

A TESTIMONY
WEDNESDAY EVENING, JAN. 1, 1975 (Bellingham)

As this is the first testimony meeting of the New Year, and as this is the time when we find our thoughts and expressions are most serious, I would like to relate an experience I have had within the last few days. I am going to present this experience to you in three phases—the third phase will be the climax and I hope you get the spiritual lift that I did.

PHASE I: Approximately a week ago I chanced to run across a T.V. program that excited my immediate attention. I am not in the habit of spending much time looking at T.V., but this was a program that was outstanding and it lasted one hour and a half. It was from Vancouver, B.C. and was the showing of athletic feats of young men and women from China. It would be difficult to go over all the things that were done, besides words would be inadequate anyway. I was thrilled, for all my life I have admired the stunts performed by trained athletes. The final act was almost unbelievable. There was a small table used and at the two ends of the table were mounted four hoops, two at each end and the two hoops were balanced on the lower hoops resting on the table. Young men ran toward the table and almost seemed to float through the hoops as their movements and timing were so perfect. One act showed two men at a time on the table and they went through the hoops without touching them in any way. I have often thought how wonderful is little man that his body can be so trained as to perform such exacting athletic feats of strength, timing and grace. Such performances thrill me through and through.

PHASE II: Last Saturday evening, the 28th, I glanced at the T.V. program for the evening and noticed that there was to be a showing of outstanding athletic and sport activities. I hurriedly mentioned this to Bessie and we loaded our plates with our food and watched the program. Skiing was featured mostly and it was marvelous what the skiers could do. There were high jumps and turning and twisting through the air that were breathtaking. One young girl performed on two high bars, one below the other and the things she could do were marvelous. Another young girl had a white ribbon on the end of a stick and she kept this in beautiful motion as she executed feats of turning, twisting and somersaulting through the air. This program lasted at least an hour and it would be impossible for me to adequately describe the wonderful things that were done. I felt deeply moved by these feats—admiration for the skill shown and the realization of how much practice had gone before to make these feats possible, and how wonderful the human body is when in good healthy condition and well trained. I felt these athletes are set apart from the rest of us, and certainly they earn their applause. Much as we admire these wonderful things, and would love to be able to do them ourselves, we know this is impossible. These athletes have spent many hours over many years to attain their perfections and they are superior to us. All we can do is to admire them, enjoy watching them, and give them the respect and applause they so richly deserve.

PHASE III: As I thought on the superiority of these wonderful young men and women, and that their superiority to us is due to their years of applying themselves to rigorous training and practice, a thought came to me that was unexpected and even startling as it developed in my mind. I thought, yes, it was true that these wonderful young men and women were able to do these marvelous feats, and physically they were superior to us. BUT I thought—what about our training in the Narrow Way?—years of rigorous training. Could any athletic training be any more exacting than the training we are getting along the line of character?! Do athletes know anything about this at all? We know they don't. And I thought further—what is our Christian training leading to?—SOMETHING THAT IS SUPREMEY GRAND AND EXALTING AND USEFUL TO OURSELVES AND TO ALL MANKIND! I thought, yes, there will be a brilliant performance beyond the veil when we reign with Christ, sit with Him in His throne and administer the affairs of the Kingdom, bringing restitution blessings to all mankind. So even though we do not and cannot participate in some of the physical joys of this life, I think of the words of Paul in Phil. 3:7, 8: “But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, I count all things but loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.” And so I can say that I am happy and thankful that I was never an athlete, for if I had been, the joys might have blinded my eyes to the joys, honors and pleasures of the Christian calling and profession.

Brother Staples, Richmond, Va.: I have been set thinking since yesterday because of the testimonies of two brothers who spoke of trouble in their homes. These two brethren mentioned something of the breach that had been made in their families which was caused by the Truth entering in. My experience has been a little along this line... The leader said yesterday that perhaps these brothers had talked too much... I called to mind a silent sermon, when our Saviour preached to the spirits in prison and I determined to emulate Him, feeling that it would be the best sermon. So dear friends, I want to say if you will just ponder and pray over the matter looking to Jesus as the example and follow Him, you will get help. His sermon was His life, His death, and His resurrection... I find my wife has mellowed down to my astonishment and will help me to any reasonable extent. I ceased to call her by name, but “my dear,” “my darling,” “my precious one.” And when coming in from work I would ask “how are you my dear, are you well?” Try it dear brethren. (1907 Convention Report, Part II, pages 149 and 150.)