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THE MEYERS: JOSIAH SHELLEY AND LUCY JANE RIDER

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She called him "Papa." He called her "Jennie." Not their given names, of course, but affection-filled endearments, uttered across the supper table or by the fireside, penned in notes or signed to letters, names reserved for solitary times and places in their private lives. The world knew them as Mr. and Mrs. Meyer. Of the pair, she was the better known, the public figure, "the far more powerful personality." No adjective, "brilliant," "magnetic," "inspirational," "radiant" seemed too superlative to describe her. He was steady, sound of judgment, patient, and practical. His "genius," so to speak, lay in his business acumen. In an era infatuated with the principles of scientific management, he won praise from his peers as "a skillful efficiency man."[1]

She was Lucy Jane Rider. He was Josiah Shelley Meyer. Contrary to societal norms which ascribed man to public roles and woman to the private sphere, they merged private and public worlds into a shared experience of institution building. Beginning in 1885 with the Chicago Training School for City, Home and Foreign Missions, they oversaw an expanding array of care-providing facilities; hospitals, schools, orphanages, homes for the aged. Summarizing their progress in 1917, Mr. Meyer noted that he and his wife had established six institutions in the Rock River Annual Conference alone. He credited another thirty-two institutions in other Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church to "our graduates and students." Reflecting on the couple's lifetime achievements in founding and managing institutions which attempted to serve society's social and spiritual needs, a mutual friend asserted: "Seldom have husband and wife so intimately and successfully labored together in a common cause, as did these two people."[2]

Lucy Jane Rider and Josiah Shelly Meyer became husband and wife at high noon on May 21, 1885. The ceremony took place at the Arlington Heights home of Dr. and Mrs. J. E. Best. Accounts of how the pair met circulated among their wedding guests. The more romantic among them preferred the version which set the meeting in a Chicago restaurant. Mr. Meyer, dining there by himself, noticed his future wife sitting alone at another table. He took the initiative, presented her with his business card, thus striking up

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[1]J. A. Diekmann, "Lucy Rider Meyer," 5. Unpublished essay. n.d.
[2]Diekmann, 5.

"an acquaintance that flourished inconspicuously for months."[3] Less fanciful and more believable versions of their courtship better suited their more pragmatic minded friends: a mutual friend acting as matchmaker arranged for them to meet; they met quite naturally while attending a mass meeting at Des Plaines Campground.

At 35 years of age, both bride and groom were well past the blush of youth. They were set in their ways. Since her father's death in 1876, Lucy Jane Rider had been the family breadwinner working to support herself, her widowed mother, and a younger brother. A graduate of Oberlin College (1872), she applied her knowledge of science, medicine and the Bible to teaching and writing.[4] As field secretary for the Illinois Sunday School Association, (1880–1884), she earned "a larger salary than women are usually paid."[5] As to the domestic arts of cooking, sewing, and general housekeeping, the bride's talents were definitely underdeveloped. Yet, according to at least one close friend, Lucy Rider Meyer dutifully "adapted herself to the Pauline ideas of wifehood."[6]

Josiah Meyer was working as Assistant Secretary for the Central Young Men's Christian Association, Chicago, when he traded in bachelorhood for the married life. His formal education included two years at Bryant and Stratton Commercial College in Philadelphia and a year at Park College, Parkville, Missouri, and some time at McCormick Theological Seminary. Over the years, he earned a reputation for his "business genius." The groom's natural reserve led "friendly gossipers" to speculate which of the newlywed pair would prove "the captain of the matrimonial craft." Expecting the man to take the lead in marriage, good-humored critics referred to Josiah Shelley Meyer, not as Mr. Meyer, but as "Mrs. Meyer's husband."[7] That the unassuming groom did not assert the male prerogative as a marital right led some to see him as "a mere satellite, basking in the sunshine of his brilliant wife." On the other hand, Mr. Meyer's talent for handling the practical details of business did not escape everyone's notice. "While Mrs. Meyer breathed her spirit into the Chicago Training School and made it a living organism," declared one admiring friend, ""Mr. Meyer gave it its body."[8]

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[3]Isabelle Horton, *High Adventure, Life of Lucy Rider Meyer* (New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1928): 80. Horton maintains that Lucy Rider kept the business card tucked away as a keepsake in her favorite Bible, an anecdote that reinforces the notion of the romantic version of the meeting. However, the Des Plaines Campground or other church related function seems more plausible.

[4]Among her numerous publications *The Fairy Land of Chemistry*, a science book for children, brought her royalties. She also authored science articles and Sunday school lessons for periodicals.

[5]Lucy Rider Meyer, *Deaconesses, Biblical, Early Church, European, American* (Chicago: The Methodist Publishing Company, 1889): 57. In the year just prior to her marriage, she taught Bible at Dwight L. Moody's Young Ladies Seminary, Northfield, Massachusetts.

[6]Horton, 282.

[7]Horton, 279.

[8]Diekmann, 5.

Early on June 15, 1885, less than a month after their nuptials, the newlyweds attended the Chicago Methodist Preachers' Meeting to ask that influential organization's support for a Christian training school for women. The idea was hers. He signed on to it. When the ministers showed interest in the plan, the couple congratulated themselves upon a day's work well done. "Could they have foreseen it," claimed their mutual friend, Isabelle Horton, June 15, 1885, really marked "a life work begun."[9] When the school opened on October 20, only four of the twelve students anticipated to enroll actually showed up. Trying to raise his wife's flagging spirits, Mr. Meyer told her: "There now, Jennie, no need to feel disappointed! The only wonder is that there was anybody here at all."[10] Beneath his quiet reserve lay "a keen sense of humor" which he willingly drew upon for his wife's benefit. The school's survival depended on finding financial resources. Experienced as he was in business, Mr. Meyer found it difficult to tap any deep pockets in the Spring 1886: He thought he knew why:

> There were still a group of people who said that such a school was wholly unnecessary; that women could do their work as well without training . . . and one went so far as to say that even if they should come, (to the school) it was impossible to train women for any definite work in church or mission field—that the natural place of woman was in the home, etc.[11]

"Mrs. Meyer's husband" accommodated himself to his wife's propensities in temporal matters. For example, "Jennie" loved tenting vacations in remote locations. He decidedly did not share her love for outdoor life. Having survived one such camping trip, he complained: "I hated dreadfully getting up on a cold, damp morning and rummaging around to find a garter snake or two in possession of my shoes."[12] He emphatically protested such indignities, a reaction that "only amused Mrs. Meyer." His wife's love of the rugged outdoors was hard to squelch. When she settled her sights on 40 acres of wholly unimproved land on the eastern shore of Lake Michigan for the summer cottage of her dreams, Mr. Meyer reluctantly conceded. The distance between Tamarak Farm and Chicago was some 125 miles: 110 by boat across the lake; 12 miles by train to the village of Twin Lakes; and another 3 miles "by any available conveyance" that could be found.

Considering all his business obligations in Chicago, Mr. Meyer was not as "elated" with the farm as "Jennie." In time, his trips there grew sporadic, leading his wife to admit: "I do wish it were nearer Chicago because Mr. Meyer wishes it." Nevertheless, enamored with her garden of cucumber vines, tomato plants, and strawberry patch, plus her ambitious plans to clear an overgrown section to plant a cherry orchard, Mrs. Meyer satisfied herself with his absence. "If Mr. Meyer should not come over again, this summer—

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[9]Horton, 93.

[10]*The Bulletin*, Vol. XLVIII No. 1 (January/March, 1945): "Sixtieth Anniversary, Chicago Training School," 10.

[11]Josiah Shelley Meyer, "Modern Miracles," 3 unpublished ms.

[12]Horton, 296.

of course I hope he will, but if he doesn't—won't he be surprised in the spring!"[13] In time, Mr. Meyer sold his wife on the idea of a vacation cottage in Hartford, Michigan, a lot closer to Chicago. The spot offered an easy train trip for him, but no wilderness charms for her. Despite his efforts to outfit the cottage with a special sleeping porch where "Jennie" could enjoy the experience of outdoor living without really exposing her health to the elements, she did not like it. She admitted as much to a friend:

> But (this is a deadly secret, Don't tell it if you're hanged and quartered for your silence), I am simply bored with it all. I stand it because Mr. Meyer and Miss Daly are happy here. They think it has many advantages over Twin Lakes. But I'd give more for a week in the *real wild* than a year here.[14]

It was differences like these that led Mr. Meyer to muse: "We seemed to understand each other perfectly, but in temperament we were, perhaps, the most pronounced opposites who ever lived happily together."[15]

In spite of the genteel tug of war caused by their opposing views of the perfect vacation spot, the wilderness retreats took them away from the demands of their working lives. Far from Chicago, distanced from the training school routine, husband and wife could indulge themselves in long lazy walks by gurgling brooks to collect watercress for salad, carriage rides to distant chapels for Sunday morning service, dinners outdoors under the starry night sky. These shared experiences nourished their personal relationship. May 21, for example, was an occasion for romance: "I whispered to Miss Daly that it was the anniversary of our wedding, and together we got up a great dinner in honor of the occasion. Chicken, asparagus, biscuits, honey and cherry pie. After dinner, Mr. Meyer and I walked to Riverside, Mr. M. with a little lilac tree peeking out of his pocket."[16]

Although Mr. Meyer tended to give in to "Jennie," in matters affecting their personal relationship, he tried to act more prudently when it came to their work. But, when "Jennie" conceived of one of her "brain babies,"—ideas which she insisted on pursuing regardless of all obstacles—she was hard to dissuade. In June 1887, when she decided that the church needed deaconesses if it ever expected to address the temporal needs of the nation's unchurched population, Mr. Meyer was not so sure. The Chicago Training School was just closing its second year when his wife decided that the house to house visiting carried out during the regular school years had to be continued over the summer. This service would require keeping the school open during the summer to accommodate those women who agreed to stay on. Mr. Meyer admitted: "It took all the faith I had to believe that we should go through the summer successfully, when at the beginning of vacation a dozen people sat down to breakfast in the dining room, and I realized that I had not

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[13]Horton, 301.
[14]Horton, 303.
[15]Meyer, 47.
[16]Horton, 303.

a dollar in sight for our support."[17] In an effort to generate more income, he looked for a second job. "I was under a terrible strain," he recalled. "As I walked down the street I found my face was wet with tears. When I reached the door (of the prospective employer) I simply could not enter." Instead, Mr. Meyer retreated to the training school convinced that "we could not fail, trusting our Heavenly Father."[18] His strong religious convictions overrode his fear of economic disaster. The decision also assured that he could continue to give all his time to helping his wife realize her newest plan.[19]

In 1888, when Lucy Rider Meyer grew "hot on the idea" of petitioning General Conference, the Methodist Episcopal Church, for formal recognition of the deaconess office, Mr. Meyer balked. "I was feeling just then that we were both working ourselves to death for a cause that the Church was not interested in," he later admitted. "Mrs. Meyer's actions were 'much against my wishes.' "[20] Management of the training school, which was finding its own niche among Methodist educational institutions, needed his full attention particularly its financial affairs. Yet, once the deaconess cause won church approval Mr. Meyer put aside his reservations about taking on the new venture and worked selflessly to guarantee its success. He initiated a campaign to build a Deaconess Pension Fund, an effort which eventually raised $500,000.

Josiah Shelley Meyer's willingness to seek a middle ground, to adapt, accommodate or compromise in his personal and professional relationship with Lucy Rider Meyer was not inexhaustible! On matters theological, he exhibited an "inflexible will."[21] In the early days of the training school's history, Mr. Meyer had taught classes in Old Testament and church history.[22] He believed with unflinching certainty that "the power behind the work of the school was the English Bible," that is, the Bible literally translated. As he saw it: "The simple truth of the Word of God took such hold of the minds and hearts of the young women that they were eager to imitate the Christians of the early church as described in the New Testament. This should be the method employed in every Christian Church. There is no other method, there never will be any other method of reviving the Church."[23]

Within their circle of friends, Mr. Meyer was known to be intransigent in his literalist view:

> Mr. Meyer in his theology was a confirmed fundamentalist.
> He walked in the old ways and loved the old truths, and felt that they were being discredited by modern investigations and research.
> Mr. Meyer had difficulty accepting the historical interpretation of the Bible.[24]

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[17]Horton, 137.

[18]Horton, 139.

[19]Meyer's decision could have been influenced by his wife's pregnancy. Their son Shelley Rider Meyer was born September 25, 1887.

[20]Meyer, 11.

[21]Diekmann, 5.

[22]*The Message*, February 1887, 4.

[23]Meyer, 41.

[24]Diekmann, 6; Horton, 314; "Letter," Ina Katzenberger to Murray H. Leiffer, October 22, 1969.

Mrs. Meyer welcomed the light that science, humanities, and other disciplines could shed on the study of the Bible: She never tried to hide her "broad-gauge" views under a bushel:

> Mrs. Meyer was perhaps more than a mild modernist.
> Mrs. Meyer, an ardent student, had accepted the more modern teaching.
> Mrs. Meyer early appreciated the need of a liberal education for those who entered the waiting field of endeavor.[25]

Before they met, before they married, before they started their training school, Mr. and Mrs. Meyer had arrived at their respective positions on Bible interpretation. But, their contrasting creeds did not come into conflict until the outbreak of World War I. Then their religious differences threatened to erode their personal relationship and their professional partnership.

The trouble between the Meyers reflects the broader fundamentalist/modernist debate that destabilized American Protestantism in the opening decades of the twentieth century. As one specialist on this topic notes: "By the time of World War I, 'social Christian' was becoming thoroughly identified with liberalism and was viewed with great suspicion by many conservative evangelicals."[26] In the case of the Meyers, the liberal and the conservative lived under the same roof; they worked together in the same place, ostensibly pursuing a shared goal. For them, the fundamentalist/modernist dialogue could not help but grow personal.

Among the earliest supporters of the Chicago Training School was William E. Blackstone. He offered lectures on foreign missions to its students and served as a trustee from 1885–1904. In 1886, his wife Sarah and her mother Adeline Smith pledged $5,000 between them as seed money to start the school's new building on the corner of Dearborn and Ohio Streets. Blackstone's religious activism extended far beyond the fledgling training school. An early and enthusiastic member of the Niagara Movement, he authored *Jesus Is Coming*, "a proof text presentation of the tenets of adventist dogma."[27] First published in 1898, his book became "the most popular of the many millenarian tracts of its type." The cataclysmic events set into motion by the World War (1914–1919) kindled fundamentalist embers lying latent in the church. The times prompted Blackstone to call Lucy to task for her "erroneous" scriptural views, the woman whose work he once favored with his support.

In July 1917, he wrote to her: "You are mistaken, dear Mrs. Meyer, in presuming I have always understood your attitude on premillennial matters." By way of explaining his confusion, he pointed out that "Mr. Meyer has

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[25]Diekmann, 6; "Letter," Ina Katzenberger to Murray H. Leiffer, October 22, 1969; "In Memoriam," Chicago Training School, *The Bulletin* (March 18, 1922): 41.

[26]George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture, The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980): 91.

[27]Stewart G. Cole, *The History of Fundamentalism* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1963): 46.

always professed his belief in the literal return of our Lord."[28] Blackstone was correct concerning Mr. Meyer's position, but he was presumptuous in assuming that his wife, because she was his wife, shared it. A decade later, while reflecting on those years when he and his wife were caught in a contest of creeds, Josiah Shelley Meyer noted with a definite tone of relief: "At one time it looked as if the modern views of the 'intellectuals' would work a change in the School, but the work in the field . . . demonstrated the great truth of the Word of God."[29] That his wife qualified as one of the 'intellectuals' had not dampened Mr. Meyer's resolve in 1917 to see the Chicago Training School "continue on the early foundation," which he had helped to lay.

Holding firmly to her own theological beliefs, Lucy Rider Meyer dismissed her husband's concerns over higher criticism with a degree of annoyance: "Nothing that is true in God's work can possibly bring discredit to His Written *Word.* Why should we shrink from the fullest light we can get on every subject?"[30] She would hear nothing of curriculum changes that could "lessen or impair the splendid quality" of the training school's courses in Bible study.[31] Her mind and heart were set on this principle: "I can never consent that the historical method of Bible teaching shall be given up. It is reasonable and sensible."[32] But, no amount of reasoned resistance could prevent the advance of fundamentalism and the retreat of modernism in her precious school, let alone, within Methodism. Assessing the depth of the Meyers' theological differences, a mutual friend concluded: "While in their affections they remained intimate soul affinities until death . . . in theology and Biblical interpretations their views became so divergent that they mutually agreed for the good of the Training School to resign from their positions."[33]

The decision to relinquish leadership of the Chicago Training School was not mutual. Long before his wife would agree to it, Mr. Meyer had set out to make it happen. Inextricable from the theological dispute which strained their relationship was the issue of Lucy Rider Meyer's health. While she tried hard to hide her physical weakness from outsiders, she sought refuge in "Papa":

> When she awoke at night and could not sleep again for the pain she would often come to my bed and I would put out my arm and draw her close to me. She would stay until she felt the pain was abated and she could sleep again. We would be quite still. The soft brown hair that I remember so well, would come against my cheek. . . . One night I was so sleepy I forgot to put out my arm. She said, "You did not put out your arm" and I hastened to do so.[34]

After years of playing the "benevolent ogre" trying to make his workaholic wife slow down, to cut back on her commitments, Mr. Meyer's patience unraveled.

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[28]Horton, 185.
[29]Meyer, 42.
[30]Horton, 323.
[31]Horton, 317.
[32]Horton, 323.
[33]Diekmann, 5.
[34]Meyer, 55.

Despite her multiple physical ailments—chronic dyspepsia, diseased gall bladder, dizzy spells, persistent headaches—she "could not be persuaded that she was ill." As her health problems accumulated, so did her husband's fears. "I was unspeakable depressed. We did not know what moment her head would fall back, and she would become practically unconscious . . . not knowing day or night when an attack might come commenced to tell on both of our nerves."[35]

For her part, Lucy Rider Meyer wanted to believe that the attacks were temporary. She persisted in work days that lasted from early morn to late at night. "Whenever I talked to her about a change," noted her husband, "she insisted that a woman must succeed her as Principal, when the time came for a change." But, Mr. Meyer argued in favor of a man. "I was definitely convinced that no woman could be found to carry the responsibility of that institution, maintain its finances, and provide for the needed repairs and additions that were contemplated."[36] These serious discussions did not go well. In the words of one observer both husband and wife emerged from such sessions "with tragic faces," each, for the time being, going their separate ways. Mr. Meyer back to his business affairs; Mrs. Meyer off on long solitary walks in search of composure.[37]

In her heart, Lucy Rider Meyer wanted to make the right decision for the good of her school, but the process of separation proved painful. "I'm worn out trying to think what is best," she admitted to her husband on one occasion.[38] To a colleague she confided: "I can't think of it with composure, but I am trying to think calmly."[39] On some days she seemed convinced that she and her husband were "not the ones to lead" the Chicago Training School into the future. In the winter of 1914, for example, while recovering from a recent operation, she contemplated her eventual retirement quite rationally. She told Mr. Meyer: "I am thinking about a plan for resigning from the School next year, Mr. Meyer whether you decide to do so or not. I shall have to give up the work sometime, and why not go while I am young and strong enough to turn my hand to something else."[40]

Within a year, she was once again hatching plans to avoid the inevitable. ". . . if we could raise the Endowment, we might go on. . . . you and I could go on a few more years, until our own trained women or some one the Lord might send to us, could take up the work in the same way we have been doing it," she suggested to her husband.[41] Sensing that his wife would never willingly give up leadership of her beloved school, Mr. Meyer sought an ally in Bishop Thomas Nicholson, Chicago's resident Bishop. Over a number of meetings in

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[35]Meyer, 50.
[36]Meyer, 50.
[37]Horton, 322–323.
[38]"Letter," LRM to JSM, Horton, 320.
[39]"Letter," LRM to Belle James, Horton, 320.
[40]"Letter," LRM to JSM, Horton, 319.
[41]Horton, 320–21.

1916–1917, the two men settled on Louis F. W. Lesemann, Superintendent of the Chicago Northwestern district, as a good man to take over leadership of the training school.[42] Lesemann had taught at the Chicago Training School for a number of years, making him a familiar figure to its faculty, students, and naturally its Principal. And, no doubt, Mr. Meyer and Bishop Nicholson thought Lesemann's history with the institution would be reassuring to Mrs. Meyer, a soothing balm to ease the pain of the decision she was being eased into. The Board approved Lesemann's appointment as President in June 1917, reserving the title Principal Emeritus for the woman he was to replace.[43]

Lesemann's inaugural ceremony was held February 9, 1918. The moment that Lucy Rider Meyer had tried to delay and her husband had tried to hasten finally arrived. Calm and composed, she stood to deliver the "Presentation Address" on behalf of them both. In a symbolic gesture the departing Principal handed over five keys, one for each of the five buildings in the training school complex to the new President:

> We have made these keys. They have been thirty-two, long, terrible, joyful years in the making. The pain of the moment—the passing pain—is because of relinquishing something that stands for these long years of life, for the terrible toil by day and by night, for the heart's blood—for the anguish of suspense, sometimes the shock of disappointment.[44]

With the last words of this poignant speech delivered, the long postponed deed, the moment the wife had dreaded and the husband had anticipated, was done. Now, the Meyers could head into retirement. They were provided with a pension and an apartment not far from the training school. Both husband and wife continued to involve themselves with the school's affairs. She taught when her health permitted; he busied himself with working on the Deaconess Pension Fund.

The situation was not ideal. Mr. Meyer, whose own health was declining, longed for a true retirement. In 1919, as his wife was taking a swing around the circuit of deaconess institutions in the Northwest, he was planning for "a long trip to some agreeable spot." He warned his wife: "I know you will have to go more slowly or your nerves will give out entirely. Please agree to this for my sake."[45] Previous trips to California's sunny southland had proved curative for his wife's health, so Mr. Meyer hoped that the region would work its magic once again. "It was not until late in June 1920, that we had our own affairs and those of the School sufficiently adjusted so that I could conscientiously leave Chicago."[46] Almost immediately the long awaited trip took a bad turn. Headed for the west coast, the couple had to leave the train in Ogden, Utah, because Lucy Rider Meyer's attacks had returned. They took a hotel

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[42]Their first choice was J. S. Marcy, D.D. He was unavailable because he was serving as chaplain to the U.S. American Expeditionary Forces fighting in World War I.

[43]*The Bulletin*, Vol. XLVIII No. 1 (January/March, 1945): 11. Lesemann served as President for 1917–1934, its Director and Professor 1934–1941.

[44]"In Memoriam," *The Bulletin*, Vol. XXI No. 3 (March 1922): 59.

[45]Horton, 341.

[46]Meyer, 51.

room, where Mr. Meyer attempted to nurse "Jennie" back to health. Her condition proved far too serious for him to remedy. "Oh Papa! I am very ill!" she cried before slipping into unconsciousness.[47] He took her to the local hospital.[48] Rest and professional medical care restored her strength sufficiently enough to permit them to reboard the train for California.

Once the couple arrived at their destination, Mr. Meyer set about finding a cottage where his wife could be comfortable and content. Over the next year, they lived in a series of little houses in and around Los Angeles, Pasadena, and Altadena, each with enough yard for her to grow a modest garden. The geographic change seemed to be good for Mrs. Meyer's health. The attacks of vertigo started to subside. "I must tell you how wonderfully well I am," she wrote to a friend. "It seems a miracle, and I feel thankful, every good breath I draw, I am still dieting carefully, but am regaining much of the strength I lost in that Ogden attack."[49] Away from the old haunts, husband and wife found opportunities to mend their frayed relationship. Given her precarious health, they "talked about the future life" agreeing that they should meet again and be "with Jesus." Mr. Meyer particularly enjoyed long walks after the dinner hour, an activity they shared when his wife's health was up to it. "I shall always look back to those hours," he recalled "as among the most precious of our married life." It was times like these that lent credence to his statement: "Mrs. Meyer and I understood each other perfectly. . . . We loved the Lord, . . . and it was a pleasure to consecrate ourselves to his service."[50]

Their sojourn in Southern California ended in the fall of 1921 when the Meyers decided to return to Chicago. They settled into two rooms at 4950 Prairie Avenue, an annex to the training school. She turned one room into an office and looked forward to September 28, the opening day of the Chicago Training School's 36th year. She looked forward to teaching a Bible Course, just as she had done so many times before. Being back in familiar surroundings filled her with a sense of elation. The moment seemed right for a decision she had put off for many years. She approached an old friend to help her with the manuscript: "It is a great secret—I have not spoken it to a living soul . . . and I don't want the folks here at the School nor indeed anybody, to know a breath of it. But I know that you are a safe depository of secrets. I am going—that is, I *think* I am going to write my autobiography!"[51] The book was never written.

On Christmas morning, while she and Mr. Meyer were opening their gifts, the debilitating spells returned. She was taken to Wesley Memorial Hospital, one of the institutions which she had helped to found in 1888. Afflicted

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[47]Meyer, 53.

[48]Meyer, 53.

[49]Horton, 344.

[50]Meyer, 5.

[51]"Letter," LRM to Ina Loy Shinn Katzenberger, September 15, 1921. Katzenberger had been a secretary and stenographer at CTS. LRM offered to pay her 40 cents an hour or $100 for the entire job, if she would take on the secretarial work of preparing the manuscript.

by Bright's Disease, a failing heart, and acute stomach problems, she suffered "unspeakable pain" over the next seven weeks. Throughout the ordeal, Mr. Meyer struggled with his emotions: "I could not remain in the room and see her suffer. My nerves had collapsed utterly. I was helpless, I felt that it would kill me to see her sufferings." Her lucid moments grew rarer each day. On March 15, she spoke her final words to her husband and partner of 37 years:

> I was standing by the right side of the bed. She did not seem to recognize anyone, but suddenly opened her eyes and said the familiar words. 'O, Papa' . . . I realized she was not to stay with me much longer. . . . I stooped to kiss her, and we both knew it would be the last. Somehow there comes a feeling that is as plain and sure as language. Our lips pressed hard in that farewell kiss of tender love.[52]

She died the next evening, Thursday, March 16, 1922. Mr. Meyer was not at her bedside. Despite pleas from others to postpone the funeral until Monday, so that the many out of town mourners expected to attend the service would have sufficient time to travel to Chicago, Mr. Meyer insisted on scheduling the ceremony for Saturday, March 18. "I could not stand the strain over Sunday," he declared. With "Jennie" gone "Papa" struggled to overcome his sense of loss. The day was etched in his memory: "I lived as one in a trance the day of the funeral. . . . I too wanted to die."[53]

Whatever opinions his contemporaries may have entertained about the role reversal in the Meyer marriage, she public figure, he private person, Mr. Meyer had been happy to stand in the shadow of his "brilliant wife." A reticent person by nature, "he shrank so much from every form of public notice" that he didn't receive his full share of credit for his achievements. As a widower, he had no shadow in which to hide. He never really made the adjustment. "When Mrs. Meyer departed for her eternal home four years ago, he walked like a man suddenly stuck with blindness. . . . It was more than a year before he or any of us realized how dark the valley through which he had passed.[54]

Between 1922 and 1926, Josiah Shelley Meyer spent his winters in warm places like Florida and California, the rest of the year in Chicago. He took as active a role as his failing health allowed in the Chicago Training School, Wesley Hospital, and the Deaconess Pension Fund. In May 1926 he attended the training school Commencement Exercises, but he did not "trust himself to step upon" the raised stage. On Tuesday, June 29, while at his brother's home in Aurora, Illinois, he suffered a stroke. He was taken to Wesley Hospital, where he died at 4:30 p.m. on July 1. Although he tried to speak in his final hours, "it was impossible for those about him to understand or guess what he meant to say."[55] Whether he uttered "Jennie" in those last moments of life is unknown, but given his obvious love and admiration for his lifetime partner, chances are that "Papa" did.

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[52]Meyer, 55.

[53]Horton, 353.

[54]Louis F. W. Lesemann, "In Memoriam," *The Bulletin*, Vol. XXIX No. 1 (September/October, 1926): 11.

[55]Lesemann, 13.