter of God, a princess of the highest government of the universe.

As I toyed with the thought of being a princess, my legs didn't hurt nearly as much. And when I thought of suffering as a member of the royal family of heaven, I didn't ache anywhere.

The night seemed quiet as we moved into the mountains.

“Say Ron”, I whispered, as I suddenly thought about what day it was. “It's Friday night - Sabbath.”

We both stopped, surprised at how quickly the week had passed.

He smiled. I couldn't see his smile, but I could tell from the way he talked, that a broad grin was across his face.

“Let's have vespers.” The words were exciting.

Finding a place where we felt safe, we very quietly, almost silently, had a worship service. When we finished, we felt refreshed and hurried on our way.

Just twenty-four hours stood between us and the enforcement of the death decree. We were in the mountains now.

It was nearing morning. Just think, to be able to see the sun rise on a Sabbath morning. I turned my gaze eastward. We both paused, breathing hard, to witness the beauty of it. It was so glorious that we couldn't help but kneel and thank God for His loving care.

We had just risen, when we heard a yell behind us. Turning, we saw two men with rifles, and a dog.

"Hey you! What are you doing?" Their voices were hard.

"Get along Alice!" Ron pushed me one way, and he ran the other. "Philippians s 4:13", I heard him call back.

Blindly I ran. I could hear the dog barking behind me. The men were screaming and the dog sounded crazed. I ran. My side hurt. My throat ached. I ran. Always there was the dog. I kept running.

"Oh, help me Father!" I cried.

One of the rifles went off. I stiffened, but felt nothing. Another shot. Still I was not hit.

Oh, I ran. On and on and on. The dog was still behind me.

"Please don't let them catch me!"

Suddenly I was falling!

I began to get up, but it was too late. The dog was upon me, and right behind him were the two men.

As they came up, the dog backed off. I lay looking up at their hard faces.

For a brief moment I wondered if my hair looked all right.

Then one of them raised his rifle and took aim.

“This is it”, I thought.

His finger tightened on the trigger.

“Hey, the law don’t go into effect till tomorrow.” The other man grabbed his arm.

“Aw, so what’s the diff, we kill her now or later?”

“Well, why don’t we take her to the authorities, everyone else is. And besides, you’ll have plenty of hunting time tomorrow.”

The both laughed as they jerked me to my feet.”

“Too bad that other kid got away”, one said disgustedly. “He’ll be caught tomorrow.”

Happy that Ron was still free, I prayed, “Thanks for answering.”

At the jail, I was questioned, finger-marked, booked, photographed, questioned again, made to change

into prison garb, and then taken to a cell in the basement.

As I entered, the cell's occupants looked up.

"Welcome, Little One", one of the men smiled. I like him.

"Have a seat", another offered, pointing to the floor. "We're just having church."

I sat down. I couldn't help smiling. I felt good there. This was a wonderful place. The people were kind.

"You can be our visitor this week", the lady said. "If we had a guest book, you could sign it."

The service was very simple. We sang and sang and sang. The songs were so real. Not just a lot of words set to music, like it had so often seemed back home. After this, we prayed.

As the day lengthened, we sang and prayed and talked some more. One man beamed as he told of how the men who had captured him tried to shoot him. But the guns wouldn't go off!

I thought about how close to death I'd been.

Why had that man missed me twice, and what had stopped him from shooting me the third time?

Tom, the man who had smiled when I entered, called

me 'Little One' and made me feel right at home. I called him Tom, because that's the only name he gave. He was different somehow from the others, more friendly, or something.

Aunt Nelly was the woman.

My stomach felt empty. "Do they ever feed you?" I asked.

"Oh yes", Tom smiled. "Once in a while, they give us a little something."

"Oh well", I thought. "You've been on diets before Alice. This shouldn't be anything new for you."

I began to think. All my life I had heard how we should be like Christ. But I just knew I didn't reflect His image fully. I was afraid that I'd forgotten to confess some sin. Oh, if only I could be certain. If only I could know for sure!

Tom came over and sat down beside me.

"Don't get so discouraged Little One, we can't know everything right now."

His voice was soft, and full of understanding. How could he know the way I felt?

"Just remember, no matter what, that God's love for you is as strong as it has ever been. He hasn't failed

you yet, and believe me, He's not going to."

I did believe him. I couldn't help but believe him. There was something about Tom that inspired trust and love.

"Remember", he went on, "Christ went through all this and more for you. He feels every pain, every ache, every discouragement you have. He is listening and watching you and He loves you very deeply." As he stood up, he said, "You're a good soldier." Then he smiled and added, "And you're a perfect princess."

He walked to the other side of the cell.

How could he do that? How could he know about my being a princess? A strange fear crept over me as I tried to figure out just what kind of a person Tom was. Then he turned and smiled, and I knew he was just a wonderful, wonderful Christian man.

The cell door opened and three more people entered, a man, a woman, and a little girl. The little girl Judy was scared. She cried and wanted her parents, but Tom soon had her smiling.

The hours passed.

The guard came by and gave us all a bowl of warm water - he called it vegetable soup. After dishing it

up, he sneered, “Just four more hours.”

All of us knew what he meant. It was 8.00pm, just four hours from the time when the death decree went into effect.

“Don’t you guys care about your families?” he went on in a derogatory tone. “Can’t you see that they are going to be persecuted because of you? I never could understand how people can break the law. It’s the ones back home who suffer.”

His words hurt.

I wondered if people were being mean to Mom and Dad because of me.

“And besides, what gives you the idea that you’re so almighty and holy? Look, everybody goes along with this law but you. Just who do you think you are to say ‘No’ to God?”

He shook his head in disgust.

“People like you are crazy. When an animal is crazy, it is shot?” He walked away, leaving the unspoken words hanging thick before the bars of our cell.

As the night lengthened, many more people came into our cell. Some were in good condition, like we were, others were beaten and bloody.

There was hardly standing room, but the guards kept shoving more in. I tried to sleep, but every ten or fifteen minutes, a loud buzzer would sound. Tom told me it was to keep us awake. They know that the human body breaks down after extreme insomnia”, he explained.

“And that’s what they want. But just learn to sleep deeply for five or ten minute stretches, and always remember to pray and trust in Jesus, and you’ll be all right.”

Judy cried very hard, but Aunt Nelly held her, and sang to her.

I felt sorry for her, she was so little. I had often wondered what would happen to children during this time, and now I knew. They had to suffer right along with us, only there were people like Aunt Nelly and Tom around to comfort them.

At midnight the buzzer buzzed and bells rang and the guards came to the cell.

“Well, your numbers are up”, one laughed. He called off the names of different individuals, and they filed out. it gave us more room, but not much more security.

The lights above our heads burned constantly. We saw no more of the guard for two days, during which

time we had no food or water.

Most of the time was spent in prayer and singing. Since we had no Bibles, we recited the texts we knew. Oh, how I wished I knew more!

Then the guard came again. Tom and others were called out. As Tom passed by, he bent over and pressed something into Judy's hand.

"That's so you won't be scared any more", he whispered. He looked up at me. "Take good care of her, Little One."

The cell door shut.

"Well, there goes four more", I thought.

"Look what Tom gave me", Judy nearly sang. "Look, isn't it beautiful."

There in her hand was a very small, brightly coloured picture of Jesus. On the back, it said, "God is Love."

"How could he have gotten that in here?" I wondered. We were all given a complete searching, and we came in with nothing but the prison clothes we wore.

I wondered as I remembered his kind face and friendly smile, his helping words and thoughtful comfort. I wondered.

We prayed and sang. Judy was happy when we were singing. She always joined right in whether she knew the tune and words or not.

We were hungry, but worse than anything else was the growing fear that we wouldn't be saved. I remembered Tom's words about trusting Jesus. I trusted Christ with all my heart, I really did. But it was me that I was worried about. I didn't have too much faith in me. I just was afraid that I'd forgotten to make something right that should have been.

The guard came back and called off more names. Mine was one.

Judy started crying.

"Don't cry Honey, everything will be fine." I smiled.
"Remember the picture Tom gave you?"

That seemed to satisfy her and she waved as I left. She was so small, and yet, Christ had given her protection and love in the form of her fellow cell mates.

Now I was scared --- what happened to people after they left the cell?

I was taken to a small room. A man was sitting on the other side of a large desk.

"You are Alice Strong?"

“Yes.”

“You live in Kalamazoo, Michigan?”

“Yes.”

“You are a Seventh-day Adventist?”

“Yes.”

“Why?”

The question startled me. In all the reading I’d done on the time of the end, no one ever asked, “Why?” They always asked something like: ‘What makes you think Saturday is the Sabbath?’ or “Why do you keep Saturday instead of Sunday?”

But no one ever asked, “Why?”

“Well because I believe the Bible is the one and only rule of faith, and Seventh-day Adventists base all their beliefs on the Bible.”

I was surprised at my answer. It was no masterpiece of oratory, but it was right.

“All right, now Alice, I like you.” The man settled down in his chair and began re-arranging papers on his desk.

“You say that all your doctrines are based on the Bible, but you don’t believe in the immortality of the soul.” He paused, but motioned for me to keep

silent. “In my Bible I read where the poor man, Lazarus, was in heaven, and the rich man was in hell after they died. You have to agree that this is in the Bible. And what’s more, Jesus told the story himself.”

I began to protest, but was told not to speak unless instructed to.

“And when the thief was on the cross, Jesus said to him, ‘I say unto thee, today thou shalt be with me in Paradise.’ Now right there Jesus said the thief would be with him that day, the day he died. Therefore, it is only logical to believe in the immortality of the soul. Right? Right.

“Another thing is this Sabbath-keeping. Now, the Sabbath was kept by God’s people through the Old Testament and on till Jesus’ death. Then when He was raised on Easter morning, the day of holiness was changed from Saturday to Sunday.

“Now you say you follow the Bible, and yet here are just two instances, out of many I could name, where you go contrary to its teachings. Think about it Alice. You are an intelligent girl, and I know that you are seeking for truth. You think you are doing the will of God, but consider what I’ve just said.

“You wouldn’t want to kill anyone would you? But

some of your friends, or even members of your family may be killed because you are so stubborn. Don't you think God is going to hold you responsible?"

He stared at me with a cold, mean look.

"Of course, if you were to change to God's way, and ask forgiveness for your sins, He would save you."

There was a long silence.

"I know its hard to accept right now", he went on. "But I'll tell you what we're going to do. If you want to, we'll send you back to Kalamazoo, and then after you've seen some of your friends and family, you can make your decision. Sound pretty good?"

I nodded excitedly.

"All right, we'll see what we can do for you."

I was led to a small cell and there I waited. Each day I hoped I would be able to go home. But my home leave didn't come.

The weeks passed.

Every few minutes the guard would look through the opening in the door of my cell, and wake me if I was sleeping.

Every day there were long hours of questioning, long

hours of persuasion talks. I thought I would lose my mind.

I clung to two verses: “If ye love me, keep my commandments”, and “Here is the patience of the saints, here are they which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus.” I had to stand firm; I couldn’t fail now.

Suddenly I woke up.

It seemed as though I’d been sleeping for a long time. I couldn’t hear the guard, but I knew he was in the cell. Rolling over, I saw up and looked at the man. It was Tom!

“Tom! How did you get in here?”

He looked better than he had in the other cell. He was shaved and washed up.

“Never mind that Little One”, he smiled.

It was so good to see him. When he was around, there was no pain, no empty stomach, no heart ache. He seemed to carry an atmosphere of peace and love, of trust and joy right with him. And to me the cell shone when he was there.

“I thought that maybe you hadn’t had much to eat, so I brought you something.” He handed me some kind of food.

I'd never seen anything like it before -- but it was delicious.

"What's it called?" I asked.

"Well, there really isn't a name for it, but I'm glad you like it." He smiled. "How was Judy when you left her?"

"Pretty good, I guess."

"Listen Little One, they're going to be real hard on you from now on. You'll be going home soon, but it isn't going to be such a wonderful reunion as you might think."

His voice was solemn. "It's going to be hard, but it won't be long. Remember how much Christ loves you. Think of all the good things He has done for you all the times He has answered your prayers."

His eyes were soft, and he spoke with the love and authority of someone who has been very close to the Saviour.

"This is just a test.

"Think of it as an entrance exam to heaven. And Little One, you'll pass it. Just keep trying and praying and believe the promises Jesus has made to you. Repeat them and think only of God, not of yourself. Not of your own deficiency, but of Christ's power and strength and love."

“Oh Tom”, I said. “I want to be just like you!”

“Don’t think of being like me, but like Christ”, he reprimanded softly. “No one is like Jesus, and to be like He is should be the highest goal of everyone.”

He smiled.

“Now you must promise me that you won’t get discouraged. I have to leave, but just remember how much Jesus loves you.”

“Please don’t go”, I cried. I didn’t want to be left alone in that cell again, with the guards looking in all the time.

“I must”, he said. “But I will see you again soon.”

Turning my back, so he wouldn’t see the tears, I walked to the other side of the cell. Why couldn’t he stay? Just for a little while more? I didn’t want the guards to wake me up all the time, or to make those sly remarks, that were so characteristic of them.

Then it dawned on me that the guard hadn’t been by for a long time. The whole time Tom had been here. I turned to say goodbye to Tom but he was gone.

“Tom! Tom!” I screamed.

“Will you shut up!” The guard looked in.

I was finally sent back to Kalamazoo. At the jail I

went through the usual procedures and then was taken to a large, nearly empty cell.

“Abby!” I cried as I recognised my friend from Academy. It was so wonderful to see someone I knew.

“How long have you been in?”

“About a month I guess.”

“Is it rough?”

“Yes, but just pray and things work out.”

“Hey, have you got any information on the Academy situation?”

She nodded.

“Did Brown’s get away?”

She shook her head. “They didn’t try.”

“What do you mean, ‘they didn’t try’?”

“They didn’t try”, she repeated. “They just went along with the law and didn’t try to be true.”

“No!” I sat down weakly. “Oh no. It can’t be.”

What made everything work out wrong? How could this be the truth? How could it happen to a Bible teacher?

Two miserable days passed, and then the guard

came and took me to the court room. Entering I saw mother, Elder Brown, and Elder Jenkins. There they were. A thrill passed through me. I knew they wouldn't fall, I knew it.

I was seated and then the questioning began, just like the other jail, only this time there were teams. When one team tired, another one would take over.

After several hours of this treatment, all the questioners sat down.

"Is it over?" I wondered, hoping it was.

Then Elder Jenkins got up and walked over to me.

"Hello Alice. I've been listening with interest to the questions that have been asked you this afternoon. I know that you realise where you have made your mistakes.

My heart stopped.

This couldn't be Elder Jenkins. This wasn't my minister. It couldn't be! How could he be saying something like this?

"Its hard to believe, I know", he went on. "But when we have been shown new light, and we have. We have had visions. I, myself, have had some. In these visions Jesus has told me that the plan is changed. He is going to perfect everyone here, by means of the

Sunday law. And then no one, not one person will be lost.

I looked at him with a breaking heart.

“Do you see what that means Alice? Everyone will be saved. Everyone!”

He believed it. He actually believed what he was saying.

“Alice, its people like you who are holding up this process. You are stopping Jesus from saving us all.”

How could he believe this. How could he, my minister, be so deceived?

Elder Brown walked over to me. No, not him too? Oh why couldn't they leave me alone? I wished I was back in the other jail. Back there, where I wouldn't know what I knew now.

“Its nice to see you again Alice. I just wish it were under different circumstances.”

He looked at me with a cutting stare.

“I don't want to tell you that you're lost, because we can't know that for sure, but I will tell you that if you don't change, you cannot be saved. Do you remember in school, the many times you got into trouble?”

“Remember the time when you went to town on boys’ town day? You thought it was girls’ town day. You were positive you were right, remember? But when you were taken back to the dorm, you found out you were all wrong. And you were punished.

That’s the same way it is now. You think you are right, but really you are wrong and you will be punished if you don’t straighten up.”

This couldn’t be Elder Brown that had taught me Bible just a couple of months before. No, I knew he was different. The same person outwardly, but something had happened on the inside.

Mother walked over to me. With a hate-filled look, she hurled the words at me: ‘They killed your father last week -- they killed him because of you. You’re not a Christian, you’re a crazy fanatic. You killed your father. You are the one, just as surely as the men who shot him.’”

For a moment she just stood there quivering with hate and anger. “You aren’t my daughter!” She walked back.

I looked at the three of them. None of them were the people I’d known.

In Bible class Elder Brown had told how only a very few would be saved.

How only those who would rather die than commit a wrong act would stand through the last conflict. He said the brightest lights would go out. I can still hear him saying, "Some of the very people who you think are saints, you will find out are really devils."

I looked at him now, sitting there with that self-righteous air about him. I wondered if during our many discussions of this time, and the many statements that he had read and spoken about people falling, if he had ever realised that he was prophesying his own end.

I remembered that somewhere I'd read that about only one in twenty would be saved unless they repented. I'd thought that all those 'ones' were my friends, but now I realised how few actually would go to heaven.

Besides Ron, there had been only one person, out of all my fellow prisoners, that I had known previously as a friend.

"Well?" The judge looked at me.

"What will it be? We've given you more mercy than was necessary. You know very well that you are breaking the law of the state, the church and the law of God."

For a moment there was silence.

They were all watching me.

Why couldn't they realise how useless it was to give up my beliefs?

"Well, what do you say?"

"I am happy that I can't agree to abide by any law which is not sanctioned or upheld by the truths of the Bible."

I looked at him unafraid. I didn't care what they thought of me.

I was not going to yield now.

"But I told you, the Bible is no longer in effect!" Elder Jenkins yelled. 'Can't you see what you are doing, you little fool."

I looked at him. I looked at Mom and Elder Brown and felt sorry for them. Sorry that they couldn't realise what they were doing; sorry they were the way they were.

I believed now what I had read, what I had heard. I knew that the time of trouble was the worst of all.

"All right, then I sentence you to death by the electric chair tomorrow at noon." The judge acted bored and angered.

My three 'friends' walked out.

I was taken to a dark cell where I was by myself.

I had to know for sure that I had no sin on the books, but how could I? Elder Brown had talked of the many times I'd been in trouble at school. How could I know that all these things were forgiven?

Day and night I cried to be forgiven. If only I could remember some sin that needed forgiveness, but my memory was blank. Death wouldn't be half so terrifying if I could be sure that I was prepared to meet my Lord.

Too soon we were walking to the execution chamber. I had to be convinced that I was sealed. I had to know.

I was fastened in the chair.

The electrodes were placed on my head. The man walked over to the switch.

"Please save me."

"We'll give you one final chance", the switch man said.

A low rumble -- and suddenly there was a terrific shaking. The light went out. Everyone was screaming. The building reeled back and forth. The floor raised and lowered. The straps holding me broke. I ran from the chair. Windows were breaking.

Thunder, terrible thunder, was cracking all around us.

“The end of the world! The end of the world!” they screamed. “We are all going to be killed! We’re lost! Lost! Lost!”

I made it out to the street. Strangely I was not afraid; I was not unsure about unconfessed sins.

Everywhere people were running -- trampling one another --- killing each other --- anything to escape the light.

The beautiful light.

The earth was heaving like a sea. Great cracks appeared, and people, pleading for death, threw themselves into them. Fires blazed everywhere.

White fire flashed through the black sky. And in the middle of the blackness was the light.

As I watched, I grew happy, happier than words can express. At last, at last Jesus had come. He was here!

Had I been hurt? Had I been sad, or discouraged or hungry or thirsty? I couldn’t remember. All I knew was that I was finally going home!

The earth was hushed.

There were only a very few of us on the street now.

We watched with mounting excitement as the cloud drew nearer, and then stopped.

Raising His nail-scarred hands, Jesus called to the dead.

Suddenly the earth opened and hundreds of glorified people came up out of it. We all joined together in a long, loud shout of victory. And what a victory it was!

Angels came earthward, as those who had just risen were caught up in the air. The angels came closer to us who were still waiting. They felt warm and bright, and I could see the happiness shine bright through them.

My angel was beside me as I began to rise toward Jesus.

I looked around. There was Ron. An angel was beside him too, and together they were flying to the cloud above us. Cooks were there and others I had known.

The thrill ---- the miraculous glory of it ---I was going home to Jesus! I had made it, just like Tom said.

My angel touched my arm. "Yes Little One", he said, "you made it."

"Tom! Oh Tom!" I cried. My heart was so full of joy

that I knew it would burst.

But I couldn't look at Tom very long. There was someone else I had to keep my eyes on. Someone more beautiful, more lovely and kind than even Tom.

Jesus looked at us as we came to Him. He looked at me with the most wonderful, love-filled look, I had ever received. And then He smiled. His smile was so beautiful, so glorious.

He had come and I was happy, happy everything had happened.... *N O W!*

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