

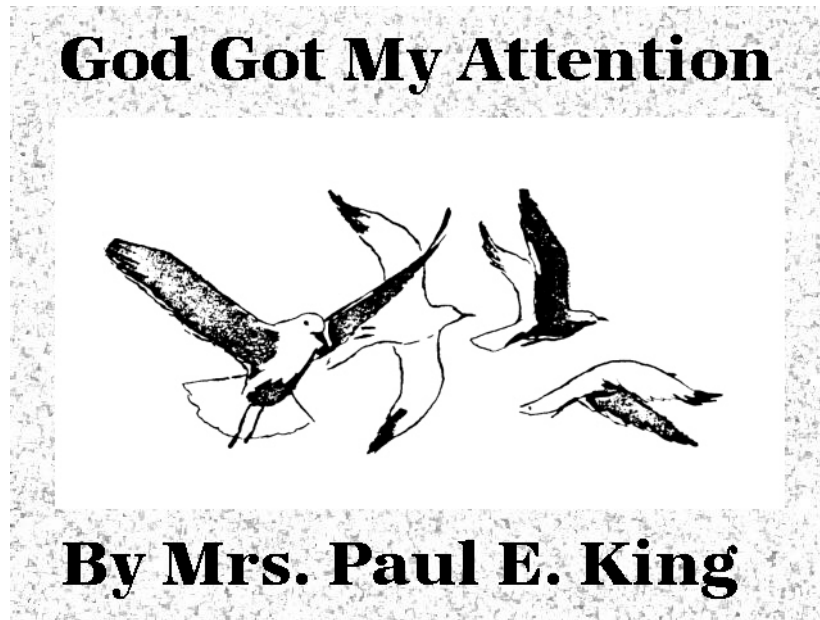
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GOD GOT MY ATTENTION
By Mrs. Paul E. King

I guess if I had to mention one thing that shook me more than anything ever in my life it would be an experience I had one sunny-bright day when I was alone in the mountains. Being in the mountains was nothing new for me since I spent most of my leisure time in the mountains. They were every bit as much a part of my growing-up years as were my parents and my brothers and sisters. I loved the mountains; I felt we sort of belonged together. Now

there's nothing wrong with this; loving and enjoying the mountains, I mean. But when one goes, well. . . .

But say, first let me introduce myself and give you a bit of my background before I elaborate upon my shaking, eye-opening experience. I'm William Kent Addamson -- call me Bill, please. I am one of seven children in the Addamson household. My parents are neither wealthy nor poor; they're what we today term as middle class. Now many people can be included in this middle class slot and, in this, my parents are pretty ordinary. There are other areas, however, in which they are not ordinary. Not at all! You see, both my father and my mother are God-fearing, Bible-believing and Bible-honoring Christians.

All my life I have been taught the Bible and its meaning and its value to me. I learned that those who believed in and followed its Divine precepts and teachings were blessed; those who mocked it, made light of it and disregarded its words, were regarded as fools and God would judge them, ultimately. I knew this; all of it. And I believed it. I believed God's Word was Divinely inspired by holy men of God who were moved upon by the Holy Spirit to pen what was given them from God. I believed this great and wonderful Book was infallible and totally without error. Again I reiterate, I believed it all: Every single word contained within its 361 pages, which is the page content of my Bible (not including the concordance at the back of the Book nor the section containing "Helps to the Study of the Holy Bible," also located at the back).

We were taught to honor our parents. I did. We were also taught to respect each other and, in honor, to prefer one another (Rom. 12:10). I knew that the soul that sinned would die and go to the lake of fire unless he repented of his sins. Conversely, I knew that he that was born again -- of God -- was God's child. Like I said, I knew all these things. From infancy, my parents "trained up" their children in the way of the cross; the way of salvation and holiness of heart and life. I knew the way perfectly and, as a young boy, I made my way to a mourners' bench and was converted and, subsequently, I sought for a holy and a clean heart.

I got through my four years of high school fine, and with honors. No problem there. When I got into the studies at the university in our area, however, it was different. How very different! Things began cropping up in the textbooks and in the classes so fast until there was no way I could keep up

with them; things diametrically opposite to my former years of Biblically sound training by my God-fearing and holy parents. And the sad thing is that, by and by, after having the "logic" (so called) of these textbooks drilled into my mind and my way of thinking day after day, well, I found that I was imbibing and ascribing to their philosophy. Furthermore, I knew that my grades were dependent upon the answers from what the textbooks stated and not upon what I had been formerly taught. Simply stated, my academic prowess would plummet radically and drastically should I do anything less than ascribe to what was being taught, or to answer the test questions in any way other than what was stated in the textbooks.

My roommate was a rank agnostic and a real heathen. I learned this the first week of rooming with him when I tried witnessing to him about Jesus. Talk about getting "slapped down" verbally! I never heard anything like it in all my life. And when I read my Bible and knelt for prayer each morning and again before retiring at night, he became infuriated and carried on like a wild man. Within three weeks he found a student more to his liking and, with permission from the president of the university, he moved. This made things easier for me, but then the textbooks and my professors and teachers began their "barrage" of the same philosophy and way of thinking as Brian held and believed in.

I made my first serious and grave error when I tried being passive to all I was hearing and studying. God's true soldiers cannot be passive when confronted with error and sin or unrighteousness; they must take a stand for righteousness. I had hoped that things would change and get "more on track" -- God's track. Instead, it got worse. Several times I thought of quitting, going home and changing my major and starting out upon a new and totally different course in life from the one I was pursuing. I didn't, however.

I graduated with honors, earning the degree for which I worked so hard and studied so diligently and untiringly. But I broke my parents' hearts by forsaking the "old paths" and removing the "old landmarks," which are timeless and enduring and have eternal values which never change.

It was during my second year of law practice that my secretary called me on the intercom to tell me I had an urgent long distance phone call from one of my sisters; I was to call her immediately.

I got finished with my client as quickly as possible then dialed Evalene's number and was on a plane to my parents' home before nightfall -- Dad was in critical condition in the hospital. Heart, they thought.

Six hours later I was on my way from the airport to City Hospital, five miles distant, in the rental car that was ready and waiting for me when I deplaned. I was nervous and anxious, wondering if my dear father would be alive when I got there. I had no worry about where he would go when his final breath left his body; I knew where he'd be. Yes, I knew. There was not ever the slightest shadow of a doubt in my mind but that Dad would be carried to Heaven by a host of shining angels. And me?

I thrust the question quickly from my mind as the teaching from the university crowded in in loud replay.

I spent a day and a night at the hospital with Dad, and my mother and brothers and sisters, when it was decided that, since Dad was slightly improved and that both Mother and I were in dire need of sleep and rest, I should take Mother and go home; we would be called if there was any change and if it were deemed necessary.

It was wonderful to be in my room again and to sleep in the old familiar bed with the same beautiful stark-white quilt covering it. Mother had made that quilt years before -- solid white. The "pattern" on the quilt was outlined/quilted in the tiniest, most beautiful and evenly-placed stitches ever. The quilt would be mine when I married, if I wanted it, she had told me years ago. It -- the quilt -- was emblematic, she had said, of the purity she had expected from me, in both heart and life. This was Mother's special gift to each of us children, and each of us received the same verbal emblematic significance of the white quilts. Mine alone remained on the bed in the old homeplace; the others were all gone: I alone was unmarried. I wanted to wait until I had more of my school debt repaid.

Mother slept late that morning; I was up early. I tiptoed down the stairs, made a cup of coffee and two pieces of toast, then hurried outside, wanting to have a good look around the place where I had a wealth of treasured memories, before we would leave for the hospital again.

Almost without realizing where I was going, my feet took the dear old familiar path through the orchard and on into the mountain. It was a beautiful

morning, almost like the sun was pouring warm liquid gold down upon the earth. A chorus of bird songs floated to my ears from everywhere, it seemed, and for a long while I stood like one hypnotized. I had forgotten how movingly exquisite and beautiful their singing could be. Tears flushed from my eyes. I was amazed.

I climbed the mountain, taking much the same route Dad and I used to take, until I came to sort of a plateau where I sat down on a mossy mound. Wild huckleberries hung dead-ripe on the loaded bushes. I grabbed them by the fistfuls and ate them hungrily, regretting not having a bucket or a pail in which to take them back to the house and my mother.

I leaned my back against a beech tree and sat quietly after eating my fill of the deliciously-sweet berries. I wanted to hear the voices coming from the tree tops and from the forest floor. I closed my eyes and listened. It was pure happiness; I felt almost like I was a boy again: a boy sitting beside his father, listening, and learning lessons never found in a book.

But wait! What was that discordant note? It was completely out of harmony with the joyous songsters around me. Where was it? What was the reason for the frenzied sound of fear?

I opened my eyes and what I saw sent chills racing up and down my spine. Near me, beneath a huckleberry bush weighty with ripened berries, was a small bird flitting about and chittering for all it was worth; only a short distance away, with smooth, silent glides, a rattlesnake was approaching the frenzied, panicky bird.

I felt my blood go cold. Fly away! Fly away! I wanted to shout. But I, like the bird, was momentarily hypnotized. I could scarcely believe what I was seeing.

Closer and closer the snake approached and closer and closer the bird seemed to be drawn to the visible fangs. I feared for my own life or I would have jumped to my feet and grabbed a dead limb and killed the fearful thing. But I knew that the slightest movement on my part could have the deadly viper strike me.

I sat motionless, watching the scenario unfold before my eyes, knowing the ultimate outcome of the scene unless a miracle took place.

It was suddenly all over and as the snake slithered away and I realized that I was free to move and to get up, a voice reached from Heaven to my soul and let me know that I, like the bird, was under Satan's hypnotic spell and charm and that unless I repented and turned about-face and came back to God, I would be consumed in my error and sin by Satan. And that, soon!

I didn't pause a moment to rationalize or to philosophize; no indeed I didn't! I had an eye-witness account of where I was heading and of what my ultimate end would be unless I acted quickly and speedily. I saw how utterly wicked and foolish I had been to have abandoned the faith of my father's and to have strayed from the old landmarks.

To say I was startled is an understatement; I was rigid with fright and with fear -- of God's impending and soon-to-be-poured-out judgment and punishment on my soul.

With beads of perspiration trickling down my face and from my forehead, I hurried away from the low underbrush lest I encounter yet another snake, and fell on my face before God in a clearing beneath an evergreen. I poured my heart and soul out to God in brokenness and deep contrition, and in His wonderful mercy and grace and love, He freely and miraculously pardoned my transgressions and saved my soul. I was once again back in the shelter of God's arms and in the safety of His fold. It was gloriously wonderful.

That was several years ago. Today, because of that never-to-be-forgotten episode and experience in the mountain, my anchor holds fast and is secure in the atoning, soul-saving, heart-cleansing blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I moved closer to my parents and attend a holiness church like the one in which I was brought up. I will praise Him forever and ever for getting my attention and for settling me once again upon the Solid Rock, Christ Jesus.