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"Looking Back" . . . a testimony recalling the battles of youth

(By a reader of "The Burning Bush")

This testimony was prompted after listening to the sermon - ['What is happening in Ulster?'](#)

My first memories of needing to be saved go back to about the age of seven when I was brought along to the Free Presbyterian Church just a few miles from our home. I didn't attend the Sunday school there and as a seven-year-old I don't remember very much about the preaching, but I do remember that I knew that to get to heaven I would have to ask the Lord to save my soul. Well, for about two years I didn't accept Jesus as my Saviour, I was only seven and didn't realise it back then, but I spent that time trampling the blood of Jesus Christ under my feet. If I had died then I would be in hell, and I thank the Lord for His mercy toward me. Then one Sunday afternoon on 6th May 1979, at the anniversary service taken by Rev. Ian Paisley, God spoke to me. Rev. Paisley spoke from Matt. 25 v 1-13 on the ten virgins, five of whom were wise and five were foolish. Five were ready to meet the bridegroom and five were not. He then related the parable to me, asking if God came that very day would I be ready to meet Him or would I be foolish. I was only nine but no one had to tell me I was foolish. An appeal was made at the end of the service and I responded. I was taken into the "back" room and there a man [whom I have often thought of over the last few years for I never knew his name] and I can only describe him as an elderly man, opened up the Bible and explained to me how to receive Jesus as my Saviour. That afternoon I asked the Lord to save my soul and He did, I was saved in an instant, and I began my journey towards heaven.

Life was pretty good for the rest of my primary school years and even into the beginning of my high school years. But then came the same old familiar story of going astray and I am ashamed to say that by the time I was leaving school at sixteen no one would have known I was saved at all. Although I never really got into the "big sins" of life I still did many shameful things which I have to live with now, for my heart was not with the Lord that saved me.

Still went to church

Yes, I still went along to church on Sundays but that was about all. I still prayed some and read my Bible a little but not as a daily routine. Really I had become a Sunday-only Christian who didn't want to stand out from others who were not saved. I even wished that the opportunity would come along to get out to some of these clubs that were talked about at school. Thanks to the Lord Who saved me, He didn't forsake me and He didn't allow me to be tempted beyond that which I was able, because I never entered a club in my life. But in my stupid ignorance, I had become like a square peg trying to fit into a round hole and for any one who has been there [and there have been many] there is no happiness there. Well, I stayed in that state until I left school and thankfully that was the end of the influence of my school friends, though I often think of how much I failed them.

Shortly after leaving school, I realised my misery and wanted to get back with the Lord. I



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would often pray to God and dedicate my life again to Him, but nothing ever seemed to happen. I expected to come to some sudden great knowledge of the Lord, but Romans 10 v 17 tells me "...faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." I realised that I was back with the Lord but that I had a lot of learning to do. I was a slow learner and still am a slow learner and I still fail the Lord in many ways, but I can truly say that by God's grace I am not what I would have been.

Socials

Well, I grew older and there were many socials taking place and I enjoyed going to them. Back in earlier days, they were just I suppose innocent party games and were only a bit of fun. As time went by the party games stopped and the line dancing began. I was always a reader of "The Burning Bush" and at that time Rev. Foster was warning against this line dancing. I didn't agree with line dancing either and I didn't partake in it, but I went to the socials anyway because I couldn't see what else to do; I would have nowhere to go and besides there were many professing Christians attending these socials. I was walking by sight, I became foolish once more and thought I could ignore the voice of the watchman [for I was well warned]. Things changed very quickly at the socials and there was line dancing to a song called YMCA which was the most popular of all at that time. After a short time I learned that this was a song written especially for the sodomites, and there were many Christians [including Free Presbyterians] dancing to this music. I knew this was totally wrong but I said very little. I was quiet when I should have been making an uproar. I had become like Lot in Sodom, for the Bible says that his soul was vexed at what was going on around him but he stayed there anyway. My soul was vexed at what I was witnessing but I was still attending the socials even though the enjoyment had gone.

Armagh

One night in Armagh Orange Hall, I came to a realisation that this couldn't continue. Just because I refused to take part in the line dancing I thought I was taking a stand, but I was failing. I knew this was sinful and was grievous to the Lord. I couldn't remain there and then go home and pray for the lost souls of my family, friends and neighbours and expect the Lord to answer. It was like a final warning from the Lord to repent. Remaining in that hall was not an option and I was only there for about ten minutes when I left feeling so ashamed that I ever went there in the first place. Whenever I was at the social in that crowded hall I felt lonely, but when I left, I left alone which was sad but I didn't feel lonely any more, because I was on the Lord's side and that was the right thing to do. When it was right with the Lord nothing else seemed to matter and I never wanted to return to a social again. Whenever I think of the Lord Jesus Christ at Calvary during those three hours of darkness, suffering hell for me and all the pain that I added to His suffering I cannot express my shame.

Lesson

I learned a sad and bitter lesson that night that there was no guarantee of safety in numbers with God's people. From then on I would have to do what was right in the sight of the Lord, I would have to seek His face and hearken to the voice of the watchman. The necessity of walking by faith and not by sight hit home.



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Moreover, in recent times when I see public money being given to the sodomities with so little Christian opposition, I'm saddened but not surprised, because I saw first hand Christians dancing to the tune of sodomy many years ago.

I'm only a sinner saved by grace and I may be a lot older now, but I will always be very capable of letting the Lord down again, and let Him down I will if I ever try to walk by sight and not by faith, because Heb. 11 v 6 tells me that "...without faith it is impossible to please him..."

"God be merciful to me a sinner" Luke 18 v 13