

March 28, 1948

Dear Doris,

Your letter was gratefully received. I am happy that the candy arrived safely, and am particularly glad that you didn't get a belly-ache (tho' you certainly deserved no less). Something tells me that you are getting to be more and more of a "chow-hound" every day. But a mighty pretty "chow-hound," I must say.

I assure you that it was a pleasure having your parents visit with us. My folks learned to love them deeply. And my kid sister got along just tops with your Dad. They were forever joking with each other. Elaine is quite talented musically, taking lessons from one of the leading vocal instructors in the city. She loves the Lord dearly and often has the opportunity to serve Him in radio work. In fact, she has another radio engagement in about a week. Next February, the Lord willing, Elaine expects to enter Wheaton.

The news concerning Van was not altogether a surprise. You realize that I know Van quite well; perhaps even better than you know him. I have always thought much of him (despite the fact that he did take my girl away from me). When I first learned to know Van he was new and weak in the faith. I rejoiced to see him grow in the faith. Tsingtao Youth for Christ was the thing, I do believe, that sent him on the right road. Van and I had hours and hours of prayer together. He had many deep problems that we solved on our knees.

One of Van's problems was his use of tobacco. Of course I believe that a person can be a Christian and still smoke. But I also believe that he can be a far more effective witness for our

Lord if tobacco plays no part in his life. Van was practically a chain-smoker: no sooner did he finish one cigarette than he would light up another. There were other fellows in Youth for Christ who smoked also. But as director, I found no sufficient reason to reprove anyone for what they would do. My sole duty was to preach Christ and salvation through him. I believed that the problems of Christian living was a matter between the Christian and his Lord. So it was that I never approached Van on the practice of using tobacco.

One day, however, Van asked for my opinion on smoking. Because he asked me, I felt free to tell him exactly what I thought. In the first place, Van didn't even know whether or not it was right to smoke. He was thoroughly mixed up on this subject. This fact can be understood when we consider that the chaplains themselves were exceedingly worldly men. Chaplain Sammel, Van's ideal, not only used tobacco, but used liquor as well. Of course, Van didn't know which way to turn. But after talking to him briefly, he decided that he could better serve the Lord if he would give up the smoking habit. But, as is often the case, Van's problem was far from being solved. He tried over and over in his own strength to rid himself of the habit. Each time he tried, he failed. A couple of weeks after making his resolution he came to me, telling me of his defeat. But with determination, he told me that he would try again to stop smoking. He did try, again and again. But each time he tried he failed. Desperately, one day, he exclaimed that the smoking habit had too strong a hold on him and that he could not possibly give it up. He didn't know what to do. Quietly I asked him if he was not depending on his own strength rather than on the Lord's power. After some hesitation, he said that probably

that was his trouble. Getting on our knees again, we prayed that he might have victory over his weakness. And the Lord did give him victory. Some weeks later Van told me that after our little session on our knees he was not ever tempted to smoke again. This was only one of our experiences together. There were many others. As a result, I learned to know Van like a book.

Van and I often prayed about you. I liked you very much, and, to my dismay, so did Van. Although he was winning your affections, due to our deep friendship, he was willing to take a back seat. I appreciated and still do appreciate his doing this. I believe that you will understand my feelings on this matter. Finally, when there was nothing else to do, I asked your decision. When your decision was made, I did all in my power to bring you and Van together, although it cut me very deeply. I know Van and I like Van. Today, if there were anything in the world I could do to bring you two together, without question I would do it. At the time you and Van started going together, I did not think the romance would last very long. I was surprised to see it last as long as it did. I shall try to explain why I thought you and Van would break up.

Van had many weaknesses. But his weaknesses were not a discredit to him; we all have our short-comings. One of Van's weaknesses was his love for a pretty face. This fact he admitted repeatedly. He could not help falling in love with every pretty girl that would come along. In America we call such a fellow "fickled." He told me how he had fallen for other girls just as he had fallen for you. And each time he would loose interest in the girl. I tried every way in my power to prevent the same thing from happening to you. Yes, and I felt that I was deeply in love with you. Do you remember the lines, "Within my heart there dwells a joy...." I do

not believe that Van was ever in love with Doris Rinell. He was infatuated with a girl (it could have been any girl) that he learned to know in China. These words sound cruel, Doris. But they do portray the situation as I see it. Perhaps by knowing the truth, you will feel better about it all.

Doris, there is something else that I must say, and I don't know how to say it. First of all, Van didn't break his engagement with you because he wanted to serve the Lord unmarried. There is an old saying that goes, "out of sight is out of mind." The same thing that happened to Van in China has happened to him again. Two days after receiving your letter, I was talking to one of the girls from our church going to Bethel. She sent greetings from Van and said that he wanted to see me. I don't believe that I shall get a chance to see him though. She told me that Van is again engaged. Doris, TRUST THE LORD! I can realize what you have gone through. Remember, it was not many months ago that I too went through the same deepwaters. The Lord loves you dearly: He loves you far more than any person could possibly love you. He will not allow anything to happen to you that is not in His wonderful will. If you are yielded to Him, every sorrow and disappointment is for a purpose. By experiencing deep waters ourselves, we can learn to sympathize with others. The Lord is preparing you for life, Doris. Some day I am sure that you will thank Him for the experience. There is only one thing that He requires of you: and that is that you trust His wisdom. Really, He is a wonderful Lord and Master. BELIEVE, DORIS, BELIEVE!

I am kept very busy at school. In about ten weeks I expect to

take a trip to the east coast. My best friend at school is getting married and I am to be best man (ah-hem!). His name is Paul Smith. Paul's father is one of the leading Christian manufacturers on the east coast. They will be married in Providence. Providence, you will remember, is the city that was founded by America's formost and original Baptist, Roger Williams. The whole wedding will be strictly according to high society. What fun! Paul's girl's name is June Hurd. She is really a "pip," and a swell gal. June and I are always holding hands to make Paul jealous. And don't think that we don't do it. I'll tell you more about the wedding later.

Today is Easter. This morning we all piled off to church. Two of my nieces were baptised. They are my oldest brother's daughters. I wish that you could have been there. They are a couple of sweet and beautiful girls. I am very proud of them.

Next Saturday another friend from school and his parents and girl friend are going with us to Dad's summer home in Indiana. I am looking forward to a good time. About two miles from our farm there, my two brothers each have summer cottages on a lake. And about a mile in another direction a sister lives with her husband and family on another farm. They have a beautiful ultra-modern dairy farm. So, you can see, when we all get together, we have more fun than a barrel on monkeys. I don't suppose that there is a crazier family for miles around. Doris, I don't suppose that you ever really knew me. While in China, I was under a tremendous nervous strain. You see, just before China, I was in combat on Okinawa. There, every one in our company except two other men and myself were either wounded or killed. In China, this nervous condition resulted in self-consciousness and constant extreme headaches. Naturally, I was not myself. You accused me of never laughing or smiling. Normally, I am constantly in good humor. And

praise God, I am getting back to normal more and more each day.

Doris, I expect to go to summer school this summer. But after summer school I have a month or five weeks off from school. I should like to travel during that time. Now, I realize that there is nothing between us; and I am not sure that I want anything to arise between us. But I have always wanted to take a trip to Sweden. I could not afford to pay my own way over. But perhaps I could work my way over and back. What do you think of the idea? Of course, you will be under no obligation. I should like to see Sweden and I should like to see you. We also have relatives ~~in~~ in Stockholm. My primary purpose will be to see you.

If I should come to Sweden, there are a number of things that I must know. Do you have food rationing there? Could I hitch-hike to Stockholm? Hitch-hiking, as you know, is a popular means of transportation in the States. A fellow gets out on the road, puts out his thumb, and begs a ride. Could I do this in Sweden? Please write and advise me what to do. If you would rather I would not come, please tell me that also. I shall act on your advise!!

I am inclosing with this letter a copy of the "Standard." Every once in a while I have an article in it. On the front page is another such article (getting up in the world!). But more important, inside is an article by your father.

A Chaplain Nyman spoke in Church tonight. He was in Tsingtao while we were there. But I never met him in China. He is a fine man of God (contrary to most chaplains).

I have sent for chorus books for you. When they arrive I shall send them to Sweden. Then choose the one you like and I shall get you as many copies as your little heart desires.

It is past my sack time, so good night and sweet dreams.

Sincerely yours,

T. Bond.