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### **The Way of Victory on the French Field. Christian Standard 1937 Pages 973, 974**

Mrs. Eugene Arthur Lower

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# The Way of Victory on the French Field

## DEVOTIONAL MESSAGE

"The heavens opened" (Acts 7: 54-60; 6: 8-15).

Sacred history reveals only a glimpse of Stephen, and that during the last hour of his life. A teacher and deacon of the church, he was brought before the council where false witnesses brought accusations of blasphemy against him. Yet his persecutors "saw his face as it had been the face of an angel." His defense was also a denunciation of these persecutors of the faith, but most of all it was a testimony to his Lord.

"He looked up stedfastly into heaven," and the vision came. He saw Christ as the "Son of man." It is probable that he had never seen Christ in life, but here was revealed to him the Son of man, the embodiment of perfect manhood, giving assurance later to His followers that He was the same Jesus as in the days of His flesh. A short time before, Jesus had stood before the same court and had said: "Hereafter ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power." Now came Stephen, proclaiming that he was realizing a fulfillment in part.

"Right hand of God" suggests the wielding of the might of God. Jesus had said: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Stephen saw Him "standing," having risen to His feet to see His servant's need and show willingness to help.

Stephen had an inward likeness to his Christ, evident in life and again as death approached. His words, uttered as a last effort while conscious, as the stones were falling about him, crushing him, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge," were like to the words of Jesus on the cross, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do."

He heeded not reviling tones,  
Nor sold his heart to idle moans,  
Tho' cursed and scorn'd, and bruised with stones:  
But looking upward, full of grace,  
He pray'd, and from a happy place  
God's glory smote him on the face.  
—From "The Two Voices," by Tennyson.

## Missionary Program

Greetings to our friends, the French Acadians, traveling with us on the King's highway!

(Note to program leader. Use the poem, "Evangeline," as a background for introduction. This, with a review of history of the Acadians [see Bibliography], will enable you to introduce these interesting people to your audience. Use in program only a few brief excerpts from poem. We suggest that a participant, dressed in the plain, beautiful costume of Evangeline, tell of the simple, happy life of her people while living in Acadia. Allow, for above, not more than fifteen minutes.)

## Leader's Message

(Quotations are from poem, "Evangeline.")  
Read paragraph:

"This is the forest primeval; but where are the hearts that beneath it  
Leaped like the roe, when he hears in the woodland the voice of the huntsman?"

Naught but tradition remains of the beautiful village of Grand-Pré."

There is a stimulus to mind and heart in reading again that masterpiece of the poet Longfellow, "Evangeline," portraying a type of people and mode of living not common in our day. Reading of the enjoyment of simple pleasures, the happiness in giving and receiving of hospitality, living without strife, loyalty to religion, is indeed refreshing. The story of the suffering, persecution and the patience of a people who wanted most of all peace, but who were subject to a people who oppressed them and who hated their religion, encourages those who are today discouraged, distressed. The poem holds particular interest to us today as we are centering our thought on mission work among a group of these people in Louisiana.

Introduce "Evangeline," who tells of Acadia, location, discovery by French, early settlers, religion, customs.

Leader continues. Quote:

"Thus dwelt together in love these simple Acadian farmers,

There the richest was poor, and the poorest lived in abundance."

Give story of exile; separation of loved ones; settling of groups among English colonies, mainly along the Atlantic; death's claim. Quote in story of exile, paragraph:

"There disorder prevailed, and the tumult and stir of embarking.

Rose no smoke from the roofs, and gleamed no lights from the windows."

Evangeline tells of reunion of groups in the Attakapas region on the Teche and Vermillion bayous, southern Louisiana. Quote:

"Thus he spake to his guests, who listened, and smiled as they listened:

"Welcome once more, my friends, who long have been friendless and homeless,"

Drawn by the gentle bond of a common country together."

Thus, in Louisiana, began life anew for the French Acadians. Their faith in God remained, though clinging to it were the superstitions and ignorance of their religion.

## Assignment Material

### EVARISTE HEBERT

Evariste Hebert has an interesting life story. An Acadian and a Catholic, he was educated at the convent school in Abbeville, La., also St. Joseph's College at Covington, La., where he was in training for the priesthood, feeling called to that work. It became necessary after three years to discontinue his studies and return home, but, receiving permission from the bishop, he was engaged for six years in the work of a missionary of the Catholic Church.

During a mission service in Mermantau, La., he spoke on the necessity of confession to the Roman Catholic priest for the forgiveness of sins, and the consecration of the



Evangeline

wafer, or Host, by the priest for Holy Communion. His statements were challenged by a man in the audience, member of a Methodist Church, and Mr. Hebert offered to bring proof from the Bible. Before leaving, the "disturber" lifted his New Testament and said: "My brother, may God have mercy, and make the scales fall off your eyes."

Then began a search for truth. He went to the priest who sold him for \$4 a Catholic Bible, but warned him that he would not understand it. He could not find his proof here. His search took him to the bishop and ministers of various denominations. From the latter he purchased Bibles and was confused to find the thirteen Bibles he purchased from thirteen ministers were alike, though they were being taught differently.

After praying desperately for light, one day the truth was made plain. W. J. Johnson, minister of the church of Christ, holding a meeting at Iota, La., came to visit him, hearing of his need. After studying all day, Brother Hebert was baptized that evening.

Then began the great work among the French Acadians of Louisiana. Mrs. Hebert accepted Christ shortly after her husband's conversion, over twenty years ago, and has served with him, sharing his trials through the years. The prayers of many friends of the work have ascended in her behalf during her serious illness of the past two years.

Aided at first by the Louisiana Woman's Missionary Society, then the Christian Woman's Board of Missions, then the United Christian Missionary Society, the work progressed. About seven years ago, following a change of policy in the work, a change to which Brother Hebert could not agree, relations were severed and the work has been supported by voluntary gifts. As an evangelist of the Christian Restoration Association, he has received aid from that source.

During the past year Brother Hebert has traveled 38,639 miles, preached 492 sermons, baptized 126 Catholics, made 469 pastoral calls, 381 visits in homes, 309 sick calls, held 219 conferences for the good of the work, gave medical and hospital help to 39 people, help with food and clothing to 129, built one new church—both building and congregation. This does not include the work of helpers.

Have you had a part in the extension of the kingdom in this place? Must the work be curtailed and suffering increased because of our neglect? Brother Hebert "prayed it through." Let us "pray and give it through."

## BROTHER HEBERT'S MESSAGE

This French Field is located in the southwestern part of Louisiana, and covers a territory of eighty square miles. Here is located a group of French-speaking people known as

French Acadians, numbering five hundred thousand, according to Dudley J. LeBlanc, historian, whose book, "The True Story of the Acadians," is just off the press. You will note that the religious background of these people is Roman Catholic. I am one of these French Acadians, as are also my two helpers, Hollins Duhon and Bernard Fontenot.

Never in the history of the French people was it known that any were anything but Catholic in religion. I am the first one known to break loose from the mother church, and the first convert to the simple New Testament church of Christ. The first missionary to bring these unfortunates the pure gospel, I am also the founder of the French work. If our Christian people could know what the Roman Catholic Church believes and teaches, I am sure they would appreciate this field much more, and would invest much more of their money than they do to help these people out of this pagan religion. We are anxious to see the Chinese, Japanese and Africans converted from their idol worship to the true and living Christ, and I say, "Amen" and "Amen." But without taking from these, let us include in our concern these people in their paganism, existing right at the door. True trusteeship of our means would insure enough for all. I feel sure there would be an unlimited support for this, our own people.

In spite of all oppositions, persecutions and trials, God has wonderfully blessed us and our labor, using us in a fruitful way. I preached my first gospel sermon on July 16, 1915, after studying three years to become a priest, and being a lay, missionary for the Catholic Church for six years. Results of my first sermon were forty-eight baptized the same hour of the night. So there was planted the first Church of Christ in the French field. In twenty-two years I have baptized several thousands of these, my fellow French Acadian Catholics. Have also established nine churches and 42 preaching stations in which we have no organized churches.

In the early days I had no car, but a small buggy and a little gray horse. Those days were indeed hard days. I had to preach while wearing clothes which were hardly fit to wear in public. At times I had nothing to eat but dry bread, but, blessed be God, I was willing to suffer for His cause. "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him." My wife and I suffered hardships at the hands of the Catholic world. Our own father and mother would have nothing to do with us, not allowing us in their home. Our best friends deserted us when we left the mother church. I received several Black Hand letters, ordering me out of my home, city, even the state. They threatened to burn my home and family; they shot at me several times; persecutions came, too numerous to mention. The only reason for our escape, as I see it, is that God had chosen me to begin His work in this part of His vineyard. They could not touch me before my mission was ended.

#### YOUNG PEOPLE RESPOND

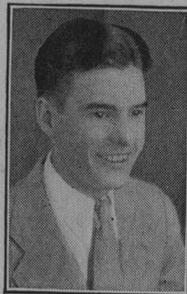
The young people respond to the presentation of the gospel and are truly Christians after being touched by the Word. You would be surprised were you to visit the French field, to see the large number of boys and girls in our churches, and their great interest in church work. In every one of our churches the choir is composed of young people from fifteen to twenty-five years of age. Our Jennings choir is composed of about eighty-five young people. Our young people of the church have forsaken the world and worldly things. They do not go to shows, theaters, club houses or any other wicked places. They are churchgoers only. They

hold fast to that faith once delivered unto the saints.

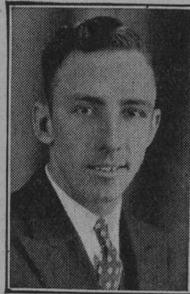
It will interest you to know that 75 per cent of our converts in recent revival meetings and regular services were young people. The future of this work is very bright. Formerly most of our converts were old people, but now many of the young generation are coming to Christ. So many of our young people did not go to school, or stopped at third, fourth or fifth grades, with no law to compel their attendance. Now laws demand it.

#### TRAINING WORKERS UNDER DIFFICULTIES

One of the greatest needs now is sufficient funds to open a school to train young men for the ministry, and others for church work. May God hasten the day to that end. As for the two boys I have under training, I have, at my own expense, kept them in my own home, but I can not take others, as my wife is no longer physically able. Other needs are sufficient funds for support for my two helpers and myself. How wonderful it would be if some churches or missionary societies would take my boys as living links,



Hollins Duhon



Bernard Fontenot

or help in some other way! One can not imagine the great work that can be done, if we could carry on this work as it should be. Do you see the vision?

JENNINGS, La.      EVARISTE HEBERT,  
Pastor and Missionary.

#### EVANGELIST HOLLINS DUHON SENDS MESSAGE

I have been with Brother Hebert for the past five years, assisting him in funerals, weddings, baptismal services, revivals and regular services. I have also worked alone in the field these past years, filling appointments, visiting the sick and going from station to station, enjoying my work for Christ, in which Brother and Sister Hebert hazarded their lives from time to time.

My father and mother were converted from Catholicism to Christianity by Brother Hebert eighteen years ago. We are French Acadians and natives of Louisiana. We have ancestors who can not read, write or speak the English language. I could not speak a word of English before I went to public school, and I had a hard time learning the language.

I can not forget what the Word of God did for my parents. Having grown up under the influence of Christian parents, my desire was to become a minister, that I might tell the story of Christ to the thousands who are still worshiping idols and false gods in this southwest Louisiana territory.

#### MY EXPERIENCE IN THE FRENCH FIELD

On July 4, 1932, I came to Brother Hebert's home and began studying the Scriptures. Sometime later I began training in the Christian homes in Jennings, leading song services, praying and reading the Bible. Then I began to do personal work among the young people in different parts of the field, winning victories for Christ as I went. My

first meeting resulted in the conversion of eleven young people. My! I was thrilled to see that God was using such a humble boy to win souls for Him!

Recently I was going to one of our little churches to hold a service, and met a man on the way and invited him to attend the service. He said, "I might go," but he looked unconcerned. However, he did come, bringing his family with him. After the service he came to me and said: "Brother Duhon, I am a bad man. I have been in prison and there was a time in my life when I did not fear men, the law, Satan, not even God. But now I see differently, and I want you to pray for me that my heart may be changed." He also expressed his desire to become a Christian.

There are countless cases like this one who have been brought to Christ. By God's grace we will do our best to bring these poor unfortunate ones into the fold before it is everlastingly too late. So far this year I have preached ninety-eight sermons in different churches and have tried to do all my Master would have me do for Him in His vineyard.

With such victories as were won for Christ in the past short years, we hope to win greater ones in the future, and we are working night and day, in season and out of season, to that end. All this work of soul-winning was made possible by God through the help of the loyal friends of the French work. We want to thank all the friends and loyal brethren for their kindness and to ask them to continue in prayer for us and the work we have at heart.

HOLLINS DUHON.

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#### LOOKING TOWARDS THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

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appetite that will not be satisfied with anything short of something that breaks the denominational lines and creates a unity on the basis of individual congregations. There is one complication, however. I referred to it briefly above: If the work of the Conference on Faith and Order is to be perfectly sincere, it is essential that there be present in its conferences representatives of the different bodies of Christendom. That means that the World Council must somewhere make provision for a conference of representatives of denominations chosen as such and not merely as representatives of nations. The multiplicity of denominations seems at first glance to make this impossible. Only one representative from each would make a conference of over three hundred. But a great number of very small denominations may be counted out. For my part, I should like to see a World Council of Christians that would not in any way seem to give countenance to denominationalism and therefore I would want to see the representation upon a basis of nations, though, of course, with Christian courtesy distributing this representation as fairly as could be done. Nevertheless, the cause that was advanced at Edinburgh would be bound to suffer severely if its delegations were created on a basis of nationality rather than on a basis of faith, as I believe it would also suffer if there were to creep into the organization any disposition to give it any authority.

EDWIN R. ERRETT.