

AN INFIDEL FINDS SALVATION

I THANK God that in His love and mercy, He led me to Portland where I heard victorious testimonies of Blood-bought Christians.

I was a prosperous North Dakota farmer —began farming when only seventeen years of age. I later enrolled in the University of Minnesota, took up mechanical engineering, and graduated as a civil engineer from North Dakota State College.

After having studied Darwinism and the theory of evolution, I came out of college an infidel, a scoffer against God. I attempted to overthrow the faith of my fellowman by trying to prove there is no God; but I began to realize my arguing would do nothing for me. In spite of all my unbelief, I feared God. I discovered that we can't tamper with the Almighty without getting under conviction, if we have any honesty at all.

When just a young man everything seemed to come my way. In everything I turned my hand to I prospered; and soon I had a beautiful home in the city, considerable city property, a flourishing garage business, a country home and an 800-acre farm. Some of those things were the idols of my heart. I was all wrapped up in the affairs of this world, piling up wealth.

Regardless of prosperity, there was always that aching void in my heart. I would say, "What good will all this stuff do us when we are dead and gone?" Life began to look like a miserable failure. But one day in my repair garage, God spoke to my soul. Tears began to flow, and from that moment I didn't care whether I ever made another dollar.

Light Dawns

I thank God for the way the Lord led me to hear the Truth. One day I bought a Cadillac —about the first car that came out with an electric starter. With that new car, my wife and I started touring the country. We didn't have any road maps and eventually lost our way. But I believe God had His hand in that. We stopped at a little railway station to inquire about which road to take; and after informing us, the depot agent said, "Here, take this paper along with you. It will do you good. I just came from Portland, Oregon, where I attended a wonderful camp meeting and enjoyed it very much."

After stopping for the night, I began to read the paper. It was an Apostolic Faith publication and proved to be a light to my soul. What it had to say agreed with the Bible. I read that paper several times and each time I read it, it seemed more and more wonderful. God began to talk to me. My heart melted up and I longed to see the people whom I had read about — those who had received such marvelous results from believing the Word of God. I said, "I am going to Portland to see for myself." We came a distance of 1,800 miles to this city for the sole purpose of investigating this Gospel work. We thought we would stay a week or so.

I shall never forget the first time I came into the Apostolic Faith church and heard that God was delivering men and women from sin and enabling them to live pure, holy lives every day —

something I had not believed was possible. An ex-drunkard got up and testified, shouting the victory, and telling what God had done for him. I had never heard such testimonies before.

As I looked upon the faces of hundreds of the happiest people I had ever seen, I coveted what they had. They told a marvelous story of victory, of joy and peace. I said, "That is exactly what I need. It sounds like the real thing. I would give the world if I could get what they are talking about."

I had seen religious sham and pretense and had become disgusted with the whole matter. But I finally realized that I would have to measure people, churches and so-called Christians — as well as myself — by the Word of God. When I began to measure myself by that Word, I forgot all about the church members and hypocrites whom I had criticized for years. I found that I didn't have any time to judge the other man. It was enough for me to know how I was to walk.

I heard through the sermons that there was power in the Blood of Jesus to take the very desire for sin out of the heart and power to keep a man living above sin. I could hardly believe that; but God's Spirit continued to strive with me until I was able to take hold of the Lifeline. And it certainly was a lifeline to me when faith took hold of the promises of God's Word. I had been so bound by the devil with unbelief that I could hardly believe even when I wanted to do so.

Became a New Creature

God let me see that I was lost and undone and needed the power of God to come into my life to take sin out. He showed me that my morality was as filthy rags in His sight. I searched the Bible to see if we could really live above sin as these people had testified, and I found all through the Word of God that people were to live a life free from sin. That very truth convicted my soul.

My life came before me like a great panorama. I was supposed to be an honorable man and had prided myself on my character and honesty. I could go into any one of a half dozen banks in North Dakota and get the limit of money I needed, even without a note. But I can tell you that God keeps books. I prayed and tried to get saved but God talked to me about my past life. I had sins that were all covered up, which I needed to straighten out. The Lord spoke to my heart and said: "Pay the price." I didn't get saved that night.

Later I came back to the church determined to pay the price and get right with God. At the close of the service I walked up the aisle, knelt beside an old drunkard and began to open my heart to God. I said, "Lord, if You will put this salvation into my soul so that I will know I can live it, and give me the grace to go back and clean up my past life, I will begin straightening things out."

The altar workers gathered about me and helped me pray. I felt the powers of darkness and unbelief leave my soul. I felt the chains snap and I was set free.

God saved my soul!

The very Heavens seemed to open to my soul. This infidel became a believer! My heart was filled with faith and the joy of the Lord. I walked up and down the aisles praising the living God. I was the most unlikely man to take up with anything like this — a straight way — but it means eternal life to me.

The moment God saved my soul I became a new creature in Christ Jesus. The Lord promised to give His people power to live righteously and holy in this present world and He fulfilled that promise in my life. I never went back to farm and my worldly interests. After years of unbelief and denying the precious Book that is so dear to me today, I found salvation to be real and satisfying.

Made Restitution

When I was praying for the Lord to save my soul, I promised Him I would clean up the past — but I wondered if I could ever do it. It was not easy to write back to the people in the state where I was highly respected and tell them of the shrewd business deals I had turned, how I had double-crossed them and taken advantage of them for my own benefit. It was difficult to write to some of the institutions of learning and confess that I had stolen things out of the laboratory. God also showed me the men in my employ whom I had underpaid, just because I had the "cinch" on them. These confessions were hard on my pride. That was my trouble pride.

I backed off for a night or two, but finally came through. I meant business with God. I said Yes to God, but I didn't sleep much that night. The next morning I was up early. I began to write letters; and the Lord was right there to remind me of every crooked deal. They all came before me as vividly as though I had committed them the day before. I didn't beat around the bush or make any excuses or have any alibis. I just came right out in the limelight and told them all about it. I knew I was dealing with God, as well as with man.

I spent nearly the whole day writing letters of restitution, enclosing checks to cover the wrongs I had done. It brought faith to my heart and oh, the joy of the Lord that came into my heart!

I enjoy life today. I consecrated my life to the service of the Lord and enjoyed putting my all into this Gospel work. The most wonderful years of my life have been those spent in God's service. What the world — money, houses, and lands — could not give me, I found at the foot of the Cross.

I have proved the Lord as the healer of my body, too. For twelve years I suffered from asthma, and many a night would be awake all night — couldn't even lie down at times, week after week. But God healed me and I praise Him for it.

I thank God for the name of JESUS, the name that I had used as a byword on my lips for years. Today it is the sweetest name on earth to me because through that Name my life has been transformed and made happy. — W. W. P.

(This man, for many years the secretary-treasurer of the Apostolic Faith at the headquarters in Portland, Oregon, passed away in 1966, at the age of 89, having kept actively engaged in the work of the Lord throughout his Christian life.)