

Bible Lovers Bulletin

BIBLE LOVERS LEAGUE, OKLAHOMA CITY 15, OKLAHOMA

One of God's Aristocrats Anonymous

By Oliver M. Price

(Vance Hayner wrote for *Sunday School Times* of the many "aristocrats anonymous" who serve the Lord faithfully and quietly without making a single edition of *Who's Who*. This is the simple account of one such "aristocrat" whom I knew as a close friend and elder brother.)

I was surprised as I read the obituary in the *Oklahoma City Times*. It was not the fact that Brother Read had gone home to be with the Lord that caught my attention. I had heard the news of his quiet departure earlier in the day. Now as I sat reading the paper dated October 2, 1959 two little letters arrested my attention. After his name was the abbreviation, "D. D." I wondered if it were a misprint. In sixteen years of close personal friendship I had never heard from him or his family any hint that he had been honored with a Doctor of Divinity degree. When I verified that he had been given this honor by his alma mater, Austin College of Sherman, Texas in 1926, I mused, "That was Brother Read, alright. It was typical of him to keep himself in the background." In the words of Paul he was,

"AS UNKNOWN, AND YET WELL KNOWN"
(2 Corinthians 6:10)

Few knew he had a doctor's degree, but he was well known in central Oklahoma as a distributor of the Scriptures. A motorist drove into a gas station. The young attendant, noting that his car was from Texas, remarked, "You've come a long way." "yes," said the driver, "I came here for my father's funeral." "Well," the young man commented, "I know a man whose funeral is being held today. He visited my school some years ago and gave me a Bible. His name was Read." "That was my father," replied John L. Read, Jr.

Recently I went to the University of Oklahoma to contact the coordinator of student affairs and upon introducing myself as director of the Oklahoma Branch of Bible Lovers League I was asked, "Is this the organization that Brother Read represented?" As a distributor of the Scriptures he was well known.

Because he sought to pattern his life by the teachings of the Bible another phrase describes him quite well. He was —

"AS POOR, YET MAKING MANY RICH"
(2 Corinthians 6:9)

Bible Lovers League itself was a very young movement with headquarters in Dallas when John



JOHN LEIGHTON READ

Leighton Read and Mrs. Read approached the director, W. E. Hawkins, and offered to put the "read the Bible for a Bible plan" into operation in rural Oklahoma. Under this plan school children earned a Testament when they read the four gospels, and a Bible when they completed the Testament, Psalms and Proverbs.

The League provided the Scriptures, but could not pay any one to set up work in the field. So the Reads financed their own trips in rural Oklahoma. Gradually they built up a circuit of over one hundred schools reaching into six counties. They made a few trips to Idabel, Oklahoma and De Queen, Arkansas opening up work there which was continued by others. Truly they made many