

# **I Met God**

Personal experiences  
of the lavish love of our Lord.

By Glenn & Ethel Coon

1955

## **CONTENTS**

1. I Met God at "X".
2. I Met God and Heard His Voice.
3. I Met God when Father Apologized.
4. I Met God in Temptation.
5. I Met God in Restlessness .
6. I Met God at Midnight.
7. I Met God at Death's Door.
8. I Met God with an Infidel.
9. I Met God and Proved Him.
10. I Met God and Trusted Him.
11. I Met God in a Seed.
12. I Met God and Purchased a Church.
13. I Met God with a Drunkard.
14. I Met God with a Hypocrite.
15. I Met God with My Hands Full.
16. I Met God My Manager.
17. I Met God at Father's Grave.
18. I Met God and Dreamed of Heaven.

## I Met God

### INTRODUCTION

Personal, my introduction  
Of my Lord. And it is true.  
As I make my presentation,  
Will you let Him talk with you?

Human words, at best, are feeble;  
You must hear Him to admire.  
When He speaks, O how delightful!  
He will set your soul on fire.

He is full of fascination,  
And I love Him. You will too,  
If throughout this meditation  
You will let Him talk with you.

G.A.C.

### 1: I Met God at "X".

THE KIND teacher had spent an entire study period in my room, slowly and patiently going over, step by step, the solution to just one algebra problem. At last he realized that his earnest efforts were in vain. Sadly, and with an inward despair he tried manfully to conceal, he reluctantly bade me "good night."

When he had gone, I sat down wearily at my desk where my opened algebra book still lay. The meaningless formula and hieroglyphics it contained seemed to mock me. No, I thought desperately, there's no hope at all for me in algebra—my mind just won't, or can't grasp what it is all about.

As I recall the events of that evening, our test for the six-week period was already over. My two brothers, who were in the same algebra class with me, had already received their grades. Yes, one of them had been given 16% out of a possible 100%; the other, believe it or not, had received an ignominious zero! And although it cheered me ever so little to be aware that there was someone else in this wide world even though it was my own brother—who was worse than I in algebra; still, my own progress, or rather lack of it, continued to haunt me. O, yes, I got 16% too when my grade finally reached me!

My two brothers immediately realized the futility of continuing the study of a subject in which they were obviously so poor. I, however, perhaps from innate stubbornness or some other only partially known reason—pride maybe—kept on. I was going to master algebra or die in the attempt!

This, my first year in boarding school, was also the first time in my entire life that I had been away from home and parents longer than overnight. Naturally, everything was so new and very strange, and the process of adjustment was a difficult one, particularly to a boy who had been reared in the rural environment of a farm. Added to the problems provided by new surroundings and new faces, was the realization of the vast difference, academically speaking, between grammar school and high school. The assignments were longer, harder, and more complicated than I had ever known them to be in my grammar school days. The hours were longer too. Even the class recitations seemed longer to my fevered imagination--everything appeared too long: including the professors' faces! It was a strange and somewhat terrifying new world in which I found myself--a strange and disturbing world in which new and growingly complex problems sprang up all around me.

## I Met God

It was into this maelstrom in which I had been placed that I began to study a subject I'll merely call "X" under this teacher who himself was still a student of the second-year algebra that was proving such an enigma to me. Together we wrestled for the elusive answers to my algebra problems, but although the old adage has it that "two heads are better than one," to our sorrow we discovered that two heads with insufficient knowledge only served to make our ultimate frustration twice as hard to bear.

After one particularly heart-breaking session in which we seemed to have been baffled even more completely than ever, the teacher sadly bade me goodnight at a late hour. In utter despair, I sank down at my desk, head in my hands, utterly exhausted and at the end of my rope.

It was at that time, in childlike simplicity and trust, I turned at last to the One Who is always ready to help if we will but call upon Him. Dimly through my tears, I remembered the never-failing promise my father and my mother had read so often to us boys: "Ask, and it shall be given you." I had read the Holy Scriptures from the first grade on in school, and I believed implicitly and without question that God could, and would, do all things for us if we would only ask Him, in faith, believing.

Silently and reverently I sank down onto my knees and in broken, halting sentences, told Him my troubles, including specifically the losing battle with my algebra problems. At last, much relieved by the unrestrained outpouring of my heart, I retired and almost immediately fell asleep.

But as I slept, a dream came to me. In it, I saw clearly the solution worked out to an algebraic problem I had wrestled vainly with a little before. Awakening, I seized a pencil and paper and put down the answer just as I had seen it worked out in my dream.

Next morning at class I handed in the answer. It was absolutely correct. I had met God at "X"! And He had solved not only my algebra problem, but He had also pointed the way to the solution of all my life's problems!

Since that night, now several decades ago, I have often had to meet God at "X." It is the place of the unknown. And I can truthfully affirm that He has never once let me down. He has always faithfully fulfilled His promises to the letter.

And what happened to me, my friend, can also happen to you-providing only that you will come to Him humbly, contritely, and above all, trustfully, and ask Him to help you. And when He has helped you, as He most assuredly will, if you but meet the simple conditions I have just mentioned, you would be ungrateful indeed if you did not share your transcendent experience with others helping to guide them into the ineffable love and mercy that passes all human understanding.

My substitute teacher friend finished out the year with me as a class member. But there was a difference now. No longer did we two wrestle alone with our problems. We had a Partner, ready and willing always to share the load with us. Together we successfully passed a course which we never could have by our own unaided efforts.

Throughout the years that lay ahead, I learned many valuable and useful lessons, but none greater and of more lasting benefit and joy to me than the one I learned on my knees the night I met God at "X"!

1. Matthew 7: 7.

## 2: I Met God and Heard His Voice

NO DOUBT this chapter title really startled you, friend, as you read it. But it is so true, I actually heard His voice! Let me tell you about it, if I may. He gave me the very message I was later to receive from my brother. But there was this important difference: He did it in advance of my brother!

## I Met God

I don't know whether or not you believe in the supernatural. I do, because I've had ample evidence of the existence of a power higher than myself! You may call this power what you will, but I prefer to call Him God, the Supreme Ruler of the universe.

The event I am about to relate, happened around an open Bible. My wife and I were alone in the guest room of a boarding school tucked away in the lovely hills of North Carolina. In many respects the wild, untamed grandeur of the scenery reminded me of my childhood surroundings. The school buildings were situated in a valley, surrounded on both sides by verdant hills and their forested slopes. It was a secluded, retired spot, and away in the distance one could barely see the vague outlines of Mount Pisgah.

My wife and I had been called to this academy for the purpose of leading the students in a "Spiritual Emphasis" week. As the name suggests, this was to be a period especially devoted to the deeper, richer, spiritual things of life, away from the hurly-burly and commotion of our everyday life.

Here in this quiet, serene atmosphere, very close to the Creator Himself, we were destined to experience the incident that I have always associated thereafter as the one of "the open Bible."

The opening services were due to begin on a Friday evening. It was about Wednesday of the following week that the truly miraculous event I am about to relate, took place.

One of my brothers had started out by auto for the west coast. But when he had reached St. Louis, he was suddenly stricken down. He had sustained a crippling attack of a nervous affliction sometimes spoken of as the "jitters." As anyone who has had the misfortune to suffer a similar fate knows, this uncontrollable nervous state often comes upon one entirely unawares. It may be caused by an accumulation of a steadily mounting series of nervous tensions, or it may arise from some sudden, sharp mental shock. But whatever the reason, it is a frightening and demoralizing experience. The soul itself seems filled with dread; the mental processes become as though atrophied; even physical movement becomes difficult. Of course, under such circumstances, the operation of an automobile becomes a hazardous and dangerous undertaking. My brother found himself up against a seeming impasse. He realized that only complete and prolonged rest could alleviate his condition. But how could he possibly hope to get this under the circumstances?

In his utter desperation, my brother turned to me for help. On Wednesday morning he called me by long-distance telephone from St. Louis. From his first few words I realized his dire condition. Would I come to St. Louis? Could I drive his car the rest of the way to our home in Tennessee?

My immediate reaction on hearing his truly pitiful tale, was to drop everything and go to his assistance. He was my brother, and he needed my help. That was enough for me. But even as I was about to hastily pack my valise, I thought of the students entrusted to my care. What of them? Could I leave them when so many were earnestly searching to know Christ, some for the first time? We were in the midst of the vital work of winning souls to Christ. Eternal life-not merely temporal existence-was in the balance. Again, I found myself in a dilemma, in which I was torn between brotherly love and my plain duty to those in my care. I did not know what to tell my brother, but I had promised him an answer that same evening.

That evening my wife and I retired to our room, puzzled and sick at heart. We were occupying a cozy little cottage situated on the school campus. Before that memorable Wednesday afternoon it had been merely a pleasant, but more or less mundane abode; but before long it was destined to become a sacred spot that will always remain hallowed in our memory.

Seeking consolation in my seeming insoluble perplexity, I opened my Bible and turned to James 1:5-8. The words I saw there seemed to literally sear themselves into my consciousness: "If any of you lack

## I Met God

wisdom, let him ask of God, . . . and it shall be given him." It was a message too simple, and too direct to admit of any error or misunderstanding. Again God was directly counseling me as to the right course to follow. And as I read on and listened to the wonderful words again as I read aloud: "Let him ask in faith," and then to do this without wavering, I was sure that again God had answered my unspoken prayer for help.

My wife and I knelt reverently and asked God for the wisdom we lacked. What should we tell my brother? What course should we follow? These were the things we asked of our Heavenly Father, secure in the knowledge that He would provide the answers.

And as we prayed we told God quietly, sincerely, that we truly believed He could and would help us in our trouble. We admitted our utter powerlessness to help ourselves. Yes, I told God that we knew He could help, and we believed that He was granting the promised wisdom at that very minute. We placed ourselves unreservedly and unconditionally in His hands.

And then something happened! No, God did not reveal any message to us in blazing emblems of fire, nor did I hear any voice then giving us His instructions. Instead, I experienced the truly uncanny feeling that the ceiling and walls of that little cottage had become as of brass—that they were completely soundproof.

We continued praying, still with that terrible sense that we were all alone—completely isolated from contact with the world. But as we continued to thank God and praise Him for His promises, a voice spoke to my soul. It directed me to go to the telephone that evening and call my brother in St. Louis. "Tell him that you cannot come for him until the week is over," it said. "Explain that you will be very glad to come next Monday. Your brother will reply that he feels a little better; that he believes he can limp back to Madison, Tennessee, if he tries to make only a hundred miles a day."

The message was clear and unmistakable. We arose from our knees, determined at all costs to follow the instructions we had received. That night we went to the hotel at Ashville and talked to my brother by phone, long-distance. When I had finished giving him my message, it was his turn to say something, You ask, "What did he say?" Well, friend, it is of course your privilege to believe me or not as you like; but I want to say that he told me word for word, what I had been told he would say, earlier that day!

Rejoicing at this further manifestation of God's protective love for those who will follow His guidance, my wife and I related our experience later on to the students in our care. As they listened in awe to our recital, I could see that many of them accepted our experience as a manifestation of God's power in men's lives when they seek Him sincerely and earnestly in prayer. In fact, at the end of the session, several of the students expressed this conviction to us, and I cannot but help feeling that God had sent that particular message in just the way He did in order to strengthen the faith and belief of others wavering on the verge of decision.

Now, do I hear some of you say, "I too would like to hear His voice"? Well, friend, very reverently I say, "You can." I do not claim any exclusive power or ability to hear Him. But I would like to add just this word of caution. Do not expect to hear any loud voice, or witness any startling demonstration of His presence. But rather be prepared to hear Him speak through a "still, small voice." But if you are attuned to that still, small voice through prayer, the message it conveys will be as clear and unmistakable to you as it was to my wife and myself.

It is a difficult thing to describe that "still, small voice." Perhaps, I can best do so by saying it was an "impression" rather than actually a voice. And you must listen very quietly, earnestly, and reverently in order to hear it at all. But if you believe He will answer your prayers, you can rest satisfied that He surely will. The voice you hear may not be one that can be heard by the ear--more often it will be one that

## I Met God

instead reaches your heart. As someone has truly observed: "If we come to Him in faith, He will speak His mysteries to us personally. Our hearts will often burn within us as One draws nigh to commune with us as He did with Enoch. Those who decide to do nothing in any line that will displease God, will know, after presenting their case before Him, just what course to pursue." What a meaningful message to everyone who finds himself with decisions difficult to make!

We had a sweet season of prayer with those students that week. The memories of souls dedicated thenceforth to Him will always remain with us. And when we returned to Tennessee we found my brother there to greet us. His had been a safe trip too!

1. The Desire of Ages, p. 668.

### The Open Bible

The open Bible means so much to me,  
Since first I heard it read at Mother's knee.  
Her face, so full of confidence and peace,  
Instilled my childish heart with sweet release.

I longed and prayed to come the happy day  
When I could read it for myself; and stay  
In quiet snugness in a corner there,  
While Mother placed the shining silverware

Upon the table in the dining-room,  
Or tidied up the, homey living-room.  
The Holy Bible now is all my stay;  
I love to keep it open while I pray,  
g.a.c

## 3: I Met God When Father Apologized

PICTURE, IF you can, a humble farm home lying in a quiet, fertile valley bounded on both sides by green and verdant hills. There were other homes in this peaceful valley too, but they were scattered here and there, with none being very close to its neighbor. Each morning the sun cast its welcome, warming rays over the valley. And as it set each evening in the west, the long shadows would creep slowly up the valley until at last the deep, still night encompassed all.

We see a father and a mother kneeling reverently on the hearthstone in family worship. Grouped around them are no less than seven young lads, ascending in age and size from a mere toddler to a husky young lad of perhaps sixteen or so. It would take just one glance at the energetic, mischievous faces of these youngsters to tell us that their parents must have a big problem indeed on their hands to control the irrepressible spirit of youth seen there, and its almost incalculable capacity for getting into escapades of one kind or another.

But as we view the scene first, the boys are all listening attentively as their father reads from the well-thumbed family Bible. It is quite easily seen from the father's lined, stern face that he is a man who has had to work hard all his life; and that while he will deal fairly and kindly with his family, he will brook no

## I Met God

opposition to his orders. If it were not so, we can imagine the chaos seven high-spirited boys would soon be able to create!

The father is speaking now, as he puts the Bible aside and addresses his wife and seven boys. "Boys," he begins in a voice which the occasion has softened, "I have made a mistake today. I have been unkind. Will you forgive me?"

Coming from a man who so obviously is the master of his household, and who bears all the tell-tale earmarks of a strict disciplinarian, the words are startling. It is easy to see from the respectful attention his family is giving him that a word or even a glance would normally be sufficient to have his wishes carried out. Yet here he is asking his children's forgiveness with a depth of sincerity that could not be doubted!

There is a slight pause as the father's words are concluded. And then as one, comes the reply from the seven boys. "Yes," they chorus softly, as their mother joins in with them.

But now let me let you in on a secret. I know all about what happened at these gatherings, because I was one of those seven boys present on this, and many other similar occasions. It was part of a standard ritual at our house. Each night father would pause to analyze the day's events. Perhaps he had been too severe with one of us. Maybe he had even lost his temper and said things that weighted heavily on his conscience. But whatever it was, Father always asked that same question, "Will you forgive me?"

And in those few words I think you have the key to our continuance as a Christian family. When we hurt another or said an unkind word during the day, we brought the matter up at the family worship hour and obtained the wronged one's forgiveness.

And when once or twice in his entire life Father forgot or neglected to apologize for some hurt he had done me, I went to bed that night with an aching, inconsolable heart. My pillow would be wet with tears as I vainly sought sleep. And not until Dad knelt by my bedside and said he was sorry, did my heart soften toward him. He never failed to remember belatedly that he had neglected this act at family worship, and he too sought sleep in vain until he had made appropriate amends.

I fully realize that in this modern age in which we live, such a routine may appear childish or even silly to some of our worldly contemporaries, but should it, let us pause for a moment to consider what Jesus Himself had to say about this very matter.

"Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." So when Father took the local pulpit the next Sabbath morning in the nearby church, I was sure he always did so with a clear heart and conscience.

And as soon as Father had apologized, Mother usually followed his lead. After a short pause, during which not a whisper was heard, nor even so much as an untoward glance from any of us lively boys, Mother began in a voice that was usually near tears. Then at the words, "Will you forgive me too?" a wee chorus of youthful voices, mingling with Dad's deep bass, again responded reverently, "Yes." Another pause. And then, one by one, we boys followed the example set by a penitent father and mother.

Thus were we taught by our devout parents to reverence worship to our Creator. As I look back now upon that sacred hour of nightly worship, I realize more than ever what a wonderful thing this was in cementing and perpetuating our close family ties. As the poet has beautifully phrased it:

## I Met God

"There is a place of full release,  
Near to the heart of God."

The burdens of sin were miraculously removed. We had confessed our faults and shortcomings to one another. But more important, we had confessed them to God.

And then, as we arose from our knees, we gathered around and sang a hymn. I remember that a favorite with all of us was, "Sweet Hour of Prayer." And as we joined in its wonderful refrain, it seemed that God had cleansed us of our sins and had enabled us to get ready to start life again renewed and refreshed.

Later on, as we boys grew up and one by one established our own homes, we carried that sweet hour of family prayer with us. And as friends dropped in, they too were invited to join in. Many benefits they derived from such participation in family worship.

Yes, too soon life's eventide will come to all of us. Before we realize it, the journey of life will be over. If we will but take the time, each day at the close of its trials and struggles, to spend just one quiet hour with God, we will soon learn the unspeakable comfort and peace which comes to him who will take the time to meet his Maker in that evening "Sweet Hour of Prayer."

1. Matthew 5:23, 24.

### " Sweet Hour of Prayer"

"Sweet hour of prayer; sweet hour of prayer,"  
Our childhood's precious evensong;  
That called us from our youthful care,  
To worship Him so true and strong.

"Sweet hour of prayer; sweet hour of prayer,"  
Life's noontide longs for this retreat  
This priceless hour we gladly share,  
Around a common mercy-seat.

When age comes on, may friends each one,  
Still join us in this vesper air;  
And sing at setting of life's sun,  
"Sweet hour of prayer; sweet hour of prayer."  
g.a.c.

## 4: I Met God in Temptation

"Confess your faults one to another." James 5:16.

IT SEEMS as though it were only yesterday, that memorable day when my two brothers and I left for junior college. I still recall the thrill we shared as we began what we eagerly anticipated would prove to be a new epoch in our young lives.

As the train puffed out of that old DeRuyter depot, our hopes were high and we talked excitedly of what we were going to do and what we were going to accomplish in this wonderful new world that was opening up before us.

Father and Mother, of course, were there to wave us off. Dad gave us our final instructions in a serious manner. I could tell that something was weighing heavily upon his heart.

## I Met God

"Boys," he began, as he very earnestly searched each of our faces in turn, "you are beginning life on your own. You all want to be successful in everything you undertake. Oh, good grades in school are important. And you can't be blamed if you wish for financial profit too. But, boys," and here Dad paused a moment before continuing, "never, never for a moment forget that the most important consideration of all of us is life eternal. Never, never, under any consideration, do anything to jeopardize that. And although I don't think I have to tell you how to be sure you will not make this mistake, just let me tell you a few of the things I have learned from my own life.

"If you will devote just one hour each day to the Lord, you cannot fail in anything you undertake. 'Fake time to read your Bible; take time to pray. No matter how busy you are, boys, don't forget to pray!'"

I was the youngest of the three brothers. But that message from Dad came to me as an admonition from God. Heart had been meeting heart. Soul had been conversing with soul. To me it was much more than mere human talk. That message came from God, and as such, it demanded unqualified, unquestioning obedience.

And so, with this sound parental advice ringing in our ears, we went on to the boarding school about three hundred miles from home. Three hundred miles only, but to our youthful imaginations it seemed like it was way on the other side of the world!

Upon our arrival at school, one of my first acts was to set up a daily schedule to follow. I tried to arrange a time for everything throughout each day. I had to be at the farm at 4:30 o'clock each morning to help with the milking. So in order to be prompt, I had to arise not later than 3:30 A.M.

Naturally, there were no lights on in the boys' dormitory rooms at that early hour, so I met my morning appointment with God in the boys' wash room. A gurgling radiator sometimes seemed to keep me solitary company, But I was always aware that God was there with me.

I started off my morning worship by reading the Bible, and followed it with a short time of meditation during which I committed to a sheet of paper all the things for which I wished to thank God. I also put down all I could call to mind of my shortcomings and failures of the past day, and concluded with the names of those for whom I wished to ask God especially to watch over. Then I knelt in prayer with my list in hand. I would look at each item or name on it, and then pray a sentence or two about what I had read. And so, each morning, before the sun had even appeared, I enjoyed that wonderful "Sweet Hour of Prayer" with my Maker as I had for so long at home.

It did not take me very long to realize the wisdom of Dad's parting counsel to us. Some of my very closest associates at school soon revealed very human weaknesses. Some of the boys got in the habit of petty pilfering at the school cafeteria. O, I know it wasn't anything really serious, judged by the world's elastic standards--an extra piece of bread picked up here, or a glass of milk surreptitiously slipped on the tray when the cashier's back was turned--but, young as I was, I knew that such acts are extremely distasteful in the Lord's sight regardless of how lightly man may treat them. Other boys filched milk from the cans at the dairy, and I must frankly admit that on one occasion I did so myself. Next day I was deathly sick, and I could not but help thinking that it was God's judgment upon me for my momentary weakness. This drove me back to my knees in an earnest, tearful plea for His forgiveness, and I never repeated the mistake. I also noted that some of the boys stole loaves of bread, or took fruit from the orchard and carried these to their rooms for a midnight snack when the lights were off.

When the boys discussed these matters, as they often did, they usually tried to justify their deeds one way or another. One boy said he had once been shortchanged at the office and therefore he was just making up for what he had lost there. Another said that he felt he was being underpaid, and by helping himself to a few things around the place he was merely compensating for the deficit. But of course such

## I Met God

rationalization never did convince anyone--not even the one voicing it--and least of all, God. And I think that deep down in their own hearts these boys knew they were doing wrong, and I am sure such wrongdoing must have weighed heavily on their consciences.

Once in a while a student would be caught pilfering and would be sent home in disgrace. I suppose now, looking back on those earlier days, such occurrences were inevitable when we consider that the boys were from all strata of society, and that many of them had never been taught to pray at home and were both morally and spiritually retarded. Others I am glad to say, learned to pray while at boarding school, and eventually gained a lasting victory over self and appetite.

As I observed these things happening around me, and realized that I too had fallen prey to the tempter's wiles on at least one occasion, I made a firm resolution to guide me through life. I would never engage in any activity that could in any way be classed as questionable in God's sight. I realized anew that it was to just such alluring temptations that my dad had had reference when he bade us good-bye at the depot.

I determined to be more faithful to the ideals I had learned at home. At any cost I must never neglect my daily prayer for wisdom and guidance to do what was right in God's sight. I resolved to follow the Psalmist's advice which says: "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."<sup>1</sup> I could clearly see that the temptations of life, coupled with my own human weaknesses, would cost me my soul unless I sought strength from the Lord.

And now, as I look back over these many years that have since intervened, I can see clearly that by no means all the people who make mistakes or yield to temptation, are insincere. I have discovered that fact in my own life. But I had also learned a very valuable lesson. It is just this: that unless man prays continually to God for help and strength, his weaknesses will overcome him sooner or later. Satan is ever on the watch to play on these weaknesses and to pierce any chink in our defensive armor that he can discover.

I soon learned to discard the uncharitable and unchristian view that all weak Christians are hypocrites. I knew then, and I still maintain, that all the sincerity in the world, all the best intentions mankind may have, are but a poor substitute for sincere, earnest and heart-felt prayer. There is no truer statement found in the Bible than: "He that hath the Son hath life."<sup>2</sup> And that life, needless to say, is conferred upon each one of us at our place of prayer, regardless of where that may be. It comes through a daily intake of the life-giving, revitalizing, rejuvenating Word of God. There can be no easy way. No short-cut.

There, in a word, is the secret of a happy, serene life-prayer. And once we have established this intimate, priceless contact and communion with God, our hour of prayer becomes a joyful and rewarding experience, because: "Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."<sup>3</sup>

1. Psalm 119:11 .

2. 1 John 5:12.

3. Psalm 16:11.

## **5: I Met God in Restlessness.**

FILLED WITH the Holy Spirit, the young man spoke earnestly as the crowded hall hushed to catch his words.

"I didn't feel like praying. I was restless. I wanted to go somewhere and do something just what I wasn't at all sure. But I felt myself being drawn by some powerful, unseen force. Thoughts flitted through my

## I Met God

youthful mind that really had no business in there. I felt a dreadful weakness overcome me as I sought to struggle against my baser nature."

As I listened intently to the young man's frank testimony, I was thinking to myself: "What a perfect description of Satan wrestling for control of a man's soul!"

I too had experienced the same frightening encounter with the prince of darkness myself. Fact is, that no better words could have summed up my own feelings under similar circumstances. But somehow or other, as many of us are inclined to do, I thought it was an experience that was peculiarly my own.

And as the young man continued, I noted the other striking parallels in our lives. We both loved the Lord. We had both given our hearts to Him at an early age and had sought our best to follow His ways. But then that restless, abandoned feeling had stolen over us. Temptation came, and the battle was on!

Make no mistake about it, my friend, temptation comes to all of us. Jesus too was tempted by the evil one on more than one occasion. All who make the decision to walk with God will sooner or later realize that Satan is not going to give up on winning your soul without a struggle.

The young man went on: "In my experience," he stated, "I have discovered that there is a never-failing solution to this restlessness and the other wiles of Satan that beset us from time to time. Within fifteen minutes, or less, after you become aware of what is happening to you, Satan's power can be broken. You might not believe this is possible, but it works," he continued earnestly. "I know it works, because I have tried it. It will never fail. And it consists simply of getting down on your knees in prayer and asking God for help."

The young man went on to explain that this simple, but effective, way to overcome temptation had been passed on to him by an older friend. He had worked for the latter and he had passed on his experience to the younger man. It got me to thinking: "It worked for them--why won't it work just as well for me?" And because it has worked for me too, I am passing it on to you. Here's what to do when this restlessness overtakes you. Slip away to some quiet, secluded place of prayer. No, you may not particularly feel like praying, but go anyway. Determine firmly in your mind to shut out for fifteen minutes everything else but God. Then get down on your knees and pray for strength and guidance to overcome. I guarantee that when you get up from your knees your restlessness will be gone.

My brother Clinton had told me this same thing years before, and he had in turn learned it from Dad. I recalled then the many times I had overheard Dad engaged in secret prayer wherever he happened to be when he felt the need for God's sustaining hand. Perhaps he was in the barn at the time, or the chicken-house, or maybe the orchard. It made no difference where it was, Dad knew that God would hear him no matter where he prayed.

My mother followed a similar practice. How well I remember once when several of my brothers and I went out gathering berries with her in the valley near our home. When we had filled our pails with berries, Mother suggested that we kneel and pray before we left the patch. The memory of that scene as we knelt together there under the boughs of a crooked tree, remains forever etched on the tables of my heart. At a later time we boys went berrying alone to the same spot. Before we left, we again knelt in prayer together.

Some of us boys looked around for our own secret prayer sanctuaries where we might commune alone with God. I remember I had one in the hay-loft, and many a day I sought solace and surcease from my childhood trials in that quiet spot, alone with my God.

In boarding school I likewise sought out quiet, secluded spots away from the hustle and bustle of my everyday life.

## I Met God

I well remember one occasion when inclement weather forced us to go indoors. We held a prayer meeting then in one of the student's rooms. This particular student was being sorely tempted at the time and he had asked some of us to come in and pray with him and for him. The Bible was read. Hymns were sung. Then we knelt in fervent prayer. Suddenly, the young man all of us were praying for got up from his knees crying out: "Get thee hence, Satan!" using almost the identical words our Lord did under similar circumstances.

Afterwards, in discussing the incident, the young lad said seriously and soberly that when he had voiced these words he had seen a big black object fly through the window. He said that he knew then that he had gained a complete victory over the devil and his evil angels. Today that same student is a devoted, faithful worker in the Lord's vineyard, helping to bring other sin-stricken souls to the Master.

Years later, one of my favorite prayer retreats was near a quiet, rippling brook set in a lovely rural background. I was teaching school at the time, and I had been sent to what I was told was a group of godless "incurrigibles" whom many other teachers had long since given up as hopeless.

But just as God never considers any sinner "hopeless," I resolved to do my utmost, with His guidance and counsel, to change their lives. I knew the job was bigger than I unless I asked His continuing aid. So I made it a daily habit to meet God beside that quiet little brook. Occasionally a mocking bird or a Carolina wren joined me in the sacred worship hour-or at least so it seemed to me at the time. The birds flitting from branch to branch in the dense foliage, added immeasurably to the quiet sweetness of the scene. They were as leaves in the great book of nature, written by God Himself. On these pages man can, if he will, read a message of trust placed there for him to see by the Creator of the birds, the trees, and all nature.

I would like to add that one of the so-called "incurrigible" youngsters from that group became a medical missionary, serving his Lord in the mission field of his choosing. I would like to believe that my quiet prayer retreat by that rippling brook played some part in the great and miraculous change that was made in his life. But of one thing I am certain-if it had not been for that and other quiet retreats I found from time to time, my life would have been a failure. I know it is true; for on occasions when I have gone astray, even slightly, it has been because I have neglected my daily communion with God. So there is no better place than some quiet, serene spot where man can uninterruptedly meet his Maker and lay his troubles at His feet.

Evidently the Psalmist recognized the importance of this same truth. He, too, often had to face the tempter. At such times he sought refuge in just such quiet spots where he could be alone with God. There he prayed much as follows: "For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him."

If there is just one message I could leave with you, friend, it would be to meet God in your restlessness; to meet Him in your sinfulness; to meet Him in your hopelessness, and know that you shall "obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

1. Psalm 32:6.

2. Hebrews 4:16.

### **Pause to Pray**

In early dawn, when all the stars are paling,  
And tinsel glory pencils out the day;  
The tempter's voice begins his new assailing.  
Then pause, O silent, waking soul, and pray.

## I Met God

When noonday sun beats down and leaves you fainting,  
On burning sands your aching feet would stay;  
A shadow 'neath a Mighty Rock is waiting,  
With cooling fountains, when you pause to pray.

When ev'ning shadows gather o'er the weary,  
And eyelids gently rest at close of day;  
The deep'ning shadows never can be dreary,  
For Love enfolds His child who paused to pray.

g.a.c.

## 6: I Met God at Midnight

IT WAS midnight on a tropical island. Except for the soft and subdued chirp of some nocturnal creature, and the slight rustle of the palm trees in the trade wind, complete silence reigned. A huge tropical moon made the night like day and sent its rays slanting through the shutters of our island home. My wife had not gone to sleep, but I had slipped away to dreamland.

The lush island to which we had been assigned as young mission workers was a little less modern outpost of civilization at that time, quite removed from many of the comforts and conveniences most of us take for granted. Our good doctor resided forty-five miles away—long miles of twisting, narrow, roads. That was the outstanding fact that kept recurring in my disturbed mind. Because I knew that our car was in a bad state of repair. In addition to a rather temperamental engine, it had only four tires, and of these, one suffered a slow leak that called for frequent pumping to keep it reasonably operative. We had no spare tire.

Suddenly my somber sweet sleep was interrupted by my wife awakening me, quietly whispering, "I guess we had better go now!" So without further ado, I slipped out of bed and began dressing. I knew without being told that she was fully aware of what this was all about. She was about to become a mother, and sensed instinctively that it would be just a matter of an hour or two at best until the time arrived.

But what a spot we found ourselves in! She had come home on the doctor's permission, after having spent a fruitless two weeks waiting in that city forty-five miles away for the blessed event to happen. The doctor had said that she could safely return home for a few days, via the train. And now, on the very night of her return, this had happened, with our decrepit car the only means of transportation! Alas! There was nothing to be gained by delay or fretful repining! This was certainly a time for immediate and drastic action!

In just a few minutes we were both ready for what promised to be an eventful, arduous trip. But before we left, I had an inspiration. I decided to call our friends with whom my wife had so recently spent those two weeks in the city. But even as I did so, another thought arose to trouble me. Suppose they might not hear the telephone ring? Their telephone, I knew, was not in the bedroom, and it would be very easy for them to sleep through its clangor. I breathed a silent prayer to God to uphold me as I stepped to our phone.

My prayer must have been answered, because after only one or two rings, they replied. I explained to them as calmly as I could what we planned. And though I was very near panic myself, I knew that I must

## I Met God

not upset my wife at any cost. As she was listening to my conversation, I had to remain composed--no matter what inner turmoil seethed within me.

And as I spoke I again prayed silently. This time I asked the Lord to impress them to meet us. But even as I asked Him to grant me this favor, I realized how easy it would be for them to gain the impression that there was no actual emergency involved. Hadn't the doctor made plain that same day that there was nothing to worry about? Wouldn't it be nothing more or less than reasonable of them to think that we were just being unduly excited? But I continued to pray nevertheless, and again God heard me; for my friends, without any prompting from me, said they were leaving right away to meet us!

Then before starting out, I had another thought. I went over and awakened the native minister and asked him if he would accompany us. This fine Christian gentleman readily consented, and soon was ready for the road. As it was night, all the garages were closed. We couldn't hope for help in that direction. Hence I prayed again that our weak tires would hold out long enough at least to enable us to reach our friends.

And, friend, I want to tell you right now that this prayer too was answered. We had no tire trouble of any kind during our long, hazardous ride. But there were many other troubles of a different nature in store. Pray and try as I would, a chilling foreboding of what lay ahead, took hold of me and would not dispel itself. The way ahead seemed freighted with unseen dangers. And worst of all, my knowledge of even elementary treatment of maternity cases such as this, was absolutely nil!

My wife and I had gone just a short distance when my wife complained of severe pain. She then said her arms seemed to want to rise above her head. A new and growing feeling of frustration and helplessness swept over me at this new development. But taking her two hands in one of mine, I did my best to comfort her as I guided our puffing little car over that winding, tropical road. I started to pray again. O, how I prayed! I asked the Lord to keep my wife safely until we arrived at our destination and the home of our friends. I didn't know what was going to happen, but my faith in the Lord was supreme. Somehow or other He would see us through our tribulation!

And although this heart cry too was eventually answered, it was not until I had been put to a further severe test of my faith. Try as I might I could not keep my mind off that slow-leaking tire and its frail brethren, because none of them were at all what you might term robust. And as pain continued to wrack my wife, I was myself nearly distraught with fear and apprehension.

At last, after what seemed an interminable time, we arrived at a little gas station just about fifteen miles from our ultimate destination. By now my dear wife's pain had become nigh insupportable. Her hands shot up straight above her head even although she and I both tried vainly to control them. Glancing into her glazed, unseeing eyes, I realized that she no longer knew or cared where she was. She had experienced a slight convulsion. Well, my terror mounted. I urged the native minister to go to any nearby house and try to find a telephone so we could contact our friends. Meanwhile I drove our car alongside the gas pumps of the darkened station, and then did what little I could to comfort my suffering wife.

Soon I discovered that my ministerial friend was running into trouble of his own. The occupants of the first home he tried would not let him in, for they thought, not unreasonably I must admit, that his excuse of telephoning at that early morning hour was but one flimsy pretext to mask some ugly and sinister purpose. He tried a second home and got no response at all from those obviously frightened inmates. He returned to the car discouraged by his failure.

But just at that moment our friends drove into the gas station. I don't believe I was ever happier to see anyone in my life than I was at that moment! Without a word, I picked my wife up bodily and placed her

## I Met God

in the rear seat of my friends' car. I then instructed the native preacher to follow in our car. In a matter of minutes we were speeding on our way to the city and medical aid. My suffering wife had meanwhile lapsed into semi-consciousness.

Instead of going directly to the doctor's home, my friends headed toward their own. They explained that they had already called the physician. And sure enough, we had no more than gotten my wife in bed than he appeared.

But now another complication arose. The doctor was plainly irritated at being aroused at such an unearthly hour. No doubt he had had a hard day and had been rudely aroused from a well-earned, sound sleep.

As he strode in he intoned brusquely, after a cursory examination of my wife, that there had been absolutely no reason to call him before morning. It was very evident that he had no intention of doing anything before then. As I saw that he was preparing to leave, I became frantic. I pled most fervently that my Lord would induce the doctor to stay. And just like that, he suddenly announced that perhaps he had better stay a while. A few minutes later he announced that labor had begun.

It was plain that the physician was overtired, irritable, and in no mood to waste a bit more time than absolutely necessary. He re-examined my wife and then announced it would be impossible for the child to be born normally. He said instruments would be necessary to make the delivery possible.

When I heard those dreadful words, I decided it was high time to take my troubles to the Great Physician Who fails never, for He was not weary or irritable. He never sleeps or disregards the pleas of the helpless or suffering. And so once again, I lifted up to Him my weary heart in silent, earnest prayer. I asked simply that our child might be born normally, if it were His will.

I had always had an innate horror of being around sick or ailing people. The sight of blood made me faint. But now, as the doctor prepared his instruments by sterilizing them, I asked the Great Physician to step in and help us in our desperate plight. I asked Him to give me the orders. And I would be His faithful attendant, I promised, ready to do what He commanded. I asked the doctor if I might stand by my wife's side for a few moments just before he began to use the instruments. Then with what I felt was a somewhat supercilious smile and an impatient gesture, he gave his reluctant consent. As I held the limp, moist, cold hand of my, by now, almost unconscious helpmeet, I breathed up another silent prayer to God. A few moments later the physician told me that the baby was being born normally!

Yes, our child, Juanita, was born normally, and my wife still speaks of her with a smile as "my husband's baby." I'm sure that she really remembers very little of what happened on that never-to-be-forgotten night. But, oh, it is one I assure you I will never forget! And no one can ever convince me that God Himself did not supervise the entire proceedings from start to finish!

You may wonder, friend, why I tell you of such a personal, intimate event in our lives. I assure you it is not from any desire to present the bizarre or sensational, but rather to help you realize that God does answer prayer when we ask humbly and contritely for His never-failing aid. Try it yourself, friend, and you will see that I am right. I know that series of answered prayers on the night I have just recounted, evoked a stream of grateful praise from my wife and myself. With the Psalmist of old we found ourselves singing: "Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!"

1. Psalm 107:8.

I Met God

### **My Physician**

I looked up at the midnight hour  
With tears of deep distress;  
Then Jesus came in loving power,  
Clad in physician's dress.

Professional, and yet as Friend,  
He took complete control  
The healing hour to superintend,  
And say, "Thou art made whole,"  
g.a.c.

## **7: I Met God at Death's Door**

"I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." Heb. 13:5

AS I recounted in the preceding chapter, the birth of our baby girl, Juanita, brought my wife and me supreme joy and happiness. But with it came an additional, severe test of my faith, As I related in the story of my child's birth, my wife suffered a minor convulsion prior to giving birth. But following it, convulsions of a much more deadly nature began to wrack her body. "She's dead," I whispered to the lady who was assisting the doctor in delivering our child. I could tell from the worried look on the face of this good lady that she too shared my belief. But one could also see that she was trying hard to appear calm and reassuring. I felt so very helpless and impotent as I watched my wife's body jerking, pulling and writhing as the succeeding spasms overcame her. Scarcely did she begin to recover from one terrible upheaval than it was followed by another equally or even more violent than the one that had preceded it--or at least so it seemed to my overtired, overwrought imagination. And so, until the gray cheerless dawn broke, my wife continued almost unabatedly to fight with the Grim Reaper.

The doctor's initial attitude of tired indifference had, I saw, been replaced by a genuine concern for his patient.

"Mr. Coon," he said at last, when it appeared that my wife could not much longer maintain the unequal struggle in which she was engaged, "I've done every thing I can for your wife. I'm afraid she is either going to die, or, if she does manage to survive, her mind will be permanently affected. I'm sorry to have to tell you this, but you might as well be prepared for the worst!"

I nodded mutely at his words, only half conscious of what he was saying. For hours I had been acutely aware of the fact that I was face to face with the presence of death itself. It just didn't seem possible that anyone could survive those body-and-soul-wracking upheavals indefinitely. But ever since my boyhood I had been taught to believe in God's power to accomplish the impossible. The Lord, I knew, had invited His creatures to "Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." 1

In my dire extremity there then occurred one of those unforgettable, and beautiful manifestations of God's power that serve to revive man's wavering, unstable faith in Him. The kind minister in whose home we were staying, sent a message to the clergymen in that city connected with our mission, telling them of our great need for their prayers. And in what seemed an incredibly short time, these devoted men of God were filing quietly into the adjoining room of the one where my wife lay so near death's door.

## I Met God

Though few words were spoken, the warm, firm handclasps spoke much more eloquently than could any mere words.

When all had gathered, we fell to our knees and began to pray earnestly and fervently. Before long I had the undefinable, but definite, assurance that we were in contact with Heaven.

I am convinced that Jesus Himself was present in that home with His unfailing healing power.

As we prayed, we tried hard to do so in the proper spirit of humility and submission which characterized the Lord's appeal to His Father as He knelt in the Garden of Gethsemane: "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." 2

I knew that the Bible was very clear in stating that many times our prayers remain unanswered because the requests we make are selfish, or perhaps because to grant them would actually be harmful to us. As the Apostle James puts it: "Ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." 3 I knew that if my wife's life was to be spared it would be because it was God's will that it be so.

At last our prayer session ended, and as we arose from our knees, my wife had her last convulsion. She has never had one since that time. It has now been many years since the dramatic scene of that never-to-be-forgotten night on that faraway island, took place.

When she had recovered her health, my wife told me that she remembered many of the events that took place prior to our child's birth, but that the events of that terrible night when the angel of death hovered so near, are almost totally blacked-out of her memory. This merely demonstrates to me anew God's loving compassion for mankind. So great is His love and mercy for us that He humanely blots from our minds the remembrance of such moments of travail, of suffering.

Friend, when a day of trouble comes your way, will you too seek God's omnipotent power, rather than to rely on man's weakness and fallibility? I would humbly suggest that you meet God in earnest prayer at such times. If yours is a prayer of surrender and complete faith in His goodness, be very sure He will answer you. And He will do so, not because you are righteous or deserving of it, but because He is good, delighting in granting His mercy and love to errant man for whom His beloved Son, Jesus, died. Make no mistake about it, friend, God is a never-failing, true companion in good times and bad, if we will but put our entire trust and confidence in

Him, and surrender our wills completely to His. If He is not now your dearest Friend, I invite you to accept Him as such today.

1. Psalm 50:15,
2. Matthew 26:39.
3. James 4:3.

### **Life and Death**

Death stood before our bedroom door;  
He held the latchstring there.  
A grin of victory he wore;  
I went to God in prayer.

Life entered, radiant as the day;  
But death appeared concerned.  
He fled the place in deep dismay;  
And never has returned. g.a.c.

## 8: I Met God with an Infidel

Faith lights the way in the darkest hour.

NOW HOW would anyone start proving there is a God? Proving that the Bible is His inspired word?" The young infidel obviously found it difficult to repress a supercilious sneer as he asked the question. Quite clearly he was one of those so-called "liberal" and "modern" thinkers we hear so much about nowadays. And just as evidently he considered that he was superior to his fellow-men because he belonged to than company of a select, supposedly intellectual group who considered it old-fashioned, out-moded and passé to believe in God or in the supreme sacrifice made by His Son at Calvary.

I could have answered him with one concise, biting quotation from the Book he professed to scorn, to the effect that, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." However to have done so would have accomplished nothing, and might have served to completely alienate a misguided, misled soul who might yet be won over to God's kingdom.

We were just concluding a "Spiritual Emphasis" week with our closing service but two days distant, and here was a direct challenge that simply could not be ignored!

As I prepared to answer the young infidel's question, I was silently praying to God, asking Him to fulfill two of His sure promises. The first was His promise of wisdom as it is recorded in James 1:5-8. The second was the promise to win the soul of this backslidden one who had come to see us. You will find that in I John 5:16.

I very humbly requested God to fulfill these promises to me before I began to speak, and then I told God that I believed He would grant them to me.

I began by questioning him about his childhood. He quite frankly admitted to having been reared in a Christian home, where he thought the folk were the old-fashioned type who believed in all those Bible fables. But he'd learned too much ever to be that naive!

Then there came to my mind another comforting assurance God has given us: "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." 2

Other promises of God's also sprang to mind. As Jesus expressed it: "What things so-ever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." The inspired Apostle Paul implied the same thing when he wrote: "With thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." 4

In my secret prayer for help and guidance to help this young man I used a time-tested formula I always employ. I call it the "ABC's" of answered prayer. "A" stands for "ask" "B" for "believe," and "C" for the "claiming" of God's fulfillment of what He has promised. This format makes it easy to remember.

At last I began to speak. First I wanted to show God's existence in the undeniable evidence presented on all sides by His perfect works of nature. I pointed out that such surpassing beauty, symmetry and orderly design could not possibly "just happen." Behind it all there had to be the Master Architect and Planner to Whom all things are possible.

I saw at once that my presentation had made a slight impression at least. Then I passed on to the great Biblical prophecies. I told the young man that there are approximately one thousand, three hundred and thirty-five prophecies contained in the Holy Bible, and that of these more than a thousand have already been unerringly fulfilled to their most minute details. I pointed out also that not one of these wonderful prophecies, many of them made hundreds of years before the events they foretold actually took place, had failed to transpire right on time and in the precise manner predicted.

## I Met God

I explained that no other book ever written could even approach this record. Again I could see that the young man was impressed even though it might be largely against his will, particularly when I cited one or two specific and outstanding Bible prophecies that had come to pass even as foretold hundreds of years before. I cited the frequent references in the Old Testament to Christ's birth, His ministry on earth and to His death on the cross; events that were then a thousand or more years in the future, and how these events were described by the ancient prophets right down to the most minute detail. I showed him how we could not explain how these early prophets could possibly foretell such details as the manner in which Christ was to be betrayed and the manner of His death, unless they were given these holy men under inspiration from God. I admitted that human beings can occasionally guess correctly as to future events, but that no man can continue to predict accurately what will happen a few years or even a few months hence. And certainly no human being, I suggested, was capable of forecasting future happening in the minute detail of the Biblical prophets.

I could see that by now the young unbeliever was plainly wavering. I then continued with a third great evidence of God's existence. This was one, I told him, that came within the realm of my own personal experience. This declares God's power and ability to completely transform the sinner's life. I have seen confirmed alcoholics, doomed otherwise to the living death of alcoholism, and condemned by their sinful appetite to a life of misery and suffering, become sober, useful citizens and workers for God. I have seen fallen, sinful women forsake their unworthy existence and become respectable, God-fearing members of the community. I have seen thieves and miscreants forsake their evil ways and make full restitution for their past mistakes. All of these miracles, as the world would term them, could never have come about but through the transforming, unmerited grace of God working through His Son Jesus.

God answered my earnest plea for this young man. That night he was one of the first to kneel at the altar and make the full surrender of self to Christ.

- 1 . Psalm 14:1.
2. Isaiah 55:11 .
3. Mark 11:24.
4. Philippians 4:6.

### **There is a God**

As on the dampened sands I see  
Fresh footprints running clear,  
I ask not, for I understand  
That someone else is near

So when I see a masterpiece  
Of rare and quaint design,  
My doubts as to the author cease,  
There is a mastermind.

The skies, the Book, the life below,  
Show footprints where He trod;  
And by each masterpiece I know  
The Mastermind is God. g.a.c.

## 9: I Met God and Proved Him.

I WAS TIRED--tired both mentally and physically. It had become a burden even to preach, and I found that I could barely drag myself to the series of evangelistic meetings we were conducting. Obviously, something was wrong--badly wrong with me. As I lay in bed one night, so utterly dog-tired and spent that I felt like a wrung-out dish rag, I calmly and carefully studied my situation. I knew that the continuing years of strenuous evangelistic work had taken their inevitable toll. My body was tired, my nerves frayed to a ragged, raw edge. All the symptoms would indicate to most people that they needed a complete rest and a respite from the work they had been doing. But I knew what I needed was good wholesome exercise in God's great outdoors, in the pure, fresh air He has given us as one of His greatest blessings.

Once I had reached this conclusion, I immediately cast about for the best means available to make it a reality. To give up my beloved evangelical work--the priceless privilege of bringing souls to God--was unthinkable, but I must get exercise to tone up my flabby muscles and restore my flagging energies.

As I pondered deeply on this perplexing problem, a voice seemed to speak to my soul as it so often has in the crises of my life that have confronted me. The voice instructed me to secure some rundown house and by putting it back in shape by my own efforts, I would also get the exercise and mental relaxation I needed so badly.

There was only one real objection I could see to this advice. I had just about twenty-five dollars I could truthfully call my own. This amount, I knew, wouldn't cover even a down payment on a home--even of a run-down house--and much less enable me to purchase it, or buy the materials to make necessary repairs.

But as though in answer to my unspoken objection, the voice continued: "Drive around the city. Find a place you like. I will give it to you. Then prove Me. See if I will not give you what you need. You choose the place. Then come to Me and--'ask, and it shall be given you.'" 1

I realized that in my depleted condition, my overwrought nerves might be playing tricks on me, yet the impression I received was so strong that I was sure it came from the Lord. I determined, as I have so often in my life, to follow the instructions I had received to the letter. I listed all the basic requirements of the property I was about to seek. First, it must be somewhere close to the school our children attended. Second it must be located in a fairly good neighborhood where it would present a good appearance when I had finished renovating it.

I started looking early next morning, and just two blocks from our children's school, my search ended. It was a house, badly run-down and in need of repair, located on a quiet street. The grounds were spacious but untended and full of weeds. The garage had blown down and lay sprawled grotesquely near the weed-choked driveway. The shrubbery--such of it that still remained--was shrunken and woe-be-gone. Here, obviously, was the place I sought, one that presented a definite challenge to whatever skill and energy I could muster.

But again I ran into a snag. The place was not for sale. At least there was no "for sale" sign visible anywhere about the premises. Yet I was loathe to think that I had found just the kind of place I was looking for and had been instructed to seek, and that I would then be thwarted in this manner. For the next few days I drove out to the old house every morning, parked my car and mentally reviewed the situation, meanwhile wracking my brains for some way out of the dilemma that confronted me. It was while I was doing this one day that I recalled a particularly appropriate promise the Lord had made that seemed to answer my problem:

## I Met God

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." 2

I knew that for every promise, contained in the Bible, there were very definite conditions. I knew also that for any one to be so presumptuous as to Claim any of God's promises without first fulfilling the plain conditions specified, was a gratuitous insult to Him.

So it was in the matter of tithes. God doesn't need our money or anything we have, because if we will only stop and think for a moment, we will realize that all the world and everything in it belongs to Him. But as proof of our faith and trust in Him, He asks us to return a tenth of our possessions to Him. Further, He says that anyone who will do this will receive untold blessings. The Scriptures plainly declare that God is no respecter of persons. And so, regardless of our station in life--be it rich or poor; whether we are Jew or Gentile; white, or black, or brown--our honest tithe is pleasing in His sight.

From my earliest childhood I had become aware that my father and mother religiously observed this commandment of God, and as a result, many wonderful and almost miraculous blessings were bestowed upon our family. In fact, they were real miracles.

As I sat in my car that morning it seemed almost as though I was arguing with the Lord, sacrilegious as that may sound. I was telling Him that the place had no "for sale" sign on it, and that therefore I might as well give up any idea of purchasing it.

But even as I argued mentally, the impression continued strong that I should persist. At last I jumped out of the car and ran up to the front door. A middle-aged lady answered my knock, and when I asked if their place was for sale, she seemed to ponder the question before answering. She finally replied that she and her husband had considered selling it, but that as yet it had not been put on the market. This sounded hopeful. When she added that her husband had told her just the night before that they must sell at once, my heart leaped within me.

She then told me where her husband worked. I lost no time in reaching there, and within a matter of mere minutes I was talking to him. He offered me his equity in the property for seventy-five dollars in cash, providing that I was willing to assume the present mortgage held. I accepted his offer right there, although I was only too fully aware of the fact that I had only twenty-five dollars to my name. I felt that if the Lord had carried me this far, He would assuredly see me all the way through. But I needed fifty dollars right away.

But I still had my mind set resolutely on that wonderful promise of Malachi 3:10. I simply could not ignore such a definite, unequivocal assertion from God to sinful men if they will but fulfill the reasonable conditions that make its fulfillment possible. When I arrived home I fell on my knees again and asked God to fully fulfill His wonderful promise.

That very same night the answer came to me, and in a most marvelous manner. When I went to the evangelistic tent that evening, an usher told me a gentleman wished to speak to me at once. Such requests were not at all unusual. However, when a stranger approached me in the rear of the rostrum, I was hardly prepared for what then transpired. He was a gray-haired, somewhat distinguished-looking man of maybe sixty or thereabout, with a very earnest, open countenance. He handed me a long envelope, saying, "I believe you need this." And without any further words, he left the envelope with me. As I glanced at it, he seized the opportunity and slipped off into the crowd. We did not then know this stranger's name, but later learned.

I retired to a comparatively quiet spot and opened the envelope. In it was a fifty-dollar bill! No word accompanied it--just the fifty dollars I needed to complete the transaction I was negotiating!

## I Met God

And still we can find some professed Christians who, I am sorry to say, doubt God's promises and His ability, or willingness to fulfill them!

Friend, if there is one thing above all else you can put your implicit faith and confidence in, it is the sure promises of God. But don't take my word for it--just try it for yourself and you will be fully convinced! God wants all to prove Him just so that He can renew our faith and trust in Him. So do it today without loss of time!

1. Matthew 7:7.

2. Malachi 3:10.

### **Prove Me**

Prove Me in the midnight darkness,  
Prove Me in the shining light;  
Take My promise, full of sweetness,  
It will fill you with delight.

Though misfortunes oft beset you,  
They will flee at My command;  
Prove Me, I will not forget you,  
I will hold you in My hand.

Naught of evil can alarm you;  
Prove Me, I will see you through.  
All the demons cannot harm you,  
For to you I will be true. g.a.c.

### **The Place of Prayer**

The safest place the place of prayer  
Makes Satan tremble when he sees  
The weakest saint upon his knees.  
Temptation's whisper cannot snare  
The soul that waits at the place of prayer.

And there is peace. This place of prayer  
Commands our fears and worries cease,  
While Jesus brings us sweet release,  
'Tis God Himself who meets man there  
With perfect peace, at the place of prayer.

O, power waits at the place of prayer.  
In weakness, souls may find a strength;  
Through faith the foe must flee at length.  
Then fighting souls, freed from despair,  
Find power waits at the place of prayer. g.a.c.

## 10: I Met God and Trusted Him

I HAD FOUND a home in what you might wish to say was a miraculous way. Yes, it was a miracle all right, but I knew that to God all things are possible. I had also been provided with the money necessary to take it over in a similarly "miraculous" manner.

But now I discovered that all was not clear sailing ahead. I was amazed to find that I had not taken over just one, but two mortgages! I was not able to meet the monthly payments required for the two of them. It was then that I realized the former owner's willingness to let the property go had not been as illogical as it first seemed.

At first, I am very free to admit, this situation made me panicky. But then I realized that to prove the Lord occasionally is not enough. The Scriptures clearly enjoin us to "trust . . . in the Lord for ever."<sup>1</sup>

Yes, one of the great and lasting lessons the true Christian must learn is that of abiding trust in God. And a good way, I have learned, to develop and nurture this necessary faith is by recounting what the Lord has done for us in the past. When I did so I no longer doubted but that God would take care of this latest problem as He had done with all the others in my life.

I therefore took my case to the Lord in pleading, humble prayer. Then, and not until then, did I venture to call on the bank which held one of the mortgages on our newly-acquired property. The information that awaited me there gave me further evidence of God's power in our lives. They said that they would be willing to absorb the second mortgage, consolidating these two into one. And not only that, they would also extend the payment period so that I could easily make the necessary monthly payments!

It was like a dream! I had blundered into my predicament through my own inexperience in such financial matters. But even so, it proved to me again, what I already knew so well, that God will guide and care for those who truly love Him. As the Scriptures put it: "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is." <sup>2</sup> And Jesus Himself made very clear on more than one occasion, the truth that "the scripture cannot be broken."<sup>3</sup>

But I still required further aid from the Lord if my project was to be a success. I had no money to purchase the necessary building materials, lighting and plumbing fixtures and many other items I would need to renovate the place.

Again I sought the Lord on my knees, then I went to a lumber company nearby and presented my problem to them very frankly. I told them I didn't have at the moment the needed cash to do the work I wanted done. They listened sympathetically and understandingly to my story. And then without hesitation they offered the solution to my enigma. They promised to send a mortgage man over to survey the property. They assured me that he would grant a new loan which would cover my obligation to them, and also include in it my existing mortgage to the bank.

The lumber company had an enviable reputation for honesty and trustworthiness in the community, so I had little worry that they would keep their word to me. And I found that when I had finished putting the house and the yard in good shape some time later, that my trust in them was well-placed. They did exactly as they had promised me they would.

Many other interesting experiences I had while working on that house, garage, and yard, in my spare time. My evangelistic program was heavy, but the exercise and freedom from nervous tension that physical exertion gave me, proved just the therapeutic agent I had sought so long in vain.

But I'd like to say right here that by no means all of the exercise I enjoyed came from my actual work on the place. It may sound a little ridiculous to some, but much of the exercise came from the seemingly

## I Met God

simple act of changing from work clothes to my business suit, and vice versa. Day after day, I would put on my overalls, only to receive a call from some sick, bewildered person who needed guidance. I would change back into my business suit, hurriedly, make the call, and then change back to my overalls again. Then, often in a space of just thirty minutes sometimes, I would get another call for help of some kind or other. Once more I would change and go through the same routine. To some, such a repeated procedure would have been irritating and upsetting to an intolerable degree. But I was ever-mindful of the fact that my duty to God came ahead of everything else in my life, and that I must serve Him before I worked for my own benefit.

It was during this time I was working on the house that I was also in the midst of a strenuous series of tent meetings. At the end of twelve weeks we had baptized more than a hundred souls, and -the pressures on me were heavy. But I continued to keep my health. More important, my trust in the Lord was daily strengthened. My faith had by now become almost childlike in its simplicity. I felt myself utterly dependent upon the Lord for every decision I made. I knew more than ever that we can take God at His word without a question. I recalled the words of Jesus on the necessity for childlike receiving of God's promises as He said: "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."<sup>4</sup>

I know that God is lovingly interested in our daily problems and is ever ready to help us if we will but ask Him. He Who counts the very hairs of our heads will not leave us to face our difficulties and perplexities alone. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"<sup>5</sup>

"Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." <sup>6</sup>

Friend, we can make no mistake when we place our trust and confidence fully in the Lord. He will never fail us even although our earthly friends, and even our own families desert us. He is indeed the "Rock of Ages" in this wicked old, troubled, turbulent, uncertain world in which we live today.

1. Isaiah 2 6:4.
2. Jeremiah 17:7.
3. John 14:35.
4. Matthew 18:3.
5. Romans 8:32
6. 1 Peter 5:7.

### Credit

How do I know if his credit is good?  
I asked at the bank with a smile.  
The teller replied, "He deals with us."  
And then he brought out his file.

And looking on, bewildered, I saw  
His credit. His record revealed  
The way that man kept his word:  
No part was left concealed.

I mused to myself, if man trusts man  
Because he keeps his word,  
Why should I doubt my dearest Friend?  
Henceforth I will trust my Lord. g.a.c.

## 11: I Met God in a Seed

"And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying,  
This is the way, walk ye in it." Isaiah 30:21

DADDY, WE have been home two weeks already and we still haven't found work. What are we going to do?" Our teenage daughter, Juanita, was serious and sadly perplexed, I could easily see, by what must seem to her an insurmountable obstacle that lay in her path and that of her girl-friend who was with her. Both had been working away from home for the summer and had come back home in the belief that they could find employment nearer at hand. But although they both searched diligently and faithfully, they had met continued failure.

As I looked at the sober, serious faces of the two youngsters standing before me, I perceived anew the childlike, unquestioning faith that the young put in their parents. In times of trouble, their first thought is of Mom or Dad, and they quickly learn from past experience that Dad or Mom will never let them down. What a parallel here between earthly parents and their children and our heavenly Father and His errant ones! O, that more of us would trust Him with this same childlike, unquestioning faith!

"Come here, girls," I said cheerily. "I know just how you can find work, or solve any other trouble you may have! Let me tell you all about it," I invited as I took up the Bible and opened it. I knew that these girls, like all of us, were destined to encounter many, many more perplexing problems in life. Also that they must learn the only way to meet them, just as I had done from my parents.

As the two concerned girls sat down, somewhat puzzled, I began reading from Psalm 32:8: "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye."

"Now, girls," I remarked when I had finished reading, "we are going to claim that promise. We are going to do it on our knees right now, in prayer," I continued, as they looked at me obviously puzzled. "We must be willing for God to lead us," I went on, "and the verse that I am about to read will explain this. It says: 'Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.'<sup>1</sup> In other words, girls, we must never tell God how to lead us. We must instead yield our wills entirely to His. We find certain very definite conditions attached to every promise given in God's Holy Bible. So not until we fulfill these conditions can we expect the fulfillment of our prayers."

Now, I'll admit very frankly that this is an eternal truth that escaped me for some years. I had read Jesus' words that say, "The seed is the word of God,"<sup>2</sup>. But I had not fully comprehended the meaning contained in them.

"Now, botanists will tell us that an apple seed is an embryonic apple tree. Likewise, an acorn is potentially a great oak. And, in a similar way, nature is the key to the Word of God. Therefore, in a promise for guidance, God is actually offering us this wonderful gift of divine guidance--God's gift is in the promise."

These girls, I could quite plainly see, were now paying close attention to me. I opened another wonderful book entitled Education, and turning to page 253, I read: "As surely as the oak is in the acorn, so surely is the gift of God in His promise. If we receive the promise, we have the gift." Also, "Whatever gift He promises, is in the promise itself."

"So you see, girls," I continued, "the Bible is much more than a mere storehouse of information. It is a series of quotes from life itself. It contains many divine promises for mankind and each one of these promises transforms the life of Christ into channels of guidance. Others are turned into channels of forgiveness. Still other promises, into channels of healing. A simple example of how it can accomplish

## I Met God

this is contained in that electric light bulb over there. When we press the light switch, the current flows into the bulb and is then transformed into light. Just so, that same electricity may become heat in the electric heater, or cold in the refrigerator unit. But although the ultimate form of energy is different, the primary source--the electricity--is the same." The two girls nodded solemnly as I concluded, a new light of understanding on their faces.

"And now, girls, let us kneel and reverently ask God to provide the seed of trust and faith that we need so badly. God's Holy Spirit will water and nurture it, and the presence of Jesus will give it warmth and life. Thus will the good seed germinate in our hearts, and bear the fruit of eternal life."

As we prayed, we asked God to send His promised gift of guidance. Then we all thanked God that we had already received this gift. As we arose from our knees, I suggested that the girls go out and claim the employment they had just been assured they would find.

The two left a few minutes later, and within a mere matter of hours both had found pleasant, permanent employment. We had found God in a seed!

1. Psalm 3 2:9.

2. Luke 8:11 .

### In a Seed

I wondered how God's holy Word  
The promised gifts contain;  
Until I saw an acorn small  
Out in the dew and rain

A tiny seed with mystery  
Wrapped so securely there--  
Like trunk and root and tender leaf--  
As botanists declare

You need a magnifying glass  
To bring it to your view:  
A tree is in that precious seed  
Awaiting sun and dew.

Then aching soul, God's holy Word  
Enfolds the blessing penned;  
Just take a promise—there the gift  
Is stored by Christ your friend. g.a.c.

## 12: I Met God and Purchased a Church

THE CHURCH was only some seventy feet from my mother's home. It was a white, frame structure with a big belfry. It had been there a long, long time--long before I was born; but to me, as well as my parents, it contained many beautiful, sacred memories. But now the church was going to have to go. Because of its dwindling congregation and for some other related reasons, it was soon going to be dismantled, piece by piece, and rebuilt in a city some seventy miles away.

## I Met God

It saddened me to learn of this, because I knew that this was no ordinary church. It had been erected, not only as a place to worship God, but as a memorial to three very precious things in our own lives. First, it was a memorial to the Bible and its precious promises; second, it served as a visible, concrete reminder to all of us in that community that religious liberty is still a living, vital force in this land of ours. Third, and undoubtedly the most important, the time-worn but stately edifice served to remind us constantly of the imminence of the most glorious, earth-shaking future event this world has ever yet witnessed--the second coming of Jesus Christ.

As a child I heard from my parents, portions of the old church's history. Its members had formerly worshiped in another building, but because of religious bigotry and intolerance there, they had forcibly been made to leave their church at gun point. But like the sturdy, God-fearing pioneers of early America, they too refused to surrender their inalienable right to worship God as they might wish. Instead, they prayed fervently and often for a church of their own where they might enjoy complete freedom to worship according to the dictates of their own conscience.

Their prayers were granted, and thus the church was finished—a lasting memorial to the religious liberty they had been denied in their old meeting place. Anyone was welcome to enter its portals and worship. No Bible-accepting believer was ever turned away; the only requirement for services held within its walls being a belief in God and the supreme sacrifice of His Son Jesus.

Before long, the new church had won the admiration and respect of most of the community. It grew and prospered while older, established churches waned in their influence. Many young men got their start there in the Lord's work and later were powerful preachers and soul-winners for Him in other fields. Later, a day school was erected alongside of the church, and the church members began increasingly to send their children there for a Christian education.

But soon a problem arose. As these children finished their education in the church day school, it became necessary to continue their education elsewhere, for the fact that there was no Christian college or institution of higher learning located in the vicinity. They drifted off to other fields, and many did not return. Meanwhile, many of the older pioneers who had founded the church and contributed so much to its growth and progress, were passing on. Inevitably, the day came when it was necessary to disband the congregation. With no congregation to use it, it was decided reluctantly to move the church to a more thriving and promising locale.

Through what I now regard as a plan of Providence, I happened to spend a few days with my mother just about the time this momentous decision had been reached. She was, of course, a very much saddened woman as she told me of what was about to transpire, and more than once I noticed her tear-filled eyes as she looked through her living room window at the church next door.

She and Father had been among the most devout and faithful supporters and adherents from the first. They had toiled and sacrificed with no idea of reward, and had given unstintingly of their time and hard cash to keep that church as a living symbol in the community.

One Sabbath morning, Mother carried out an old album. It recorded events in the church's history that dated back to the 1880's.

"Mother, did they actually turn grandfather and all the other church members out at the point of a gun?" I asked her incredulously, as I thumbed thoughtfully through the album's yellowed pages.

"Yes, indeed they did, son!" Mother replied earnestly. "They even went so far as to station men with shot guns in the vestibule of the old church to keep all who believed in Christ's second coming from taking part in the services. And that, son, is exactly why we came here and built the old church next door," she ended with moist eyes.

## I Met God

My heart was touched to the quick. I thought to myself: "Something has to be done to preserve this house of the Lord. If it were just like other churches, I might perhaps agree that it had outlived its usefulness when its congregation had moved on. But this church is much more than that. It was built to house a congregation, to be sure, but it's much more than that. It stands as a worthy memorial to the religious liberty that is such an integral and vital part of this country. And even more important, it serves as a constant reminder for all of us to eagerly anticipate, and diligently prepare for that glad day soon to dawn when Jesus comes to claim His faithful ones of all ages.

"It just cannot be allowed to go!" I said aloud, starting at the sound of my own voice. "It's a sacred thing that must stay where it is!"

The next day I went to the church council and made a suggestion. I told them that if God wished us to keep our old home church, He would help them find another structure in their community. And I promised them if they found such a building within a month, I would pay them all the money they had expended for our old church.

They were, of course, skeptical. They pointed out that it would require three miracles to accomplish what I proposed, particularly in such a short time. But I told them that I wasn't bothered about that. I reminded them that God had a way of doing the impossible when it was in answer to trusting, believing prayer.

The council members then brought to view another dismaying fact. They had already searched surrounding areas very thoroughly for an appropriate building for their church, and failed completely in finding one. It just was not possible, they pointed out, for anyone to come along and find in thirty days what they had searched for so long in vain.

I listened to the arguments patiently, by no means dismayed by the seeming cogency of the points they enumerated one by one. Everything they said merely served to increase my faith in the Lord and His eternal goodness to those who try earnestly to do His will. I welcomed one more chance to prove God's might through another miracle of faith which would preserve this house of worship. And I said as much to the council members. At last, somewhat reluctantly, they agreed to grant me the month's time I asked.

Our session broke up, after we had prayed together. The members, one by one, asked God to give them a building for worship that would preclude the necessity of tearing down the old church.

And as we arose from our knees, one of the council members suddenly said that it had just come to his mind that there was a suitable building they had overlooked which might prove to be just what they wanted. I could hardly help smiling on the inside at what I knew was already a manifestation of God's power working through man.

Just three days later I was called by long-distance telephone. It scarcely surprised me to learn that the council had found their building and that it was located nearby and ideally suited to their needs.

Later, I met the pastor and he suggested that I pay cash for the old church. I agreed, even although I was fully aware of the fact that I had no money even as I did so. But by now I had developed a firm, strong, unshakable faith in God's ability to provide. I went to a bank and explained this problem to them. They loaned me the money I needed without any question. It was just another of a series of "miracles" I have had the privilege of witnessing all through life.

The years went by, and then a little Sabbath school was started in the old church. Some of the little children who attended had never even heard of Jesus and His wonderful love for them. But soon they

## I Met God

were listening to the same old, old story that is ever new and lustrous, and which I myself had heard so many years before as a child.

Thus was a church preserved to carry on the Lord's work in that small community and to testify to the sureness of God's promises to all His faithful. When men seek the Lord earnestly--contritely--they never seek in vain. And when we claim His promises, friend, it is far, far easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for His Word to fail!

The little church was preserved all of Mother's lifetime. As I write this narrative, both Father and Mother have passed away, in sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection through our Lord Jesus Christ, Whose honor that country church ever reflected, both through the principles taught there, and by the lives of ministers and Christian workers trained in its sanctuary and the adjoining day school.

But the miracle that dried Mother's tears and soothed her heart can never be forgotten; neither can the God Who has promised, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." 1

1 . Hebrews 12:5.

### Seek Ye First

"Seek ye first," so reads His promise,  
God's own kingdom, build it strong.  
He will add those lesser blessings  
Earthly things for which men long.

This His promise, we believe it.  
God won't fail-His word is true.  
As for us, we will receive it;  
For we know what God can do. g.a.c.

## 13: I Met God with a Drunkard

MOHAMMED, AN East Indian, was a confirmed drunkard. Or perhaps, he would more likely be called an "alcoholic." Try as he might, he just could not seem to leave his liquor alone. When he had money, which wasn't very often, he would drink whiskey or gin. But most of the time, when even pennies were hard to get, he drank cheap, benumbing, befogging wine.

As Mohammed was emerging from the wine store early one Sunday morning, bleary-eyed and sick in body and soul from the excesses of the previous night, one of our street workers handed him a card inviting him to visit our evangelistic service that evening. As Mohammed was impatient to have a drink to soothe his bejangled nerves and twitching muscles, he very readily assented to be present at the meeting, although I strongly suspect that he only did so to cut the conversation short.

At any rate, as one pictured him later, "Mohammed went on down to his dirty, squalid 'flop-house' cubicle, and there he drank the first of that particular day's potion of poisonous wine. Temporarily, he began to feel better. But almost immediately, as do almost all others of his kind, he began to worry about the next bottle. Hastily he emptied his tattered pockets and began to count out his slender remaining financial resources. Carefully and painstakingly he counted the pennies and found that he had nineteen cents left. He knew that such an amount wouldn't even buy a 'short jug', as the men on skid row call a pint of wine. But Mohammed was not unduly worried by that thought. He knew from long past experience that he could easily match that nineteen cents with a like amount from some other poor 'wino' out on the street, and thus get a 'big jug,' or a quart. Of course, he also knew that he would then have to share it with the other man, but Mohammed was very sure that he would get his full share, and

## I Met God

very possibly a bit more, from such a transaction. Then of course, there was always another alternative. He could get out on the street and 'bum' or 'panhandle' the necessary thirty-one cents he needed to buy a 'big jug.' This was more than a little hazardous as the cops were always on the look-out for this type of illegal activity. But, he concluded, he would take this chance because then he would have the bottle all to himself and could drink it unhurriedly and without interference in his untidy, evil-smelling room."

Mohammed was almost immediately successful in the execution of his second plan--so successful in fact that when the time for the evening's evangelistic services came around, Mohammed was in a thoroughly stupefied, sodden condition. But to my vast surprise, when I learned his story later, he made his appearance. The song service had just begun when he came dubiously and uncertainly into the tabernacle. One of the ushers, noting his condition, hastily showed him to a rear bench. I can still remember the song we were singing when this errant, sinful creation of God arrived on the scene. It was one of our favorite hymns. It goes like this:

"Art thou weary, art thou languid,  
Art thou sore distressed?  
'Come to me,' saith One,  
'and coming, Be at rest.' "

If anyone ever needed rest and the serenity and peace that come only from God, it was Mohammed. He needed rest for his hopeless, defeated soul and for his weary body. And I knew that if I could only induce him to ask for it, the Master has promised: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

As I talked that night, God directed my remarks to Mohammed. With deep inner satisfaction, even in his befogged condition, God's message was getting to him. He was not just hearing my voice, but was listening to another vastly more powerful, persuasive, gentle, loving voice that night--the voice of a loving Saviour. And as he listened, he heard the Master promise him full release from any and all sin, and that at once.

As he began to listen more and more intently, Mohammed heard that wonderful promise given in the Bible: "Thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins." Mohammed heard the voice of Jesus, and as did the centurion of old, he believed with the simple, trusting faith of a child. Suddenly he felt completely made whole through the transforming power of the wonderful Saviour.

When he got home that night, a sober, converted Mohammed announced to his friends and family that God had freed him from his enslaving drink habit. But Satan still struggled for control of Mohammed's soul. His associates, and even his own family, suggested that he had better break off his drinking gradually so his nervous system not suffer unduly. This, I might say, is the devil's favorite device to keep the alcoholic victim in his clutches, because for the alcoholic there can be no "tapering off"--he must cut off his drinking sharply and irrevocably as he prays for God's help.

"After all," argued these well-meaning but deluded friends, "you've been drinking for many, many years, Mohammed, and you can't expect to stop just like that over night. We beg you to go easy--take your time."

But Mohammed was adamant. He had seen the light, and heard the voice of the Master. He declared firmly that there is a God Who is able and willing to give every sinner a lasting victory over wrong habits, and his inherited tendencies to evildoing. And so Mohammed believed He would do it for him. And God surely justified Mohammed's new-found faith. Six weeks later, Mohammed had cleaned up his life and never once had relapsed into his former evil, sinful ways.

## I Met God

As he related his thrilling experience to me, Mohammed freely gave thanks to God, Whom he said had not only helped him to stop drinking, but Who had entirely removed all craving for liquor.

As time passed Mohammed continued to grow in his Christian experience. His whole soul continued to be surrendered to his Lord. Where at one time he had worked for Satan and been his tool, he now became an influence for good wherever he went. His companions, his family were astounded at the change they saw in him. And every time temptation came to him, Mohammed knew that the only sure way to defeat the devil was to get down on his knees and ask God for help through His Son Jesus.

But alas, Satan was still lurking in the background, seeking how he could yet bring about Mohammed's downfall. At last he made his master stroke. One day Mohammed met an old chum and drinking companion. The latter invited him to have a drink at a nearby bar. But Mohammed told this friend of his extraordinary victory over the drink habit. The friend, a confirmed drinker himself, was openly skeptical, and challenged Mohammed to accompany him to the bar, even although, as he said, he need not take a drink. When Mohammed hesitated, the friend suggested sneeringly that maybe Mohammed wasn't as strong as he claimed to be. Stung by his companion's ridicule, Mohammed very foolishly accepted his "dare." He went in to the bar and sat down, while his companion ordered a drink. When this arrived, his companion urged him: "Just hold this drink in your hand, sniff it for a few moments, and then tell me you don't want any. You've got to convince me, Mohammed."

Mohammed, by now becoming more and more deluded under Satan's insidious influence, did as he was told. Then when his companion went further and suggested that he take "just one little sip," Mohammed again complied. "I will just humor him to show him how strong I am," he thought.

But need I go further in this sad tale? Mohammed had met Satan on the devil's ground and he didn't stand a chance. He got started all over again in his old, sinful, destructive drinking ways. He began indeed to drink even more heavily than before because it was only when he was thoroughly drunk that he could even put from his mind the breaking of his faith with his God. He had become victorious over his besetting sin for months only because he had stayed close to God. But now he had fallen by the wayside, like so many other backsliders do, simply because he had taken his eyes off the Lord and put himself on the devil's ground. The Lord's Prayer specifically entreats against just such a thing when it says: "Lead us not into temptation." And God gives no sinner any promise of victory if he presumptuously places himself on Satan's ground.

The Bible tells us how Jesus Himself was tempted on this same point: "Cast thyself down," Satan said to Jesus: "He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone." But Jesus scornfully rejected Satan's offer, thus making clear the futility of claiming God's promises when we presumptuously follow a course to prove our own strength. Said Jesus: "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."<sup>4</sup>

He who takes the promises of God without first observing the conditions of their fulfillment is by this insulting Him. When God gives a man or woman victory over his or her sins, let him burn his old bridges behind him once and for all. Let him henceforth avoid any shadow of compromise with sin or any appearance of evil, lest he fall into Satan's snare. Otherwise he is guilty of the serious offense of tempting God. As the Psalmist so aptly puts it: "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then I shall be innocent."<sup>5</sup>

When God has freed your soul from the sins that have so long beset it, no better advice can be offered than that given in His Holy Word: "Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil."

## I Met God

1. Matthew 11:28.
2. Matthew 1:21.
3. Matthew 6:13.
4. Matthew 4:6, 7.
5. Psalm 19:13.
6. Proverbs 4:25-27.

### **14: I Met God with a Hypocrite.**

ONE NIGHT I met God at the altar with a hypocrite. But the very next day that man was dead and buried! God's love is far beyond human comprehension, but His righteous anger is also terrible and His retribution for unrepented, willful sin often swift.

I can never forget that startling evidence of His displeasure. I was conducting an evening evangelistic service on a tropical island when it happened. As I always did at such services, I issued an altar call at the conclusion of my talk. Immediately after the service, three sincere-looking young men came forward. Quietly, and with seeming earnestness, they asked for special prayer. They all expressed a wish to serve the Lord. I talked to each in turn. To all outward appearances they were humble and sincere. We knelt together in prayer.

But the next day, as I was conducting a funeral service, I noticed a crowd of people nearby, evidently attending another similar rite. When I had finished our service, several of us stepped over toward the other, eager to know which member of our friendly community had passed away, and ready to extend our sympathies to the bereaved family and friends. As we did so, some recognized me, and taking me aside, told me the tragic sequel to the story of the three young men who had come forward to the altar on the previous night. I was told that they had done so on a "dare," and in a mocking, sacrilegious way. One had jokingly dared the others to "hit the sawdust trail," as he contemptuously put it. The other two boys had promptly accepted the sacrilegious challenge, and all three had come forward in mock humility, but inwardly sneering at what they no doubt termed a lot of "foolishness." And now, less than twenty-four hours later, one of the three had died and was being buried! Like Annanias and Sapphira of old, one of the boys had met the swift, terrible fate that awaits the unrepentant hypocrite at God's hands!

The suddenness, and unexpectedness of it all stunned me. But then, I reflected further, the Scriptures very clearly warn us of the danger of trifling with our God. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Here was a startling, first-hand demonstration of the truth contained in that quotation from Holy Writ.

Of course God does not always bring such swift retribution to those who harden their hearts against Him. Because He loves all sinful mankind with an abiding, humanly incomprehensible love, He gives the sinner every possible chance to return to Him, or, as the Bible puts it: "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil."<sup>2</sup> A lesson that many sinners have not yet learned is that it is extremely dangerous to trifle with God. His love is great and all-encompassing, but His anger is also terrible, and His punishment for deliberate and flagrant sin can be swift and final.

As you probably recall, the Bible cites several instances of God's swift retribution. One of them concerns Elisha. As he came to Bethel on an occasion, the children mocked him. They tormented and taunted the aged holy man of God, saying, "Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head."<sup>3</sup> The sneering allusion

## I Met God

was to Elijah's recent ascension to heaven in contrast with Elisha's condition. Quite obviously, like many irreverent boys and girls today, they thought that they were being extremely clever in their mocking of a seemingly helpless, defenseless old man. God was looking down on that degrading scene and He was not pleased with what He saw. He sent down His terrible, swift vengeance at once. Two bears came out of the woods and destroyed about forty of the children.

Much of this same spirit of irreverence for holy things is abroad in the world today, and there can be little doubt but that it is only further evidence of Satan's growing activity as this world's history draws to a close. Many people are deluding themselves today in their belief that they can continue to do evil indefinitely without having to pay the penalty for their sinfulness. And they have been taught to think of Jesus as a meek lamb whose tolerance and sufferance are limitless.

However the Bible's description of His second coming should quickly dispel any such illusions--if these folk would just take the trouble to read it. Time after time, God's holy Word stresses the fact that Jesus will come back to judge the living and the dead. It mentions also that many will feel the full "wrath of the Lamb."<sup>4</sup> Jesus has plainly revealed that He will come to judge and execute judgment on sinners, so those who continue to ignore His warning, will have to bear the consequences of their folly. As the Bible phrases it: "God is not a man., that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?"<sup>5</sup>

So the mere fact that a man has once served the Lord but subsequently strays away from the fold, offers him no immunity from God's displeasure. Fact is, that in 1 Kings 13, we read of just such a man. He was once one who delighted in serving God and several miracles were wrought by him through God's power. But he chose to disobey God. Perhaps he himself thought it was just a small, inconsequential thing. But God thought otherwise. He sent His judgment on this man immediately. A lion met him and slew him before he could reach home.

Uzzah was another man the Bible tells us about who felt God's wrath because of his insincerity and irreverence in matters sacred to the Creator. God had previously instructed that only the Levites should be allowed to handle the sacred ark which contained the Ten Commandments. Uzzah professed real concern for the safety of the ark, but God read his heart and saw that his greatest concern was to put himself in the limelight and take away from the glory and reverence that rightfully belonged to God. His retribution was swift and sure.

But as I have already said, God is patient and long-suffering with weak and sinful mankind. He extends every possible opportunity for the errant to repent and return to Him. To each one He says: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."<sup>6</sup>

So, friend, no matter how sinful you are, or have been in the past, remember that none of us is without sin in God's perfect sight; "for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." But if we will call out in the sickness of our souls, as did the publican of old, "God be merciful to me a sinner,"<sup>6</sup> He will be ready to hear our heartfelt cry, and ready also to forgive our trespasses and lapses from righteousness. God hates sin with a consuming hatred, but He loves the sinner.

Forsake your sins, therefore, and ask His forgiveness, and it will be given you freely. That is His wonderful and abiding promise to you and to me for always.

1. Galatians 6:7.
2. Ecclesiastes 8:11.
3. 2 Kings 2: 23.

## I Met God

4. Revelation 6:16.
5. Numbers 23:19.
6. Isaiah 55:7, 8.
7. Romans 3:23.
8. Luke 18:13.

### **True Humility**

A Pharisee's pretendedness  
Can never win for man  
The Lord's "well done" at close of day.  
But a Poor Publican

Can smite his breast in penitence,  
Receiving heaven's grace;  
And justified, go to his home  
With heaven in his face. g.a.c.

## **15. I Met God With My Hands Full**

WE MET GOD when in urgent need of \$15,000. That was the minimal amount we needed to begin the construction of the new church building. So you can readily believe me when I say it was a "fight of faith," because for a long time nothing seemed less likely of accomplishment or realization. Many times I was ready to give up in utter frustration, defeat, and despair. I can say without question that it was one of the great and decisive struggles of my entire religious life. But because I clung stubbornly to God's promises, we got the money we asked for--much more than we asked for in fact, because we ended up with nearly \$30,000, or just twice as much as we prayed for! But let me tell you the story.

We had only recently organized a new church, whose membership was largely composed of college young folk who in many instances must needs support their families while getting an education. Naturally, most of them had very little extra money to spare beyond their immediate household necessities. Others in the little congregation were subsisting on missionary salaries, and these folk too found it hard to find the extra cash we needed. As I surveyed the prospects, my heart sank within me. How could we possibly hope to raise \$15,000 in such an unpromising field?

One afternoon I found myself alone at home. My wife and children were out. As it so often did during those hectic days, my mind began to dwell again upon the seeming impasse I faced as pastor of that unaffluent congregation. And the more I pondered, the blacker the outlook appeared. At last, thoroughly beaten and discouraged, I about decided to leave my charge. Perhaps, I rationalized; some younger, more vigorous man could succeed where I had failed. I was not being fair to my congregation by staying on in my post. I even went so far in the carrying out of my decision as to start toward the telephone.

But when I was not more than halfway across the room, God met me. It was just as though He spoke gently to me and asked: "Is any thing too hard for the Lord?"<sup>1</sup> I stopped dead in my tracks as that still, insistent voice talked to me. I listened intently as God extended His never-failing comfort and assurance to me. Then I turned and retraced my steps toward the chair I had so recently occupied. But instead of sitting down again, I fell on my knees, with the Bible before me. I turned to Philippians 4:19, and read there again God's glorious promise to just such an one as I: "But my God shall supply all your need

## I Met God

according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." I thought of how often I had told others of God's unfailing, sure promises. "Where is your faith?" 2 I upbraided myself. "Others you can guide, but you do not believe yourself." I had professed to believe God's Word since my earliest childhood. Now, when faith was being put to the test, I had failed. So, asking His forgiveness for my weakness, I humbly asked God to supply our needs, and then I declared that His gift was granted to me as of that moment. "We have the petitions that we desired of him."<sup>3</sup>

The Bible instructs us that we should pray "lifting up holy hands."<sup>4</sup> And so I lifted up my hands reverently to God. The thought in my heart was that of the Psalmist when he said: "Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice."<sup>5</sup>

Then I recalled anew God's promise given by His beloved Son when He said: "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do."<sup>6</sup> I knew that we have no merit in ourselves and that our prayers are unworthy in themselves. It is only when we humble ourselves in prayer and plead the merits of Jesus our Lord that our prayers are answered.

I arose from my knees filled with a new, firm determination to act out my faith and prove God's promises as I had so many times before. It was late in the afternoon, but nevertheless I went over and paid a call on some of the leaders of the church. I assured them that the \$15,000 we needed would be pledged by the end of the Sabbath, which was the following day. I am sure that some of them thought I had taken leave of my senses or that I was mocking their helplessness. Nevertheless, I was determined to go ahead in faith and complete reliance on God as my guide.

Next morning at the Sabbath services I preached a brief, seven-minute sermon. I presented our needs simply and without resorting to camouflage or subterfuge. Then I called for a response to my plea. At about five minutes after twelve that Sabbath morning my elders and myself counted \$15,000 already pledged! It seemed almost impossible to believe, but there it was in black and white! And so to the question: "Is any thing too hard for the Lord?" we found ourselves with the complete answer, which is simply: "with God all things are possible."

Now I can hear you asking, friend, "Were the pledges ever paid?" I don't blame you for asking that question, but let me assure you that the most of them were. And not only that, but in a short time after that almost twice the \$15,000 I had asked for was in the treasury--and that in cash!

Today we have a fine, representative church that stands as a lasting memorial and testimonial to answered prayer. The structure is on a beautiful and spacious lot in one of the best locations of the city. It is there, not because of anything that man did to merit it, but because God will, and does, answer mankind's prayers when they are asked in the name of Jesus.

1. Genesis 18:14.
2. Luke 8:25.
3. 1 John 5:14, 15.
4. 1 Timothy 2:8.
5. Psalm 141:2.
6. John 14:13.
7. Matthew 19:26.

### Lift Him Up

I lift up Jesus in my hands;  
He is my sacrifice.  
The answer to the law's demands,  
His merits will suffice.

## I Met God

I lift up Jesus in my heart;  
On Him I can depend.  
Each day new strength He will impart,  
My mediating Friend.

I lift up Jesus with my voice;  
To Him I turn my face.  
The Father and the Son rejoice  
To save me by their grace,

## 16: I Met God—My Manager

GOD IS my Partner!" was my happy exclamation again and again as I drove my car through the congested street of a beautiful eastern city, with a young preacher as a companion. Finally, as I continued to reiterate the remark, he said quietly: "He is not merely your partner. He is everybody's partner."

His words made me pause. "Is God a partner of everyone?" I asked myself. And after a few moments of deep reflection on the matter, I came to the conclusion that He is not; for the Bible asks the question: "What concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? . . . Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you."<sup>1</sup>

And, I continued to reflect, that not merely is God not everybody's partner, but He may not be even my partner or associate under certain conditions. The Psalmist had sweet fellowship with God at one time, but he learned the sad lesson that this ineffable communion with God could be broken by sin, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."<sup>2</sup>

So "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."<sup>3</sup>

When David turned his heart toward sin, his partnership with God was temporarily voided. But in deep sorrow of heart he cried out to God: "Cast me not away from thy presence and take not thy holy spirit from me." <sup>4</sup> "I acknowledged . . . my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin."<sup>5</sup>

Nor is obvious sin the only obstacle to a full partnership with God. Such a sacred relationship is predicated on His being the senior partner, which simply means that He must always be the manager. "I will instruct thee."<sup>6</sup> In other words, a real partnership between man and God is never one that is maintained on a basis of equality. We are always the junior partners and He is the senior Partner, Manager, or Director; for "He shall direct thy paths."<sup>7</sup>

So no longer do I gleefully proclaim that "God is my Partner." Now I talk of Him only as my Manager. And even then I sometimes stop to pose the question to myself: "Is He really my manager?" Haven't I unconsciously tried, on occasions too numerous to mention, to take the prerogative of management out of His wise hands and assume it myself? Have not I tried to make the decisions and then asked Him to accede to my wishes? Haven't I many times tried to force the hand of Providence while testifying to the fact that God does answer prayer? Yes, on all these points I have been guilty of failing to abide by the rules of my partnership with God. And I have noticed that too many others are also guilty of this shortcoming. Let me illustrate:

## I Met God

One day a lady came to me with a big problem relating to her husband. She was praying for his conversion. And later, in a letter to me, she expressed herself as follows: "I have prayed that if God is going to save my husband at the camp-meeting this year, He will make it possible for me to be there. That way I will know that if I can go to camp-meeting, God will also bring my husband there, some way, and he will be converted."

Without thinking too deeply, I replied that this would be wonderful. But then I began to give the matter deeper consideration. This good woman was doing just what I had so often done. She was telling God what her conditions were, without giving any thought to the possibility that maybe God had some plan of His own. For instance, it was quite possible that He wanted her to go to camp-meeting for the benefit she herself would receive. However, she made her own attendance a sign that God would at that same meeting convert her husband. So she was doomed to disappointment because she had superimposed her will on God's.

This train of thought made me ponder further the whole concept of man's asking Him to make the decisions. Sometimes I have given the Lord a sign which would mean one of two things. But what I overlooked on these occasions was that perhaps God had a third, entirely different choice. I was, in fact, trying to act as the manager instead of only the junior partner.

Again, I have, at times, prayed that God would spare me from persecution. That in itself may sound like a simple and reasonable request. But, if all our ways are to be serene and without trial, where will we possibly attain perfection of character? For the Scriptures declare, "tribulation worketh patience."<sup>8</sup> Thus, even in this seemingly harmless request I was unconsciously arrogating to myself the powers of decision that by all rights belong to Him as my Manager.

Then again, I have too often attempted to lay down the conditions to my receiving God's blessings rather than to let God do so, I have said: "Now, Lord, if next year this is your plan for me, then by tomorrow do this for me." But Christ has made it abundantly clear that this is not the basis on which God deals with us humans. Said Jesus: "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."<sup>9</sup> Jesus recognized this in teaching us to pray: "Give us this day our daily bread."<sup>10</sup>

Even to His own Son, Jesus, the Heavenly Father disclosed His plans on a day to day basis. And Christ was fully satisfied to let His Father be His manager and guide. "He made no plans for Himself. He accepted God's plans for Him, and day by day the Father unfolded His plans. So should we depend upon God, that our lives may be the simple outworking of His will."<sup>11</sup> "But the one who depends upon his own wisdom and power is separating himself from God. Instead of working in unison with Christ, he is fulfilling the purpose of the enemy of God and man."<sup>12</sup>

If my Manager sees that I need the rod and staff, then most gladly will I suffer. When Jesus comes again, "they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful."<sup>13</sup> "Many are called, but few are chosen," said the Master.<sup>14</sup>

This is because "I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction."<sup>15</sup>

I try to make the great and continual prayer of my soul now: "Take me, O Lord, as wholly Thine. I lay all my plans at Thy feet. Use me today in Thy service. Abide with me, and let all my work be wrought in Thee."<sup>16</sup>

In the days of Job, Satan challenged God. He declared that if God permitted affliction to come to Job that the latter would change his testimony concerning God. Prior to this, Job had been a holy man, and he had witnessed for God on many, many occasions. But in any court the witness is liable to cross-examination to see if he will perchance change his testimony. Satan claims that all humanity is basically

## I Met God

motivated by the same spirit of selfishness by which he is actuated. Therefore God permits Satan to afflict the children of God, at least temporarily, to prove whether his charge is true.

But even as severe as these trials may seem to us, the Apostle Paul says they are but a "light affliction."  
17

He

>ay

that in comparison with the glori,~ of eternal life, they are a mere nothing.

If, therefore, my Manager sees that it is better for me to permit affliction to come upon me, then why should I ask for release? I would a thousand times over prefer to be refined by fiery trials if that be His will for me. It will be the means of melting away the dross in my life and preparing me for eternal partnership with Him in the new earth where

"affliction shall not rise up the second time." " 18

And so, I would not pray merely for the temporal blessings. I would pray for character, consisting of all the wonderful attributes possessed by Jesus. If it takes suffering to accomplish this, then may I have the fellowship of His suffering. If it takes the enmity of the world, or even that of professed Christians, to bring it about; even then let me never take matters out of His hands.

Exuberantly, then, the true Christian can declare: "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory." 19

1. 2 Corinthians 6:15-17,
2. Psalm 66:18.
3. 1 John 2:15.
4. Psalm 51:11
5. Psalm 32:5.
6. Psalm 32:8.
7. Proverbs 3:6.
8. Romans 5:3.
9. Matthew 6:34
10. Matthew 6:11.
11. The Desire of Ages, p. 208.
12. Ibid, p. 209.
13. Revelation 17:14
14. Matthew 22:14.
15. Isaiah 4 8: 10 .
16. Steps to Christ, p. 72.
17. 2 Corinthians 4:17
18. Nahum 1:9.

## I Met God

19. Psalm 73:24.

### **My Manager**

O Guide of men, direct my way;  
For often I have strayed;  
Too often narrow my requests;  
Too oft for self I've prayed.

Help me to wait till Thou shalt show  
The path my feet must tread.  
Help me to walk close by Thy side,  
And never plunge ahead

## **17: I Met God at My Father's Grave**

"I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye."  
Psalm 32:8

THE FUNERAL service at last was over. The last earthly farewell to the departed had been uttered. The last beautiful hymn sung; the words of sympathy from loving friends and the warm handclasps exchanged.

One by one the cars passed through the cemetery gates and headed for their varying destinations. Most of those present resided in the community, but some, including many who were very close to the departed one, had come from far-off places. Included in this number were the man's sons, all now grown to adulthood. Their mother was still with them as they grouped themselves tearfully around the freshly-covered grave of a revered father.

The kindly minister who had conducted the final rites had left us all-because it was I, my brothers and Mother who stood there on that sad day-a lasting hope that nothing on earth could take from us. It was simply the sure promise of God that we would see Dad again on that glad resurrection day when Christ would return to claim His faithful.

For many years I had myself officiated at various funeral services. I too had sought to comfort the bereaved in much the same words I had so lately heard. But now death had come to me in a very close and vital way and I realized more fully than ever before the dreadful finality that death brings in its wake. But for the sure promises of God regarding the resurrection that is to follow, and the overwhelming victory of Christ over the grave, death would indeed be a dreadful, awesome thing.

I had stood at Dad's bedside just a few days before as he breathed his last. And I had helped Mother to close his eyes in his last, long sleep. Never before had I known the presence of death to affect me so strongly, As I went to bed that night, I prayed for Dad as I had from childhood, but then suddenly realized that he was no longer with us, and awoke later in the night in tears.

Father had been a leader in the little church from which the funeral procession had left with his earthly remains. For more than half a century he had led in its services and had assisted in building the day school next to the church.

As we sons and our sorrowing mother gathered at Father's grave, one of our number suddenly suggested, "Let's form a circle." Quietly we joined hands. The completed circle stretched clear around

## I Met God

Father's grave. My mother was in the circle too, and together we knelt reverently there and prayed. We thanked the Lord for His promise to re-unite us all some day. We asked Him that He would keep us faithful until the end, as He had Dad.

My father's dying request had been that we all meet in heaven. He made it just a very short time before he closed his eyes for the last, long sleep. With tears in his eyes, he repeatedly gestured toward the skies. He was trying hard to convey to us the meaning, but it was difficult because of his greatly weakened condition. However, there was no mistaking his meaning. He was trying to tell us as earnestly as he could that he believed we would all meet again in that heavenly abode beyond the skies.

And now we, his sons, and his sorrowful wife, were gathered around his grave to claim that sure promise of God. We realized it might also be the last earthly time we would all gather in such a fashion.

As we lingered there, loathe to leave the spot, my mind dwelt on the many others lying in that hill cemetery. Many of them were friends and dear ones I had known in my happy childhood. I would not see any of them again until the resurrection day. And then, saddest thought of all, some of them might then only awake to find themselves facing the awful condemnation of God's righteous judgment. And just as it will be a blessed experience to meet God face to face and be claimed as His faithful follower, so it will also be an awful, terrifying ordeal to await the passing of His final irrevocable judgment on all who cling to unrepented sins.

Friend, being ready to meet Jesus is a purely personal matter. But if we faithfully meet Him here every day, we need have no fear when we meet Him in the resurrection. But if we have put Him out of our lives here on earth, we can be very sure our next meeting with Him will be a dreadful one indeed as we realize, too late, the enormity of our sins.

After all, this life is but a school in which we prepare for eternity. And as in any school, we can do this well or badly. So, today., friend, I invite you to prepare yourself to meet God.

If you have not made the great decision to serve God--why not do it now? Delay may be fatal. Many people have gone down to the grave planning to surrender to Christ some day, but that day never came around. Earthly life is uncertain at best, and we never know what the day will bring forth. Don't take a chance-make your choice to serve Him today! "To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."1

Do you ask how you can make this surrender? It is simple, friend. Come to Jesus now just as you are. Fall on your knees and lift your heart to God in fervent, humble prayer. Admit that you are a sinner. Then claim His forgiveness and cleansing as promised in 1 John 1:9. Tell Him you sincerely believe He hears your sincere prayer and will help you. Then I would suggest you seek out a minister and ask him to instruct you in the sacred rite of baptism and the Bible principles of church membership.

Then, as a member of the body of Christ, lose no time sharing with others your newfound faith, and witnessing to His saving power in sinful lives. Take out time each day for prayer and Bible study and for witnessing for Him. These daily sacred moments will keep you close to Him, enabling you to overcome in your own life.

1. Hebrews 4:7.

### To See His Face

Some day I'll see my Saviour's face,  
I pray t'will not be long;  
Some day I'll end my earthly race  
And sing the glory song.

## I Met God

Some day the journey will be o'er,  
The storms of life all past;  
And I will dwell forever more,  
In that fair land at last.

Some day, some day, some happy day!  
Friend, won't you go with me?  
I'm trav'ling up the glory way  
To glad eternity. g.a.c.

## 18: I Met God and Dreamed of Heaven

"I am the resurrection, and the life." John 11:25

ONE DAY I dreamed that I saw Jesus come back to earth in power and glory. The sky was filled with myriads of angels.<sup>1</sup> His glory was truly celestial.<sup>2</sup> And as He came, the earth was rocking to and fro. The mountains were moving and the islands of the sea disappeared from sight.<sup>3</sup> All nature was in a great upheaval.

The lovely Jesus was coming in the clouds, and every living creature could see Him clearly in His great power and majesty, <sup>4</sup> Amid the roaring of the elements I could hear two distinct cries. One was the cry of the righteous, faithful followers of the Lord who had long awaited His coming so eagerly and hopefully: "This is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us."<sup>5</sup> The other was the terrifying, despairing cry of the wicked and unrepentently sinful to the rocks and the mountains: "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, . . . for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"<sup>6</sup>

And after the hearing of these voices, I became aware of a third. It was the lovely, comforting voice of the dearest Friend this world has ever known. Yes, it was the voice of Jesus, our Redeemer. It was the same voice that had raised the dead during His ministry on earth; the same voice that had healed the sick, cleansed the leper, and had given sight to the blind in days of old.

As He spoke, I listened enraptured to that voice of my Saviour. It was clear as crystal and sounded like many waters. His was a voice that encompassed the globe. This was the voice of the Archangel.<sup>7</sup> It raised the dead again. And among those who arose I recognized my father. He had gone down in death, but not in defeat. He had been supported by the Spirit of Jesus to the very end. But now, at the tones of that wonderful voice, he arose; because, "this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."<sup>8</sup>

As I saw Father come forth from his grave, I heard his voice give forth with a shout of victory. There were others all around, also emerging from their graves. And all were joining in that triumphal chant that Jesus' own death and resurrection had made possible: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"<sup>9</sup>

"Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air."<sup>10</sup>

I dreamed also that my family was completely reunited. Every one of the brothers was there with his family. And as we joined with Mother and Father, what rejoicing took place, as we were all caught up together to meet Jesus in clouds of glory!

## I Met God

Gradually, as we ascended from the earth, the shrieks of the doomed faded from our ears to be replaced by other voices singing the rich, ineffably sweet melodies of heaven.

I could see that we were on our way to our heavenly abode where Jesus had promised we would one day dwell with Him.<sup>11</sup> We were rapidly flying through space and passing other worlds whirling around us. It seemed like heaven itself, but that blessed land still lay ahead of us. Finally, after what seemed like mere moments, we beheld in the distance a sight which your and my eyes have never seen. It was the radiance and glory of the New Jerusalem. Some of the accompanying angels had preceded us to the city and were now singing a welcoming anthem of praise to God and of joy at our presence with them.

The angels sang the wonderful strains of "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in." Then, from within the city's confines came an answering chorus: "Who is this King of glory?" And this time all the angels joined in swelling that triumphant chorus: "The Lord of hosts, lie is the King of glory." <sup>12</sup>

As the doors of heaven opened, Jesus viewed His redeemed. He seemed joyful indeed to see that I was a part of that number. I thought of the many times the devil had tried to discourage me and lead me astray. I remembered the many times when doubt, and fear had entered my heart, causing it to fail within me. I recalled the many instances when Satan's insidious temptations had well-nigh caused me to stumble. But these memories faded and died as I too joined in the swelling anthem of praise, singing: "Glory to God in the highest."<sup>13</sup>

Soon Jesus led us through the gates to the city of God. And as I entered in with the rest of the redeemed, I saw scenes that defy any mortal description. There was a beautiful throne encircled by a rainbow of surpassing radiance and glory. And gushing out from the throne was the river of the water of life, clear as crystal.<sup>14</sup> On either side of the river was the tree of life. And I thought at first that they were two separate trees, but looking at it more closely I could see that the two were joined at the top. The tree bore twelve different kinds of fruit, and its luxuriant foliage I was told was to be used for the healing of the nations.

I saw my resurrected father plunging unhesitatingly into the river of life as it sparkled with the glory of God. And he emerged bathed in the light and glory of heaven. Then I saw my mother reclining under the shade of the tree of life. They were enthralled with heaven's innumerable delights. The streets, I saw, were of solid gold and the walls were designed with a variety of most precious stones. The gates to the Holy City were of solid pearl.

I saw that many mansions dotted the streets of heaven. Everyone in our company was assigned one of the mansions. Jesus told us then that in addition to this mansion we would also be given a country estate, as the Holy City would soon descend to earth; that in these rural retreats we all could "build houses, and inhabit them; . . . plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them."<sup>15</sup> Best of all, perhaps, Jesus reaffirmed His comforting promise to mankind that: "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." <sup>16</sup>

But of course the One upon whom all eyes were fixed was Jesus. The ugly scars of His crucifixion had now become the objects of our continuing and ceaseless adoration. His face, in its pure radiance and tenderness, held our enraptured gaze like a magnet.

O, I thought, how I wish I could have had such a view of heaven years before so that I could have won many more sin-sick souls to the Master. I might have pictured the wonders of heaven and life with Jesus as no mortal pen could have done. As I began to sorrow because I had failed to make the joys of heaven more real to those entrusted to my care, I suddenly awoke. It had been a dream, a very wonderful

## I Met God

dream, right out of the Scriptures--a dream that I love to ponder over and over again as I travel along my earthly pathway.

And now, my friend, will you give the opportunity to me to dream again, and that this time I may see you among the saved in heaven? You can be saved today if you will lose no time in meeting your Lord in humble, contrite repentance. 17 He will forgive, cleanse, and heal you. He is ever ready to keep you from falling into sin. 18 And always remember this: "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name " 19

And as a son, you are entitled to a home in that land where "the years of eternity, as they roll, will bring richer and still more glorious revelations of God and of Christ. As knowledge is progressive, so will love, reverence, and happiness increase. The more men learn of God, the greater will be their admiration of His character." 20

Yes, for all eternity, "The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of . . . gladness beats through the vast creation ... all things, ... in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love." 21

O hasten, glorious day!

1. Matthew 25:31.
2. Luke 9:26.
3. Revelation 6:12-17.
4. Revelation 1:7.
5. Isaiah 25:9.
6. Revelation 6:16, 17.
7. 1 Thessalonians 4:16.
8. 1 Corinthians 15: 53.
9. 1 Corinthians 15: 55.
10. 1 Thessalonians 4:17.
11. John 14:1-3.
12. Psalm 24:7-10.
13. Luke 2:14.
14. Revelation 22:1, 2.
15. Isaiah 65:21.
16. Revelation 21:4.
17. 1 John 1:9.
18. Jude 24.
19. John 1:12.
20. The Great Controversy, p. 678.
21. [ibid, p. 678

I Met God

**Dreaming**

'I am dreaming of heaven and Jesus my Friend,  
I am longing my Saviour to see;  
I am waiting the time when my journey will end:  
I am seeking eternity,

I am pleading with Jesus to carry me through,  
I am nearing the end of the strife;  
I am trusting His Word, for my Saviour is true;  
I am claiming the promise of life.

I am happy, so happy that soon I shall be  
Far removed from the world I now roam;  
I am holding the hand that was nailed to the tree,  
I am dreaming of heaven and home.

g.a.c.