

THE LORD'S PROVISION

When my grandfather Charles B. Lamb was a young man, his father Richard, took him from the village of Sibford in Oxfordshire England to a nearby town to apprentice him as an auctioneer. In those days one had to pay an apprenticing fee and the auctioneer wanted Twenty Pounds. Great-grand-father did not have it. For even though my great-grand-father had farmed 640 acres, he filled a house with wool when cheap wool started coming in from Australia and lost heavily when the price of wool dropped. Because of this my grandfather moved to Ireland to work in the Linen mill at Bessbrook. There he came to accept Jesus as his Lord and Saviour and the Lord prospered him. He was given the opportunity to take on the debt on a property and subsequently started the jam business at Fruitfield, Richhill, Co. Armagh. His wife lost their first child, Joseph, stillborn and premature, thought to be due to the heavy work making the jam during the first year of their marriage. They subsequently had eight children. My father was the fifth child and was born in 1896. In 1923 he moved to Dublin to help his older brother in the jam business there.

I was born nearly twenty-four years younger than my eldest brother and it was natural that when I finished studying (Mechanical Engineering) I should go into the family business to join two brothers, two cousins, two uncles and my father in what by then, was the largest fruit growing and jam manufacturing business in Ireland.

I guess it was a privilege to have the opportunity to make mistakes. Looking back I can see that the greatest mistake was an accumulation of small ones, particularly in the area of human relations; more specifically, in practical caring for people, by improving the environment of the old factory and in understanding how people on the factory floor really thought. It was not that I did not care at heart, but that I was not practical enough in quickly showing this caring. When I became Operations Director in the

Spring of 1976, after substantial losses the previous year, I was in the difficult position of needing to make changes yet I lacked the skills of a trained or experienced negotiator. While financially we managed to produce a program to turn the company around to profitability, labour relations came to a standstill.¹⁴ I lacked the confidence of the workforce and they did not believe me. This was partly due I think, to my failure over the years to get little considerate things done for people. What we sow, we will also reap. Years later I had the opportunity to go to Value of the Person seminar where Wayne Alderson told how he had been able to turn Pittron Steel company round by “Valuing the persons working there” a story recorded in book “Stronger than Steel The Wayne Alderson Steel by R.C.Sproul published by Harper and Row. New York 1980 ISBN 0-06-067502-0. If only I had learnt to value all the people working for me earlier. Or the words of scripture about loving ones neighbour as myself or the saying of the early church “Don’t do to others what you would not like them to do to you” and grappled with the challenge of treating those who work for one with equity Col 4v1 remembering that each one will receive again for what he does and that we should fore bare threatening knowing that there is no partiality with God (see Ephesians 6v8-9)

In the Spring of 1977, we started off on a budget which called for increased business. The pressures on me increased, and when in May there was a dispute with some of the maintenance men, I 'blew my top' and we had a strike on our hands. It was settled by another director but this burst of anger really undermined my authority and standing. On top of this, having committed ourselves to the increased business I was informed that the Bank would not go along with the increased peak borrowings required, so all the Summer I was outwardly increasing production while inwardly I knew the brake would have to come on severely in the Autumn. It was therefore not surprising that it required a week for me to unwind and be able to communicate with Marj during our holiday in August that year, in the quiet of Newcastle

where the mountains of Mourne sweep down to the sea. Marj received a word from the Lord during a time of worship that Unless the Directors of the family business turned to the Lord the business was finished. She faithfully shared this word without significant response, (five years to the month the business closed and went into liquidation there was not a penny left for the shareholders. Refreshed from our holidays, we returned to Dublin ready to continue the struggle in the difficult business climate that existed at the time.

Shortly after our return, we found that in my absence, the other Directors had decided to sell cakes containing 1% whiskey .I have had a strong aversion to alcohol since the father of a friend of mine was killed by a drunken driver when I was ten-years-old. On top of this, I often found myself praying for people with alcohol-related problems in their families. "If our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God and we receive from Him whatever we ask because we keep His commandments and do what pleases Him." (1 John 3v21-22) I could not pray with confidence while my heart condemned me and equally well as a Director, I felt the weight of responsibility of not being party to anything which could cause someone to stumble. Paul says, "It is right not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that makes your brother stumble." (Rom.14v21) I wanted nothing to do with this trade.

Friendly discussions were held with other Directors, but in the pressurized business conditions of the time, it did not seem feasible to obtain a decision to phase out the sale of the cakes so it seemed better for me to resign as a Director rather than rock the boat and possibly stir up .ill feeling. I sat on the fence' for some weeks very reluctant to leave a business I held shares in and into which I had put my heart for twelve years, yet deeply unhappy with my involvement as a Director when suddenly from somebody who we respected in the Lord and who knew nothing about our situation, there was at a meeting the following word from the Lord. (2 Kings Bv1-6) "And the Lord brought it to me this way.

Somebody has had the word of the Lord to move and they haven't moved, and this woman (referring to the Scripture) because she got the word of the Lord to move and He gave her a choice of where she should go and she chose the land of the Philistines where she'd be looked after. But that wasn't what really mattered. What mattered was the fact that she moved out on the word. And it came to me that there's somebody and you're in a place of security, at least you think you are secure in it, but the Lord is going to bring a famine there; it's going to dry up -that place that you thought was secure. The Lord wants you to move out. He's given you His word and I think this must be specifically for somebody that's been thinking of moving, but has hesitated. Well, where you are staying is not going to prosper any longer and the Lord wants you to move out on the word He has given you. And you are not going to lose anything by it because, you see, He restored unto this woman **all** that she had lost in the moving out. He had given it to her seven-fold. Seven years food was there for her when she returned to take up. But she moved on the word of the Lord and the blessing came and she didn't lose a thing by moving. Sometimes we look when the Lord asks us to move into something and we hesitate and look in the natural and say "well what will people think, or maybe it wouldn't be profitable to move just now -I'll wait," but the Lord has already given you a word and you're to move out on it and go and just trust Him because He never lets us down and He never gives us less; when He tells you to move you move into more and I have proved that over and over again. The things that you think you're secure in, the Lord will remove them from you, so that You'll trust Him more and in trusting Him, we come into more. We never come into less, it's always into more and we get to know Him better and the blessing's there are seven-fold for us. Just step out on the word of the Lord and you'll see the blessings that will come."

With the agreement of Marj, I resigned as a Director in December 1977 and left at the end of January, 1978; confident in

the Lord and encouraged by the word of prophecy given at the meeting some months previously. I see it as a miracle to have been able to leave a family business without creating a lot of difficult family relationships. So I was released from the very high pressure business situation to be able to lead a freer life serving the Lord. I had grown up in a very privileged position in a family with considerable assets and the ability to provide employment for several hundred people. In one sense, it may be asked; why did it happen? Why did I 'blow my top'? Why did everything not work out sweetly for one who was baptized in the Spirit? As I said earlier, the gift of the Holy Spirit is not instant perfection, but the ability to communicate with God -to move on to be more like Jesus. It was necessary for the Lord to shake me from the apparent security and involvement in business to be freer for His service and to prove His supply and provision.

The Autumn of 1977 saw the start of the Dublin Chapter of the Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship International. Had I not been out of the family business, I would not have been free or able to put so much effort into the Lord's work in the Fellowship.

Having left the company, I decided to give a certain amount of money away to the Lord's work each month and at the end of the year, when I checked up the average amount I had earned, it turned out that on average per month, to be nearly exactly ten times the amount I had given away. Praise the Lord. He is no man's debtor. (Malachi 3v10-12)

There are no testimonies without tests. We don't like the tests but the assurance of knowing the Lord's provision after the test is glorious. 1982 was a 'testing' year. At one stage I took on a contract which I found I could not complete with a clear conscience, so I was faced with a choice between a relatively secure income and a clear conscience. I felt a little bit like Daniel must have felt when he was forbidden to pray, and for me, ceasing to do this work was like Daniel in faith, continuing to pray openly

and God in whom he trusted delivering him from the lions. Likewise, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego put their trust in God rather than bow down and worship the golden image and God delivered them from the fiery furnace. As we go through life, there will come temptations -to cover up, to cheat, to go with the crowd, even though we know it is wrong. We so quickly realize that we or our families may suffer (humanly speaking) if we stand for righteousness and justice, in other words, to be 'a just man' (Hab.2v4;Rom:1v17;Heb.10v38) This is why it requires faith to do what is right. Faith in God means that we have the freedom to act rightly and trust that while in the short-term, it may be very difficult, in the end the Lord will triumph and 'right' will prevail. (Psalm 112v6,7) The contract work that I had been doing with an international company was reducing; I had been able to side step to them to complete a project I had started for the family business, then acted as local project engineer on an animal byproduct project, and had to work in an icky smelling place. Then I was given work in sales, and having closed a major sale, I found that the customer was wanting to fiddle purchase price to be able to collect a bigger government grant. I felt I needed to face the customer personally with what I knew and say that I would not be party to it, personally very tense and stressed with pains in my chest when I drove to his factory. Subsequently I got a letter from the man that clearly indicated he was not going ahead with that scheme. I do not think the international Company I was working for were pleased and gradually reduced my work with them as I failed to obtain significant orders, business in Ireland was depressed at that time.

In August 1982, when we heard that I would be shortly working half-time, Marj and I decided it was right to take the family and go to the Full Gospel Businessmen's Conference in Mannheim, Germany. While we were on the continent, we visited Switzerland and Northern Italy. After this trip the Autumn proved to be a further testing time for us as I was only working part-time. However, we were not driven to despair and at times were greatly

encouraged by gifts from very unexpected sources. By the end of the year, we had as much as if I had been working full-time through the Lord enabling me to design, construct, sell and commission a Separator for Mussels. Praise God. As self-employed, I was faced with the prospect of no income if I had no work -not really a pleasant thought if one has a wife and three children.

Marj had been 11 years in Ireland and wanted to live nearer her family in Ohio so we got up momentum, to go to Ohio. Plan was that if work opened up there we would stay. My Father had died, the family business had failed, So we arranged to rent our house to Teen Challenge, and packed up Marj and the 3 children going first in August. As she flew she felt in her spirit that she was only going for a Sabbatical, but she never mentioned it to me.

I packed up a lot of personal things and a box of tools, when the company was coming to collect the boxes I felt in my spirit 'Do not send the tools' We had both passed red lights. (14 months later I had to cross London by tube from Gatwick to Heathrow with 28 lb of tools on my back)

Another Aspect

One day shortly after Elizabeth was born, Marj and I returned to the apartment where we lived to find in our absence, it had been raided. Some valuables were taken and the place was left in a mess. We said, "Hallelujah, praise the Lord!" We have felt much less concerned about our home being raided ever since. "For I have learned in whatever state I am to be content. I know how to be abashed and I know how to abound. I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger; I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. My God will supply every need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. To our God and Father be glory forever and ever Amen." (Phil.4v11-13, 19).

Revelations 12 V 11 puts it this way; "And they have conquered him (the accuser of the brethren) by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony. For they loved not their lives even unto death." In other words, their faith in God was stronger than their fear of men. So we can see that the just will live by faith because it requires faith to do what is right.

Faith is doing what we know to be right deep down in our hearts even though we face opposition and things seem to go wrong. Faith is stepping out in obedience to God's promises. Paul lived a life of faith and though he suffered much, he was convinced that he was more than a conqueror in Christ, because he had experienced God's 'keeping' power. I believe that our stepping out in faith will be accompanied by God's assurance through the witness of the Holy Spirit (Eph.1v13, 14) by signs following (Mark 16v15-19) just as is recorded in the book of Acts. Faith will be followed by works. (James 2v22).

Having less work to do, I was free to serve the Lord in helping with the March, 1983 All-Ireland Convention of the Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship International and the visit of twenty-six F.G.B.M.F.I. People from Arizona in April, 1983. It was good to be able to serve the Lord in this way, yet at the same time, it was an act of faith. Come the end of March, I sat down and calculated the point at which our pending bills like income tax, would exceed our reserves set aside to pay them; and when we were likely to run out of cash. At the same time, we felt it was right to give away several hundred pounds. Marj and I agreed that this would only mean we would run out of cash sooner so we gave it away. Praise God! The day that cheque was written, so was the order for a second-hand machine I had bought and subsequently the order came for a second machine from someone I had never even contacted. Praise God the sale of these machines has been His provision for us these last few months. This has also given me time to write this book. Path of Hope in Ireland

It is good to know we serve the living God and that He is able to continue to be our provision as He has been in the past. God has a purpose for each one of our lives, and when we put our lives in His hands, He makes a way for us. I remember a man who had been out of work for one-and-a-half years coming to the prayer meeting for several weeks. We prayed with him that he would get a job. He applied and got several interviews. Each interview that he went to gave him more confidence that he would get a job; the opposite to the normal reaction, then he got a suitable job. Praise God. The sad part was that he no longer came to the prayer meetings until he lost his job again.

Jesus healed ten lepers- only one returned to give thanks. I want to thank the Lord and give him the glory for all His provision in our lives. Jude v21 says; "Keep yourselves in the love of God." How we need to keep ourselves in God's love and where He can bless us. We need to remember as the Psalmist says: "If riches increase, set not your heart upon them." (Psalm 62v10)

In 1970 I had read on a notice put up by some young Quakers asked the question: "How can I simplify my life so as to .be available to the Spirit?"

"If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But Love your enemies, and do good, and lend expecting nothing in return and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High for he is kind to the ungrateful and the selfish. Be merciful as your father is merciful. Judge not and you will not be judged, condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive and you will be forgiven; Give and it shall be given unto you, good measure, shaken together, pressed down and running over, will be put into your lap. For the measure you give will be the measure you get back." (Luke 6:32-39) It takes

Faith to live just lives in this present world, for does not our education teach us to look after own interests and comforts “for are we worth it” !

My mother quoted this poem author unknown

For we must share if we would keep
This good thing from above
Ceasing to share we cease to have.
So runs the Law of Love.

In 1983 we moved to Barnesville in Eastern Ohio USA to be near Marj’s Parents. I started the 1984 trying to sell the Mussel Crab Separator I had made on the eastern seaboard and failed. Since I also failed to get a job in the food industry within 150 miles we only had sufficient cash left, from the car we sold in Ireland, to pay already incurred bills. (We were not entitled to any unemployment pay because we had not been in the country 5 years). I was depressed. Then I read aloud to myself what I had put together a year earlier. *Passage in bold Italics earlier*

"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." (Psalm 23v1) "I have been young and now am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken nor his children begging bread." "He is ever giving liberally and lending and his children are a blessing." "Depart from evil and do good so shall you abide forever." (Psalm 37v25-27) "He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly, who despises the gain of oppressions who shakes his hands lest they hold a bribe, who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed and shuts his eyes from looking upon evil; he will dwell on the heights. His place of defense will be the fortresses of rocks; his bread will be given him,; his water will be sure." (Isaiah 33v15, 16)

***"Therefore, do not be anxious saying; "What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, for your Heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness and all these things shall be yours as well. Therefore, do not be anxious about tomorrow; look at the birds of the air -they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns and yet your Heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Consider the lilies of the field how they grow. They neither toil nor spin. If God so clothes the grass of the field, will He not much more clothe you O men of little faith; "* (Matt. 6v26. 33).**

"Ask and it will be given you, for everyone who asks, receives. If you then who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in Heaven, give good things to those who ask Him! (Part Matt. 7v7-11)"And if you obey the voice of the Lord your God, being careful to do all His commandments, all these blessings shall come upon you; Blessed shall be the fruit of your body the fruit of your ground, the fruit of your beasts the Lord will command a blessing on your barns, and all you undertake. The Lord will make you abound in prosperity. The Lord will open His good treasury in the Heavens to give rain of your land in it's season; to bless all the work of your hands. You shall tend upward only if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God, being careful to do them." (Part Deut.28) "Therefore, give thanks in all circumstances for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."

(1 Thess. 3v12)

The words went out my mouth and in my ears and faith was kindled. The depression lifted, and a week later I got work picking apples, very good exercise, fortunately I was young and fit enough to climb the ladder and pick apples. This was because while I was unemployed I had worked chain sawing timber, splitting locus trees and digging fence post holes. For one who used to be a Director of company with 1000 acres of farms and since the age of

16 had managed fruit pickers it was an experience. I managed to pick 2 bulk bins a day and earn 120 \$ per week. After a month I found myself picking beside a really good apple picker and found I was able to double the picking rate and one week picked 28 bins. We still living with Marj's parents though we did have a room and kitchen to use, the converted chicken house that had been Marj's home as a child, and which was heated by a barrel stove I had made, One 40 gal steel barrels on top of an other. Probably my quotes from scripture should have ended with "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say rejoice.....have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made know to God, and the peace of God which passed all understanding will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.....not that I complain of being in want; for I have learned in whatever state I am to be content. I know how to be abased and I know how to abound; in any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger abundance and want. I can do all things through him who strengthens me." Philippians

4:4-13

In the summer of 2007 I attended a conference which African Friends (Quakers) also attended, one evening I felt peckish and purchased a chocolate bar for €1 from slot machine.....and I scoffed it down.....only to realize that I had not offered to share it with anyone and more important I learned later that many friends in Kenya at that time were only able to earn €1 per day if they have work and if they fail to turn up they may lose their jobs. Imagine trying to provide for a family in that situation. This experience has encouraged me to keep in touch with Friends in Kenya and in a tiny measure share in their struggles, in a totally inadequate way feel their droughts, and appreciation of an orphan for a little help each month.