

GEO. SUISTED'S INTERESTING STORY



The late Mr. George Suisted, the subject of
this interesting narrative.

George Suisted's Interesting Story

I was born in New Zealand in 1855. When between four and five years old my mother and father died, and I was cast out into the world and had no schooling beyond a few weeks' night school.

Being physically strong as a lad, at 12 years of age I left my grandfather's home to shift for myself, and shortly after learned the art of chopping and hewing timber for bridge building. I was thrown into the roughest society, and soon learned card-playing, smoking and drinking. My brothers were well educated and respectable, and were carrying on an extensive business, and seeing me so reckless they informed me that if I could not behave myself I must leave the town. I said, "Very well, I will leave the colony."

Having saved £100 (for I had been well paid at the timber hewing), I left for North America, taking with me another New Zealander, whose fare I paid. There I met up with my older brother who had gone to America previously. I went to Utah territory and engaged in the sheep business. While there I met and married a fine young woman

who shared with me all the rough experiences of ranching. The conditions were terrible. The rough, snowy winter killed about 4400 of the sheep, and I suffered considerably myself. The finger nails on my right hand were frozen off, and I got rheumatic fever and almost died. My hip bones almost came through the skin, and I had to have pads of wool about 2 to 3 inches thick put on them to ease the weight of the body. I became delirious with the excruciating pain, and remarked that I wished I was dead and in hell! Oh, if God had allowed me to die then, I should have been tormented for ever in the lake of fire, "where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched!"

But God had His eye on me and spared my life. Still my troubles were not finished, for my little boy, 2 years old, died and soon after my dear brother and one of his children got burned to death through a kerosene lamp exploding. I returned to San Francisco intending to come back to N.Z., and after paying my steamer fare I had £20 left. Just before leaving the wharf a man expressed sympathy with me and invited me to go and have a drink. We went and had more than one drink, and as a result he and another man got £10 of my small store by a "confidence trick."

We arrived safely in Auckland, although I nearly lost my wife, for she was very ill all along the journey. From Auckland we took steamer to Wellington (my birth-place), and my wife soon recovered. I arrived there with £6 in my pocket. Seeing some men raffling a horse (a steeplechaser), I offered one of them £5 for his chance. I waited eagerly to see if this man's throw with the dice was to be beaten, for I had risked my last £5 note. However, no one beat his throw, and I took the horse worth £30.

I then found a situation at butchering and took to drinking heavily, and in a drunken revelry I sold all our household effects and took my wife to Wanganui, where I joined my brother who owned a hotel. I was employed as barman, and received £2 a week and food, but I drank the £2 as fast as I earned it. One day my brother's daughter said to her father, "Uncle steals money out of the till." Now, no matter what I had been, I was not a thief, and this hurt my feelings so much that I told my brother I would leave. He said I ought not to take any notice of what his daughter said; but I persisted in leaving, and as I had no money he gave me £10, so away I went to Bulls and took a place at 25/- a week.

I now tried to live a moral life—gave up drinking, and turned over a new leaf. After

three months I went to work for a storekeeper, who sent me down to a bush settlement named Campbelltown (now known as Rongotea) to open a store. Here I got amongst a class of people known as "Plymouth Brethren." The first one of them I met was a Mr. Jas. Chrystall who spoke to me about my soul. He told me I was going to hell. I said, "Then I will go with the big crowd, and if they can stand it I can." He then asked me to dinner, and while at the table spoke very plainly to me as to my state before God and my need of being saved.

From that time on I became very troubled about my soul, and some nights I dreamed that the heavens were on fire and would leap out of bed with horror and tremble like an aspen leaf. Other nights I would dream I was sinking into the flames of a burning hell. Again, on other nights, I would be fighting with the devil. I remember one night a man was sleeping with me, and I dreamed I was grappling with the devil. I got my bedmate by the throat and nearly choked him. At this time I went so far as to load a gun to kill a man, and would have done so had he crossed my path that day. Thanks be to God, the man kept clear of me.

But things were coming to a crisis, and I began to wish I could be sure of going to

heaven. An evangelist came to Rongotea by the name of Mr. C. H. Hinman, and I was asked by Mr. Chrystall to go and hear him preach. I said I would, but when night came and my wife asked me if I were going, I said, "No." She said, "You ought to be a man of your word and go." I replied, "I will be a man of my word, and I will go." All the way to the schoolhouse the devil kept saying, "If you go to the meeting you will get saved, and you will have your old chums pointing the finger of scorn at you." However, I went.

When the gentleman got up to preach my heart was filled with a spirit of hatred towards him because he had no gown, no surplice, and no white choker. But as he preached all the prejudice left me, and I became under deeper conviction of sin. He spoke about the door of grace, which was Christ, being open, but he said there was no guarantee that the door would be open on the morrow, and if the door was shut I would be shut out for ever. I thought the door would be shut before I could enter in, and I became almost frantic with despair. I went home and smoked till early morning thinking over what I had heard.

I pressed my wife to go the next night, and told her who ever the man was he was

a man of God; so she went, and came home convicted but not converted.

The next day the evangelist went away. I saw him pass the shop, and said to a man present that I would give that man £5 if he would come in and show me words whereby I would know I was saved; but he passed by my shop. I would have gone anywhere, or I would have done anything, and given anything to be saved, I was in such agony of soul. If I had possessed a revolver I felt I could have ended my life; but thank God, His eye was upon me, and His hand too. I had heard that Mr. Chrystall held what they called a cottage meeting, so I was determined to go to it and see if I could get peace to my poor aching soul. Oh, that men and women would come under a deep conviction of sin such as I experienced; there would be no fear but they would get saved.

So I caught my horse and started off, without being invited, to go to the cottage meeting. On my way there I met a bright Christian gentleman by the name of Mr. George Marshall. I said to him, "What kind of people are these who read the Bible and sing hymns and have prayers and such like?" He said, "You will find them pretty right; go and hear them." He got off his horse and went

under a bridge and prayed earnestly to God to save my soul that night. I proceeded up to the house, knocked at the door, and was welcomed in. When they sang, I tried to sing; when they kneeled down, I kneeled down; when they read the Bible, I listened; and when the meeting was over, I had got nothing for my poor aching soul. When I got up to go, Mr. Chrystall followed me outside and said, "How do you feel?" I replied, "I feel wretched and miserable, and I wish I had never been born. He said, "I am glad to hear it." When he said that, he could not have pierced me worse had he taken a two-edged sword and thrust it through me. Then he asked me this question, "Suisted, do you believe that Christ died to save you?" I said, "Yes, I believe that Christ died to save me." He said, "Are you saved?" "No," I replied. "Then you contradict yourself," he said. I thought the matter over to myself, and said, "Well, I have contradicted myself, but I am not going to say I am saved when I am not." He then said, "I will come and pray all night with you." But I said, "It is no use, Mr. Chrystall."

Then I got on my horse and, putting the reins on his neck, said to him, "Now you can go, and I don't care how fast you go, or how slow." And he went very slow. The

roads were very muddy, and the horse went plop, plop, through the mud. When I got to the bridge where Mr. Marshall went under to pray for me and ask God to save me that night, I looked up to heaven and out of the depths of my soul I cried to God to show me what was right. And what seemed like a voice said to me, "Why can't you say you are saved—why can't you say you are saved, after what Christ has done for you?" I said, "I will take Christ *now* as my Saviour," and immediately I saw, as in a vision, the person and image of the Lord Jesus nailed hand and foot to the cross. I was born again, born of God, there and then, at about 10 o'clock at night, sitting on my horse.

I went straight home and preached Christ to my wife, and asked her if she could not see Christ bleeding and dying for her sins, and about twenty minutes after my conversion her's took place. The next morning everything down here bore a new, heavenly appearance—"If any man be in Christ he is a new creature: old things are passed away, and all things become new." Away went the pipe, away went the liquor, away went the cards. These things had no attraction for me now, and I saw that the "friendship of the world is enmity with God," and he that will be a friend of the world is an enemy of God.

Now, dear friends, 29 years have come and gone, and He has kept me, and will keep me to the end. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31). "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. 10:9-10).

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The foregoing account of his conversion was written by Mr. Suisted in 1914. Four years later, on May 26, 1918, after about three months intense suffering of body, he passed away to be with the Lord at the age of 63. The following particulars, taken from a Christian magazine, will interest the reader:

"The late Mr. Suisted had a great love and zeal for souls, and was very faithful in testifying to his neighbours and all others he met. Though not gifted as a public speaker, yet he had an exceptional gift for visiting and personal dealing. Of a good presence, free manner, and kindly nature, he won his way everywhere, and many have professed to be saved through him. He could approach the most refined, and be at home with the rough-

est. He has suffered vile fellows to spit in his face, whom his powerful arm could have sent flying, finally overcoming them with the Gospel story. He travelled far and wide in New Zealand, and distributed immense quantities of tracts and booklets, having no respect of persons, and the record of his labours is now on high. Latterly it was much before him to visit the Chatham Islands, but the Lord took him instead.

Visiting him some days before his departure, he showed much joy in the reading of Philipians 3:20-21, and asked for it again. Likewise portions of John 14, especially verse 27. His spirit exulted in the thought of seeing the Lord soon, as John 20:20, Revelation 22:4, and 1 John 3:2 were slowly read; and after a pause he repeated with emphasis, "We shall be like Him!" He said he had always put both sides before sinners when dealing with them. His intense bodily pain seemed to deepen his conviction of the sufferings of the damned and he referred to the need of warning the unsaved. "Tell the believers," he said, "to trust much in the Word of God; much in the precious blood of Christ, His sacrificial and finished work on the cross—it has been all my trust." He tightly clasped our hand for some seconds in a last earthly farewell, till we meet again around the Lamb

who was slain to redeem us to God by His blood.

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Reader, there is a God in heaven who cares for you; a God who loves you and desires to save you from the destiny to which your sins are carrying you. He has opened wide the gates of heaven, and from His throne of grace an invitation comes ringing down to you. God invites you to His home, His feast, His arms of salvation, and His great love. The death of Jesus, God's beloved Son, was the cost—the mighty price paid that you might have salvation. To reject this Saviour is certain and “everlasting destruction.”

“Without shedding of blood is no remission” (Heb. 9:22). Divine justice demanded full and complete satisfaction. Only the death of the Lamb of God could atone for sin, and set God free to be a Saviour-God. But Jesus' blood has flowed beneath the stroke of justice, and His blood cleanseth from all sin. God is fully satisfied with the work He accomplished at Calvary, for He has raised Him from the dead. And He freely offers pardon to the worst of sinners.

This door of escape stands wide open for all, and God beseeches all to enter in and be saved; but if men deliberately turn their backs upon it, choosing their sins and the way of death instead, the blame lies at their own doors, and they must reach the end of the road they have so madly chosen for themselves, and at the end of the road is hell—the only just consequence of the deliberate rejection of God's salvation, God's Christ. "Be not deceived, God is not mocked; whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

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