My Journey – A Life in His Favour

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Introduction

> "*For a moment is passed in His anger; a life in His favour;*
> *at even weeping cometh for the night,*
> *and at morn there is rejoicing*", *Psalm 30: 5.*

My name is Gordon Rainbow. You may want to know something about me. If not, feel free to skip this page.

There are many failures in my history – of which I am ashamed – but the glory of God's grace and mercy in recovery overshadows all.

If you are adrift spiritually, may He use this account to assure you of His watchfulness over you and His faithfulness to His promises.

To any who might be wary, because I once supported that wicked system known only too well to some of us, I say, in Paul's words: "but mercy was shown me because I did it ignorantly, in unbelief", 1 Timothy 1: 13.

See Ministry: J. Taylor 4 – An address 'The Holy Spirit's Activities in Relation to the Gentiles' - Acts 8: 29, 39; 10: 19, 20, 44-46; 13: 1-4.

Brethren have long considered the locality in which ministry was given as significant and, in this instance, to me the date is also. J.T. gave the address in Toronto on November 11, 1929, the very place and date of my birth. At that time my parents were not believers and had no knowledge of the brethren.

When I came upon this address many years ago the reference in the last paragraph to Psalm 87: 6, "This man was born there", confirmed me that God's eye had

been upon me from the outset for blessing. I understood, to a degree, Paul's feelings when he could speak of "God, who set me apart [even] from my mother's womb, and called [me] by his grace ...", Galatians 1: 15. GAR

1946: My Conversion

"Surpassing Love", a poem on the Poetry: The Alpha and the Omega page, gives my recollections of my conversion.

I was converted in March 1946 at the age of 16.

I had heard and been touched by the gospel, at 13, but soon become an ardent atheist. But God answered the prayers of the mother and sister of a school mate.

Returning from their home one night, I was deeply convicted. I rushed home, fell on my knees, confessed my sins, acknowledging that there was indeed a God.

"The fool has said in his heart, There is no God", Psalm 14: 1. I was worse; I had said it aloud and often.

But God in mercy delivered me from the dead end of atheism to living faith in "the Son of God who has loved me and given Himself for me", Galatians 2: 20.

July 2011: A young friend wrote

"I was reading your 'Personal' page on the 'My Brethren' website. It says Gordon was an atheist at the age of 13 but converted when he was 16. So I was wondering, Gordon, what convinced you to accept Christ into your life since you were an atheist before that?"

I replied:

My family, like many in this country at that time and since, professed no religion at all. I found a copy of Darwin's 'Origin of a Species' and devoured it and was completely deceived by it. Even though I had heard the gospel, as most kids of 13 even now, I thought I knew

everything and Darwin wholly reinforced this delusion. We had one little Bible in the house and I got my father's permission to burn it in the furnace. You can see how far I was from the truth.

I joined the youth group of the CCF, the socialist political party from which the NDP developed. Many of the members were either atheists or agnostics. I went to the library and got the books of Marx, Hegel, Lenin and others and was well on my way to being a communist -- but God intervened.

In my high school we used double desks and I was sitting with a boy named Jim who came from a Christian home. He and I were both different from the rest of the class. We spent a good deal of time together and I visited often in his home. His mother was a Christian -- although her husband had left her -- and I know that she and Jim's older sister prayed for me, and they also spoke to me regularly about the gospel. But I was not at all receptive.

Then, one night as I was walking home from their house I had a strange experience, not quite like that of Saul on the Damascus road. I had an overwhelming feeling that I can't quite explain. It caused me to run the rest of the distance home.

I went to my room immediately and fell on my knees and confessed that there indeed was a creator God. Subsequently speaking with Jim's family it was simple to acknowledge the Lord Jesus as my Saviour.

See the poem 'Surpassing Love' in the Poetry: The Alpha and the Omega. It is a record of my reflections on that wonderful experience. I hope this explanation has not been too long for you. Everyone who comes to Christ

comes via a slightly different path but all are led by the Spirit of God.

1946-50: Early Experiences

Shortly afterwards, I came into contact with a so-called open meeting, was baptized and broke bread with them.

A beloved brother Russell Grant, now many years with Christ, was a great help to many of the young men and a spiritual father to me.

What I learned from the Scriptures, through him and the Spirit's help, raised questions as to the rightness of walking with those dear believers, with whom I had enjoyed all I then knew of Christian fellowship.

What was commendable was offset by compromise of divine principles with sectarianism and sectarian groups, and worldly habits of living, by elder men.

Then, in a gospel meeting, a visiting missionary taught serious doctrinal error touching the Person of the Lord Jesus and the bearing of His work on the cross.

After the meeting, I remonstrated with him to no avail.

Elder brothers all admitted privately that there was serious error but refused to refute it publicly.

After waiting in vain for some action – not breaking bread but attending the meetings – I had no alternative but to act 2 Timothy 2 and withdraw from iniquity.

That was in the spring of 1950. I was only 20 years old and – except for God – alone.

1950-53: Progress

During my earlier exercise I had attended various so-called exclusive meetings.

I met a few young men who, with some I knew, started meeting on Saturdays to read the Scriptures.

Even this precious link was not enough to satisfy my longings for fellowship as the others continued committed to diverse partisan positions.

Earlier, I had attended meetings of brethren who valued the ministry of FER, JT and CAC, and felt some attraction.

The hospitality and friendliness of the brethren had particularly impressed me in my aloneness.

I resumed my attendance and later, in August 1950, began to break bread with them.

There I met Betty. We were married on Tuesday, August 28, 1951.

Four of the young men with whom I had been meeting on Saturdays later followed.

1953-59: Failure

Having judged and left unfaithfulness to Christ, I expected – idealistically – to find some sort of perfection in assembly order and practice as well as in Christian conduct.

Outwardly things were orderly but the looseness and social cliques – in this city at least for I knew little of brethren even in nearby cities – tried me greatly.

Instead of being "a model of the believers", occupation with failure led me away from Christ into a very low state, although at the time I thought I was spiritual.

I followed a friend, in the same low state, and we and our wives – they reluctantly – withdrew in 1953.

We thought that we were right and that the Lord would confirm us, but it was just the opposite.

Feeding on the others' failures – meeting regularly, then sporadically – we sank into the world, as did Lot.

Six years of spiritual darkness ensued – a nightmare of despondency – in which we suffered bitterly.

God granted repentance at last, and in the spring of 1959 we returned.

1959-71: Deceived

We vowed that we would support the truth. Our intent was right but we were naive, lacking in spiritual discernment.

From that time we fully supported the – now infamous – 'universal leader' who had pushed himself forward.

Except when conscience smote me in 1965 and early 1970, we loyally and blindly followed the party line and had our shameful part in – and suffered some of – the atrocities of those barren years.

When the exposure took place at those meetings in July 1970 we were deceived by the explanatory lies.

But in October 1970, my conscience was convicted of the sectarianism, clericalism, legality and harshness.

Our earlier experience raised fears that if we left 'the position' we would go into the world.

Three months later, those who had withdrawn in July were called "garbage" and we withdrew – not knowing where we were going.

1971-72: A Detour

Earlier we felt that we could never go with those who had withdrawn in July 1970, but after we withdrew it seemed right to investigate.

Our exercises seemed on the same line at that time and – imprudently and precipitously – we joined them.

We soon became more deeply convicted of the grossness of what we had been involved in previously.

But we discovered that all – both in this city and abroad – had no clear judgment of the brethrenism and haughty spirit of pretension that had marked us.

Many had no sense of the state that allowed the "universal leader", and his system, to gain dominance.

Our present judgment and knowledge of the pretension that existed would not have allowed us to walk with them.

I waited on the Lord that the pretension would be met and corrected by the ministry of the word.

This did not come about. Many who ministered either promoted or condoned the pretension and, to a lesser degree, some features of the system we had left.

In the next division – 1972 – we concluded that we could not go with either side.

1972-78: Hopeless

A long period of decline and compromise ensued.

A collective testimony to the truth of Christ and the assembly seemed impossible – all seemed hopeless.

Bereft of friends – those who remained in the sect, and those we thought had judged it – we were alone.

Did we still not have the Lord and the Spirit? Surely; we could not have survived otherwise.

Only those who have had such an experience will understand the agony of the isolation and loneliness.

Fearing more sorrow, we concluded that we could not identify ourselves with any brethren from our background.

What then were we to do? It is clear now that quiet waiting on the Lord was the proper course. But that was then – and this is now.

I longed for Christian companionship, and allowed my need to override my responsibility to the Lord – to overwhelm my conscience and the convictions that had first moved me as a young man in 1950, and later in recovery in 1959.

I questioned the ministry of the recovery – questioning God's operations in the revival – not to justify leaving but to blame it for the catastrophe that had come upon us, then to ease my conscience as I sought companionship with believers in companies marked by doctrines and practices of which I had once had a judgment.

I am ashamed of the way I rationalized – questioning and then surrendering truths that had once been and, thank God, are again, blessed and precious to my soul – speaking against ministry of some beloved servants – ministry I had once cherished as from the Lord, attempting to convince some – with whom I corresponded – to follow my twisted reasoning.

Convictions as to truth cannot be lightly cast aside, but the enemy's powerful weapon of disillusionment – against which I had warned others – overcame me.

It is difficult to believe that one could thus go so far astray – but it was possible – and it did happen.

For 6 to 7 years I tried to work matters out with several groups, one after another, for the sake of companionship, accommodating myself – really compromising – to many situations I once would not have condoned.

Many of the individuals were personally estimable and I made some friendships I still value.

But – predictably – each attempt failed. I was like the prodigal son, David among the Philistines, Samson in the prison.

But thanks be to God who, in His sovereignty, worked to extricate me from my miserable estate in three specific ways:

He gave me the opportunity and responsibility of guiding some young believers into the truths I had betrayed but was now beginning to value again – some did not continue but a few remained, committed;

He raised issues in my then connections which, even in my state of departure, I could not accept;

He recovered one of my earliest friends out of the world, putting us in contact after more than ten years.

I began to retrace my steps and, with the Spirit's help, saw again the unparalleled value of the ministry of the recovery.

1978 On: Recovery

The weekly Bible readings in our home which commenced around 1978 – and continued till the enemy brought in division – strengthened our resolve to pursue the truth.

We recognized that everything was not over, and began breaking bread alone in our home.

We came in contact with some old brethren – known before – who had separated in 1960, but who by then had no links elsewhere.

When the brother in whose home they met – Mr. R. W. Saunders – was taken by the Lord, they had no place to meet and came to our readings on the Lord's Day.

Soon we all concluded that there was nothing between us and we broke bread together.

They have all now departed to be with Christ, but we have happy memories of the few years together.

In the meantime a few of the young believers who came to the weeknight readings joined with us – and with them and the brother recovered earlier we continued for some years – in weakness and dependence – the Lord's Supper and the service of God.

Sadly the enemy found means through one of aggressively introducing legal and divisive thoughts which quickly led to the stumbling of the younger ones, and Betty and I were left and remain quite alone – although able to maintain friendly contact with those stumbled, and their dear children, whom we consider part of our 'family'.

Because of age and increasing frailty we moved in April 1955 to 'Bethany Manor' – an assisted-living Christian retirement home in Markham in the Greater Toronto Area.

Thankfully we are able to receive visitors from time to time, and continue telephone and email contact with several old friends.

Though in great weakness we continue the Lord's Supper and the service of God together.

We do not know what the future here may be – but our hope is to be with Christ in glory, and with all those of the assembly, there to be forever engaged in the service of God, and so we continue "until He come".

"For we must all be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ, that each may receive the things done in the body, according to those he has done, whether it be good or evil", 2 Corinthians 5: 10.