

September 23, 1931.

Dear Dad and Mother:

Since Dr. and Mrs. Scott are coming up for the weekend I wanted you and mother to know how it stood between Betty and myself. You ought to know, and it certainly wouldn't be nice if Dr. and Mrs. Scott knew how matters stood and you were in the dark. I hope Betty can come up for the week end too. I know you folk have been praying for us.

Unfortunately Betty and I haven't had much chance to be together alone, and will only have about one more day together before she goes off to China, so that many questions which we should have liked to "talk out" we've had to write about, but doubtless our Heavenly Father knew all about that. Perhaps we have even been able to think them through better and with less hurry and fluster than otherwise. "He doeth all things well." We don't always, do we?

Since I still feel that the Lord would have me spend some time alone, I told Betty that in all fairness and love to her, I could not and would not ask her to enter into an engagement with years to wait. But we can have a real understanding and thus be free to let the interests of the Lord's work always be first.

Some
~~Between you and me, though, Dad and Mother, I have an idea and a strong one that both Dr. and Mrs. Scott favor very much an early marriage, and they bring forth, or rather those who do favor this, bring forth strong reasons for it too. The health of married missionaries is generally better than single ones. The companionship one with the other is a great factor when you consider the impact of a depraved heathenism all about you. Married missionaries are supposed to be more respected by the heathen too, since they do not suspect them of the things they suspect single people of. Foreigners travelling in foreign countries have left an awful reputation behind them, and missionaries are tarred with the same brush until they prove themselves to be different, which by the grace of God of course is done in time. There are other reasons of course, but I shall stop with these.~~

Now for the other side. The C. I. M. has appealed for men, single men to do itinerating work out in sections where it would be in some cases almost impossible to travel with women, and at least they feel it unfair to take women up into these unsettled sections until a work has been started. After a work has been ~~the~~ started we all recognize that women are needed. You can't reach the native women any other way. But they are looking for men to travel from village preaching and distributing literature. The men at the head of the mission are seasoned missionaries, men of God, and are fully aware of the dangers and trials on the field, and yet they feel that what they need is single men for this work. Some time ago I promised the Lord that if I was fitted for that work, I would gladly go, and so now I feel that I cannot back down without a very good reason, reasons that would show the work of the Lord could be advanced by my changing my course, not merely reasons that concern personal convenience. Apostolic example seems to point to that way, and I suppose that really ought to be our first reason.

So there you have the reason, Dad and Mother, why I wrote Betty as I did, ~~she has certainly been a dear in being very very patient with me for a long time.~~ If after we are out for a year or two, we find that the Lord's work would be advanced by our marriage, there is no reason why we should wait any certain number of years.

And now, Dad and mother, from the way I've written this you'd think I was talking about a carload of lumber I was negotiating for, instead of something that has dug down deep into our hearts. Both Betty and I have been praying very much about this, and I know you have too, and of this I am sure, if we are foolishly waiting, and the Lord's work will not be really prospered by our waiting, truly the Lord will not let us miss out on any of his blessings if our hearts are set to do His will. Even this He will show us.

But this is true, isn't it, that our wishes must not come first. The progress of the Lord's work is to be the first consideration. And so there are times when we just have to stop and think hard.

I do feel the need of your prayers. I am writing Mr. Drew and Erling, asking them if I can use their names for referees to the C. I. M. The more I look at my applying, the more I feel that I need to know the power of God in my life. I do feel such a lack of love for souls, and such a coldness and deadness, that I wonder why I ever have the nerve of thinking of going to the foreign field. So pray for me.

As I look over the first page of this letter, it looks as if it came out of a typewriter all right, hard, cold, metallic, even brusque, but there are just a few of the angles.

Pray for me.

Yours in Jesus love,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "John". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name "Yours in Jesus love,".