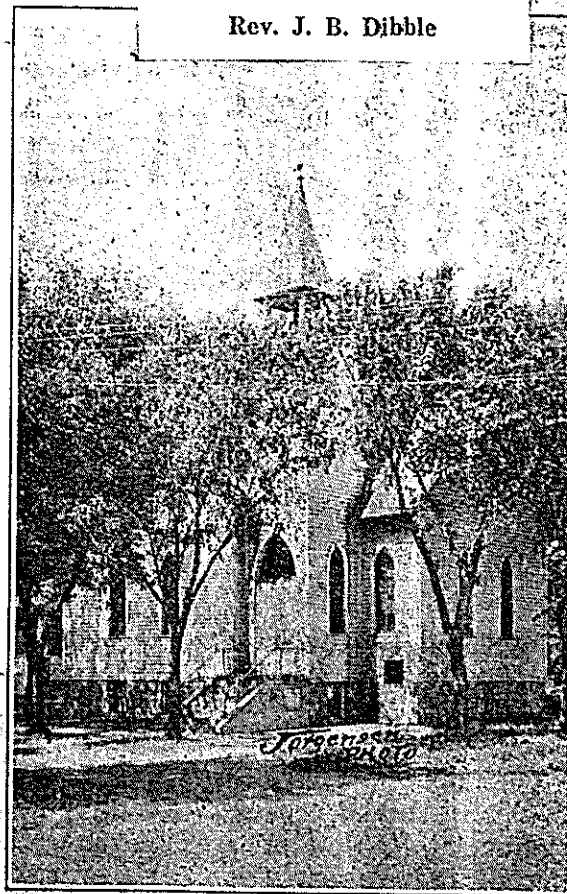




Rev. J. B. Dibble



Methodist Episcopal Church of Hurley, South Dakota

THE HURLEY HERALD

MEMOIRS

by A PIONEER PREACHER

Forty-six Happy Years in Ministerial Work
in S. Dak. REV. J. B. DIBBLE

Since retiring from ministerial work upon April first, 1934, I have been most urgently pressed by my relatives and some others to write the story of my ministry. At first I thought that would be a waste of time and good paper, but the urgency continued, until finally I consulted the editor, he knows what some of the people read. He favored the project, was willing to publish it in his esteemed paper. So here I am!

In the beginning permit me to say two or three things concerning the enterprise. If you do not like the story, "Turn it off," that is, do not read it. Of course I cannot write every detail of a forty-six year ministry, that would keep the editor busy a long time.

Then I wish to thank Mr. Hutchinson for the space and the time required for the publication of the story. I wish it to be understood this is not a sermon, I shall not preach to you.

If I seem to use the personal pronoun, first person singular number, immoderately, please pardon me, this is a personal story.

The greatest value of this narrative will not lie in the record of my personal activities and achievements, but in the peculiar experiences which I have passed through and the historical relations.

This ministry began in October of 1888, one year after the organization of our state. Prior to 1889, the vast domain now comprising the two great states of North and South Dakota appeared upon the maps as Dakota Territory. The very first of our pioneers did not come to South Dakota, but to Dakota Territory.

During the year, 1889 this vast domain was split through its middle, east and west, being organized into two great states, North and South Dakota. But my ministry was a year old when this took place. Those were busy days in the new state. The or-

ganization and establishment of the new state with its kindred institutions.

Railroads must be built; new towns sprang up on every hand. Schools, churches, better roads, homes, barns etc. In fact a new state must be builded. Wells must be digged, fences built, the building and equipment of a vast empire was on.

There was hope, expectation, and joy in those days. "There were Giants in the Earth in those Days," Giants in the Earth of Statesmanship. We who had part in those days recall from memory the names of scores of great Statesmen of that period.

There were giants on every side. Far-seeing, energetic men of industry. Many of these Titanic people were from the sturdy, industrious sections of northern Europe. Thousands of these hardy Norsemen helped to transform these treeless prairies into home and a civilization. They were fitted by courage and training for the life of the pioneer. They could live in sod houses, burn hay, ride in the ox-drawn wagon, eat food and wear clothes corresponding to those conditions.

There were "Giants in the Church" in those days. It would be interesting to mention some of the but space forbids. But the young people of this day must not hold the character, equipment of those pioneer men in contempt. The majority of those were college men. Remember, younger people, the churches you worship in, and the house

your pastor lives in, were largely built by those pioneers. Your Sunday School was organized by them.

I grew up in the expectation that some time I would become a preacher. There seemed to be a program or a destiny which persistently shaped itself to that end for me. My folks shared in the conviction. The next Sunday afternoon following my conversion, I attended the College C. E. meeting. This service included all the Christian young people of the college who wished to attend. At the close of that meeting the leader, a young woman, said "Rev. J. B. Dibble will dismiss us with the benediction," while we were rising I improvised a form of benediction I have used throughout my entire ministry. I am sure that was the first time I had been called "Rev. J. B. Dibble." That girl knew I was not yet a minister by the authority of the church. Her calling upon me after that fashion was wholly prophetic. Other things happened which led me to feel that it was expected by friends that I was destined to this high office.

Grandpa's Prediction

Many, many years ago, while I was yet a small boy, one hot summer Sunday morning, in company with my uncle Fred, but six months my senior, went into grandfather's pasture and chased his sheep until some fell exhausted and lay panting. We were caught red-handed in our crime by our fathers, who came armed with paddles, and a look

of justice on their faces. Grandfather was a stern old man. Soon those fathers had each his own son across his knee, applying vigorously the weapon of their parental warfare. I think grandpa must have pushed his paddle a little harder than my father did his, for father's paddle didn't hurt much, while Fred bellowed like a calf. When the operation was over grandfather seemed to think I had not received all that was due me, and looked as though he wished he could get hold of me and try his paddle. Then he said to my father, "That young outlaw of yours will be a preacher some day." I have never quite understood the Old Man's reaction in that statement. What correspondence is there between a boy smarting as if he sat on a bumble-bee and the ministry? I think my old grandfather, who was a wise old man, thought I would get what was coming to me in the ministry. Anyway, the old man guessed correctly that morning.

I grew up with the thought you will preach some day. In fact my call to the Christian life carried with it my call to the ministry.

The next day after, two other students, and I knelt in penitence and consecration about the Altar of the old Methodist church in Brookings, I went to the parsonage, and told Dr. Hall the pastor, that I felt called to the ministry and wished to dedicate myself to that sacred office. He said, "I am not a bit surprised, Bro. Dibble, I expect-

ed you to come." No one seemed surprised. The machinery for my ministry was set in motion at once.

I always enjoyed the work of the ministry, considering it a divine calling.

On a near Sunday evening after my conversion, Dr. Traveller, in the Methodist church in Brookings, which that night was packed with my friends, gave me a local preacher's license. I began plans at once for entering the conference at its next session to be held in October in Yankton. To do so I must pass a rigid examination in all of the "Common Branches" as well as Steven's History of Methodism and the Discipline of the church. I wished to review it all and conceived that my best way was to teach, so I secured our home school for the summer, running from early spring until harvest. During those few weeks I went carefully over the work. I must be examined in.

After my school closed I helped my father with his harvest, after which I threshed until one day my college friend J. D. Allison came to our place on his way to conference, it having been arranged earlier that we were to make the trip together. It was 13 miles from our place to Colman, where we had decided to take the train, and my sister Mrs. Whealy lived six miles on the way. We left our rig at their place and walked the seven miles, carrying our suit cases. We arrived in Yankton during the night and went to the Portland hotel for lodging.

I was greatly disappointed in that conference session. I had thought of a Methodist conference as a very devotional gathering, with much prayer and religious exercise, where the godly, pious bishop would lead in the devotional spirit and help to create that kind of an atmosphere. I think I may have attended conferences where that was true, but it was not true of my first conference. The bishop was old and in his dotage, cross and gnarled. The sessions of that particular conference were scrappy and red-hot with debate. Men talked on the conference floor with their fists clenched. A struggle was on between the giants of the conference, and there were some. Oh, how, throughout the entire closing night they debated and contested until the sun of the new day shone. There was a great issue on, challenging to contest every member of that historical session. The cause of it all was the fact that a terrific tragedy had befallen the conference. The winter before the sole building of the Dakota Wesleyan had burned to the ground; practically the only assets left the institution being a hole in the ground filled with ashes.

In that fire several students were severely injured. The disaster had awakened a spirit of grasping on the part of certain groups of preachers and laymen, who saw a possibility of having the institution removed to their respective community. Some

were in favor of discontinuing the school permanently. All night long the contest continued until with the dawn of a new day the giants wearied with the struggle surrendered. Mitchell was left in practically undisputed possession of the institution where it has reposed in comparative peace since.

My First Appointment

That morning when Bishop Walden read the appointments for the year he said: "Midland, J. B. Dibble." Where was Midland. We have a Midland now, but not then. Finally I went to Dr. Traveller and said, "Dr. where is Midland?" "Why Midland," he said, "is between the C. N. W. Ry. and the C. M. & St. Paul, that region between Brookings and Flandreau. Great opportunity there Dibble. Go and make good or your head will come off at the next conference session."

No minister ever went forth more disappointed and crestfallen than I did at that time. I thought I had been sent to nowhere.

I went home completely discouraged ready to give up which I would probably have done had it not been for my old pioneering father. He really seemed pleased over my appointment. He was wise enough to see that that it would make me a good starting place, and it did. I would not eradicate the experiences of that first year for any ten years of my subsequent ministry.

I was thrown largely upon my own resources and it developed me. I could not sit upon my throne and whistle and command, I must do things myself. I soon became resigned, and fell in love with my work. A vast section quite thickly populated with scarcely any Christians, but I think they were the most hungry for the gospel of any people I have seen.

Three Problems Confronted Me

First, That of conveyance. That problem was soon settled. A group of pony dealers had passed thro' the community, one pony had gotten away and no one could get near enough to capture him and he was such a mean outlaw of an animal they seemed glad to be rid of him, and told some young men in the community if they could catch him they might have him. They offered him to me for \$25. I bought him. I cannot describe the absolute devilment, meanness, and murderous instincts of that degraded Bronk. But he was the finest saddle horse I ever sat upon. He started every trip with a fine exhibition of bucking. I learned to make a flying leap, making sure of the saddle, after his few contortions were over he settled down to business and all day he loped on, skimming the earth like a bird. I have sat on his back for hours and read and studied as I might in a rocking chair at home. He never played me a mean trick. An affection grew up between

us. I never scolded or chastised him, if I had tried to. I would have spoiled him.

I was intimately acquainted with Mr. Lockwood, a Hardware and Implement dealer of Brookings. Monday morning I rode my little Bronk to Brookings, and called upon Mr. Lockwood. He said "Let's go out to the vehicle rooms, I have something to show you out there." I followed him. After we had looked things over he said, "Some of the Hughson men were in yesterday and instructed me to have any buggy you should select, and charge it to them. Now, take your choice."

I priced his rigs. There were some costly ones. I decided I must not be "Piggish" and take advantage of their generosity, so I selected a fine, red wheeled rig the price of which was about \$100. But how was I to get home? My bronk could not draw the outfit, and would not consent to do so if he could. I knew every livery man in Brookings, and I at once began a tour of the barns, until I found a man who had a fine little mare he would sell me and take my pony for part pay. I bought the mare which proved to be one of the finest drivers I ever had.

I went at once to the harness shop and selected a new harness which I had placed upon my new horse which was soon hitched to the new rig. It was indeed a swell turnout.

I drove at once to the college, secured the finest girlie in the institution and we spent the af-

ternoon breaking in OUR new rig. That morning I had gone to Brookings with my \$25 bronk, and I came home with the finest turn-out in the community.

Solving the Second Problem

Where should we worship and hold our services? There was no place where I could appoint a service without securing the consent of those in authority. The first thing I did was to sit down and figure out a practical circuit with my parents. Doing that was highly interesting. 6

We knew the surrounding country quite well. I wanted three central places. First, we selected the Hughson school house, seven miles northeast of my father's, and about ten miles southeast of Brookings, and about the same distance southwest of Aurora.

We then selected our home place, the central appointment, and decided upon the Winnegar school house, one mile north of our home, and by the way, 80 rods north of the Slocum home, from which some time later emerged Rev. W. P. Slocum. In this neighborhood were a few professed Christians, representing it would make me a very good summer Sunday School, in which my people had been active, had been carried on from the earliest date of settlement.

For the third appointment we chose the Wellman community and school house, seven miles southwest. Now, with our circuit outlined I must get the consent of the different school boards. This was quite a job. I decided to tackle Hughson's

first. May I say here, practically every body within the bounds of the circuit we had mapped out knew me personally. My people were pioneers in that region. I had threshed well over the entire section. The old neighbors and friends were very kind to me during the entire year.

So I set forth in my quest. I think in one day I had consulted the Hughson board and obtained their unanimous consent to use the school house.

I next tackled the board of the Winnegar school, and met with the same gracious reception, "Sure you may use the school house."

So now I had a real circuit. All that year we maintained the circuit as we had arranged it. I preached at each place every Sunday, alternating the hour between Hughson's and Wellman's, one Sunday morning at Hughson's, afternoon at Winnegars, evening at Wellman's, next Sunday reverse Wellman's in the morning, Winnegar's afternoon Hughson's evenings. That schedule continued throughout the conference year, and worked without a hitch.

Now with my schedule arranged, we approached prayerfully our third problem. What type of work shall we pursue? What shall be our goal? I had sense enough to know that simply preaching in those places once a week would not do the work.

The spirit of evangelism was abroad in all Methodist churches. Then I was possessed with

the evangelistic tendency, for I saw strong men hasten to the altar walking over the top of benches. My people were evangelistic, so after prayer, I decided to follow that course.

My conclusion now, after these many years in the ministry, is that what the poor confused world needs today, more than an mere education, or a social program is a real Bible revival. Anyway, the real revival has always done the business. We Methodists have the age long traditions of our church to sustain this position.

Vote for Revival

I found a very acute hunger among the several hundreds of people involved for the gospel. I decided they should have it. I had no experience of my own to guide me, but had been reared in a revival. Revivals were constant in and about our old Iowa home. We spent our winters attending special meetings. My father was considered to be especially successful in the work of the revival. 7

I chose that as my line of procedure. I usually preached to more people through the windows than over the pews.

Revival at Hughsons

In November, one month after conference, we began our special meetings in the Hughson school house. We ran ten nights, and 52 persons, nearly all adults, flocked to our improvised altar, a plank in front and wept their way through to had at Hughsons. I am sure some of the Brookings and Flan-dreau pastors had held services there, but nothing regularly or

The soul hunger, the religious eagerness of those fine, intelligent people, who had not had a chance since coming to Dakota, was really pathetic. Oh, how I loved them! and they reciprocated with their love. When you do something real for a man's soul his spiritual self, you gain his confidence and affection. That revival transformed the atmosphere of the entire community.

One source of blessing in that meeting was the gospel singing.

Oh, how that people sang the old songs! Our music was simple but heart deep. It was led by a neighborhood girl, Miss Carrie Roscoe. During the entire year we had great crowds at all our services. The school house would not begin to hold the people who flocked to it. When the weather permitted we opened the windows along which the people drove their rigs and listened that way. I usually preached to more people through the windows than over the pews.

A Revival at Winnegars

Directly upon the close of the Hughson meeting we appointed at Winegers. Miss Roscoe also had charge of the singing for this meeting. These people had not been deprived of religious privileges quite as much as they had at Hughsons. Occasionally there was not a night that people did not come seeking. We

permanent. They were happy to have regular services. The temperament here was a little different than at Hughsons. The people were somewhat more reserved, but just as fine. Our ten nights at Winnegars yielded about the same number of conversions at the Hughson meeting.

In each of these meetings some strange incidents took place. There were several in the Hughson meetings, which would probably interest some had I the time and space for them. But there was an experience which took place in the Winegar meeting, which has such a gospel lesson that I will relate it.

Sea Captain Loses Swear

About two miles northwest of the Winegar school house was the claim of Capt. McKee and his good wife Mary, a fine genial elderly couple whom everybody respected and loved. They were very devoted to each other. The old captain basked constantly in the sunshine of Mary's love and confidence. They were good people but not Christians.

One night Mary became concerned for herself religiously, and came to the altar with other seekers and was happily converted. At the close of the service I greeted the old captain. Right here permit me to say that the captain had spent his mature manhood as a seaman on the Great Lakes, for many years the Captain of a lake ship, until he was thought to be too old for

that sort of life, when he and Mary had come to Dakota and taken the claim where they were now living.

When I greeted the captain after his wife's conversion, he was weeping as if his heart would break. I said "Well, Praise the Lord, captain." He replied; "You have ruined our home. This is the first time one of us has ever gone where the other could not go. Now Mary has gone off and left me alone." I answered by saying, "Oh, captain that is not true, you can go right along with Mary if you will and your companionship will be the sweeter."

By the way, the old captain had formed the habit of mild profanity, and would swear in your home in friendly conversation. He said, "No, I cannot be a Christian. I said, "Why?" and he replied; "Do you think, Birney, a man could be a Christian and swear and curse all the time?" "No, I don't," I replied, "but if you will take Christ as your Saviour he will take all the swear out of you." "Do you believe he can do that?" he asked. "I know he can" was my answer.

We parted, each going his way home. It went on, for several nights when the old captain came in, his face lighted up and beaming. As soon as he could get to me he said, "Oh, Birney, Praise the Lord I believe he has done it, and Mary thinks so to." I answered "Done what captain? What has the Lord done?" He replied, "Why, what you said he

could do, take the swear all out. I haven't sworn today and have not desired to." I said, "Well, Praise God, I knew he could do it, and now he can keep it out." That became the dear old man's ringing testimony. Some years afterward, Mrs. Dibble and I being in Brookings in the evening, went into a drug store for some article, when we saw standing at the counter captain and Mary McKee. When they saw us the old man hurried to me and grasped my hand while tears ran down his cheeks and he actually shouted, "Praise God, he can do it." "Do what?" I asked. "Why, take the swear all out of a man." That was the last time I ever saw Captain McKee, but folks when we go sweeping through the gates of pearl I expect to find this wrinkled, gray old seafarer, hard by the gate shouting, "Praise God he can take all the swear out of a fellow."

Dear readers, that is what we mean by salvation. If God does not take our sinful habits out of us we may well question our salvation. Profanity, intemperance, lying, deception, gossip, hatred, and enmity, sin of every kind must come out and be kept out.

And praise his dear name, dear friend, our heavenly father contracts to do that with all who accept Christ as their Saviour.

The meetings at Winegars was followed at once by meetings in

the Wellman school house, seven miles southwest of our home. In these services we had no outside help. I did the preaching, led the singing, I could do that in those days, conducted the services, and scoured the community during the day time. We had the same crowds here as in the other places. The building was packed at every service. Two or three old vicious sinners attended each night. In that community was a deadly feud that seemed likely to end some day in a tragedy. The two leaders of this dreadful fight were to neighbors, Allen and Smith. They destroyed each others property. One man was impressed that one of his horses was standing with his head down for a long time. He went to the animal in the pasture to find that the horse's tongue had been cut from his mouth. Of course he knew who was responsible for the dastardly deed, but could not prove it, so there was nothing left for him to do but pay his adversary back in some devilish act.

Both of these men attended the meetings every night. The people were afraid some tragedy might occur in the services. One night old Mr. Allen arose and said in confession that he had been a miserable, murderous old sinner. And strange, no one contradicted him. That incited Smith to make a confession and express a desire for the Christian life. He rather outdid Allen

in the confession business. I felt that those wicked old codgers were playing to the galleries. Neither of them confessed to the destruction of the property of the other. To my way of thinking those old reprobates must get down on their faces in penitence. Their religious lives did not endure long. A little wheat trying to secure roots amid briars and thorns of their wicked hearts. Folks with hatred in their hearts do not get far in the Christian life.

After the Wellman meetings closed we found there were about as many genuine conversions as at each of the other places. We had won to Christ 162 people. There was shouting and joy over the entire region where the services had reached.

We organized three churches from these converts, who were of course in the church as probationers. 10

The next summer when approaching the close of the six months probationary period of our people, we wished to make some sort of effort that would warm the converts up and fit them for their reception in the church. Finally we agreed that a summer get-together meeting might be the best way, therefore, we planned a campmeeting in the beautiful grove on the banks of the Sioux river at the site of Old Medary, six miles south of Brookings. Within a year, Bro. Dibble. There would be few yards of where the Memorial monument stands. At this,

which was under the supervision of Dr. Traveller, great crowds attended this meeting. They came from Brookings, Aurora, Volga and from more remote places, while the immediate countryside was there to a man. The meetings ran a week, which was one of the greatest weeks in my ministry. Sunday afternoon Dr. Traveller stood for nearly three hours and baptized our converts, over 150. Nearly all these people were gathered into the three organizations already formed.

These organizations continued for a while, until the Hughson and Wineger people became absorbed in the town churches, but the organization at Wellman's has continued thro-out the long years. It is to day undoubtedly one of the very strongest of all our rural churches. They have a finely equipped church plant, where all the departments of church activity are carried on.

At the last quarterly conference gruff old Dr. Traveller thawed out and was very profuse in his enthusiasm over our year's work. He pronounced it the most outstanding work on his District for that year.

At that visit he asked me about the next year. I told him I was in his hands and would do what he thought best. He said you must not stay here another year, Bro. Dibble. There would not be much for you to do. I have a piece of work I want

done and I believe you can do it, now, and has been for many, so you may plan to move after many years an efficient instructor at State college.

Appointed to Willow Lakes

The conference that fall was held in Huron with Bishop Vincent presiding. At the close of the conference I found myself appointed to Willow Lakes. The place Dr. Traveller had hinted of sometime before.

As we separated from conference Dr. Traveller said, "I am sending you to Willow Lakes to build a church, if you do not do it your head will come off next conference." I did not enjoy his threat, but I knew that was simply his way of saying that he expected me to put the job over. When I reached Willow Lakes I found it to be a nice little place with fine intelligent people. There were several church buildings but none bearing the Methodist brand, although we had quite an organization functioning, and a good little building which I made my home.

Our people worshiped in an empty room in the school house which were simply two rooms upon the ground. But one room was used that winter for school purposes. We Methodists had a lot of old junk equipment in the other room, which opened directly from the school room. The teacher that winter was a young man who did not care much for the church at that time. Between this man and myself a fine friendship later developed. He is

During each week the children would smash and demoralize our Methodist furniture. Each Saturday afternoon I spent in nailing up the broken junk and arranging it for the Sabbath worship.

Dr. Traveller had told them why I was there and what he expected me to do. That church had its bosses, all in one family, the old couple, on their farm two miles east of town, their son-in-law, a country school teacher, and the daughter, our pianist. These folks had dominated the church for years and were bitterly opposed to the contemplated building.

The condition at the school house becoming intolerable, we rented a public hall for our services. The next Saturday afternoon the old boss came in with his wagon to move the Methodist junk home. When he was loaded and sat upon his load he asked; "Brother Dibble do you intend to try to build a new church this year?" I answered; "Brother Hawes, God helping us we shall dedicate a new Methodist church in Willow Lakes before conference." He said angrily, "I say to you, if you undertake that enterprise my wife and I, and daughter will leave the church." I said, "It will be too bad for you folks, but Methodism cannot be defeated in that

way."

May I say here, the old folks did leave the church, they had nothing to do with the building until the day of dedication, when with much flourish, they gave \$25.00, which was not so bad for them. But the daughter and her husband were obstinate and incorrigible. That is the daughter was, the husband was just a trailer in pants. I received from that woman one of the most insulting letters I have ever received. She asked for their dismissal from the church, which I knew she did not want, but which she got as quickly as I could write it and get it to her. The promptness on my part made her madder than before. She was mad because we had so quickly found another pianist. She took her dismissal to my friend, Brother Hichcock, pastor of the Congregational church, but he would not accept it telling the poor deluded woman, "I will not accept you into our church. I know you have been a trouble maker in the Methodist church for years. If you cannot get along with Brother Dibble I do not think you could with me." The poor woman found herself without a church to boss.

We Proceed to Build

The G. N. R. R. Company owned two fine lots just off Main street, which I coveted for our church, but did not believe the company would donate them to us. After much delay and red tape, they sent word that we might have the lots if we would

erect a creditable building upon them.

Later with the deed for this property in our hands we were ready to launch the enterprise. I went to Mr. Perry who owned the south shore of dry Willow Lakes, which was buried by fine rock, of the "hard-head" species and asked him for what rock we might need. Mr. Perry was not a churchman but I have not forgotten how gracious he was in that matter, inviting us to help ourselves to all the rock we might need. Now, for business!

Remember, I was practically alone in this matter. Really had no Official Board. The Hawes had assumed the domination of affairs for years, the other members of the Board could not function. One of the worst calamities that can befall any church is when a few people with the pastor, ignore other people and assume sole responsibility and authority. Any church thus dominated is headed straight for the rocks.

We planned this way. I went among sympathetic farmers and asked them to come to town at a certain hour on next Monday morning prepared to haul rock. On the time appointed eight or ten big wagons came. We proceeded to the Lake side and loaded our wagons with fine rock, then in procession we drove to town and began unloading our wagons upon our lots. Oh, how those men did hammer those rocks together. I

am sure one half of the men in town visited us while the unloading was going on, and all asking the same question. "What's going on, what are you doing?" Our answer was, "Why, haven't you heard? We are building a new Methodist church." After the unloading was done I took the subscription paper I had already prepared and went forth to canvass the town for funds. We took pledges for cash, for material, for labor. I insisted that Mr. Berry specify a value upon the rock he had donated. Before I retired that night practically every business man in the town had been solicited, and practically all had made pledges. There was a fine response to our appeals. According to our church custom at that time, each new project like this would receive a grant or gift of \$250 and a loan for the same amount. We estimated this would care for about one-third of the cost of the building. But we never could have succeeded if it had not been for Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Chase. Mr Chase was a lumberman Mrs. Chase was an efficient active housewife. Mr. Chase told us voluntarily, "We want the church and will let you have the material as you need it. I will take my chances for the pay." I do not think Mr. Chase lost a dollar at that time through trusting the church.

We hired a professional carpenter to supervise the work, but we depended mostly up-

on volunteer and donated labor. I worked all summer upon the building, rising at 4 A. M. and working as long as I could see at night. The work progressed until completed and dedicated a month before conference. Upon the day of dedication, Dr. Traveller who had charge said to me, "Brother Dibble you may continue in the ministry many years and achieve many successes but you will never have a greater victory than this." That little church was beautiful. I painted both inside and out with a view to beauty and attractiveness.

Some way the church organization never flourished in Willow Lakes much. After a few years of feeble effort our church quit, the building was sold to another denomination and moved to the country where, for all I know, is still housing the worshippers.

That year cost me all I had. Except for the \$100 missionary money, which I received there was no provision for my support. I batched mostly. My fine rig, my little mare that I loved, the buggy that the Hughson people had given me, my new harness, piece by piece went into my living and into the church. I brot a little money there but that had also gone. I had litterly stripped myself for the church. The people were urgent and insistent that I remain for another year. I told Dr. Traveller I could not do so as I did not have another rig to put into it.

He said I should not, and offered the village. Every Christmas he sent the church a check for the amount of the church's one away northeast in the conference, the other close to Wil-low Lakes.

Our conference that year was held in Mitchell, Bishop Fitzgerald presiding. I have a personal reason for remembering that conference session as there I was ordained Deacon.

As I said before the Presiding Elder suggested we could have our choice between two very good churches—Sisseton and Kampeska. After prayer and consideration I chose Kampeska, which at that time had a very good church, and was paying the standard salary for that time for the smaller churches, \$800 and house. Then the surroundings appealed to me, the beautiful lake one mile away, one of the richest regions in the state. A millionaire, when millionaires weren't as plentiful as they are at these rich times, owned practically everything in and about the village, including the beautiful home on the beach of the lake where Mr. Jacobs, the manager of the estate lived. At that time one of the most beautiful homes in the state.

In Chicago where the Robinsons lived, they were Unitarians, in Kampeska, they were loyal Methodists. Mr. Robinson had built the Kampeska church and given it to the community. He had given the church a deed for an eighty-acre tract that bordered the village. Every Christmas he sent the church a check for the amount of the church's one away northeast in the conference, the other close to Wil-low Lakes.

Every Christmas he sent the church a check for the amount of the church's one away northeast in the conference, the other close to Wil-low Lakes. Of each quarter the pastor received a check from Mr. Robinson for \$25. Besides, the good, old people were constantly making gifts to the church. The old folks spent some months of the heated season at their home near the lake. When they were there they attended our services every Sunday morning. Mrs. Robinson was a member of the L. A. S., attended and worked in it.

When the Robinsons were with us, they lived and dressed as our people did, which helped them to the goodwill of the people.

Empties His Purse

One day Sister Jacobs, with whom the Robinsons lived when out there said, "We know you are as interested in the Robinsons as we are, and are just as anxious to retain their goodwill. Mr. Robinson is positively opposed to foreign missions, and we are wondering if you might arrange your missionary offering at some time when they are not here. We know about when they are here. We must be careful and not give them offense." I agreed with her and promised to steer our missionary efforts clear of the Robinsons.

That year the church authorities chose Easter Sunday as the date for the missionary offering in all the churches. We began our plans at once.

I prepared a red-hot sermon for the occasion, undertaking in it to refute the common objections made to missionary endeavor at that time. Easter morning while I sat in my pulpit considering the service, while the people assembled, the Jacobs family rig drove up, but who is that with them? No one but Mr. and Mrs. Robinson. Sister Jacobs was a cheerful playful lady. As she came in she telegraphed me a smile which was laden with significance. I was knocked stiff by the turn things had taken. My first thought was to say nothing about missions until some later time when the coast would be clear of Chicago millionaires.

But that plan confused me, I could not think of a single thing but my sermon, over which I had prayed and given a week of earnest labor, so I struggled on. We sang every stanza of each hymn. All the while I was struggling with my dilemma, but as the audience was droning through the last hymn, and the moment of execution arrived, I felt as I think the criminal feels when being led to the electric chair. I must do something and do it quick.

Just then, when I must act, there came over me a feeling of great courage, and because I could do no other way, I said to myself, "You old coward, back down before money-bags, will you? I will not be intimidated. I will preach the sermon that

the Lord and I have worked on all the week, millionaire of no millionaire"

With the decision, the clouds cleared away, the Holy Spirit fired my heart and mind, and, oh, how we preached that morning! I did not omit one objection. Did my best to refute them all. As usual Mr. and Mrs. Robinson came away forward, just close to the pulpit. While I preached they listened intently, and when the time came for the offering, after I had made the strongest plea, I could and the ushers were passing the boxes for the offering, Mr. Robinson drew from his pocket a great leather purse, opened wide every door into it and turned the entire contents into the contribution box. I do not know how much he gave, neither did he, not a million dollars, millionaires do not carry that much in their purses, but we received the largest missionary offering almost in the history of the church.

As I dismissed the service, Mr. Robinson hastened forward, caught my hand in both of his, said, "I thank you for that message Mr. Dibble. It was a fine presentation of what you and your church believe." I learned a lesson that morning which I have never forgotten.

Do Your Duty

Robinson and Jacobs raised and trained horses for the Chicago markets; driving horses, Morgans, Hambletonians, that

class. They bred them upon the Lake farm at Kampeska. As young as they could be trained, and that was early, Mr. Jacobs began to work with them. They had a fine one-half mile track upon the farm. Mr. Jacobs was an expert. When these young horses had been mated, blacks, sorrel etc., Mr. Jacobs took them to Chicago, where, if Mr. Robinson had not yet found a customer for them, they were richly harnessed, hitched to a fine light rig and driven about the streets until they caught some rich man's eyes and pocket book. It usually did not take much time to get rid of a team.

Millionaire Gives Parsonage

We had no parsonage in Kampeska. It became known that the pastor would need one late in the conference year. A beautiful young lady from White was to graduate from State College that summer, and was expecting to become Mrs. J. B. Dibble, directly after. Mr. Robinson had learned that very important bit of news and was alive to it.

One day he and I were conversing upon the street, when he broke out with, "Say, Dibble, I hear you are going to do the wise thing and get married this fall?" "Why, why, Yes, Mr. Robinson I believe that is the plan." I answered, "Well, where are you going to live?" he asked. And I had to answer, "Oh, I don't just know." With that he said, "Well, you had better know. Can't bring

that girl up here without some place for her. Do you see that house over there," pointing to a very good dwelling which he owned and which was unused at the time, "I'll tell you, Dibble, if your men will get busy, dig a cellar, and move this house over by the church, and make the required changes and fix it up, I will give it to them. But I want to see them at it."

I thanked him, when he turned and said, "All that will cost some money. I will give them \$200. in cash to help it along." He did, the house was moved, became the first home of the young pastor and his bride the next year. It still stands by the church, I think.

New Church at Hazel

The Kampeska circuit had three preaching points, Kampeska, Grover, six miles south upon the G. N. R. R. and Hazel farther down the G. N. line. Hazel had no church building although ours was the only church of the town at that time. We had a very fine congregation of intelligent, industrious and prosperous people.

We worshiped upstairs in an old dance hall, altogether too small and inconvenient for our work. After a little persuading the church people there decided to launch a church building project, which we did, but I must take charge of it. Hazel was about 10 or 12 miles from Kampeska. But we jumped in when there was a chance to build

something. I wonder if my personal schedule for the summer would interest you? Beside the regular work of a large circuit, I supervised the construction of the Hazel church, the building of the Kampeska parsonage and the completion of my conference studies. To put these objects over I arose each morning at four o'clock and worked quite late at night.

But the most important event of the year to me, came off October 7, just before conference, which was held in Sioux Falls that year with Bishop Foss presiding.

On October 7, Miss Hettie Doughty, of White, cast in her destiny with mine and became my faithful wife. She had graduated from State college in August. I had waited three years for her to complete her course and receive her B. S. degree. Something strange about that event. My birthday has always been upon October 8, and I was married October 7. In other words I was married the day before I was born. The good people upon the Circuit demanded our return for the next year. They insisted they had put up with the Batch for a year and had a right to the new wife. We were happy to accept their gracious invitation, and were appointed there by Bishop Foss at Conference.

came to me, however, a very serious disappointment in the fact that I found the course in Garrettsville, Ohio, just the same as our

exceedingly good conference to me as at it I would graduate from my Conference course and be ordained Elder, all of which took place. From the beginning of my ministry I had planned to complete my Conference studies, be ordained Elder, and go to the Theological school at Evanston. We were all ready to go. My brother, W. L., pastor of the Congregational church in Willow Lakes, was to be married to Miss Maude Cornwall, a teacher in the Willow Lakes school, at once, where he would enter their theological school, the "Chicago Seminary." It was planned that we should live together. Directly after their wedding Will and Maude went directly to Chicago and located an apartment on Park Avenue, on the West side. We followed a few days later. We had a fine, comfortable winter together. I made my trip daily to Evanston by rail, walking two miles each way to the N. W. depot where I took my train.

conference course had been. They used the same text books. I had worked hard upon the course and had very excellent grades from the conference examiners and it seemed a loss of time and means to go over it again down there, so I did what I have regretted very much; quit my work in the school and returned to Bowdle and Bangor, which were open at that time. I am convinced I should not have left the school. Those schools do not give their greatest value from the literary studies but from the associations involved.

We all know a bright young man who is fighting out the same condition as I had. Well, anyway, wise or unwise, I accepted the pastorate of Bowdle and Bangor. Bowdle at that time was the terminal of what is now the coast line of the C. M. & St Paul R. R. 18

That Bowdle and Bangor section was one of the finest agricultural districts in our state. As we had no parsonage in Bowdle we secured the rooms above the depot, where we spent the summer. That region was settled mostly by German Russians, who were coming on every train, the most of them directly from their native foreign homes. Mrs. Dibble was interested in the affectionate greetings of the newcomers with those who had been there longer. They would embrace and greet each other with

affection. Those people were industrious, frugal and lawabiding.

Bangor was the inland capitol of Walworth county, in the immediate vicinity of where Selby was later established, when the railroad was extended.

We liked Bangor very much. A fine American people had settled there. We found there on a claim the home of the Browns, the parents and sisters of our Rev. G. D. Brown whom we all know so well, at one time pastor of our church at Parker. We had some very interesting experiences out in that strictly pioneer section at that time. We would drive from Bowdle to Bangor on Saturday afternoon, and return to Bowdle Sunday afternoon. The people out there would invite us to stay with them on Saturday night.

Sleeping with Oxen

A fine farm woman invited us to stay with them the next Saturday night. When the day came, it was a hot mid-summer day. We drove to the home and found it to be a veritable pioneer shack, which was all right, but oh, how hot! The kitchen and dining room were the same, the cooking was done upon a big range. When time for retirement came the man with a lighted lantern said he would show us to our room, and taking our bag, started out of

doors. We thought we should follow the bag so went along. The good host took us to the barn, and opened a door into a granary annex. In there was a furnished room, and right at our feet was an open passage, just beyond a great yoke of oxen with their great spreading horns. All night they munched and rattled their chains, went to bed, got up, and fussed away all night. Did we sleep that night? I did some. Mrs. Dibble always was afraid of big-horned cattle. The next morning she said, "I felt like Mary the mother of Jesus, Why? How? She lay in an Oxen's manger." Now dear reader can you believe the woman of that house was a fine intelligent cultured lady? She would grace the finest home in our state. 19

Bowdle had no church building at that time, but a very fine lot of people organized into a church. I began at once to agitate for a new church. I found the people sympathetic, but worried about their financial ability to perform the task. But finally they mustered enough courage to jump in and tackle the project. We had the assurance that the Church Extension Society would donate us \$250.00, and loan us another \$250, which would be about one-third of the total cost. In all my church building experience, and I have had much, I have never seen in

any other place, so many different and ingenious ways of securing funds for a church enterprise as those hustling people put on.

The L. A. S. built a booth upon the street where they made and sold ice cream and lunches several times a week. We had in our church in Bowdle a very devoted man and wife, Mr. and Aurand, who owned a large department store. They had a beautiful home, were well-to-do and were making money. They put themselves with all their energy behind our building enterprise. Mrs. Aurand asked him to invite all the travelling men who should come to the store home with him for dinner. She always got a liberal contribution from them. She made a shopping trip to Aberdeen and came back with \$200 for the church.

I was in the store one day when Mr. Aurand asked me if I could keep a secret, not even tell my wife. I said the last proposition would be difficult, as I entertained no secrets from my wife. All right he would not reveal his information to me, until I promised absolute secrecy. He said, "That little woman with whom I live thinks she's smart around here." By the way Mr. Aurand was devoted to his wife and was proud of her ingenuity. He had been in the merchantile business in Wisconsin and Dakota, he dealt with the

leading wholesalers, had bought tens of thousands of dollars worth from some of them. He said: "I have written to each of the houses with whom we do business asking for contributions. In about two weeks I shall begin to hear from them, then we'll see where the little woman comes in." He got a great "kick" out of his anticipated victory. But his highest hopes were realized. Every one of his houses responded, mostly with \$25.00 checks. He was a proud man when he surprised the committee by turning over to it about \$300 in cash he had received. 20

We built a fine beautiful church which has been in service until the present time. It was a beautiful structure. I painted and finished it outside and in. I remember we wainscoted it inside and stained it a cherry, which with white with white plaster made a fine looking interior. We dedicated the structure just before conference. The only marring incident of the year was the fact that during the summer I observed that my young wife was declining. I became alarmed. She had worked too hard all summer. The Ladies Aid divided into groups to do that work, but Mrs. Dibble thought it necessary for her to be on every group, and she puddled about in the icy water two or three times each week. I thought that might be a difficulty. Finally I consulted

the Dr. who investigated her condition and told me, "The Mrs. has no disease, but the worst disease possible has gripped her." "Oh, Dr. what is it?" I asked. "The little woman is dying of homesickness. The lonely condition with its associates has paled upon her. You must get her out of here or you will lose her." I asked anxiously, "How soon Dr. must this be done?" "When is your conference" he inquired, and as I told him, "Just a few weeks hence," he said, "If she can have the assurance of a change soon, she would be encouraged and perk up."

I wrote to our Presiding-elder, Dr. J. S. Akers, telling him the conditions. He came to Bowdle at once. Sympathized in a fatherly way with Mrs. Dibble, and assured us if we could endure until conference he would bring us down closer to our people. With this assurance the good lady's spirit revived. She might have gone home any time but would not leave me out there.

Appointed to Ashton

The Conference that year was held in Brookings, Bishop Ninde presiding. We were appointed to Ashton at this conference. We had packed our furniture so that we would not be compelled to return to Bowdle. The Bowdle people expressed great sorrow that we should move, but appreciated the circumstances and were very kind. They were justly proud of the new church.

We left many cherished friends in Bowdle and Bangor.

Mrs. Dibble's home, at White, was but 16 miles from Brookings where the conference convened that year. Bishop Ninde appointed us to the pretty little city of Ashton, with Athol, four miles west on another line of R. and Clifton, 11 miles north-east as afternoon appointments. The people of Ashton were cultured and fine, but Ultra-conservative. Our congregations were good throughout the year. But it was difficult to get up any speed in the work of the church. 21

We had no parsonage in Ashton, and found upon arriving that there was not an available house or room in the town.

A fine cottage would be open March first, which we could have then, but we must find a place for winter. Mr. George Boyer, an implement dealer had an old residence house, which he had used as a store room for years, filled with junk and dirt. If they would clean it up would we live in it? Yes, if two or three of the front rooms were cleaned and fixed a little we would make it do until the cottage was available in the spring.

Cleaning and fixing that old ranch, was as much of a job as Warbucks and Anne are having fixing up the old house in which they are living. We moved in and were quite comfortable all winter. March first we moved

into the cottage, one of the finest places in which we ever lived. This was 1894 the year of the severest drought in the history of the state, until the one through which we are now passing, which is the worst since the settlement of this region. There was absolutely not a drop of rain the entire season. And, oh, it was hot. The scorching, blasting hot winds blew up from the south every day.

Shooting Rain out of Sky

The people in their desperation listened to some so-called scientific men, who reminded them that rain is brought through great explosions here, and showed how the concussions of great battles always brought rain, and also the racket of our Fourth of July's nearly always closed the day with a shower. All that being true, they argued that through a liberal belching of explosives, rain might be secured. Finally a special election was held to vote upon the question of levying a tax of ¼ mill (I believe that was the amount) to raise a fund to shoot rain from the skies. A Fort was established at Frankfort. Within a short while the bombardment of the dry sky began. That bombardment continued all summer, or as long as the explosives lasted.

Day after day the bombardment continued, with not one drop of rain. In spite of their banging the Sun rose the same

great, hot, defiant-red-ball, the skies still did not hang out one single promising cloud, every day the blasting, blighting red hot winds blew up from the Southland, another defeat for the "brain trust". The rain makers surrendered and have not been heard of since. SEQUEL, when the Lord wants it to rain it will do so, and man cannot shoot it out of the sky with Giant powder and dynamite.

That drought was general thro-out the state. I believe there was not one sheaf of grain harvested in Spink County that year. The whole country grew up to vicious, cruel thistles. That fall the farmers found it necessary to make leather boots for their horses to protect their legs from the terrible thistles and thorns. 22

In spite of all the disaster and destruction of that historic year, I read the other day that the conditions produced were not nearly as bad as those of ours today. That was for one year, while the drouth of today is for a series of years, with not one sign of its cessation. Then the resources of the people were not as badly reduced as they are now.

THAT YEAR was marked by a great tragedy and gracious event. During the summer, while we were engaged in Revival meetings at Clifton, a man living out there came to me and said a tragedy was being enacted

in the neighborhood. A man and his wife had engaged in a bitter quarrel for some days and that very morning had taken her children to the home of her parents in Mellette, a few miles away. I might do the man some good if I would call upon him, which I did. I found the man crazed with anger. He threatened to kill his wife and her parents. I think I have never anywhere else, witnessed such hatred and human madness.

He repeated to me what he had told his neighbor as to his vengeful purpose. I talked to him the best I could; appealed to him in every way I could think of. I got his promise to come to the meeting that evening, which he did, sitting on a back seat and giving good attention to the service. Oh, how I prayed that the Lord would lead me to say something in the message, or in the songs that might touch his heart and soften him. At the close of the service we separated. The next morning when I went upon the street, a friend said; 'Brother Dibble have you heard of the terrible tragedy that took place in Mellette last night.' I told him I had not. He said that during the night the man had come to the home of his wife's people had tried to shoot her father and mother, but they both made their escape.

He then followed his wife under a bed where she had taken

refuge and beat her over the head with an empty beer bottle until he thought he had killed her, and the next morning his dead body was found in a plowed field near town, near his body an empty bottle from which a deadly poison had been drained. I have often wondered if I might have said any thing to that madman which might have averted that tragedy. This, I presume I should have done, notified the authorities and had the man locked up. I did not think of that then. 23

The Crowing Event

The chief, great event of the year occurred September 4th when there came to our home our first son in the form of a fine, big, twelve pound baby. About the only product of that barren year..

Upon that baby we conferred the name Robert Doughty Dibble, Doughty being the maiden name of his mother. That baby boy is now a man forty years old, with a beautiful, cultured wife, a sparkling daughter and peppy son. He and his wife are both graduates of State college from which institution they hold their B. S. degrees. He spent 27 months abroad during the World War, has a beautiful christian home in Chicago where he holds an important position in the College department of the Y. M. C. A.

Thus our year at Ashton

closed with its problems and its victories.

That year our conference was held in Watertown with Bishop Fowler the presiding Bishop. A week before conference Mrs. Dibble, with young Robert, went to her home at White to spend the time while I was at conference.

We might have remained in Ashton another year, we were invited to do so by the leaders and officary of the church. But some way, ultra-radicalism did not produce the best of feeling when mixed with ultra-conservatism. I felt under a great restraint and requested a change if possible, which was granted, and we were appointed by Bishop Fowler to Webster.

At the close of the conference I returned to Ashton by train to prepare our goods for removal to Webster. Reached Ashton about 8 p. m. packed all night and the next day, then loaded our car, having everything loaded, the car billed, ready for transit. I packed my suit case stuff and by train got back to Watertown that night where my rig was. The next day on to White to wife and baby.

I went to Webster a few days before Mrs. Dibble, secured a house, there being no parsonage in Webster at that time.

Our year at Webster did not prove happy to us. Webster was

a nice town, aristocratic in spirit. There were fine people in our church. We were well treated, but there were some bad conditions there then and it seemed to preclude much advancement in the church. There was a BOSS in the church at that time. Not a man boss. I had rather work with five men bosses than one woman. This boss was the wife of a leading merchant of the town. She was rich, proud, wilful and well nigh every thing else that made her hard to get along with. The pastor was her slave. She demanded that he come to her home for his orders. And, oh, well; that's enough. It was very disagreeable and discouraging, and often humiliating to us, so we decided that one year was enough for us. Other pastors had quit disgusted mid-year. Financially it was a hard year. Following the drouth of the year before, the farmers having but little feed, which they were carefully saving for their horses during the seeding time. They turned their stock upon the prairies, where they lived all winter. Had it been a hard winter much of the stock must have perished. I remember how anxious the farmers were. They feared their horses would be so reduced and weakened during the winter as to be unable to do the work of the spring. But a miracle was wrought. Toward spring when they took their horses up and began to feed them carefully on the little hay, straw and few oats, they had carefully gathered, their teams began to pick up, and with careful handling went through the spring's work in fine shape. As I remember, 1895 was marked by an abundant crop.

Several minor incidents transpired during the year, but I think you would not care for them. During the winter some church in the east packed and shipped to us a "Missionary barrel" from which we were to take what we needed and cared for, and distribute the rest among our needy people. I am almost ashamed to relate that we insisted upon a change at the close of the conference year. In the last Quarterly Conference of the year, Dr. Dresser, the presiding elder gave that church a severe lecture. He told them he had no cify. He reviewed their history more preachers for them to crucify and reminded them that they had had some of the best preachers in the conference whom they had sent away broken hearted and defeated. He said we should move.

A Fine Appointment

The Conference that year, was held in Aberdeen, good old Bishop Joyce presiding. Bishop Joyce did richly by us and made us happy when he appointed us to Arlington, where we had one

of the most beautiful pastorate of our ministry. We remained in Arlington four years.

25

In our wanderings, to and fro, from community to community, as an itinerant Methodist preacher, we found that communities, like persons represent certain types which is peculiar to that particular section. The Creator must surely love variety. One has only to look about him in nature for the verification of this truth. No two objects about us are alike. A million grass blades in the meadow, but no two exactly alike. A world full of people but each possessing his own personality, and different than all others. We may resemble some so closely that our friends can scarcely distinguish us apart, but we are different, and it is that difference that creates our peculiar personality and individuality. The mother of twins that resembled each other so closely that no one outside the immediate family could distinguish one from the other, I asked the mother one day how she could always tell one from the other. She answered quickly. "Not from their appearances alone, but their personalities, they are not at all alike." I am saying this is true of communities, no two alike. That fact constitutes one of the preachers problems, to meet the peculiar type of this particular

community. One cannot direct this people just as he did those of the last church he served. Here, I must study my books, but I must study my people more. Unless I know their attitudes, their reactions, I shall fail of doing them the most possible good. No two of our churches have been alike. Hurley and Davis are not alike, and neither Hurley and Parker. Neither are the communities represented by these churches alike.

When we came to Arlington, we found the people there not like any others we had served. Arlington has always maintained her type and distinct personality. I am not pleading that the people were all saints, nor any large number them. Arlington has always been a live progressive little city. It takes live progressive business men to produce such a town. I found a fine bunch of men doing business on main street. They were not all professed christians, nor church members. Arlington had a very fine group of non-church member business men. One year while we were at conference, our District Superintendent came to me and said; "Brother Dibble, I just received this from Arlington, I thot I would show it to you before showing it to the Bishop." Whereupon he handed me a paper which proved to be a petition asking for our return to that place for the

next year, followed by a long subscription list signed by, "We, the undersigned business men of Arlington not members of any church, promise to pay the amount set opposite our names to Rev. J. B. Dibble, if he is returned to us for the next year. But this subscription list will not be in effect if he is not returned." I have that petition in my home. Within two hours after our return from conference, a group of those business men called upon me and paid me \$102.50. In view of that the official board raised our salary \$100 that year. One day I was passing along the street and as I came to the grain elevator of which Al Connors, who was not a professed christian, was the manager, came out and said, Mr. Dibble, I know your salary is not large. You are a young preacher, and you probably need more books than you are able to buy. I want you to take this and put it in your library. Whereupon he gave me a personal check for \$25. These are just samples of how they treated us while we were there. They gave us a multitude of fine gifts while we were with them. That is what I mean, they were different. Arlington has always been a fine, hustling business town. It is located in one of the best sections of the state. 26

They have placed and kept the church in the center of the community activities and in-

terests. Now, it is practically the only church doing business in the community. They have one of the finest, best equipped church buildings in the state. Also a fine ten-room thoroughly modern parsonage.

They are united and stand directly back of their pastor and boost him along. We had four beautiful years as pastor of this church. We were happy every minute. As usual we stressed the evangelistic phase of the gospel. Had several good revivals during our four years there. Arlington congregations were always good. There were many events which transpired in which the reader might might have an interest, but it would require much space to record them.

The Thain Wreck

It occurred one cold, drizzly evening in February. We were in special meetings in the church, I was preaching, when looking toward the railroad, I saw a great fire raging. It attracted my attention for a moment, when the congregation noting my interest turned in their seats and saw the fire also. Of course, they became anxious at once. I said, "Friends, I think that fire is in the country." At that time a man came to the door and said, "There has been a terrible crash on the railroad and several men are burning." In a moment the

room was emptied. By this time the people of the town gathering near the wreck, but were being held back by members of the train crew who told the people to stay back as one of the crashed engines might explode. There was a fine old Arlington man burned in the wreck. 27

Finally Asa Harris, president of our Epworth League said, I es. That is nearly as convenient will not stand here doing nothing while men are burning to death. He secured a shovel and went to the burning pile, began throwing snow into the fire. His heroic act was contagious, and before long 100 men were shoveling snow into the raging flames.

The cause of the wreck was, line will grow and succeed while this. In those days there was a high grade on the railroad approaching the city from the west. The tracks were covered with ice. A special freight train was making its way east, and in Arlington, the coming into was ordered to pass the depot, our home May 17, 1898 our second son. Upon him we conferred the west bound passenger to the name Paul. As it was the pass. Directly behind this very time when W. E. Gladstone, England's greatest statesman, and one of the World's greatest and best men, passed permitting the engine to pass. So we named our boy baby Paul Gladstone Dibble. Some one said at the time, "You surely are giving that boy a job, to did not make the siding in carry and live up to those time, and the stray engine ran into her, causing the terrible wreck. Several men were killed a moment that we conferred

and burned. That dangerous grade has long since been eliminated.

The railroad passes through Arlington in a northwest and southeast direction and the town was laid out to correspond with the railroad, until all streets are on the bias, and there is no one in the town who knows for sure which way their house faces. That is nearly as convenient as the historic pocket in a shirt. The Methodist church in Arlington has always been vital and strong. I believe one of the reasons for that is the fact that it has always been an orthodox church. It has stood for the vital things of the gospel. The church that persists along that

too much upon him, as he has borne the weight of those names with honor.

28

Paul is now a man in his thirties. On June 25, 1923, he was married to Miss Marie Bjerno then of Evanston, Ill. Marie had graduated from Wesley hospital Chicago, as a trained nurse. In their ministry she has proved a helpmeet indeed, to her preacher husband. Directly after their marriage they went to Madras, India, where they put in five years in Missionary work under the authority of our Missionary Board. They were granted their vacation, came home expecting to return, but the terrible slump came, and the Board retained the Missionaries who were home, and gradually recalled nearly all of those who were on the foreign field. Paul entered the Chicago University, where he spent about two years and secured his Master's Degree. He is a graduate of Garrett, and is now a member of the Rock-River conference of our church, and stationed at Rochelle, Ill.

One day just before our conference, the closing of our fourth year in Arlington, with no seeming reason for moving, as I was on my way up town, I am sure I could go to the exact spot, there came a voice from above which said plainly, "You should move this fall." From that moment I could not shake off that impression. Later I re-

lated the experience to the congregation with the information that I had requested a change from the District Superintendent, who had tried to dissuade me. So we moved.

Appointed to White

The conference that year, 1899, was held in Huron, Bishop Hurst presiding. For some time some friends in White had been teasing us to come there. This was Mrs. Dible's home. There were many, many of her relatives living there. Upon the church record was a list of members, among whom were the names of Doughty members, 37 of that good name in a row. Some of our friends said I was making a mistake, going where we had so many relatives. The Doughty's were a vital, exacting lot of people. All of them quite radical. But we were appointed to that church, a veritable hot-bed of relations. We were on good terms with all our relations at that time, and I do not remember that our relatives caused us any embarrassment during our pastorate.

White is located in a very productive section. It was in those days a live thorough going little city. Probably no town in the state of its size did more business. A large amount of grain was marketed there each year. They had an outstanding flouring mill, which had much patronage. Another enterprise that brought much trade and

business was the Farmer's different lines. They ran a large general store, sold machinery, hardware etc. White was a real commercial center.

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The town and its environs were made up of a high type of intelligent and mostly, law abiding people.

Back in 1899, when we went there, our church was quite strong and active. The congregations, morning and night, filled the building. I think they had one of the best organized and most interesting Sunday Schools that we have had during our ministry. Some fine, and peppy teachers.

It was an inspiring sight on Sunday mornings to watch the farm rigs coming to that place of worship. They came from every direction. Away down toward Brookings, and all around they came. Those were really halcyon days for the church. We had a good spiritual year.

In material things we built that year a much needed barn for the preacher's team. A fine building that graced the parsonage premises, and still stands doing the Master's business, as a garage for the preacher's car. At that time Bushnell, six miles south, and Prairie Home, a rural church, seven miles to the southwest were afternoon appointments upon the White circuit. The field was large with practically no roads as we think of them today. The work was really hard. I used to come

home from my afternoon appointment with the stars shining and facing the evening service, Eworth League, so completely exhausted I could scarcely put my team away and get to the house.

One Sunday evening I reached home late, because of bad roads and as I approached the church, I heard the first bell for service ringing. It frightened me, I said to myself, "I cannot do it." I put the team in their stall, and dragged myself into the house. Mrs. Dibble had lunch ready. I said, "Please excuse me for a few minutes." I crawled up to my study, and fell upon my knees before my table, and talked to the Lord as I would talk to a friend. I reminded him how hard I had worked during the day, how wearied in body and spirit I was. I told him if I was to do anything in the approaching service he must rest me and give me strength. I remained there upon my face until there came the assurance that he would go with me and strengthen me for the task.

Dear reader, I came down from that room 30 minutes later as rested and peaceful as if I had risen from a good night's rest. From that Sunday night I have never doubted the potency and power of yearning prayer.

Our year at White was happy for us, and quite fruitful. May I speak of the fact, that living on the hill, on her claim, one mile south of town, lived an es-

seemed widow, with her two children, a daughter and a son, just big children at that time. That lady was Mrs. Carrie E. Hutchinson, with her two children. Mattie and Howard, the latter, the honored editor of our local paper, The Hurley Herald. Miss Mattie, a few years ago, married a man with a good position, and later they moved to North Carolina, where they now reside.

Howard grew up, and quite a ways up, went to Valparaiso University, where he completed a course in Public Speaking and journalism, met a beautiful lady, whom he later married. Returning to South Dakota he entered State college and received a B. S. degree. After completing this work he launched into the newspaper business. His good mother is now spending the winter in Hurley. Mr. and Mrs. Hutchinson rejoice as the proud parents of a fine team of boys of the same age, John and Charles.

About two months before conference that year, Dr. J. O. Dobson, Supt. of the Sioux Falls district of our church, wrote me inviting me to accept the pastorate of the church at Yankton. I do not know why he selected us for that terrific task. The Yankton church, at that time, was in a terrible turmoil, the present pastor had things torn up. Many families had quit the church permanently, several other families had quit

temporarily. It was a bad proposition. But I had been longing to get into a larger place, so accepted the invitation subject, of course, to the sanction of the Bishop.

The conference that fall, 1900 was held in Sioux Falls, presided over by Bishop Merrill. The people of White were urging us to remain with them another year, had invited us to do so. Sent a long list of petitioners to the Bishop. Instructed the Presiding Elder to return us to White, with the promise of an increase in salary of \$100, for the next year.

But our promise to Dr. Dobson was out, and we were not inclined to interfere with it, therefore when Bishop Merrill read the appointments he said Yankton, J. B. Dibble. It was really hard to leave White, Mrs. Dibble's home was there. But for some reasons we thought it best, so began our packing for our new charge. No big auto trucks in those days, so we shipped by freight.

We had a driving team and a large, capacious spring wagon. On a certain morning Mrs. Dibble bade her folks an affectionate farewell, and with our two sons, Robert and Paul, we set out for the city on the Missouri. I remember how highly we enjoyed that trip. The weather was warm and ideal. Some way the appointment inspired us. The first day we reached Len-

nox where we spent the night at the hotel. The next morning we set out again. As we drove along we observed that one of our horses was showing signs of lameness. We stopped at Hooker and had the blacksmith make an examination but he located nothing wrong, but poor old John's lameness grew worse. We expected all day to reach Yankton that day, as the next day was Sunday, and I was announced to preach. It was quite important that we get there. We drove carefully until reaching Volin at dark, and they told us it was 12 miles to Yankton. By the way! the distance from Yankton to Volin has always been a long 12 miles to me.

By this time our horse could scarcely hobble, so at the restaurant where we got supper Mrs. Dibble and I held a council of war and decided that to drive farther that day would abuse our poor horse, we did not know the way, at best it would require about all night to complete our journey, so we decided to leave our team in Volin and go into Yankton upon the train. So I put the horses in the livery stable with the instructions, to those in charge, to keep them there until I should call for them. We got to Yankton upon the G. N. train about ten o'clock. Their depot at that time was located on the extreme east end of Main or Third St. We took a hack to the Merchants hotel on

Broadway where we spent a comfortable night. Our boy Robert always had an eye for the larger things. When he was just a child we took him to some function at State College, as we were leaving he looked back upon the buildings of that institution and said to his mother, "When I get big I'm going to that college". He never could be induced to change his mind. When the time came, he went to "The Big College" from which he graduated in due time. But that night as we drove in the hack the full length of Yankton's main street, he said with a sigh, "My, but that is a long Main Street". Sunday morning I left the hotel early to locate the church in which I was to begin my ministry that day. At a certain intersection I met a nice looking man going south while I was headed east. I saw he was carrying in his hands some Methodist Sunday School periodicals, among them the popular blue "Quarterly" which has descended from remote period of the past. I at once knew that man was a Methodist as no other man would be caught upon the street with his arms full of that literature. I greeted him telling him I was looking for the Methodist church. He said, politely, "I am on my way there and shall be glad to help you locate it." I said "My name is Dibble, I am

the new pastor." He said "I thought so. My name is Shufelt, J. W. Shufelt, general roustabout for the Methodist church". Dear reader, there began upon the street corner that day an intimacy that increased thro-out the years. I loved J. W. Shufelt as I have loved but few other men. After two years we were moving again and when I bade him farewell he wept like a baby. Sunday proved a good day in the church. The people received us kindly. Monday Robert and I went to Volin and drove our team home.

At Yankton we had but little country driving and we did not need our double team, and big rig. I went to an implement dealer who kept rigs and traded him our lame horse, spring wagon and double harness for a beautiful up-to-date surrey. Nothing finer on the streets of Yankton, and a new single harness. My! we surely had a swell rig.

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Bro. Lachlan Maclean was our predecessor, and had been appointed to Elk Point for the new year. We found their "goods" packed but still occupying the parsonage. Brother Maclean was an ardent Republican politician, I believe a Presidential election was on that year, the election taking place Nov. 2nd. Our predecessor refused to move until after election as he would destroy his right to vote. But the time was

not long, so we piled our stuff in with theirs. Until they got their goods out we simply batched. I remember one day Homer Shufelt came with a young lady to be married. With a big dry goods box for a table, I tied the sacred knot, and the young people went forth feeling that they were truly married, so indeed they were.

The Yankton of 1900 was not the Yankton of 1935. I do not know of another city or town in our state that has made so much of an improvement in its material and moral character than Yankton has. When we went there in 1900 very much of the old "River town" atmosphere was there. There were 15 open saloons doing a big business on the main streets. On First Street was a row of houses protected by a high board fence with sharp spikes at the top, each of these houses a bad resort. The girl inmates were paraded up and down the Main streets each day. Gambling ran riot. Gamblers and women shuttled back and forth between Sioux City and Yankton.

There was not much attention given to the prevailing vice by the municipal authorities. As is usually true where vice reigns practically undisturbed the city was also run down materially. Things were unkempt and ragged. But in the midst of all this vice and squalor there was a multitude of fine Christian

people, in the different churches as could be found any where. These good people in the churches have prayed, lived, and voted until a complete change has taken place. Until today, Yankton, one of the Mother towns of the commonwealth, is one of the most beautiful in material things, fine business centers and emporiums, beautiful and well kept homes, great schools finely equipped, perfect streets, restful parks, and up-to-date churchess housing large congregations on each Lord's day. The material and moral character of the fine city has undergone, we say, a complete change since 1900. 33

I think Yankton is now one of the most beautiful and cultured cities in our state, and any time some good, wealthy residenter has a nice little bungalow to give away let me know and I will move in any time. I do not know another city in our state where I would as leave spend my declining years. At that time our parsonage in Yankton was a comparatively new house, and very nice and cozy. It has since been modernized and changed somewhat.

The Methodists in Yankton have always been somewhat handicapped because of their old and inadequate church building.

Many minoir incidents and events transpired while we were in Yankton that might interest

some, but their recital would require much space.

One Sunday afternoon as our family was reposing in the parsonage we heard a strange "Chug-chugging" upon the street. One of the boys came running in crying out "Come quick, it is a horseless car." Sure enough it was the first automobile any of us had seen. A little baby buggy affair with one cylinder, the outfit making more racket than a freight train. That particular machine was owned and operated by Charles Edmunds, son of ex-Gov. Edmunds, the family operating a bank in Yankton. That automobile was the center of attraction upon the streets of the city for a long while, and I suspect frightened more horses than had ever been scared in the town before.

During this year the Methodist churches of the Sioux Falls district purchased the beautiful park south of Canton, and established the Epworth League Assembly.

We attended that year and continued to do so as long as the church maintained services there. After some years the Assembly features were abandoned for an annual campmeeting which would run ten days. In that meeting was used some of the finest evangelistic talent in the country. The grounds are still owned by the Methodist church.

We found our church in Yankton in very much confusion I said several families had left it permanently, and others temporarily. There was internal trouble that seemed to threaten the existence of the church. A situation that we readily saw would require much tact and wisdom to overcome. But we prayed and worked carefully.

One of the worst things a pastor can do is to permit the "fussing" of the church to affect his relations with the entire church. There are fussers in nearly every church. Our first year closed happily with the beautiful wedding of Miss Stevens, belonging to one of the families that had gone out, but was now back. We never had warmer friends than that family.

Our conference that year, 1901 was held in Milbank, Bshp Foss presidng. We borrowed a pony of the "Dye" man to drive with our horse. This Dye man's business sign read "We live to Dye and Dye to live". We drove to the parental home of Brother W. P. Slocum, in N. W. Moody county where we substituted the "Dye" pony for Slocum's horse. We drove that afternoon to Mrs. Dibble's home near White, where we spent the night, W. P. and I leaving early for the seat of conference, Milbank, where we arrived mid-afternoon. While quite a group of the ministers were sitting about in the hotel, a man came and sidled up to the desk and told the clerk, "I'm a stranger here and wish to get married, can you help me out with a preacher?" "Sure these fellows

church and once more became active in the work of the kingdom.

are all preachers". I happened to be the closest to the applicant and got there at once. "Are you a preacher?" "Sure!" "What kind of a preacher are you?" "A good kind, one of the best". "No, no, what church?" "I am a Methodist Episcopalian". "Good, that is just what my girl and I are. Will you marry us?" "Sure I will. That is just what I am here for." We made the arrangements and in the parlor of the hotel I married them.

After the ceremony the groom handed me \$5.00. When I came out that whole group of Ecclesiastical teasers got after me to share my fee with them. We bought grapes by the several baskets, apples almost by the peck, peaches by the crate. They teased me thro-out the entire conference session. "Say, did you hear, Dibble had a five dollar wedding since he came to conference?" That bunch of greedy preachers munched up my entire wedding fee before conference closed.

At that conference when the appointments were read the Bishop said "Yankton, J. B. Dibble." I think I was never happier or more hopeful in all my life than I was the next morning when Brother Slocum and I started on our return trip. There did not seem to be one thing to mar my joy. There was not one appointment in the whole conference that I would have traded Yankton for. We

drove to Mrs. Dibble's home and spent the night with her people.

We had already planned for Mrs. Dibble and the boys to make a more extended visit with her people. The next morning Slocum and I left for his home where his wife had spent the time. At Slocum's we traded horses again and the Dye pony came back into service. Upon returning home knowing we needed a few things in the home, I took \$100 in cash, went down town and spent the whole amount in new household equipment. The people express much joy over our return for the second year. And we were never more happy than we were over our appointment. I do not know that I have anything particularly interesting to speak of concerning that year. Dr. Dobson had served his entire disciplinary period upon the district as Presiding Elder and had been succeeded by Dr. J. P. Jenkins. May I say I was with Dr. Jenkins thro that six year term of his leadership of the district, and later, six years with him while more recently he gave another period on this same district.

During that year there were no outstanding events or incidents. It was during that winter, I think, that our legislature was in session in Pierre. At that time our congressional representatives, Senators and Congressmen were elected by the legislature. One afternoon

We

we heard the most terrific bedlam over the city. The bands struck up, men were rushing about shouting at the top of their voices, schools were dismissed and the children joined into the general racket. I hurried down town to find out what there was to shout over. I discovered all this demonstration because a highly respected citizen of the community had been elected to congress. Hon. Robert E. Gamble. One of the cleanest, wisest, most refined men South Dakota has ever sent to Washington. Too bad we have not some more like him, and sense enough to send them forth to represent our great Commonwealth. Robert J. Gamble was an honest Christian man. We were never ashamed of him while he represented us.

One thing that helped to make our pastorate in Yankton pleasant was the fact that my widowed sister, Mrs. Hattie D. Tanzy, was matron of the Yankton college all the while we lived in that city. She was in our home practically every day. She and Mrs. Dibble, Hattie and Hettie, were a little closer in their beautiful intimacy than sisters. They had roomed together while attending State college from which both had graduated.

That year passed away quickly as "years" have a habit of doing, when one is busy and happy. The thought of the approaching conference and the

possibility and probability of moving had not suggested itself to us.

About two weeks before our conference, Dr. Jenkins, Presiding Elder, was at our place to conduct the last Quarterly Conference of the church year, when after supper he said, "Shall we take a little stroll together before the meeting?" As we walked slowly upon the street he said kindly, "Brother Dibble, how would you like to go to Parker next year?" "Brother Nicholls must take a leave of absence for the sake of his broken health," I said "This is unexpected by us. I must talk with Mrs. Dibble about it." At that time Parker ranked much higher than Yankton. Mrs. Dibble was not eager to move. Their church was comparatively new. Their congregations were large. The Sunday School, and other church societies were alive and prospering. Finally we decided to accept Parker and so informed Dr. Jenkins, although we were so attached to Yankton that we considered any move indifferently.

The conference session that year was held in Madison. Bishop Goodsell, the presiding officer. When he read the appointments he said, "Parker, J. B. Dibble." As usual, after the more fragile "goods" were packed—Mrs. Dibble always packed them—she took the boys for a month's outing at her

home at White. When we were married I told her I wished her to spend a month each year with her folks as long as the old home continued. This she did, I think without missing a year. I left the heavy packing until after conference. Packing in those days, when we shipped by rail freight was much different than it is today, moving by truck or van. On the way from Madison to Yankton, I had gone by train, I stopped over a day for a short visit with my people in Canton. One beautiful afternoon I went south on the C. M. St. Paul train for Yankton. When we were passing through the railroad yards of Hawarden, where the two lines of railroad cross at right angles, an engine on the C. N. W. R. ran broadside into our train, knocking the front portion clear over the telegraph pole. It happened on a small trestle, and the North Western engine was drawn thro the trestle. It was surely a real mixup. Soon the wreck-purchasing crew of each road was on hand clearing up the wreckage, but it was about morning before our train was cleared and we got on our way.

IN A WRECK

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A Northwestern freight had stalled a little way west of Hawarden, and this engine was ordered down to draw them in. The engineer was ordered to make the trip. In the investigation it was shown that in his hurry and excitement, he climbed into the cab, put his engine in motion, forgot about the C. N. St. Paul, was putting on his overalls when the crash came. Had the engine plowed into one of the frail coaches, filled with passengers, there must have been a terrible tragedy. It shows the value of ten seconds of time, and 40 feet of space. Yankton was highly favored that year, having appointed to it a new man from New Jersey, George W. Rosenberry, who proved to be one of the best preachers, pastors, administrators in our entire conference. He gave Yankton about eight years of excellent pastorate. Later Dr. Rosenberry served a term as District Superintendent of the Sioux Falls district.

While serving in this capacity Dr. Rosenberry became enamored with the Florida "right of way", breaking off a country, made some quite heavy investments down there, and also induced many of his friends to do the same thing, among them the writer, who purchased seven acres away down in the Fort Meyers re-hand clearing up the wreckage, with the Caloosohatchie river, one main outlet of the Everglade section, flowing upon two sides of his land, and overflowing from one to 100 feet deep each year.

Dr. Rosenberry finally transferred his Conference membership to the Methodist Church South, and has held several im-

portant charges down there.

It took me nearly two weeks to complete our packing before going to Parker I went to Parker by rail for the intervening Sunday. Saturday when reaching Parker I decided I would leave the train Ig-Cog-No-To, go to the hotel and care for myself, but as I was about to go around east of the depot I heard a lady's voice calling "Brother Dibble, here, Brother Dibble, you cannot do that way here, Parker does not do that way." It was the cheery voice of Mrs. C. R. Goff, who in company with Mrs. Quiggley, and I think Mrs. Lukens, had come down to meet the new Pastor. I had a slight acquaintance with these ladies, having met them several times at the Canton Assembly. I was taken to the Goff home for the week end period. The daughter Bessie was home in those days. 38

Of course I received beautiful entertainment the the Goffs, I have been entertained in that fine home several times since.

Sunday found a large crowd in the church at all services. This characterized that church during our entire five years pastorate. One Sunday morning at the regular service hour Mrs. Dibble and I counted 33 farm teams about the church. Several large farm families never missed services. John Rundells, the two Eggleston families, Ollie Roberts, the Brookins, Carters and several other large farm

families were faithful and constant in their church attendance.

Monday I returned to Yankton, completed the packing and shipping of our goods. Bade goodbye to the dear friends, with my faithful horse Dewey attached to our surrey, and the boy's big dog on the seat beside me, started on the trip to our new home. Drove thro Hurley on the way. "Shep" the dog, felt very keenly the dignity and exalted position he occupied on the seat beside his master, and as we drove thro the towns he sat bolt upright and as common dogs from about town followed us barking, Shep kept up a steady "Boo-Boo-Boo".

May I tell the boys and girls a story about Shep. After we had lived in Parker, the town officials passed an ordinance that any dog found on Main street without his owner or guardian would be run in by the marshall and if not called for by the next morning at day break, and the payment of a dollar fee, would be put to death. We were absent once for a number of days and got Earnest Purinton to take care of Shep. I came home alone, and quickly Earnest came to our place, and told me solemnly that Shep got away, had gone down town the marshall had him and he was due for execution the next morning. My first impulse was to let him go. After

I retired that night, every time I fell asleep I heard and saw Shep. I could not get away from the poor fellow all night. My sympathies warmed up toward him. Just a dog, you know! How could he know his company was not desirable on Main street? Before morning I had myself wrought up to a high state of sympathy and affection for Shep. Boys and girls, what do you think I did? I put a dollar in my pocket, got a chain and went to the home of the marshall, paid the fine, got the dog, who was happy to be loosed and have the Master with him. 39

We lived in Parker during a part of the wet period for this part of the state. Rain, rain and more rain was the program. It was not unusual for the Vermillion river to be a vertible flood. Several times we saw the entire "Flat" north of Parker under water. Many land owners proceeded to tile their farms at that time. That period from 1902 to 1907 revealed what Turner county might have in the way of moisture. My memory is that the crops were heavy. Crops are always good in South Dakota when we have an abundance of moisture. I have lived in South Dakota since 1879 and I am sure during that time we have not had a failure when we had an abundance of moisture. Our altitude is high, and our country is normally dry. Our natural rainfall is inadequate to produce

the crops. That is our greatest difficult, and N. R. A., A. A. A. W. R. C. and all the government projects cannot prevent. There are only subterfuges, emergency provisions, while we wait for rain.

Just at this point in my writing, a friend came in and said, "Charley Goff is dead." I considered Charley Goff one of the best friends I ever had. C. R. Goff did not make high professions, but he possessed fine convictions and qualities. He loved music and sang all his life. Recently he has been connected with a male quartette composed of pioneer men.

Nearly all the while we were in the Parker church, Mr. Goff was the faithful chorister. No matter what time of the week, Mr. Goff never refused to take charge of the music for funerals etc. He was a genial, friendly man. I loved him.

I wish to express my sympathies of Sister Goff and Miss Bessie. Charley Goff will be greatly missed in Parker for many years to come.

Thus one by one the people who built our Commonwealth are passing on.

We made our pastorate in Parker strenuous. The church people responded beautifully. One thing characterized our church in Parker during those days and, that was the fine, large number of young people we had during our pastorate there. They took a live interest

in the church and its activities. Were loyal to the pastor and his work.

During our stay in Parker financial conditions were good. A large number of Iowa farmers settled about Parker in those days. These astute old Iowa farmers believed Turner county soil equalled their boasted Iowa dirt, and they could sell their Iowa farms for from \$300 to \$500 per acre, and buy Turner county land of \$100 or less per acre. They were deceived into thinking our land was as good as the Iowa land, which never was true. But back in the days of which we are thinking now, many who have become the leading and most substantial citizens of this section came here under the above conditions.

Many of these people were loyal Methodists and found their way at once to the church of their choice, while many others went into the other churches of the community. During that time all the churches of Parker were keenly alive and aggressive. A leading Parker lawyer, Judge Jones, said in public at a certain function, "If there could be as fine feeling and fellowship between the lawyers of the town as there is between the preachers it would be a fine thing." Patterson of the Baptist church, Rider of the Presbyterian church, and Dibble of the Methodist church made a harmonious trinity.

Beside these leading churches the Episcopal brethren main-

tained regular services with a resident rector, building their present rectory while we lived there, then the German Methodist people had their church and parsonage, regular pastor and maintained regular services. Also the German Evangelicals the Catholics had services, with a resident priest, and large congregations.

So Parker was a city of churches and church-going people in those earlier years.

Horse Breaks Loose

While in Parker I served the Marion Methodist church much of the time. One Sunday afternoon I took Dr. Jenkins over there for service. I had just bought a new horse from Jonas Jones of "Jones he pays the freight" renown. For that trip I had borrowed Judge Jones' fine top buggy. At Marion we tied our horse at a post just west of the church.

That day there was no choir, nor any one to conduct the singing. If prizes had been offered to the poorest leaders of song I think Jenkins and I would have carried off the blue ribbons. I was sure however, that I had it on Bro. J. a little, as I could sing some, while he—Oh well, let bygones be bygones! That day we announced a hymn, we all knew but none of us could sing.

I would go as far as I could, when Jenkins would break in then I, then Jenkins. And we two heartless fellows beat, strangled, punched, maltreated

that poor hymn until it lay before us a corpse. Dr. Jenkins preached, that was one thing he could do perfectly. We dismissed the service, went out to come home, but behold our horse and rig were gone. I found him later not far off, helping himself at the haystack of a resident. On our way home I said incidentally "I think he broke loose while we were singing the first hymn." "When Dr. Jenkins replied "I do not blame him."

We had several real religious revivals while we were in Parker. The church maintained a good degree of spiritual life and activity.

Five years were considered the pastoral limit of time then.

The people had voluntarily raised our salary twice. When we went there the church was giving \$900 without house, after two years the salary was raised to \$900 with house, at the close of the third year it was voted to pay \$1000 and house the next year in case we should be returned.

When Mrs. Dibble and I went to conference Dr. Jenkins at once told us the way was open for us to go to Madison for \$1000 and parsonage if we cared to do so. But he said "you will receive the same salary if you return to Parker, and will raise that church to \$1000." We decided at once to remain in Parker.

While we were in Parker something important took place in our home. It was on a beautiful summer Sunday evening, August 7, 1904. The church bells had rung for the evening service the congregation was assembling, when there came the gentle flutter of wings. It was the Stork who said "I have brought another boy to your home and hearts. Rear him carefully and make a good man of him." We accepted gratefully the sacred charge. We christened that boy Clifford E. Dibble, which name he has borne with dignity and honor ever since. He is now a man married a beautiful Southern lady. For years Clifford has worked for the Northrup-King Seed Co. They keep him traveling in Kansas and Texas. He prefers his Texas territory. He makes his home, when he can be at home, with Irene's people, Boswell, Oklahoma, away down upon the Oklahoma and Texas border.

The conference session, 1907, was held in Vermillion, with Bishop McDowell presiding. We had had five years of strenuous but happy years in Parker, and thought the time had come to move.

I am sure we had remained in Parker long enough. Dr. Jenkins insisted we might remain longer. He told me Sunday morning of the conference "I know no reason to prevent you

returning for another year." but I understood the situation better than he did. I have always thought it would have been fatal for us to have returned the next year, so insisted upon a change. Dr. Jenkins had no charge in the class with Parker open that year. He had completed his term upon the district and must accept a change. A good place had been arranged for us upon this district, but to open Watertown and provide for Dr. Jenkins our place was filled. But we were not neglected. Two very fine places opened to us and left for our choice. G. F. Hopkins, one of our best friends, was Supt. of the Aberdeen district, and all through the conference session urged us to accept Groton, which was a strong point, paying \$1000 and house. Dr. W. I. Graham was Supt. of the Watertown district and had Clark open on his hands, which paid the same as Groton. From the first our inclinations were in favor of Clark. Clark was a live county seat. Their property was comparatively new. So, finally we chose Clark. I always appreciated the fact that we might have gone to Groton.

When Bishop McDowell read the appointments he said "Clark, J. B. Dibble." 112

We had one of the most beautiful pastorates in Clark. Clark we found to be a high grade, substantial prosperous little city. The people of Clark

were mostly cultured and wide awake.

We received a most gracious reception by the people. The largest congregations of my ministry, I think, greeted us all through our three years pastorate in Clark. As I remember the crop conditions were fair while we were there. One fall, I think it was either 1907 or 1908, there was a financial tie-up for a few weeks. The banks would only pay out ten dollars at a time, or any day. But that was a mere flurry and soon passed away. Clark is situated in a fine and normally rich section of the state. I am told that section has been hard "hit" during the past few years, but so has Turner and all other counties of South Dakota. Up in the north western part of the county, in the Coteau region, were some fine cattle ranches. Mr. Vid Jones and his sons had nearly a township filled with fine cattle. When Jones and sons shipped, it was not by a carload or two, but whole train loads. Sometimes two train loads. Mrs. Vid Jones and her sons' families were connected with our church and were liberal supporters of it.

We enjoyed Clark for one reason, because it was a fine wedding center for the Methodist preacher. Our parsonage was within one block of the courthouse, on the main street to the county capital. The other preachers lived at a dis-

tance, across the R. R. and were not as accessible as the Methodist pastor. Strangers would go to the court house, secure their license and drop into our convenient parsonage for the ceremony. One Fourth of July, 9

A. M. we had a wedding for which we received a \$10 fee. At high noon that same day I had another wedding for which I was paid another \$10 fee. That afternoon at 4 P. M. I had another wedding for which I was given \$10 as a fee. That was not all-at two of these functions, Mrs. Dibble and I were guests at great wedding feasts, morning and afternoon. Several times I had two five dollar weddings in a day. Weddings were about as common in those days, there, as snow birds are here now. 13

I believe there were quite long periods while we were there that our income from marriages would have provided for our needs. But we were paid a good salary promptly. Had an official board that looked after the needs of the church quite faithfully.

The Logan Community

Those of you who are familiar with that region know that Clark is situated on the east side of the little range of Coteaus which mark the eastern boundary of the James river valley. You also remember that as you pass through the Coteaus going west there is spread before you a most beautiful

plateau stretching away off south of Raymond as far as one can see. The immediate portion of it, south of Raymond is Logan township of Clark county. That whole section had been settled and opened at an earlier period, but crops failed year after year, until nearly all the settlers had lost heart and courage and had abandoned their homes, and returned east. Land had no value. An old timer related this experience to me. A neighbor had been living upon a tree claim in this community, but wished to move to a homestead he had secured a little farther west, and came to the neighbor, who told the story, and engaged him to help him move, and said "for pay I will either give you the deed of this tree claim, or \$4-incash." The man said he told him "I think the four dollars will do me more good than the tree claim." Now, to be brief, that whole beautiful valley was laying there abandoned until about the time we went to Clark in 1907. Just a few scattered farms had been kept up. I remember that before this time in passing thro there upon the highway I became enamored with a certain quarter section adjoining the highway, one of the most beautiful quarter sections, I think that I have seen in our state, as level as a floor, not one rise or depression upon it. I

am sure a Jack-rabbit could have been seen any where upon it, from any part of it, but for crop production the whole tract, with its rich soil had not been worth five dollars.

But, behold a wonderful change has come! For two or three years the farmers of that region have proven that, with enough moisture, Logan township will grow abundant crops, and a boom, the most wonderful boom I ever saw, was soon on Logan land doubled, trebled in value. Men would buy a farm in the morning, sell it during the afternoon and make \$500, \$1000 or even more in the turnover. There had been started a movement from the Des Moines section of Iowa, to the Logan locality. Those people mostly had money. That beautiful valley attracted them. Men were buying and selling constantly. The boom was the chief object of interest. Real estate firms hired men to meet the trains and solicit who ever might get off. People came by the dozen.

Many of these new comers from Iowa were devoted Methodists, in fact there were many Des Moines' Conference ministers who came also. They had succeeded in saving \$200 or more and saw here a fine chance for investment. Some of these good preachers lost all their money in their speculations and their religion, also.

That boom condition continued until the whole valley was practically bought and settled, and the click of the farmers' machines, and the hammer of the builder's hammer, and the stir and sound of life, were heard all over Logan township. There was still a sound that those Christian people longed for, that was not being heard thro-out that beautiful valley, the sound of sacred song, the voice of the gospel and worship. But that condition could not long remain with those people.

One day a group of Logan men came to our home and said they had decided they must have preaching services in their community.

They already had a Sunday School organized, which met each Sunday afternoon in the Smith school house, but wanted preaching also. Would I take on that place as a regular appointment. I accepted the gracious call and it was arranged that I should begin my work with them the following Sunday afternoon.

It was nine miles from Clark to Logan. I always greatly enjoyed going out there. I think that was one of the finest country neighborhoods I have ever worked in. Logan became a regular part of the Clark charge. The last summer I was there, we decided to build a church out there. A farmer gave the church an acre from

his farm. The people came and dug the excavation for the basement.

When we left about Nov. 1st the building was inclosed, and the work was pushed to completion and dedication. They now have one of the finest rural plants in our conference. Two years ago I received a fine letter from the people there urging me to go up and participate with them in celebration of an anniversary project they were planning. I thought, however, that it was too far to go. I am sure no other church in our conference has been a greater delight and blessing to its community than that little rural church has been to Logan township. We have been asked many times "What is home without a mother?" A poor, cold lonesome place. May we ask the question, "what is a community, without a church?" A poor, lonely place, indeed.

Clark has been rich in the several prominent people who were pioneers there, and have lived there since. For instance, Ex-Gov. Samuel Elrod, and Ex-Supreme Judge Carl G. Sherwood. There have been no more vital, prominent men in the affairs of our state than these two men, Sam Elrod and Judge Sherwood. Living on opposite side of the street in their fine homes in Clark.

These men were both official members of our church when I

was pastor. Mr. and Mrs. Elrod had been members of our church from its beginning. Judge Sherwood was a Unitarian. He and I did not always agree theologically, but got along finely. He was one of the finest, most interesting Sunday School teachers I have ever known. One difficulty in the S. S. in our church was the fact that everybody wanted to be in the Judge's class.

There were other prominent people residing there, of whom we cannot speak here.

Tabernacle Meetings

The three Protestant churches of the city, the Norwegian Lutheran, Congregational, and the Methodist, decided to employ an evangelistic group, build a tabernacle and conduct a month's series of meetings. The Johnson party of evangelists was engaged. Including the singer and Mrs. Johnson there were about six in the party, as I remember. A large open space near the depot. There was some objection to the project. Some proud people thot it was a reflection on the character of the town, while some nominal, worldly church members took it as a personal affront. But mostly the people were sympathetic. And with Ex-Gov. Elrod and Judge Sherwood both on the managing staff, the more thotful people were bound to have some respect for the project. Of course

it was quite an expensive enterprise. I remember the meetings cost our church, as their share, an amount equal to our entire church budget for the year, including Pastor's salary and the total cost of the church expenses. Many interesting incidents took place during the meetings. May I mention one that might interest the readers. *UE*

I think it was about the third week of the meetings that public announcement was made that a three day sport event with horse racing as the chief attraction would be put on the next week. We had inside information that that was being done to interfere with the meetings. We plead with the promoters to wait a few days until our tabernacle work should close. They would not listen, they would show us who had the people of Clark. By the way! we had had great crowds in every service.

That night in the service the evangelist talked to us. He said we must not permit that hideous thing to happen. Of course we could not use violence to prevent it, we were Christians, and must conduct ourselves in a Christian spirit. But he urged all Christians to pray that it might not be. And we did pray and exhort the promoters of the sport, but the last night before the day when the celebration was to begin, it did not look good. It looked as if the united prayers of all

the Christian people in the community would be defeated. Johnson said they would not, that God would intervene in some way. Some of us prayed nearly all night, some all night. I arose early, and saw the celebrators already coming into town. When about eight o'clock some of the most terrible things began to manifest themselves in the sky and the elements. I never before nor since beheld such black threatening clouds. The lightnings were frightful, the almost constant thunderings seemed to rock the earth. It poured down hail, then floods of rain. I have never seen such an hour. Dear reader, think what you will, Almighty God was fighting the devil that day.

After the terrible storm I went down town. One man was working at his cess pool, he was panic stricken. He said "Oh Mr. Dibble what can we do? Our cess pool has broken into our basement". A hundred terrible things took place during that horrible hour. When I got upon the street I saw it was not safe to be on the street as a large element of hoodlums seemed to think we church people had defeated them. Their race track was under water, the ball park was a lake. The sports never came off. I sincerely believe that the promoters would not have dared undertaken it again. They felt the supernatural presence and power that day. Some people had

already come to town for the sports before the storm. As there were no amusements they did the next best thing and came to the tabernacle services. The devil did not try again to interrupt the effort. *UE*

The last night of the meetings when the finance committee reported, it was discovered that money sufficient to pay every cent of obligation was in hand with a fine large surplus. What shall be done with the surplus? Finally Dr. Johnson told of the fine Bible school to be held in the First Baptist church of Minneapolis, Dr. W. B. Riley's church. Part of these meetings would be held at Excelsior, on the shores of Lake Minnetonka, a few miles from Minneapolis. Would it not be a fine thing to give the three pastors a vacation and let them attend this meeting. Every one in that vast happy throng voted "Yes." Thus it was arranged and thus later we three pastors went.

The chief event to us in Clark occurred in the first December, we were there. December 11th, 1907, when the stork came for the fourth time and flew into our home with a sacred burden and said, "I have another boy for you. As I have instructed you in the case of his older brothers, so do with him." We said, "Old Stork, aren't you coming rather often? Notwithstanding we are happy to com-

plete our quartette of fine boys so will accept this new responsibility." He, the last son, we called Rolland Asa Dibble. He has grown to a fine manhood, has a beautiful christian wife, Margaret, and two fine boys, Jack and Joel. For several years Rolland has held a responsible position in the office of the Northern-States Power Co., at Sioux Falls.

Beaten to Forty Dollars

One Easter season, while we were in Clark, we put forth a special effort to raise the benevolent funds for the year. We tried to arouse an interest in the S. S. We put on several new stunts of a money raising nature. Among other things, I secured a beautiful silk banner. There were two classes, one of boys, the other of girls, of the same age, from ten to twelve years old.

I told the children that the class which secured the largest amount by Easter should have the banner for a year. Here is where the joke came in with me and I told them also, that I would match dollars with the victorious class.

Do you know, reader, what those two groups of kiddies did? They got busy, there were about a dozen in each class. A red hot rivalry sprang up among them. One day we would hear that the boys were ahead, the next day the girls would be in the lead.

Everybody in the church, and many outside became interested in the contest, and the preacher was very much interested. Those kiddies went to everybody for contributions, and got them too.

When the final report was made on Easter morning, it was found that the boys had won by a narrow margin. But, the poor preacher was he happy in the result? Those two classes of boys and girls brought in nearly \$70, not counting the \$37 that the preacher had to pay. The leaders in the church, with brother Frank Harris the S. S. Supt. said to the pastor, "Brother Dibble, you must not pay it." But I steadfastly insisted and paid it. I was dealing with boys and girls, it would not do for me to break down on my own offer.

In fact the amount was not much more than Mrs. Dibble and I would have given. But brother Harris tried in several ways to compensate me, but I kept even with him. One Monday morning I was hanging the family wash on the line when a fine looking man approached and asked, "Is this the Methodist pastor?"

"Yes sir," I answered. He gave me his name and said, "I am a member of the Des Moines conference. We have a little money and that we might invest in Logan Township land. I was to meet the land agent, A. M. Molesworth today, but they tell me he is out of town. Have you some good reliable real estate

man in your church that I might see." "Oh, yes," I replied "there is brother Frank Harris, one of our leading men in the church, S. S. Supt. etc., you will find him a good man to deal with." I told him where he would probably be found. He left and I soon forgot the incident. But some days later as I was passing brother Harris' office on main street, he called me in, and handed me a personal check for \$40. I said, "What is this for?" He said, "For that bit of business you did for us." "What business?" I asked. He then reminded me of the man of whom I just mentioned, whom I had directed to Harris and Sharp's office. I said, "Do you think I must be paid for directing a man to your office?" He replied that the \$40 was the regular fee for that type of service. Then he said, "We sold that man a farm and made \$1,000. This is strictly business, that is your commission." I quickly thought if Harris and Sharp had made \$1,000 off that poor Methodist minister, I might as well have a bit of it. But here lies the animus of the whole thing. As I was leaving the office, Harris said, "That will square you with the \$37 the kiddies dug out of you, will it not?" That was Frank Harris' way of paying me back.

Besides the more material events of our Clark and Logan pastorate, I must say that our work there was characterized by

several gracious revivals, many sinners were converted and the christian people were greatly revived in their religious experiences.

We had worked very hard, and at the end of three years felt that we should have a change.

The conference that year was held at Mitchell, presided over by Bishop Nuelsen. We were appointed to Howard. Certain unfortunate conditions, for which the church people in Howard, with the exception of two or three official members, were not to blame, made the appointment intolerable. You, reader, would not be interested in the detail of it.

During the winter, one day, while I was alone in the house, I answered the call of the telephone. A cheery voice said, "This is Bishop Nuelsen speaking, brother Dibble. Will you transfer to the North Nebraska Conference and come at once to the pastorate of the church in Plainview?" Then he proceeded to explain conditions in Plainview. They had a strong active church organization there.

The church had met with a terrible calamity. Because of their activities along temperance lines, the liquor people had burned the entire Methodist property, church and parsonage. Undoubtedly they had tried also to burn the Congregational church at the same time, but

their fire failed there. As soon as our people could straighten matters out, a fine residence was purchased for a parsonage, and a fine new church erected.

The leadership of this work of restoration had been entrusted to an efficient man with the assurance he should be released as soon as the task was completed. That time had come. The church was to be dedicated the next Sunday, the Bishop must appoint some man as pastor, would we accept? I said, "Yes," to the good Bishop, and we began packing at once, and within a week Robert and Paul were entered in the Plainview school. Mrs. Dibble with Clifford and Rolland had gone to her home for a few days visit. We were never more graciously received.

Within a few days Mrs. Dibble and the younger boys came, but Clifford was not feeling well. He had been sick upon the train and grew so much worse, that we called the Dr. who pronounced his ailment Scarlet Fever. We must straightway be placed under quarantine, which at that time extended for full thirty days for each case. We hustled about. Directly across the way was the large Baptist parsonage occupied solely by Mr. Patterson, the back-sor pastor. We secured a couple of rooms from him, and Robert and Paul and I moved in. Mrs. Dibble remained alone in the parsonage with the sick boy and his younger brother.

er. That condition continued for 35 full days. It was February when we moved to Plainview. That country has light soil. The following summer was, oh, so hot, hot, scorching south winds prevailed all summer. We nearly perished from the terrific heat and hot winds.

So The North Nebraska conference was held in Omaha that fall, with Bishop Nuelsen, I think, presiding. We were appointed, per expectation, to Plainview. That winter, with brother Slocum assisting we had one of the most gracious and beautiful revivals we ever had. There were many beautiful things which occurred in those meetings. Later I assisted brother Slocum in his church at Ashland, Nebraska.

Now I must confess to a personal weakness, I became homesick for the brethren of the Dakota Conference, and decided to return to this conference upon opportunity. There came an opening in Tyndall, Dr. Will Shepherd, the District Superintendent, urged us to accept the pastorate. Said the church was ready to build a much needed parsonage, and he felt sure we could put it over. So we came back to Tyndall in the early Spring. We soon had the new parsonage project under way. Our Tyndall property was within the "Fire Limits" and frame buildings were prohibited. We decided to build of concrete blocks. The church delegated me

to go to Hawarden, Iowa, meet a manufacturer of blocks and investigate. This I did, and a contract was given this man to manufacture the material for us. He took our plans and made the blocks for the building, the masons placing each block as a part of a machine might be placed in setting it up.

The body of the house was built of these blocks, the four gables were built of brick, and the roof covered with black slate shingles, all of which made a most attractive appearance. The house was completely modern in every respect. The lower rooms were finished in oak and maple. This has been considered one of the finest and most comfortable personages in our conference.

Tyndall, at that time, was commercially, one of the most stirring towns of its size in the state. It was situated in one of the richest and most fertile sections of the state. That was a busy summer for us. We lived in an unsued room in the church. We enjoyed our work there very much, but when Fall came, and work on the new building was competed, we did not care to stay longer, and the people did not manifest much enthusiasm over our return, so it was decided between the appointing authorities and ourselves that we should be given a change.

Our conference that year convened in Yankton, with Bishop

Luccock, presiding. We wished, if possible, to get back on the Sioux Falls district, with Brother C. W. Rosenberry superintendent. He welcomed us at once, and offered the East-Side church in Sioux Falls. We readily accepted, and was thus appointed. This was a hard situation, but we got thro with it harmoniously. I shall not bore the reader with a review of the conditions in that church at that time.

I conceived that a new building was badly needed, and began to agitate to that end. The people were not ready. The church was so split and divided that it was difficult to get united action on any project. Finally, after much effort, I got the official board to vote to build, after we had secured \$7000 in good pledges. We had an architect plan us the building that now stands upon Van Eps Avenue and 7th Street. I began the canvas for funds at once, and worked all summer upon them, until as conference approached, I had just about secured the amount desired, but the situation did not look good to me, I thought the church was more nearly dead from the work of the summer, and the people were so indifferent, I felt that I did not care to go forward with the project.

51 Dr. Rosenberry was kind and appreciative and told Mrs. Dibble and myself that he had a dead sure enterprise for us for the next year.

That year's conference session was held at Redfield, Bishop Luccock, again in charge. When he read the appointments, he said; "Beresford, J. B. Dibble." That made us happy again. Beresford was a fine, live-wire little city. They had about the keenest, most wide-awake lot of business men I have met. The people of Beresford, like those of Arlington, gave the church a prominent place in their lives and interests. We found the church spiritually and in every other way moving finely. There were about twenty consecrated men active in the church. Their property was old and badly run down. My predecessor had tried to induce them to enter upon a double project at once, church and parsonage, but they thot they should not undertake so much, but told him they were ready to launch either the church or parsonage. When we began our work the men of the official board told me they were ready to begin the work of building either a church or a parsonage, and I might decide which. I thought the church was more needed than the parsonage. They accepted my judgment in the matter and we began at once to organize for the new project. I had scarcely ever worked with a more heroic group of people. Several gave \$1,000. toward the building. About fifteen went to the bank and signed personal notes for \$500. each, and our

We have not the time, and the reader would not care to know of all the incidents that transpired during the summer of 1914, while that beautiful building was in progress. On the 29th day of November, Bishop Luc- cock dedicated the fine struc- ture to the service of the Lord. It stands as one of the finest church buildings in the North- west.

The conference session of 1917 the year we closed our ministry in Beresford, was held in Pierre with Bishop Mitchell the presiding officer. We had received \$1200. and house as our salary in Beresford. At once upon reaching the seat of conference, Dr. J. S. Harkness, superintendent of the Mitchell district, asked me if I would accept a \$1500 church upon his district. After some inquiries had been made it was decided that we should go to Alpena, for \$300 more salary than we received at

When we went to Alpena in October 1917, the war was on in all its hellish fury. Thousands of the boys were at the front, many of them knee deep in the mire of the trenches. Many had already paid the supreme price with their lives. Other thousands were on the broad seas where lurked unseen dangers and death. Tens of thousands were in the encampments, being trained for their part in the horrible conflict. But, everywhere, war, war, war, held the center of the nations thought and activity. When I think of those days my blood runs cold. To me, the cause of our present difficulty centers in that brutal, cruel black holocaust of destruction. The church was sold out to it. No doubt we preachers imbibed lying propaganda, and innocently, fed it to our people from the sacred desk in the name of Christ and Patriotism.

Alpena was a German community. There may have been a little disloyalty there, but some of the choicest christian people were some of those people with German blood coursing thru their veins. To be a German was to be suspected, suspicioned and hated. Neighbor became arrayed against neighbor. I saw kindly old men insulted with impunity, by hoodlums. I do not dare per-

Early in the war I enlisted as a "Minute Man." I preached what the War Department bade me. I have in my tin box as fine a discharge from the War Department as any man who participated in the service, possesses.

Our people responded nobly and self sacrificingly to all the calls made by the government. We gave our boys freely, we gave our provisions gladly. Our people did all in their power to feed the greedy maw of war.

No battles were fought on our soil, but the war left its black withering trail across our fair land in every direction and spot.

c During the spring of 1918 our church thro-out the country, interests of the church. The pas- raise money for the benevolent

interests of the church. The pastors were instructed where our folks preferred to give Libertybonds to cash to accept them. In our campaign in Alpena I found that the people were inclined to withhold their cash

but were liberal with their bonds. In our church we had a splendid, simple, old couple who were quite wealthy. They moved from one bit of their property to another, and I called upon them just as they had moved, they were not settled yet. They received me graciously, and when I made my errand known, the old gentleman said "Mr. Dibble, we really have but little cash at our disposal now, but we will give you \$25." Then I reminded them that they might give a Liberty bond if they preferred. He said "Will you take a Liberty

"bond?" "Yes" "Well," he said "we will give you your choice between \$25 in cash or a \$500 bond." I said "We will take the bond."

They seemed greatly relieved when I chose the \$500 bond in-

Instead of \$25 in cash. He said to the old lady "Ma, give Mr. Dibble that \$500 bond". The good woman began clawing the

old papers and rubbish over, that had accumulated upon the table in moving. She discovered two or three bonds of larger value before she found ours. Finally she handed me the bond for which they had given \$500 in cash. My point is, they placed no value on the bonds. Just rubbish to them. After I had secured our bond, I preached the good, simple old folks a sermon. I told them "You must not throw your bonds about after this fashion. They have or will have a cash value. The government will redeem them some day. They are money. Gather up what you have and place them in the bank or some other safe place," which I learned later from the banker they had done. Of course not every body were that way. I went to a field where one of bright, well-to-do farmers was harrowing, made known my errand. He told me what he would give, I suggested we would take a bond if he wished to give it, when he said with much emphasis "Nothing doing. You cannot have our bonds. My wife and I have agreed we will stow these away and forget them. Some day they may meet some emergency for us".

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I found, however, that nearly all the people were much more liberal with bonds than with cash. The normal giving of that church for the causes for which I was working, had been about \$150 to \$200 a year, that

spring I received \$2500, mostly from bonds.

The two years we were in Alpena were wet years. Floods of water all over that section, as the result, there were immense crops.

Because of the scarcity of laborers the preachers were asked to assist where needed. I shocked grain for one farmer. I can remember yet, those great heavy bundles of oats, but I went thro all right. Living a couple miles east of Alpena were two brothers, extensive farmers, who bought a new J. I. Case "Pepperbox" threshing machine. One day at noon one of those men came to our house and asked "Mr. Dibble, do you know anything about a J. I. Case seperator?" they were having trouble with their new machine. "Why yes, threshing was my main business for some years." I went with the man, and we three discovered the difficulty, and soon had J. I. Case redeeming his good name, and operating perfectly. I helped those brothers all that fall.

We had a good time at Alpena. There were choice people there. We never lived in another community of its size where there were so many college people as there were in Alpena. The people were high-grade and cultured. The Germans prevailed. Some of the best friends we ever had were among the Germans of Alpena. During the last one half of

my ministry I have been homesick off the Sioux Falls district. I was seeking to get back upon this district. The work in Alpena, because of the war and its activities had been hard and nerve racking, and as we were offered a good charge upon the Sioux Falls district decided to move down this way. 55

There was an eliment associated with the year now closing of which I will speak briefly, that was the year of the "flu". The fall before, 1918, our conference convened in Madison, Bishop Mitchell presiding. We gathered at Madison as usual. The flu had not reached us yet, but was reported as rapidly coming in our direction. About the second day of conference, Bishop Mitchell addressed the people telling us that he thought we should not remain in Madison. The good man seemed to be in somewhat of a panic. A little time proved him right, however. He reminded us that we were staying in the homes of kind people. He said before time for the conference to adjourn one half of us might be down with epidemic. Madison people will have enough to do to care for their own folks. You preachers should go home, your people will need you. I think we should hurry thro and close at once." It was so decided. The cabinet did their work, the most important things were done, and on Friday, as I remember, we broke up for home.

Some thought the Bishop had gotten into an unnecessary panic but, I repeat, a few days proved his wise foresight in the matter.

The next three months were terrible, only overshadowed by the war. I judge Alpena and community, suffered just about as other communities did. I helped to bury many without public services.

The conference of 1919 was held in Mitchell with Bishop Wilson presiding. Something fine had just happened in our home.

Our eldest son Robert enlisted in the war during the time of registration in the summer of 1916. He was placed in the Second Division and was soon hurried across. He was in France before Christmas. After the Armistice was signed and hostilities ceased, he with his Division were ordered to Germany in the Army of Occupation. They were kept on the Rhineland nearly a year, the Second Division reaching reaching New York late in the spring of 1919, and Robert reached home in August having been gone twenty-seven months.

When Robert enlisted he still had a few months left before his graduation at State college. He came home with his plans all made to go back and finish his work at State college. That greatly pleased his mother and me. We took him to Huron and

stocked him up with civilian building in Egan. While I was clothes.

May I say, when he got back that father built still stood, just to college he soon met a fine one block south of the present young lady there from St. Law church. When I stood in my renee, by the name of Alta pulpit I could look down upon Reeves, an intimacy sprang up father's old temple. I have had between them and as soon as my heart stirred and even thrill they had finished their work at ed as I have looked upon it. the college, they were married They told me of strange experi- and established a cultured, Chris- ences through which father- tian home. passed in his pioneer work. Be-

As I said before, the confer- fore the church was built they ence that year was held in, had no regular place for wor- Mitchell, Bishop Wilson presid- ship. Father would hunt out ing. Paul had just graduated places. The old "Taylor House" from Dakota Wesleyan, and was was the leading pioneer hotel, making his way to arret theo- the managers of the establish- logical school, from which he; ment were a rough, wicked lot. was graduated three years later. One day father walked into the WE ARE APPOINTED TO office of this discounted hostelry and said to the proprietor,

EGAN

When Bishop Wilson read the "Mr. Taylor, we shall have ser- annual assignments he said vice in your dining room next "Egan—J. B. Dibble". We were Sunday". The old man in aston- happy in the change. My father- ishment replied, "The h---ll had been Egan's pioneer preach- you say". Father said "We shall er. The older people remember- be here about 2 o'clock P. M." ed him affectionately, and never. A visible change came over Mr. tired of talking to me about Taylor, and in more respectful him. Egan was about twenty tones he said, "The room will miles from father's homestead, be ready for you, Mr. Dibble." for a time he walked to and fro. He ordered the dining room but later secured an old pony. girls each Sunday to clear away Father would stop wherever the dinner work as quickly as night or occasion overtook him. possible, and he and the boys If it happened to be the home of stacked the tables in a corner, some old sinner it did not mat- chairs and seats were placed for ter. I wonder if it was strange the worshipers. Quiet thro-out that all the people, saints and the house was maintained dur- sinners, respected him and glad- ing the hour of meeting. That ly gave him shelter. condition continued for months,

Father built the first church and I have heard my father tell

how respectful, kindly and helpful that old hotel man was. Dear reader, there was good, even in old Mr. Taylor, and my old father had the rare genius to bring the qualities of good out of the Taylors and people of that class. I am convinced there is more good and kindness in even wicked and often despised people than we realize. Egan had a fine aggressive church organization. When we went there the church, a fine structure, was comparatively new, and one of the finest bungalow parsonages was "bran new". They have a splendid chance to spread out and do a large work for the kingdom, and I believe they are fairly awake to their opportunities. While in Egan, we served the "Riverview" country appointment, 8 miles N. W. The Riverview church overlooks the beautiful valley of the Sioux. It is also the home of the Arms'. The Egan people received us kindly and, I think, gave us a chance to carry on and succeed. A bad situation existed within myself, I needed an extended vacation, not so much to rest as to shake loose from the old monotony, and grind for a while. That was 1919, from 1888 I had been busy at the same job, under practically the same conditions, and we never took vacations in those days, I had grown tired and homesick, and had a great longing to quit for a little while and have a change of scene. We were

not able to take a "Year off" and travel. The south had always held a great appeal to me, and does yet. In a moment of discouragement I wrote to Bishop Richardson, of Atlanta, Ga., who had charge of our work in Florida asking him for a transfer to the St. Johns River conference and not expecting my request to be recognized, kept on with my work and forgot it.

This, by the way, was our second year in Egan. We had already had two revival meetings, Bro. Slocum assisting with one.

During January of 1921, I was assisting Bro. Slocum in meetings in Beresford, where he was at that time pastor. On a Saturday afternoon, as I was exercising myself by throwing some wood into the basement, Mrs. Slocum called me saying "you are wanted on the phone". I hastened in to answer. It proved to be from Mrs. Dibble at home in Egan. She said, "A wire has just come from Bishop Richardson, from Atlanta, Ga. What shall I do with it?" "Read it to me". This was the message "I have transferred you to the St. Johns River Conference and appointed you to Winter Park. Come at once, by February fifth if possible". I had been through Winter Park the year before, on a trip through Florida and knew it to be as beautiful as the good taste of cultured people, backed by that

salubrious climate could make it. I was to have helped in the meetings over the week end, but closed my work in them the next day, and Monday started home to prepare for our change to our new field of work.

On the way home I stopped in Sioux Falls securing some needed things. We decided on a public sale for the disposition of our "stuff". Quickly found a buyer for the car. Our sale date fell upon one of the finest days I have known. Great, good natured crowds at the sale, which went off beyond our expectations. Everything going well.

On Sunday, January 30, I preached my farewell sermons to the Egan congregation. There was not much weeping, a little gnashing of teeth. A few resented our going, but mostly the people were kindly, and took the position that if we wanted to quit and go to Florida it was our own affair. Of course a pastor quitting mid-year does disturb the work of the church somewhat. Monday, January 31, we started upon our long but pleasant journey to the Southland. I had visited Florida the year before.

We went to Chicago via the C. M. St. Paul R. R. Mrs. Dibble Clifford, Rolland and myself. We reached Chicago the next morning, Feb. 1. Had planned to take the Illinois Central, the "Seminole Limited," from Chicago to Jacksonville, Florida. This train would leave Chicago

for the South at 9 P. M. We had the entire day before us. Went over to the great I. C. terminal. Paul came down from Evanston and spent the day with us, and we spent much of the day sight-seeing about that portion of the city adjacent the terminal. The Field Museum is right there. It is not far up to the Municipal pier and other attractions, including Lincoln Park.

At the appointed moment we bade Paul "Good-bye" and headed south. We would be out that night, the next day, that night reaching Jacksonville at about eight o'clock the next morning. During the first night out from Chicago one goes straight south as far as a limited train can take him in nearly 12 hours. At Cairo, which you reach just as the sun is rising at that season, one crosses the Great Father of waters, the Mississippi, which receives to its heart and broad channel the waters of the Ohio river at that point.

In crossing these rivers, one enters the state of Kentucky. You pass within a few minutes into the romantic "Dixie Land." One passes, there, from winter into summer climate. Men remove their coats. Out of doors the children are barefoot, the older people dressed in warm weather toggery, and some of them in not much of that. From now on the colored people seem to increase. In a little while we reach the great railroad center, Fulton, the native home of our

good Station Agent and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Yates. During that forenoon and part of the afternoon, our train is climbing its way up the Tennessee Mountains. They are right-ly called the "Smoky Mts." for they are always smoky. Very limited trains pass during the tourist season, than any other busy upon their little farms. They say the people wash their clothes every day. That is the country of the "One Mule Fom" the "Two Mule Fom" and the "Four Mule Fom." The size of Jacksonville, Florida. At Jacksonville we changed trains, to the A. C. L., the Atlantic Coast Line. From Jacksonville to Winter Park is some distance, but a most beautiful and interesting trip after you leave the farm. Some of Florida's richest and finest country lies down that line. About 40 or 50 miles south of Jacksonville you enter the citrus section, orange, grape-fruit groves become more numerous, until as you reach our destination these beautiful rich groves cover all cultivated areas.

Some beautiful cities and towns down that route. Palatka, Delovod, Sanford, etc..

As we reached our destination Winter Park, four miles north of Orlando, the gorgeous beauty nearly overwhelmed us. I will not undertake to describe it. We were met at the train by some thoughtful friends from the church. They said the par-

sonage is all ready for you, you will prefer to be alone, so we will not accompany you. We hope you will soon feel at home with us. (We were conveyed to the parsonage in a friendly automobile).

6 a. We found the parsonage furnished from top to bottom with fine furnishings, all our parsonages are furnished thro-out in that conference. When the preacher moves he has only to pack his few personal belongings in a suit-case and go. We found a large house. Many furnished rooms. In the parlor a new sixty-dollar rug graces the floor, while a new three piece parlor suite, with several easy rockers and other chairs offered their repose and restfulness.

The dining room was equipped with a fine buffet, its drawers containing silver ware and linen. The pantry was filled with beautiful dishes. Tables, chairs, every thing needed in the family. Dining room. Also a large fire-place. The kitchen was also furnished with every thing needed, oil stove etc. Up on the rear porch a large ice-box filled with ice. The chamber rooms were furnished with beds, bedding, again every thing needful. We had only to walk in, hang up our hats upon the hall tree and be at home.

Later friends began to call welcomed us in gracious manner. If there were any differ-

ences in the church they did not tell us.

Within a few days they extended us a beautiful public reception. At first I was a little confused as to how I, a rough and ready man from the far Northwest, could hitch up to these fine cultured Southerners? I knew that some of their reactions were different than ours, but I need not prod their sensitive spots, and I did not, and was getting along fine. I do not know that there was one criticism upon our work. We had but few native Southerners in our church. Our people were nearly all from the north. We had a fine delegation from Lincoln, Neb. Winter Park was a tourist town, and our church was kept packed with strangers. The church was alive, including Sunday School, Epworth League, Ladies societies etc. In Egan we were receiving \$1600 and house.

In Winter Park the salary was the same with this exception, the church paid all utility expenses of the parsonage, telephone, electric lights, water etc. When I began my work the young cashier of one of the banks, our church treasurer said to me "Dr. Dibble (every minister down there is Dr. The negroes called me "Docta",) the treasurer said "Dr. Dibble, you will greatly oblige me if you will call at the bank during the forenoon of the first day of

each month. I shall be there but you might not be at home" of course I accommodated him, and every time received every cent of our monthly salary. We soon began to see that we were not using all our salary. I opened an account at the other bank, in which we placed \$50.00 a month. Mrs Dibble said there were two reasons why it was not costing us as much as in Egan We had no car, and living was cheaper down there. Our parsonage was in an orange grove. We would lie in bed and hear the over ripe oranges plunking upon the roof. There was just one grape-fruit tree upon the parsonage ground, and it was loaded with great fine fruit. Each morning I would go out and pick one big fruit for the family breakfast. Clifford and Rolland gorged themselves upon the fine fruit. Among other things, Florida has fine roads, schools and churches.

Our boys came home many times with their patriotic northern blood boiling with resentment over something their teacher had said. The southern people are largely loyal to the Government, but the memories of the "Great Wah" still abide with the older people. Our experience was that the younger people were about as sensitive as the older.

CLIFFORD AND ROLLAND HEAR HOGS GRUNTING IN LAKE VIRGINIA

There were several beautiful little lakes in Winter Park. The Florida lakes are mostly deep and clear. One evening after supper Clifford and Rolland were going for a dip in Lake Virginia. After awhile they came rushing home, greatly excited saying that while they were in the lake they heard hogs grunting along the shore. Of course we laughed at them. I said "You know boys, there is not a hog in Winter Park, scarcely one in Orange county. What you heard were alligators, which was true. But they never cared to go into the lakes again in the evening.

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Thousands of "gators" in Florida waters. The people pay no attention to them. They are harmless. One day a group of us were spending the afternoon at an isolated, uncivilized lake. During the time we were there I saw a dark object some distance out crossing the lake. I thot it was a log drifting across, until I heard one man say incidentally "See that old 'gator over there". I asked is that an alligator? "Yes" How large is that fellow? "About sixteen feet long." They have alligator parties. They say it is great sport, to go to their sleeping grounds at night and

play with the sleepy gators. They come up on the sand for night, and men go out with lights and tumble them about at will. The aroused animals strike out for the water, but the men catch and hold them. When he gator is on the ground he is strong and can defy the strength of strong men, but once in the water boys drag him out.

WE ARE SURROUNDED BY DISTINGUISHED PEOPLE

Just at the north of us were the Morses. Mr. Morse was the head of the firm of Morse and Fairbanks, makers of scales, gas engine, etc. Mr. Morse died the winter we were down there, but the firm continues. You can see their add in nearly any magazine.

Then, directly across the avenue from us were the Packards. Their chaeuffer told me one day that the family have no constant abiding place. They have

their mansion in New York city, the great rich Florida home, a spring home in the Adorondacks, and a hot weather home in Colorado, and they permit themselves to be moved about by weather conditions.

They brought a large retinue of servants with them for the winter. They go north about the first of March. Friends, isn't that some life. That would meet the roving demands of a Dibble. Mrs. Packard was one of the finest ladies I ever met. She was busy all the time help-

ing the needy people and institutions of the community.

One incident, a mere type of that good woman's spirit of benevolence. The W. F. M. S. ladies of our church planned a "Rubbish sale" to get funds for the society. Rubbish sales go big down there as the colored people and poor whites are glad to pick up the articles cheaply. The president of the society and Mrs. Dibble were selected to conduct the sale. They put up a table outside the church, and arrayed their things upon their improvised counter. During the forenoon Mrs. Packard came over to the sale, and apologized for not donating any goods. She said "You know we do not carry any worn out clothing with us. But I have written a small check, if you can make use of it, I shall be glad to give it to you". Of course those WFMS people were glad to get the cheque, which proved to be for \$25. How would you ladies of either of the Hurley Missionary societies feel to have some one do that for you? If you should hold your sales outside the church, some millionaire might.

That is given as a sample of that rich woman's benevolence. Surely, that wealthy woman "went about doing good." Just this lesson, rich people are just folks, like what the most of us would be if we had their wealth.

I AM SOAKED IN BUYING A USED CAR

Before leaving South Dakota, we sold our Ford touring car. After we got to Florida we wished we had it. The roads to Florida were not as perfect in those days as they are now. If you wish to get the greatest joy out of Florida, you must have a car. There are hundreds of interesting trips to be made. We had expected to secure a car when we went down there. I began a still hunt about the car agencies in Orlando. I was advised to wait until spring, when the tourists would begin their exodus north.

The idea was this, some quite wealthy people, not caring to drive their family cars so far, would make the trip by rail, and buy a new Ford, run it during the winter, sell it before coming north in the spring. Those comparatively new cars

could be bought for a song. In scouting about I found two cars, which attracted my attention

one because of its outward fine appearance, the other because of its good condition and cheapness. I want you to see how foolish I was in my choice. May I speak first of the Ford touring car, which a well-to-do man had bought new the fall before and did not care to take north with them. That car was about as good as new, and the owner dinged me to take it for \$125. He drove up to Winter Park to see us about it. A garage in

Orlando had an old Maxwell touring car for sale. It had been repainted and looked fine on the outside. I finally paid those fellows \$400 for the Maxwell. The first Saturday we had the car the boys took it for a drive, but did not get back for dinner as they had told their mother they would. During the afternoon a phone call from them informed us they were a few miles from home broken down. The rear end, characteristic of the Maxwell in those days, had gone out. It cost me nearly \$100 to fix it up. Other breakages followed. Finally we decided to sell it. After much

time the people from whom we bought it managed to "soak" somebody else and got rid of the old pile of painted and varnished scrap-iron for \$100 less than we had paid for it. If we had bought the Ford it would be running yet.

Moral—Don't buy a car, nor marry a wife, because of outside paint and shine.

Thus I might go on much longer describing our Florida trip, but must ring off. Florida is a great country. There is probably not another state in the Union that has a greater variety of natural attractions than Florida displays.

When the northern exodus took place, beginning about March first, the great hotels, which had been the centers of gay life for the season, were closed and their windows cover-

ed with papers. The millionaires' homes were also shut up and blinded. Nearly one half of the people who had made the community alive with their gay activities, had sought their northern homes for the heated season, the spirit of homesickness began to creep over us in its subtle gaseous manner. At least over me. Mrs. Dibble and the boys disclaimed any feeling of the malady, homesickness. The friends in the church urged us not to leave. They said "We will give you a month or more vacation, you can go north, and in a short while you will feel like returning." It works that way with many. We had not been back three months before Mrs. Dibble and I were ready to go back.

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The two Bishops involved, said we might come back. Dr. Mattison, the District Superintendent here, said we might come to Garretson, which was open at the time and on Memorial Day, May 30, we left Winter Park, Florida, for Garretson, South Dakota. For our homeward trip we chose what is known as the "Battle Field Route," running through the scene of many of the most sanguinary battle fields of the Civil War. This route takes one thro Chattanooga, Tenn., where your train passes just along the base of Look-Out Mountain, up through Chicamauga, Nashville and several great national cemeteries, on

and on to the great city of Chicago, in which place we were compelled to remain through a day for our train home, or to Sioux Falls. We went up to Evanston and spent the day with Paul.

Upon reaching Garretson, we found a hustling little prairie city. Garretson is a Norwegian Lutheran community. North west of the town a few miles is a large Norwegian Lutheran church. The pastor of that church told me that that township was solidly Norwegian Lutheran, that there was but one American family in the entire township. My observation is that where the people of this nationality predominate they may be somewhat clannish, yet always well housed, well-clad, cleanly and thrifty.

But, in Garretson, amid the Norwegians, is quite a sprinkling of Americans, and a number of these were Methodists when we went there. We found a good little church building, and a fine commodious modern parsonage.

The people greeted us warmly. I will say here that during the time we were there we had a fine, harmonious time. I think we never have enjoyed our work anywhere else more. Our church people were kindly and responsive. I always felt that my messages were really good. Good, well organized Sunday school and other societies. While we were there, we

succeeded in painting the property upon the outside.

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About Garretson are some very interesting attractions, The "Devil's Gulch", "The Dells" the Split Rock river, etc. If you have never been there, you would find you can spend a day there profitably.

We came to Garretson June 1st, 1921. That fall the people desired our return for another year which pleased us very much, as we were happy in the prospect of another year with that good people in that prosperous community.

Our conference that year was held in Huron, Bishop Mitchell presiding. Our assignment read "Garretson-J. B. Dibble".

This year passed most happily. Toward the close of the year an incident took place, intended in friendship, which came nearly embarrassing us greatly. A friend came down from White, where we had before served a pastorate, representing himself as delegated by the church in that place to induce us to return there that fall. We really did not care to go to that place. This brother stayed all day and actually laid siege to Mrs. Dibble and myself. He insisted the people in White were ready and anxious to build a new church, which was greatly needed. These with other statements induced us to yield. We soon found ourselves in line for White. After moving there we had a cruel awakening. The

people in the church had not commissioned our good friend to seek our appointment to that church. They were not ready to build, in fact had not the remotest inclination in that direction, and some were resenting strongly, not so much us, as the manner in which our appointment had been brought about. We were under embarrassment during the entire two years of our pastorate, but in spite of that we had a very happy and successful two years. Our congregations were good. With the exception of a very small group the response was encouraging. We had two very helpful special meetings. The people responding to them nicely. I painted the parsonage two coats on the outside. We put, beside that, \$1000 of improvements upon the parsonage. Raising it 18 inches, putting a fine basement under it, running both hard and soft water into it, building a modern septic tank, out back, installed a new furnace and several other improvements.

We formed many of the warmest friendships in White of our entire ministry. Our son Clifford graduated from the White high school that year. That fall, 1924, Watertown entertained the conference session while Bishop Mitchell again presided over its deliberations.

Brother Matteson had said he would do his best to give us

a place on his district, the Sioux Falls. At conference time there was just one opening, Harrisburg. We hesitated about going there, the place was so small, but finally decided to do so. And were appointed there. We have never been happier and more contented than we were in Harrisburg. Not one thing transpired to mar our peace and joy. The little church had recently been greatly improved, had a very fine basement, and was as neat as wax. The community took much pride in it. The parsonage was not so good, an old unattractive building. But the best those good people could afford at that time. There was something so homey and peaceful about Harrisburg that it attracted us. Dr. Matteson had told us the fall before that he would not ask us to remain long in Harrisburg. But when the time came to move we were very indifferent, one thing induced us, the bad condition of the parsonage, which was very hard upon Mrs. Dibble. There were some fine cultured people in Harrisburg. The town is so close to Sioux Falls as to secure city advantages and privileges. **WE LIKED IT IN HARRISBURG.** Our congregations packed the little church. The Sunday school was good and well organized. There was a very active and efficient L. A. S. The Home Missionary Society was alive and active.

Harrisburg, though small, had a well organized church. We had people in the Harrisburg church who lived nearer to Sioux Falls than to Harrisburg. Their reason for coming to the village church instead of going to the city churches was that the country church was more democratic and they received more recognition here. We were happy every minute of our stay in Harrisburg. We did not ask for a change. But the change came unsought by us.

DR. MATTESON PHONES US

One forenoon, while I was busy in my study and Mrs. Dibble with her ironing in the kitchen, our phone rang. I answered it, finding Dr. Matteson, District Superintendent, at the other end. This was in September, about a month before conference. He said, "Brother Dibble, I'm working out my schedule for next year, will you go to Hurley and Davis for \$2000 and house?" I told Mr. Dibble the substance of the message and asked "Shall we go?" We had no time to discuss the matter as Dr. M. was waiting our answer. She said "Yes. Let's go." The matter was not mentioned again between the superintendent and ourselves. May 1 say, we did not receive the promised \$2000 cash for the first year. The official board in Hurley cut the salary \$100. We received \$1900 and house the first year.

It was the thought of Hur-

ley's fine, modern parsonage that induced Mrs. Dibble to so quickly vote for our change. We would have been happy with the Harrisburg people, but the care of the old house was preying on her strength. She had admired the beauty and convenience of the Hurley house, from the time of its construction and occupancy by the Slocums. But the poor girl did not have a long time to enjoy it.

The conference of 1925 was held in Mitchell, Bishop Burns of California presiding.

This was quite a peculiar conference session to me. I had reached the retirement age, 67. I might have retired at that conference. Dr. Matteson, who was two months my junior, did retire. I was in perfect health and strength. If I retired what should I do? The church authorities urged me to continue, we were inclined to, but in our thought just for a year or two. It was subsequent circumstances and the district superintendants that kept us here so long.

That was an anxious session of conference for the Slocums and Dibles. On the very first night, a message was received from the Warners in Lennox, with whom our mother was staying at the time, that she had been taken seriously ill, and we had better come. Both Slocum and myself had very important work in the conference which was hard to leave, so,

after extended consultation, we decided that Mrs. Slocum and Mrs. Dibble should go to Lennox upon the first train, which they did, and Slocum and I would hold ourselves in readiness with the car to come at once if they thought we should. But mother rallied a little and we were not summoned. But the women remained with mother thro-out.

That fall Dr. J. P. Jenkins was appointed superintendent of the Sioux Falls district. He is two months older than myself, and was therefore in the same guilt as myself in the matter of retirement.

We moved to Hurley at once. Rolland was in his last year of high school, graduating with the 1926 class. We were kindly received by both of our new churches. Our work started off with promise.

We were happy at the parsonage. We could not discern the black cloud which was slowly gathering over our home.

About 1925 the drought conditions began in this section. I have lived here over nine crop years, and think I have not seen a real good crop since we came. But during this time the economic condition reached its highest peak in all the history of the country, and finally burst in 1929. They tell us economic conditions are improving. Possibly they are. Some of us have not very good vision for these things. I con-

less I fail to see much financial improvement in our section of the country. Practically as many, or more, unemployed as ever. I believe that before real easement is restored nature must enter the relief ranks. Our people who have gathered no harvest for years, and those thrown out of employment must either be provided for, or starve, or perish. But when nature again comes to the relief and gives ample moisture to produce crops, better times will begin. When the farmer's granaries and cribs and hog-yards and pastures are filled again with the products from his labor and fields he will again begin to live. Abundant crops, even though prices are low, are better than no harvest. We must learn, in this country, to make a living, provide for our homes and families, and cease this mad rush after great profits and quick wealth. To secure wealth, not a living that thousands of our people have borrowed and mortgaged until they have jeopardized all they have. More than any human agency South Dakota needs, today, moisture upon her fields. These vast barren prairies will respond that day when the copious rains fall. I doubt if there is another section in our country that will respond more readily to right conditions than our own South Dakota. For over ten years we have suffered from lack of sufficient mois-

ture. The underground supplies have been gradually depleted until there is practically none left.

Well, after good Bishop Burns said "Hurley and Davis, J. B. Dibble" we hurried home and began our preparations to move.

Monday I drove to Sioux Falls, taking with me Sisters J. P. Jenkins and Matteson, whose husbands were detained in Mitchell. That afternoon I drove to Lennox and got Mrs. Dibble, mother's condition being such that Mrs. Slocum and Mrs. Dibble could leave her.

On the following Sunday Roland and I drove to Davis for 10 A. M. service and on to Hurley for 11:45, leaving Mrs. Dibble at Lennox. We were greeted that morning with fine congregations at both churches. That day we were invited to dine with the Mitchells.

We had no evening service that day, but drove back to Harrisburg by way of Lennox. During that week we moved to Hurley with a Sioux Falls van. We received a most gracious welcome both in Hurley and Davis. The parsonage was as clean as wax. Upon arriving there we found, good faithful brother John Mitchell keeping guard while he awaited our arrival. I believe we had supper with the Mitchells, but slept in the parsonage that night.

May I say that when we came

to Hurley Mrs. Dibble and I fully expected to retire within a year or two. Upon retirement our pension would be the same wherever we lived.

Roland would be ready for college. Mrs. Dibble and I conceived the plan of locating our home in some college town, and we agreed that should be in the South. We began a general investigation of southern schools, their character the estimated costs, living conditions, etc. We were somewhat inclined toward our Methodist University in Chattanooga Tenn. We found conditions there satisfactory.

Fine school, Christian influences, beautiful historic city. In the many and large furniture factories, which abounded there then, ample opportunity for employment for Roland, and a possibility of some preaching place for me, but they have wet, cold winters. We took the Chattanooga Daily for six months, and studied the weather reports carefully. In the mean time we became interested in the Florida State U located at Gainesville and Tallahassee Florida. The men at the former place, the women at the latter. We found this to be a great and finely equipped institution. They claimed students from every state in the Union with 2,000 men in the Gainesville division. We had some very intimate friends in Gainesville. So we finally decided I should go down and investigate and if I found conditions to our liking secure for us a home. I went to

Gainesville. It was just as their unhealthy real estate boom was beginning to slip a little. Almost anything would sell at almost any price. Just outside the city limits, within a mile of the University I found an acre tract, which finally the owner consented to let us have for \$400 cash, altho his price upon it had been much more.

There were a few old buildings upon it and some fruit a really beautiful place, within 50 feet of the tracks of the Jacksonville and Tampa line of the A. C. L. R. R. I laid down the price and received our deed. We are still in possession of this tract while Mr. J. S. Pingrey's people were down there a few years ago, they lived part of the time adjoining our tract. He planted our acre to sweet potatoes. If conditions here, would permit I would dearly love to go down there, but this will probably never be.

Our Gainesville friends secured Roland a "job" driving a laundry truck. Practically every work day for nearly a year, he drove his truck 100 miles his daily route taking him across the historic and romantic river, honored in popular song, "The Swanee River." He had one point for delivery actually in the Gulf of Mexico. For his work he received \$27.00 a week.

During that year there was much pressure brought to bear upon us to defer retirement for one year more and remain in Hurley-Davis, which we finally

decided to do. In our last Quarterly Conference, when the question of pastor for next year arose, Mrs. Mitchell "Moved" that Brother and Sister Dibble be invited to remain the next year. This motion prevailed unanimously and enthusiastically. In the face of such an urgent and general invitation, we could not see why we should move, so decided to remain another year.

That fall, 1926, we went to Vermillion for our conference. It was in charge of Bishop Locke. We were returned to Hurley and Davis. That was Mrs. Dibble's last conference.

Just as we returned home the "Turner County Bank" closed its doors. We had considerable money in it. May I relate just to show, how a deep impression may save and guide aright.

Upon arriving home I went at once to the Farmers Union and ordered of Mr. Muilenburg, the manager four tons of coal. They did not have it in stock at that time, but it would and did arrive within a short time. Incidentally I asked Mr. Muilenburg if I should pay then or wait for the delivery? "Oh, that will be all right. Pay when it is delivered." I was passing out, had gotten to the door, when there arose a deep impression, "Pay now." I turned and said, "I guess I may as well write you a check now," which I did. That night the bank closed. If I had not obeyed my impression our coal

money would have been tied up in the defunct bank. Dear reader, I wonder if we enough consider and follow our intelligent impressions? I can say from my own experience that whenever I have done so, I have almost invariably come out right, but when I have violated and neglected my impressions I have suffered.

Undoubtedly there would be fewer relief candidates, and fewer lost farms and homes, if our people had given a little closer obedience to the soul deep impressions which had come to them.

Did you ever retire at night under cloudless skies, the stars twinkling overhead, to be rudely awakened before morning by the raging of a terrific storm? That is what happened in our home during the winter of 1926-1927. Perhaps I should make no reference to that black experience.

Late in the winter Mrs. Dibble began suffering somewhat, she insisted it was nothing serious that with the approaching spring she would "pick up" and soon be herself again. I urged her to permit me to call a Dr. but she protested and would not permit it to be done.

Late in the week between the two last Sundays of March Brother Dick Muilenburg was taken away. This was one of the worst calamities that ever befell the Hurley church. It eventuated in taking the Muilenburg

family from us. The Muilenburgs were a vital part of the church, active in all its different departments, 100 per cent regular in their attendance upon the services of the church. Among the most liberal in their financial support of the church and its institutions.

The church was surely afflicted when Brother Dick Muilenburg was taken from it. This good man's funeral was conducted in the church early Monday morning, March 21, 1927.

Mrs. Dibble and I arose early that morning, and she spent some time in helping to prepare the church for the solemn services. On the Saturday before we had received a telegram from Gainesville, Florida calling me to that place at once. I planned to go Monday noon, following Mr. Muilenburg's funeral.

Mrs. Dibble was to remain in the parsonage that night and the next day go to the Slocums, in Yankton, and visit there until I should return from my trip. She went to Yankton the next day, but came there very sick. It was soon thought best to take her to the hospital which was done. She soon went into a coma from which she never aroused.

Friday, directly after dinner, as I was going over on our acre, Mrs. C. G. Fry with whom and her husband I was staying called me saying that an important telegram had just been received from Brother Slocum. The message said: "Hettie very sick

in the hospital, come at once. Diabetus and Bright's disease."

Of course I planned to start home as soon as there was an available train. Having an afternoon of waiting, I called upon one of the most skilled physicians in northern Florida and showed him the message I had

received and asked him concerning the seriousness of the lady's ailment. He said, "A bad combination, but it is my judgment they will save her at the hospital." He greatly heartened me. I left Jacksonville Saturday A. M.

riding that day and night, Sunday, reaching Chicago Sunday at 4 P. M. I caught the C. M. & St. P. train for Yankton which place I reached Monday, 10 A. M.

As I had ridden along that morning I would permit myself to be nothing but hopeful I had fixed up in my thought just

what the greeting with Brother Slocum should be when we should meet at the train. "How is Hettie?" "She is coming fine.

Came from the hospital Saturday or Sunday. She'll be all right in a few days." But, friends my manufactured greeting was not to be. I asked the question. "How is Hettie?" Bro. Will hesitated.

They had agreed I should not know until we had arrived at the Slocum home. I insisted. Mr. Slocum finally said, "Hettie is in Heaven." When we arrived at the parsonage I found two or three of my boys. Paul was in India, Rolland had been recently vaccinated for smallpox. The

doctor in Gainsville had told me Saturday that it would not be safe for Rolland to travel until the vaccination had worked itself out. But he did come, arriving at Slocums just as we were about to leave for the services at the church. He was very sick and we were compelled to leave him in the care of a physician. So but two of the boys, Robert and Clifford were able to be at the funeral of their mother. Now I must not darken this narrative with any more details of the sorrow of our home. We must fortify ourselves and lay hold upon our tasks, as lonely as the future might be.

I held all my regular services the next Sunday. Clifford had gotten Rolland home Friday. Robert and Clifford went back to their work in Minneapolis. We almost at once, got Rolland a position in the State Hospital in Yankton, as guard or attendant in one of the wards.

Now, what was I to do? It was expected by some that I would not be able to carry on alone and will quit, but, I was not disposed to do that unless the church should demand it, which it did not. In the last Quarterly conference, when I expected I would quit, Mrs. Schroedermeier moved that we be returned, the people voting unanimously upon the motion. I decided to remain another year. I thought surely this would be my last year. I think now it should have been.

We had a very good year in the church. Lonesome in the parsonage, but thro the kindness of the people of the two churches I was able to keep going.

That year our conference convened in Brookings, under the leadership of Bishop Smith, who returned me to this charge. That was a hard conference session upon me as nearly everything in Brookings seemed to, in some way, be associated with Mrs. Dibble.

Soon after conference there came a proposal from my sister, Mrs. Whealy, in Madison, that she and her husband spend the winter with me. She was anxious to relieve Mrs. Slocum of the care of our mother for a short while, and she, Mrs. Whealy, had no down stairs room that mother could occupy. The very fine arrangement was made and for nearly six months the Whealys and mother were with me. During the next summer I was alone again but got along very nicely, altho it was lonely and hard work. During seven days of every week I had hard work to do. At the conference the next year, held at Rapid City by Bishop Locke, I was returned to Hurley-Davis for the fourth year.

I would like to say here, I was simply extending my ministry year by year, now, expecting each year to be the last. I was ready to quit at any time that

the church should demand a change. But that demand did not come. The 1928 conference was held in Rapid City. That was a gracious occasion. Mr. and Mrs. Slocum, Merrill Powers and myself rode to Rapid City with Bro Doolittle in his new Pontiac. The weather was perfect in going, while we were there and returning.

A Story on Merrill Powers

As we desired to start early Monday morning upon our Rapid City trip, it was agreed that we should accept Mr. and Mrs. Doolittle's invitation to spend the night in their home in Irene. The Slocums could come up from Yankton in the morning. We and Brother Powers, at Gayville gave up our evening services and went to Irene. After supper Brother Doolittle said, "Let's drive to Brother Slocum's service."

That was eagerly agreed to by all. Now, Merrill had announced to his congregation that he must give up the evening service in order to be at Irene on time. On the way to Yankton Sister Powers suggested, "It will be a joke on us if we find a number of our Gayville people in the Yankton service." Soon after we were seated two or three carloads of Gayville Methodist people came in, to the embarrassment of Merrill and Gladys.

In Rapid City the Slocums and myself were entertained in the home of Prof. and Mrs. Earl

Prunty, (Hazel Slocum).

Mr. and Mrs. Whealy spent the winter of 1928-29 with me again. We had mother with us this winter, also.

We had put on several attempts in revival efforts. Had a meeting in Davis with Brother Doolittle as the preacher. Another in Hurley in which Doolittle assisted as song leader. During this winter of 1929 we had Jenkins as our preacher for a short meeting.

On January 31, of that year, a tragic event took place at the parsonage, when our mother was paralyzed. She survived the stroke until May first, when she was relieved from her terrible sufferings in the hospital at Yankton, where we had finally taken her for better care than we were able to give her in Hurley. I was with her all night preceeding her going, was compelled to come home, that morning. Just as I entered my home, Mrs. Slocum phoned me that mother had just passed away. This was to have been a day of jubilation to me, instead of a day of sorrow, as it was the day of the visitation of Paul's family, who had just completed their five years Missionary service in India. I had not seen their two bright children, Elsie and Birney, both of whom were born in India. True to expectation they arrived upon the late afternoon train, when we drove to Yankton at once upon the invitation

of Mrs. Slocum.

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Sunday returning home Tuesday.

Our father, who passed away some years before, was lying in the beautiful cemetery in Lincoln, Neb. It had been mother's cherished wish to be finally placed by his side. We made arrangements with a Yankton undertaking establishment to convey, by hearse, to Lincoln.

Saturday morning, the Slocums, and Mrs. Whealy in the Slocum car, Pauls family and myself in our car, with the hearse, left Yankton early, for the quite long and sad journey. Late in the afternoon we reached the home of J. A. Brown, our brother-in-law, in University Place, Lincoln, where our brother Will, sister Julia, and others had gathered. Arrangements had been made for the interment. A minister of the city was present to read the commitment service. Just as the sun was sinking to rest after a most beautiful day, we laid the sacred remains of our dear mother by the side of, to her, the greatest and noblest man who had ever lived. To her he had been all that. If we had travelled the entire country we could not have found a more beautiful or restful burying place for our parents than where they sleep side by side awaiting the resurrection morn, when Christ shall come to accompany his people home.

This was Saturday and we remained with the Browns over

Paul and his family remained with me for some weeks, when they went to Chicago, where he entered Chicago University to take advanced work leading to a classical degree; which after about two years he secured, an M. A.

Our work in the church moved on through the summer in a fine harmonious manner. That fall, 1929, I attended conference with the brethren in Huron, where Bishop Meade, of Denver presided. Dr. Jenkins favored our remaining in Hurley and Davis another year, our fifth, and as there came no protest from the church, that became our assignment.

October 30, 1929, a very gracious event, to me, took place. Lest you should call me sentimental, I will not remain long in recital of the details of this event. One of the most devoted members of the church was Miss Zora Inez Polley. In many ways, Miss Polley appealed to me, as she in many ways, resembled Mrs. Dibble. Upon the evening of October 30, thro ministration of Brother Slocum, and in the presence of several friends in the family, she cast in her lot with mine, and at once became one of the most devoted and patient Preacher's wives. Zora was making a beautiful keeper of the parsonage. I am feeling badly that she was compelled to quit the

active ministry when she was just beginning. She made it possible for me to continue the few remaining years of my ministry. She is my perfect angel.

Dear reader, I cannot tell you how my home and heart brightened up. The burdens and responsibilities of our work lightened at once. I shall never forget the kindness of all the people, both under the shadows and the sun-shine.

I might close this narrative right here.

Of course our return year after year including 1933-1934, is known to nearly all who will read this story.

I am quite sure, now, that my long continuance in the work wrought an injustice to myself, at least. We were ready to retire some time before we were physically compelled to. Good Dr. Hoagland, our efficient superintendent, had a theory which he practiced for himself and for the older men on his district. He insisted that when the Lord calls a man into ministerial labors, that when he is thro with him he will let him know and give him release. That conference, and Bishops, and superintendents, and disciplinary regulations and laws have no right to interfere.

For sometime I had possessed an ideal for my retirement period. I would be in good health, Mrs. Dibble and I would spend a few days, perhaps years, in

restful occupation. We would drive about, bother our relatives by calling upon them more often, etc. But why should we give ourselves up to homesick idleness when able to work?

The last year, 1933, I rather insisted that we should retire. But Dr. Hoagland was quite insistent that we should not. But two strange things happened. I came from that conference sick and broken, have been in that condition ever since and shall probably continue in that condition. Our old-age plans have gone glimmering. Dr. Hoagland came back to his work, threw himself into it, until one Sabbath morning, while preparing himself for his trip to an adjacent town for service, the Lord passed his way and took this good, efficient, and active warrior home with him. I am saying that release and discharge from the Lord's work came to Dr. Hoagland and myself at the same time. The chariot was ready for him, the Master wishes me to bear a little more pain and inconvenience. I am trying to do it religiously.

I am able to be about the home, do the out-side chores, saving Mrs. Dibble that much of burden. I have not been up-town for many weeks, but think I shall be able upon the coming of spring and summer weather. I quit the work voluntarily April 1st, 1934. We should have quit at the fall conference. The

actual period of my ministerial labors extended over Forty-six years.

I can say triumphantly, with one of old, "Thus far hath the Lord led me". The future is radiant with certainty and blessed assurance. I am all packed and ready when the angelic charioteer shall reign his steeds before our door—**HALLELUJAH!**

Well, we will proceed to the completion of this story—

I have written this narrative wholly from memory. Never have I kept a diary. The main incidents and events of my ministry have been recorded. After all, how short and apparently inconsequential is the longest and most active human life.

I can say consistently I tried hard to make my ministry serious, vital and helpful. I have seen hundreds of people happily converted at the alters of the church, and many scores of Christians and church members enter into the "Fullness of the Gospel as it is in Christ".

I have seen young people consecrate themselves to special Christian work, and go to India, Africa, China, and other far off regions to carry the lighted torch of the gospel to benighted peoples.

I have seen the broken, inadequate properties of the church, replaced, remodled, made fit again for "The Master's Use".

I doubt if any other member of our conference has builded, rebuilt, or remodeled more properties than your writer.

I wish to render grateful appreciation of good people in every church we have served who "have stayed by the stuff" year after year and made possible the achievements of the ministerial leaders who have labored with them.

We have learned that the real success and existence of the church do not depend upon any man.

Probably some of the ancient Jews may have thought every thing depended upon their great leader Moses. But the soldier Joshua, although somewhat different, successfully led God's hosts through the swollen stream, out across Canaan, into homes of their own.

Some said the church in Hurlley is doomed when Brother W. H. Stoddard shall be removed from it. The Lord took that old faithful warrior to himself, and while we have missed greatly his going, the church has not ceased its life and activities. No minister is so important to the life and success of the kingdom that his going will stop God's great purposes.

I wish to thank all who have, thro the expression of their pleasure in our story, made the writing of it a delight and joy.

Nearly every day some one tells in conversation or written

page how greatly they enjoy the narrative.

Dear reader, this is the story of one of the humblest ministries our conference has had.

More than any thing else I miss the Brethern of the conference. These holy men were always kinder to me than I deserved. Twice I have tried to leave this conference, transferring to other conferences, and in each receiving better appointments than I have ever held in the Dakota Conference, but in each case I became violently homesick and lonesome for my brethern at home.

I thank Mr. Hutchinson, again for the fine way in which he has published and circulated our simple story. Sincere love to you all.

THE END

REMINISCENCES

J. H. Hutchinson

I hope I am not old enough as yet, to qualify as a writer of pioneer experiences, but after reading the current installment of Rev. J. B. Dibble's Memoirs, I thought a few observations in connection with his early visits to White and his pastorate there might not be out of place. Especially, since he passed rather hurriedly over that first year at White.

My first recollection of Rev. Dibble was when he paid a visit to see that young lady, whom

he later married, and had such a happy companionship. Mother, at that time, was trying to keep the old homestead, and her two children together, and when opportunity offered, she did sewing in her home for neighbors. At this particular time, Mrs. Asa Doughty wanted some sewing done for herself and children, and thought it would be best to have mother, sister and myself come to her home while the sewing was being done. So Mr. Doughty came and got us. I have thought many times since that along with the convenience it would be to them, to have the sewing done in their home, was the opportunity to give us "kids" a good time and to do a little missionary work, in the matter of food, for that was scarce in those days.

I am not sure, whether at this time, mother was making Miss Doughty's wedding dress, or doing other sewing. She did, however, make the bride's wedding dress, which Mr. Dibble still has in his home here.

While we were there a dashing young minister, came on a courting expedition, and while I was too young to think of observing any of the details, or of playing any pranks, I remember the occasion well. The younger brother and sister of the favored young lady, made much of the visit.

The rest of the story you all know from Mr. Dibble's narrative. There are one or two instances in connection with his ministry at White, which were pretty well impressed on my mind, so I will take the liberty to relate them. At this time John Alexander Dowie was having a great wave of popularity, and there were many people at White who were pretty well converted to his ideas. One very devout woman, a relative by marriage of Mr. Dibble, became quite an enthusiastic follower of Dowie. His followers, like the followers of Dr. Townsend, were militant and had to be shown, if it were possible. Divine or miraculous healing was one of the cardinal points in the doctrine of the Dowieites, and this good woman asked Mr. Dibble to preach a sermon on "Divine Healing." He did, and it was done to a "Queen's Taste." There was but little discussion in the church after that on Dowieism or divine healing, as I remember it. There was no malice in his sermon, but it was based on a sound interpretation of the scriptures on divine healing as is generally accepted, or was in those days. It was a forceful sermon, and one that I have always remembered.

During the winter the usual "vival" meetings were held, and the vision does not ex-

There was lots of snow that winter, and it was at its worst while the meetings were in progress. It made no difference on the attendance however. Whole families came in sleighs or doubled up to make full loads and unless the weather was impossible, they came every night, some of them driving three and four miles and farther. Some of these families would pick us up as they came along, so we, mother, sister and I, went nearly every night. Rev. W. P. Slocum, I believe, assisted in the services, and they resulted in a number of converts. During those meetings another boy and myself did a few pranks at altar service that might be mentioned, but not discussed in detail.

Practically all of the "Old Guard" of that time have passed on, and there are but one or two connections to those stirring times that remain. Not a Dougherty by name, remains in the community, that they did so much to build and maintain.

I have found on numerous occasions that Herald readers are finding keen enjoyment in reading Mr. Dibble's Memoirs, and I am delighted to have the opportunity to give these rich experiences to the people through the medium of the Herald.

SECTION ONE

DEDICATED TO THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY

The Herald

"You Can Sell 'em, if You"

COLUMN 52

OFFICIAL COUNTY PAPER Hurley, S. Dak

Golden Anniversary

OF THE METHODIST CHURCH, HURLEY

FOUR PAGE

ay Herald

Tell 'em in the Herald"

Feb. 14, 1935

OFFICIAL CITY PAPER

NUMBER 4

ry for Methodists

Strong Pastors Served Church

After the organization of the Board of Trustees the Hurley Methodist Church was without a regular pastor until the fall when Rev. Mr. Clyde was sent here to be in charge. At the conference of 1885 Rev. J. H. Sparke was appointed and served for the year 1886. For the year 1887 we find the names of W. T. Carson and Thomas Alcock. The year 1888 saw another change when Rev. L. J. Bliss became the pastor. Rev. S. J. Jones served for the year 1889. During the pastorate of the men above mentioned there was no church building, and the Methodist Society met in Kite's hall, (next to the Herald building), in the Corner Cafe building and some services were held in the Baptist church (the Maggie Polley home, now). It was during the ministry of Rev. A. E. Carhart in 1890 that the present church building was erected.

Rev. Carhart served from conference time in 1889 until the fall of 1892. Rev. Alexander Bennett was appointed in the fall of 1892, but did not finish out the year due to illness. He was followed by Rev. George F. Hopkins who remained until October 1894. For the next year the charge was served by Rev. John Kaye, who was succeeded by Rev. L. W. Darling who served for three years and was respon-

sible for a large increase in the church membership. He was succeeded by Rev. H. S. Farr who was here for one year. Then came the Rev. J. Clark DuVall who remained two years. The next appointment brought Rev. G. L. Granger. In 1904 came a man who was destined to serve this church at two different times for a total of eight years, the Rev. W. P. Slocum, now pastor of the M. E. church at Arlington, S. Dak. In his first pastorate here he served three years. Rev. W. O. Redfield came in 1907 and remained for two years, being followed by Rev. S. Olds for a period of one year.

For the next four years, Rev. Wm. S. Rowden carried on an active ministry. Then in 1914 Rev. Slocum returned to this appointment and served in a busy and happy ministry until 1919. His successor was Rev. O. P. Jackson, the father of the present pastor of the Watertown M. E. Church. In 1922 came Rev. H. O. Blackburn now at Beresford. He left here in 1925 to become assistant pastor of the First M. E. Church at Sioux Falls. At the 1925 conference, the Rev. J. B. Dibble, who had served in this state for many years, was appointed here, and as we all know was pastor for eight and one-half years, until the spring of 1934, when ill health forced him to retire. His successor and the present pastor is the Rev. Walter T. Ratcliffe, who came to Hurley directly from his training at theological seminary. Looking back over these rec-

ords it appears that this church has been served by twenty-four different ministers, one of whom served at two different times. Rev. Dibble holds the record for the longest pastorate and is closely followed by Rev. Slocum, who served for eight years during two pastorates.

These names are recorded here because each one of them has had some share in the fifty years of history of the Hurley M. E. Church. The earliest names are of those who saw a new state, new towns, new opportunities and had a part in the establishing of a new church. Those who came after, have labored through difficulties of all kinds to preserve that church and to pass it on to us today.

Brief History of Organization of Board is Given

Religion follows the frontier, is a remark often heard among church historians. It was true in the colonization of America, and in the pioneering days in South Dakota.

Methodism in this section seems to have had its inception with the work of Rev. C. W. Batchelder in the late fall of 1871 or early spring of 1872. He labored over the southeastern part of Dakota Territory. Since there was no Dakota conference

at that time he was commissioned, first by Des Moines Conference, and later by the Northwest Iowa Conference. He traveled and preached through this section for about ten years. There is no doubt but that the religious needs of large numbers of people were cared for by this man, who went wherever a helping hand was needed. We today, can hardly estimate the good that he did, and how he plowed and prepared the ground for the harvest which has since appeared.

In the fall of 1873 we find the Methodists of Middleton, Turner and Hurley townships being served by the Rev. J. W. Spengler who resided at Lincoln Center in the western part of Lincoln county. He traveled through these townships and held services in the homes of many people, including Cyrus Morris, Henry Davis, Henry Smith, James and Joseph Smith and W. H. Stoddard.

Within the next few years, especially those immediately following 1880, Swan Lake developed into quite a town, and with its development came a Methodist Society. They built a church under the leadership of Rev. Batchelder. It was the first Methodist Church in Turner County and is said to have cost \$600. Around the work at Swan Lake and the neighboring settlements grew up the Swan Lake Circuit. In the meantime a Methodist organization had grown up at Lennox and those Methodists

living along the Vermillion River in eastern Turner county were transferred to the Lennox charge. When the Chicago and Northwestern railroad put its line through this section in 1883, the town of Hurley developed and the church at Swan Lake was divided. A few farmers from nearby and from Spring Valley continued to attend but the larger part of the congregation became part of the Methodist class in Hurley. Wm Conklin was the Superintendent of a Methodist Sunday School in Hurley. The Class met in Kyte's hall and later in the hall over Brauch's Drug Store (now the Corner Cafe building). The Methodist Class which was formally organized by the Rev. F. A. Burdick of Parker in 1884, consisted of ten members: Wm Conklin, Clara Conklin, W. E. Wortman, Alice Wortman, A. A. Bayse, Maggie Bayse, N. M. Bayse, Samantha Pies, Wm Selby, and Matilda Selby.

During the next winter definite plans for organization were made and on February 16, 1885 six men met with the Rev Burdick and formally organized the Board of Trustees of the Hurley Methodist Church. A subscription list was circulated for funds for a church building and by one week from then \$799 had been subscribed, and a resolution was passed that they should proceed to build. However, this purpose was not accom-

plished until 1890.

As the years went by the church grew, some of the original members passed to the Great Beyond, new members came along, many children were influenced for good by the Sunday School and the devoted activities of numerous men and women. Many young couples found their way to the parsonage to be united in the holy bonds of matrimony; their babies were baptized in the church, and friends and loved ones were buried from its portals. The ministers who have served here have considered the whole community as its parish, and their influence and ability have been at the service of the community for worthy purposes.

If the church building could speak it would tell us of, years of plenty, of drouth, grasshoppers, of the passing of the prairie frontier, of local boys off to the Spanish American War, of financial panics, of the boys who went to the World War and of those who never came back. It would tell us of the men and women who have found peace for troubled hearts, those who have felt the salvation that comes through Jesus Christ. For all the service it has rendered it must feel a real satisfaction. May it remain for many years with open doors for those who have a longing which the Christian faith can meet.