

A Scottish Deacon Finds Salvation

By John C. Clasper



This man learned that acting religious and being “born again” were two different things.

Brought up in a godly home, under the teachings of the old Scotch Covenanters, I learned much about what God desired from His children. About seven o'clock each night, the Bible was read to me and we prayed. I later discovered that good training could never make me a Christian.

I entered the church as a young man, and when I grew into manhood, they made me a deacon. I was the minister's right-hand man and never missed a meeting. But, thank God, this deacon found

out that he needed salvation.

Working in one of the largest explosives factories in the world, I saw men and women blown into eternity in a moment's time. Each time, God thundered out of Heaven to me, "What would happen if it were you?" I didn't feel right to meet God, even though I was a deacon in the church.

A Move to Portland, Oregon

I can truly say that God has led me over land and sea to bring me where I could hear the full Gospel. It was in Portland, Oregon that I caught the sound of the old-time religion. Crossing the Burnside Bridge one day, I heard a band of the Apostolic Faith people on the street corner at Second and Burnside singing, Rock of Ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in Thee. I stood two blocks from the street meeting, while tears flowed down my cheeks. I know now that God was talking to me! I went closer and heard the ex-drunkard and the ex-dope addict telling the marvellous things God had done for them. I reasoned that it was all right for the dope addict, it was all right for the drunkard, but I was a deacon in the church, and I didn't need it.

I shall never forget the first meeting I heard at the Apostolic Faith Church. I heard something that went down into my heart, and I learned that acting religious and being born again are two different things. They said God had saved them from their sins, separated them from habits that were attached to their lives, and had given them victory. I never could say that. I could say that I was a church member, a Christian Endeavourer, a Sabbath schoolteacher, but in my heart there was no rest or peace.

Two Sermons About Hypocrisy

God spoke to me that Sunday morning, as I sat there with a profession on my hands but no possession in my soul. The Lord's messenger was preaching that morning about hypocrisy. I was sitting with my Christian Endeavour badge and other badges on the lapel of my coat. That sermon went home to me, and I knew it was God speaking.

I fought against it: I rebelled, and said I would go my way and serve God as I pleased. But down in my heart there was something telling me, "This is the way, walk ye in it!" I looked at my Christian Endeavour tag: I was endeavouring, but I was endeavouring in the wrong direction.

Sunday morning came again. I had just come from work, and my wife asked, "Are you going to church with me this morning?" I said. No! Don't ask me to go to that place anymore. I have gone for my last time. Leave me alone. I have had enough of that! I went out into the backyard, lit my cigar, and paced up and

down. God spoke to me and said, "You had better go!" I went into the house and said to my wife, "Wait a moment. I believe I will go."

We were late for the meeting, but not late for the sermon. That morning, another preacher got up and began to preach about hypocrisy. I thought that was all they preached about. That preacher came across the platform that morning, pointed right down to me and said, "You hypocrite!" He talked about people making believe they were Christians but down in their heart they were far from God. I figured that my wife had told them about me, but she hadn't said a word to them. I left that meeting with my fists clenched, determined never to go back. I realized later that God was speaking through the preacher.

Miserable

I was most miserable, but I went from the church to my job, where I had to work for two hours that day. After I got there, tears began to run down my face and I wondered what was wrong with me.

I went to the motor room to make an electrical adjustment on one of the motors, but found that I was too afraid to touch anything. I knew a wrong touch would mean severe burns or death. As I stood there in tears, every click of those motors seemed to say, "You hypocrite!" At last I said, "If this is the Spirit of God, I will see it through. I will put God to the test right here, and if there is a God, I want to know it. "

There was a terrible internal battle going on as I wondered what my co-workers would say if I prayed. I finally decided that if God would give me what the preacher had talked about, I would give it a try. I got down on my knees before three of my fellow workers. I lifted my hands to heaven and said, "God, be merciful to me a sinner. I want salvation!" I told Him I was a sinner. God answered, the heavens opened and the glory of God flowed into my soul. He saved me through and through. In about two minutes I rose to my feet, saying. "I've got it! I've got it!"

The moment I said. "God. I will give You all," He did the work in my soul. A few days later, at an altar of prayer, God sanctified me wholly. The love that came into my soul at that time could never be told. The next night, I sought for the mighty baptism of the Holy Ghost. I cried out to God and said, "O God, baptize me and give me power to tell the Story." He heard and answered and baptized me with the mighty Holy Ghost and fire.

These past forty-eight years have been a happy time for me. I have had a few battles, but God has brought me through. I thank Him for the peace and victory in my heart.

John Clasper worked in the printing plant of the international headquarters of the Apostolic Faith Church for many years.