

# *Testimony*

by Mary J. Morrison

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Charles Finney said we should never testify of our own experience but of the truth of the Word of God. I can never remember a time when I was prejudiced against God's Word; I could not have been, for its truth was not only taught but demonstrated before my eyes from my earliest years. The church, though not strong in membership was strong in influence, because many of its members lived its creed. The word 'godly' aptly described their lives. Stories of such men and their deeds were often related by the fireside by those who sought to encourage one another in the ways of the Lord. Unknown to the story-teller, we children benefited although we had never read a Christian book apart from Pilgrim's Progress, which was one of our school books.

I attended neither Sunday School nor church, but like all other children brought up in Lewis, I had to learn chapters of Scripture off by heart in the day school, both in English and in Gaelic, the latter being my native language. Family worship and grace at meals were the custom in most homes, yet at the same time drink was the ruin of many of the men, and in seasons of festivity one was accustomed to seeing them helplessly drunk.

When God visited my island home in revival blessing I was in Glasgow. Having escaped from the restraints of home I began to learn what it meant to be free—so I thought! It was not easy to get away from the influence of home, for at heart we islanders are 'home birds', and the fear of bringing shame to the family is a very real one. As a result I never really got away from a certain measure of restraint. I greatly enjoyed my round of entertainment night by night, but to the grosser sins I never could stoop. I had a real dread of such! That, however, did not prevent me from being unclean in heart. The books I read and the language I used, revealed the hidden nature within—the heritage of fallen man.

News of revival came as a real blow to me, and my first reaction was that of anger. Though I dared not put it in words, my attitude was, why should God intrude and spoil our enjoyment, just when everything was going so well for us! There was no God before my eyes, and I certainly did not wish Him to intrude at this stage. I was booked to sing at a concert for the Comunn Ghaidhealach, and prospects for the future were bright in that realm.

Just then, God arranged in His providence that I should return to Lewis on account of the illness of my parents. I was not at all happy in making my way home, and felt less so when I arrived to find myself in the midst of an atmosphere of religious expectancy. The circumstances which brought me home were soon over-ruled, and my parents joined the many others who attended the crowded church nightly. I was determined to evade God, and refused to attend. News of the meetings and nightly conversions greatly disturbed me; I wanted to escape from it all, and wished that I had remained in Glasgow. I seemed to be hemmed in, like a bird in a cage, and longed to be set free. My rebellion, however, made no difference to the working of God's Spirit in other lives: God had come!

My parents finally prevailed upon me to attend the meetings, in order to see and hear for myself. I went against my will, and continued so to do. When I saw the enthusiasm of others, I was annoyed with myself, because I was different. What turmoil went on in my heart! My mother's conversion shook me even more and I found myself being solemnly subdued by the things of eternity, while the truths of Scripture kept repeating themselves in my mind. My soul was being awakened from its sleep of death!

The climax came one memorable morning after a cottage meeting had been held, at which two of my friends had sought the Lord. Feeling like a 'fish out of water' I stood listening to the singing of the young converts outside, and as I did so the words of the hymn penetrated my hard heart:

"Take the world, but give me Jesus,  
All its joys are but a name."

The arrow went home to its mark, and the truth dawned upon me that here were people who had something I didn't possess, and a deep hunger for that 'something' filled my heart.

Almost four months of conviction and desire followed. It appeared as though all hope of salvation was lost, and I was resigned to living a reformed, but empty life. It seemed that God could not be just and forgive me: I was destined to be lost forever! Still I continued to attend the meetings. In my heart I cried: "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him" (Job 13:15). I was acquainted with the warnings from Sinai, but to the promises of Calvary I was still a stranger.

On August 24th 1950, the 'Sun of Righteousness' finally rose 'with healing in His wings', as I sat in the weekly prayer meeting of the church. Through Isaiah 53:5, the truth of Calvary came as a healing balm to my soul. That familiar truth, illumined by the Spirit to my despairing soul, became my anchor for time and eternity. "Then are they glad because they be quiet (calm); so He bringeth them unto their desired haven" (Psalm 107:30). At last I had arrived at my haven, and my soul rejoiced with unspeakable joy. In the peaceful hours of that morning (2 a.m.), while the village slept, my friends and I walked along the shore, singing:

"Now none but Christ can satisfy,  
None other name for me!  
There's love, and life, and lasting joy,  
Lord Jesus, found in Thee!"

One could continue the story from there, relating the precious experiences of God's truth during those days of 'heaven upon earth', but I would conclude this testimony with the words of Charles Wesley:

"My chains fell off, my heart was free;  
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee."

All glory be to God for saving this worthless soul, and for leading me into His will for my life.

. . . *Mary J. Morrison - The Faith Mission*