

An Example of Sacrifice

A number of times through the years I have had the privilege of preaching in an area of Arkansas which remembers the influence and sacrifice of Joe Blue. As I read and thought about some of his sacrifices, I wondered if we would do the same today.

Brother Blue preached one whole year for the church, baptized 75 and established one congregation and was paid \$19.00. Many times he did without meals because he did not have the money to buy them. He preached in a meeting once and was paid one dollar and given a bushel of seed corn. He sometimes would ride the train from wherever he was holding a meeting, to Hardy, Arkansas, and from there he would walk home. He once closed a meeting in Cotter, Arkansas, and afterwards, with snow coming down, walked home from the train station, a distance of some 35 to 40 miles.

I visited the church building at Pleasant Valley, Arkansas, where dynamite was put under the pulpit where brother Blue was holding a meeting. Fortunately, either the fuse went out or there was a bad cap, and the dynamite did not explode. This was about 1930. The place where the fuse burned across the floor was still very visible.

Dynamite Was Put Under The Pulpit

It was my privilege to eat with brother and sister Hubert Flint, who lived just down the road from the Pleasant Valley building, and were faithful members there. (The building has since been torn down.) The Pleasant Valley church stopped meeting a few years back and merged with area congregations.

Brother Flint was gracious enough to show me the building, and the place where the dynamite fuse had burned the floor. Brother Flint thinks the dynamite cap was bad, and that is why there was no explosion. Sister Flint was attending the meeting by brother Blue when all of this happened. She said some people also threw walnuts and eggs through the window while the preaching was going on. She said they went right over her head. Some of the people in that community obviously did not like what brother Blue was preaching.

Brother Blue once preach a whole month in a certain congregation and they paid him \$2.00 and gave him a handkerchief. He held far more than a hundred debates

and when he died in 1954, no denomination existed in his community near Salem, Arkansas.

The influence of this unique man lives on in Arkansas. I never was privileged to meet this man, although his brother, Roby, used to attend meetings where I preached in Arkansas. One cannot know of the sacrifice of this great man of God and see the result of his work and not appreciate it greatly.