

“PAY-DAY—SOME DAY”

With Other Sketches From Life and Messages From The Word

by

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

BURNING HEARTS

They were three days of unusual interest. Now the evening of the last day of this pleasant visit had come. The old-fashioned homestead was some two miles from the nearest little farmer village in northern Sweden. The auto that had taken me from the nearest railroad station could not navigate the narrow and rather stony road that led to the home of my relatives, so I had to carry the heavy suitcases as I walked the last mile of the way.

At a distance, from a little hill, the red-painted house with the white trimmings and the old antique porch appeared so homelike, imbedded among the white birch trees and with the background of a heavily wooded forest of pine and hemlocks. Yes, an ideal setting for a worn, weary and homesick wanderer. A little distance below was the old mill and the millpond and beyond that the larger lake. For three days I had tramped the old familiar trails in the woods and fished at the same “good spots” of my childhood days.

The last evening had been spent and early in the morning I was to bid farewell and begin my return journey.

I was awakened, not by an alarm clock but by a song. I rubbed my eyes as, half awakened, I heard the song from the next room. The rays of the early morning sun came through the windows as I heard my cousin singing and playing the guitar. It was so beautiful that I forgot to get up and dress. It warmed my heart to hear this heart-touching song.

She had sung two verses and the chorus, but in the middle of the third verse she stopped. I could clearly hear the sobs as the verse was started over again and again but with the same result. The words would be something like this: “Many a soul turned back, many a song has ceased, and the path is sad and drear.” I hurriedly dressed and went into the room to find my cousin in tears. “What’s wrong?” I asked.

“Oh,” she said, “when I lived in Chicago and sang in your choir I was so happy. You seem to have retained this spiritual warmth and I am cold and indifferent; I’m not happy; let us have a prayer meeting and pray that God might rekindle me with fire from above. I want the same burning heart I once had.”

In the early hours of this beautiful summer day a soul cried out to God and the blessing came.

A few weeks later I received word that I must return and that in the nearby village a meeting had been arranged, but I must come at six o'clock, or before sundown, as the school house could not be used and the village had no church or meeting house.

An auto took me to the village and when I reached one of the farm homes I found a crowd that filled the old hay barn to overflowing; that is, many folks were sitting on the ground outside. Benches had been arranged from boards and old lumber and the hay swept to one side, and behind one of the low partitions a small table had been placed, with a white tablecloth, which was to be the pulpit. Looking over the gathering of old and young I should judge that about two hundred people had come to the meeting. My cousin sang the same song that she had tried to sing that early morning, but this time she didn't falter.

This time it was a song of victory. After Titus Johnson and Helgot Larson, who were visiting with me from Chicago, had spoken, I closed with a brief message, "**Abide with us, for it is toward evening,**" and as the evening sun was setting many with tears streaming down their faces came and knelt down, becoming new beings in Christ Jesus. One of the most glorious meetings I have ever had.

Why? Was it because of a good sermon? No, it was no sermon at all. Because of a fine church? No, it was only an old hay barn. Had the crowd come because of a catchy newspaper article or clever ads? No, this little hamlet had neither printer nor newspaper. Here is the reason: God had strangely warmed a heart in that early morning hour with a desire to win some one for Jesus; my cousin had gone from house to house, visiting every farm, inviting people to come and hear the Gospel story that had set the joy bells ringing in her heart. Her prayers and zeal had impressed them and they all came out for the meeting. It was the result of a burning heart.

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I was assisting H. L. with evangelistic meetings in a well known Iowa town. It was only a short series but God met with us and His power was mightily felt from the very beginning. Each night souls came to the cross and the spirit of revival had gripped the people who filled the church night after night. Now and then the song that was sung at every service comes back and re-echoes in my heart:

Revive Thy people, O Lord;
Revive every soul;
Come now, take control,
Revive Thy people, O Lord.

Yes, God did speak to His people during those days. We had our home with a well known and beloved Christian businessman. One morning while we had morning worship in his home he asked me to go with him to visit an old man that lived a short distance outside the town.

“While we prayed the Holy Spirit told me to visit him and speak to him about salvation, because he is unsaved. Will you go with me?”

Those were his words and without delay I accompanied him. We came to the little farm just as the old man came from the field carrying some pails and we met him in the little barn. Brother J. introduced me and we had a short chat, whereupon I asked him if he was happy in the Lord.

When he answered in the negative I asked him why not come to Jesus now? We told him we had come this early because God had sent us. That this dear old man with the long whiskers was not far from the kingdom was clearly seen. “We better go into the house and I can get cleaned up a little so I look more presentable,” he said. I was rather afraid that he might change his mind in the long walk to the house and that the devil might get him to say, “Some other time,” so I told him that we could kneel right there on the straw-covered floor and pray. “It is just as easy for God to save you here in the barn as in a carpet-covered room.”

He removed his cap, we knelt down together and he was saved. We went home happy in the service of the King and this old man was happy in the assurance of salvation. He had found peace with God.

Here is the application: This old sinner was no churchgoer. He could not be impressed by the message in sermon or song. But the Holy Spirit had a warm heart that He could work through in Bro. J. and he listened to the still small voice which led us to this lost soul who was ripe for salvation.

My friend, is it hard for you to serve Jesus, or win the lost? Then pray,

Revive me again,
Fill my heart with Thy love,
May my soul be rekindled
With Fire from above.

THEN YOU WILL GET A BURNING HEART.

~ end of chapter 11 ~

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