

Testimony

by Duncan Campbell (1898-1972)

Saved and Sanctified

My conversion happened under very strange circumstances. God didn't speak to me in a church or in a mission hall, though I went to church every Sabbath. God spoke to me at a dance. I happened to be a player and a step-dancer. I was very fond of bagpipe playing and just as fond of step-dancing. I was asked to play and dance at a concert and also to give several demonstrations of step-dancing. The concert had begun. I had already played several pieces when a minister came over to me and said, "There's a special request that you play, "The Green Hills of Tyrone;" one of our favorite Scottish tunes.



As I came to the second part of that great tune, I found my mind altogether wandering from the tune. My thoughts centered on another green hill. At family worship on the farm, we frequently sang: "There Is A Green Hill Far Away." That was the green hill before my mind as I continued to play "The Green Hills of Tyrone." When finished, I was so gripped by the Spirit of God and so distressed in my mind that I turned to the other players and said, "Boys, you carry on. I'm leaving the concert. One piper turned to me and said, "Are you not well? I said, "I'm very well in body, but I'm terribly disturbed in my mind."

As I walked along the country road toward the farm, I saw a light in a church. I had been away on business and had just come home to play this dance. No one had told me that two workers of the Faith Mission were conducting a mission in the parish, and on that particular night they were having an all-night affair in the church along with the minister of that parish. I was curious to know what was happening. So I went up to the door and listened through the keyhole. Someone was praying. I listened and who did I discover praying but my own father. I am sure he was praying for his wayward son at the concert and dance. Horses could not have dragged me past that church. I was in my piper's regalia with its buckles and plates and whatnots, two swords in one hand with which I had been demonstrating sword dancing. and a set of bagpipes in the other. I laid them down in the back seat and walked up the aisle and sat beside my father.

The minister looked at me and then he looked at the two girls on the platform with him. I'm sure they thought I was either drunk or mad. Whoever heard of a piper in full regalia walking into a prayer meeting? I sat down beside my father, who turned to me and said, "I'm glad to see you here." That was all. After that, a young woman from the island of Skye, Mary Graham, a worker in the mission, stood up and spoke for about ten minutes in Gaelic. She spoke from the text: "God speaketh once, yea twice, but man perceiveth it not." The arrow of conviction struck home, and now I became fearfully distressed in my spirit, so much so that I was afraid I would create a scene in the church.

I walked out, left the others there praying, and I made my way along the road outside of town, arriving home about three o'clock in the morning. If I prayed one time along that country road, I'm sure I prayed ten times, crying to God to have mercy on me. I saw myself so vile and sinful. Upon arriving at the farm, I found my mother on her knees by the kitchen fire. Oh, thank God for a Christian home! Thank God for Christian parents! Mother couldn't attend the prayer meeting because we had visitors on the farm that night. But she could pray at home. And there she was on her knees by the fireside. I'm sure she too was praying for her wayward son. I went over and told her my story, told her how distressed I was, and asked her to pray for me.

Like a wise woman, she said, "There are visitors with us this evening. Your cousins have come, and there's one occupying the bed in your room. I would suggest that you go out to the barn and tell God what you told me." I went out to the barn and knelt in the straw prepared for the horses in the morning. I still remember the prayer I uttered. It was in Gaelic. I'm thankful that God understands Gaelic! If He didn't, I wouldn't be saved today; for I had not a word of English then. I prayed, "Oh, God, I know not how to come and I know not, what to do; but, if you'll take me as I am, I'm coming now." And God, in less time than I take to tell it, swept into my life. It was

miraculous! It was supernatural! Never for one minute, since that hour, have I had any occasion to doubt the work that God did that night.

I knew nothing about the doctrine of simply believing, or about this matter of making a decision. My cry was, "God, come into my life!" I was, that night, supernaturally altered, and so supernaturally altered that godliness characterized every part of my being, body, soul, and spirit. On the following Wednesday, I walked seven miles over the hill to attend a prayer meeting. I had aspirations and longings of the soul that found expression in being at prayer meeting. Shortly after my conversion, I found myself along with many others, on the battlefields of Flanders, a soldier in the king's army.

It wasn't long before I discovered powers resident within me that were fighting against my desire for godliness and holiness -- a power well entrenched in my nature. A power that battled my best endeavors. And with the Apostle Paul I frequently cried, "Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death? The good that I would, I cannot do, the evil that I hate, that I do." Yet, in the midst of it all, I knew that I had entered into a saving and covenant relationship with God, and that He had entered into a saving and covenant relationship with me. I knew that. And yet -- oh, the law of the spirit of life fighting the law of the spirit of death!

However, the day came when that was changed, and changed under very strange circumstances. I found myself severely wounded in a cavalry charge outside of Amiens -- The last cavalry charge of the British army, April 12, 1918. It is a terrible thing to be in a cavalry charge when machine guns are leveled at you, firing five and six hundred rounds-a-minute. That was what we had to face on that fearful morning. I lay wounded on the battlefield; the blood was flowing freely; I believed I was dying. I was very conscious of my unfitness to appear before the judge of all the earth. Two things troubled me: I felt so unpure, and I knew that I hadn't helped any soul to find the Saviour. We had often sung on the farm: Must I empty-handed go? Must I meet my Saviour so? Not one soul with which to greet Him? Must I empty-handed go? Could I but recall them now, Oh, the years of sin I've wasted! I would give them to my Saviour To His will I'd gladly bow.

But I was dying, I thought. And then, a miraculous thing happened. The Canadian horses were called out to second charge. They charged over that bloody battlefield toward the enemy in a body. Men were dying; men were lying wounded; the whole field was littered with men and horses in distress. As it happened, a horse's hoof struck me in the spine. The mark is still there, and I must have groaned. In the providence of God, that groan registered in the mind of a Canadian trooper. He might have said to himself, "There's a cowardly man of the Scotch Grays. He's still alive."

After the charge, again in the providence of God, that trooper came right to the place where I lay and saw that I was bleeding profusely. He lifted as gently as he could placed me on the horse's back, dug the stirrup right into the horse's side; and that steed galloped with fury toward the casualty clearing station. Would I be alive to reach the casualty clearing station? Would my soul be in eternity before my body was lifted from the horse? These were the thoughts that coursed through my mind.

As I lay on that horse's back, I remembered a prayer Father frequently offered at family worship. The prayer came from my heart, "Oh, God, I'm dying. Will you make me as holy as a saved man can be?" It was McCheyne's prayer, frequently uttered by Father, "Make me as holy as a saved sinner can be." God the Holy Ghost fell upon me on that horse's back. You needn't say, "There isn't such a thing as a definite experience of the Holy Ghost subsequent to conversion. My confession was real; my regeneration was wonderful; but it paled before the revelation of Jesus that came to me on that horse's back.

Then the horse stood at the casualty clearing station. Loving hands lifted me and laid me down on a stretcher. The place was crowded with wounded and dying, mostly Canadians. I couldn't speak English. But I tried to sing in Gaelic, and what I sang was a psalm: "Oh, thou my soul, bless God the Lord; and all that in me is, be stirred up. His holy name, I will magnify and bless." Oh, I was weak. My voice wasn't strong. But God swept in.

Mark you, there wasn't a man there who could understand me. To them it was a strange language. But within that hour seven Canadians were saved. Revival, a miniature revival, swept into the casualty clearing station! One young lad said, "Trooper, can you not speak to us in English? We are seeking Jesus." Men with little thought of God, here they were, moved by the Spirit, God, the personality of Jesus, making His impact upon sinners. That's why I constantly say that to me the power of the Holy Ghost in its final analysis is the revelation of Jesus.

It's not gifts. Gifts may come if God wills to give them. But I know nothing about gifts. I do know this, that when that experience of the Holy Ghost filling my life came upon me on that horse's back, the supreme reality was Jesus. 'Twas Jesus. I loved Him "because He first loved me and purchased my pardon on Calvary's tree." Oh, how wonderful it was! There in the casualty clearing station, wave after wave of divine realization swept through; sinners cried to God for mercy and sinners found the Saviour.

NOTE:

Duncan Campbell was mightily used of God in two great revival periods. Entire villages in the Hebrides Islands were smitten by the power of God, and saloons were nailed shut with signs reading: "Closed forever."