

A WORD OF TESTIMONY

My earliest recollections of hearing that I needed to be saved were as a child of about six. My mother told me I had to ask the Lord Jesus into my heart, so that I could get into heaven. As a child I didn't really understand, but the memory stayed with me all through life. My mother had ill health and passed away very suddenly into the presence of the Lord when I was ten and my brother was six. A short time after her passing, two Faith Mission pilgrims held meetings in the Orange Hall in the townland of Ballinlea, where we lived. I faithfully attended the children's meetings and heard the gospel preached too. I learned so many choruses and heard bible stories told by flannelgraph and I thought this was just wonderful. If you teach children the Word of God don't underestimate the influence that this effort can have on young minds. I asked Jesus into my heart in a simple way and told my friends at school that I was saved. As the years passed I put these things to the back of my mind, although I attended church with all its activities week by week. I am thankful for all the scripture passages and beautiful hymns and psalms that I learned both at church and school. How greatly things have changed in my lifetime. Lots of children now don't know who Jesus is. After leaving school I began work in Ballymoney and the dances and other places of entertainment were always on my mind. After each outing there was always an emptiness and a looking forward to the next outing. I met my husband Sammy at one of these dances and as he and his friends visited the pubs etc. I soon started to drink also. I felt ashamed because I knew deep down it was wrong and I had not been used to people drinking. When the devil gets a hold of you it is hard to escape his clutches and that is just what happened to me. I began to enjoy all the entertainment that these places offered. After a year we got engaged and planned to get married the following year. A few months later on Sunday 9th October, 1966, we decided to go to Ballymoney for a driving lesson as my test was coming up. It was a lovely evening so we walked up the street and listened to an open-air meeting. A man was testifying and as we were drawn to listen, we decided to go to their evening service in the Salvation Army Hall. During the service the speaker told of a young person who had put off salvation and had later been killed in a car accident. This spoke to me and during the last prayer an invitation was given for anyone who was under conviction to raise their hand. I felt that this was my last opportunity so I raised my hand, indicating my desire to get saved. Shortly after someone else put their hand up and then I felt Sammy's elbow and him asking me "what about you". Praise God he had been the other person, so both of us had got saved at exactly the same time and neither had been aware of the other's conviction. How good is the God we adore. I went into work the next morning and told them what had happened. I felt a real peace knowing that if I should die there and then I would be with the Lord. As Christians we have our ups and downs, but God provides for every situation. Why don't you trust Him and find out for yourself that He never fails.

...it is time to seek the Lord ... Hosea 10 v 12

Mary McAlister

