

TESTIMONY OF JIM GOODHEART, SUPERINTENDENT

SUNSHINE RESCUE MISSION

DENVER

Believing that all men seek for real peace of heart and mind, I am prompted for the glory of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me, to give this, my testimony.

I was a successful business man and lived as men describe it, "a good moral life". I was a good neighbor and social club fellow; I drank cocktails and highballs with my friends, played bridge whist, held theatre parties, as this seemed to me essential to good fellowship.

Now, I would not have you think that only those who indulge in such habits as these are the only ones who may be lost, for this is only the outgrowth of sin, and the wrong impressions which are held by some that only those who do indulge have never come from good parentage or had opportunities in life, for this is not true; the greater majority of those who have fallen low through intemperance and over indulgence come largely from what would seem the better walks of life; men who were once successful and quite capable of conducting a business.

I was brought up in a Christian home, went to church and Sunday school. As I grew older the ambition of my life was to earn money, and thought that success was measured on this scale. There were times in my life that I would feel a hunger for something I did not possess, for during the affairs of life I had gradually drifted away from the teachings of my childhood. I was associated with different ones who seemed happy, and they were, for their lives were seasoned with peace, especially when the inrush of difficulties and trials came, they were calm, which was very noticeable to me at that time. I tried to convince myself that a good moral life was all that was necessary; that if a man lived up to all that he knew- the rules of his lodge etc., he was living a pretty good life. This I tried and even succeeded for a time, but with all my reasonings and imaginary veneered

There are some in this house tonight, with whom I drank whiskey etc, and to whom I dealt out the cards years ago. At that time you were more prosperous than I, and even now are humanly speaking- but you need God in your lives now more than ever.

goodness, I did not have that something deep down in my heart that satisfied, as Christ said to the young ruler, "One thing thou lackest", and I, like him, would return to my pleasures in club and good fellowship, until before I was aware, habits formed themselves in my life that to resist them seemed impossible. To have communion with God, you must have union with Him.

Thus for years I went on fighting inwardly against that something that seemed hopeless. I was looking for a feeling, and "peace" is not a feeling; it is a condition that we must meet, and that condition is God's Word, who cannot be mistaken which says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house, for my peace I give unto you". I would drift beneath the overwhelming billows of doubt and rise again, only to sink deeper than ever, making myself believe if I would only cease indulging in certain habits, now that they had mastered me, would be sufficient. (Matt 5:20- "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no <sup>wise</sup> ~~case~~ enter into the Kingdom of Heaven".)

Little did I know of the monster, sin, which was the root of all my habits and doubts, for during my early associations when tender in years, I was deprived of the association with boys of my age, because my father's wealth was swept from him in a very unfortunate way, and I have always praised God that it was not through carelessness; therefore, I had to work and do a man's work and associate with men whose lives were filled with habits, and their influence was greater on me than my influence was upon them. Then the subtle serpent became my master. I was careful with my money, and saved considerable, and went into business for myself. I was a close observer and learned very readily from the practical side of life, and now as I had grown into manhood, I loved to read- but the egg of sin in my life had been laid in my heart, and was beginning to germinate and already began to show life.

My mind was filled with doubt as to the atonement and Sönsrip of Christ. I tried to find peace of mind and satisfy my conscience by reading other religious and so-called "Science" both Christian, mental and divine, until I was as a drowning man grabbing at a straw, and I found no rest for my soul, for there was no reality.

I began to find myself drifting into infidelity; I would do many good deeds, in charitable and in other ways, hoping to merit some peace of mind, still evading direct and immediate surrender. I was persuaded to join the church and the Y M C A, all of which are good, but not for an unregenerate man. I did not know of the new birth, neither had any one tried to explain. I had read the Bible considerably, yet we may read God's Word with the idea of criticizing it, and if the Holy Spirit does not open our understanding, we may never see as God would have us see; so, therefore, the words of life became a Saviour of death, and more of a "beautiful story" rather than the "Words of Life". I had now lost position after position, for my own business finally got away from me because of my negligence, and now my will power had become so "flabby" that resistance seemed impossible. I was persuaded to take the "liquor cure" which I did the second time, but of no permanent cure- only a temporary relief. I became heavily involved in debt, my creditors closed in on the mortgages to save themselves. I resolved with one last brave effort and succeeded for only a few days. (Psalm 127:1, "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it")

My wife, through disappointment, despair and heartaches, her health was broken; we took her to the hospital. In the meantime, our house and furnishings had been drunk up and pawned, in effort to keep up appearances. While she lay, seemingly dying, in a hospital in Peoria, Illinois, I became intoxicated- trying to drown my sorrow, while she was in the operating room, and I did not hear of her for

over a week, nor she of me; in fact, I was afraid to inquire for I believed she had died. Through the goodness of the Lord, her life was spared, and her health seemed to mend; new hope seemed to be inspired, until she was compelled to leave me, because of non-support, and I was turned out in the world a tramp.

Thus I drifted for a number of years from place to place all hope of recovery seeming impossible-- family, mother, father, brothers, character, all gone. In hopeless despair I had decided upon suicide, for here in Denver I had become marked by the police authorities to stay below the "dead line" when, on the twelfth night of November, 1907, with nothing for the future, I drifted into Sunshine Mission.

God is dearer to the heart when He is all the heart has left. One may lose health, property, position and family and character, but if in the struggle and failure, he has found God, through His Son, Jesus Christ, he has made an incomparable gain, and God can take the remnants so marred by sin and use it as a channel for His mercy and power to flow through to enrich even hundreds of others. In this awful, sinful, drunken condition, with childlike simplicity, I saw Jesus on the Cross--- He saved me--- I heard His words (John 5:24) Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my Word and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, for he has passed from death unto life". I believed it and I have the full assurance tonight and can say, "I know in whom I have believed.

In the ten years I have walked with my Saviour, He has made me Superintendent of this same Mission in which I was saved, viz., the Sunshine Mission of Denver, and I have ministered unto thousands. I commend Him to all men everywhere.

-----