

The Romance of the Doctor's Visits

by Dr. Walter L. Wilson

Copyright © 1935

by Moody Press

Moody Colportage Library #162

THE PREACHER FOUND CHRIST

Occasionally, the call of the pulpit reaches the mind and heart of an unsaved young man, who sees in that work a great opportunity for helpful service. He enters a seminary, studies the Bible and allied subjects for four years, is graduated and receives a "charge" in some city or village where he begins his public ministry. Such was the case of a minister about forty years of age, who visited me in my office one Monday morning about ten o'clock.

A Christian friend had driven many miles from a neighboring city to bring his pastor to see me. All night long, the pastor had walked the floor, read the Word, prayed, and conversed with my farmer friend concerning his own need of meeting CHRIST. He was introduced to me as the Rev. Mr. C-- from G-- City. After the introduction, my friend left and we two were together in my office with the Bible and the Lord.

"Tell me about yourself," I said, "so that I may know what line of thought to pursue, in seeking to help you."

"I am pastor of the C-- Church in G-- City, where I have been now for four years. Altogether, I have been in the ministry for fourteen years. I graduated from the seminary and have never been without a pulpit since that time."

"About six months ago," he continued, "I began to search my heart to see why there were so few conversions under my ministry, and why it seemed so difficult for me to pray. The more I looked into the experiences of my heart during the past twenty years, the darker I seemed to get in my soul. I wrote to my superintendent about my distress, and he replied that I was simply restless in my spirit, because I did not have enough to do. He suggested that I should begin a building program and get rid of the old structure which was very old, dusty and dirty, and build an attractive new place."

"What this the case?" I asked. "Do you think that a new building would give you peace?"

"No, certainly not," he answered, "and I wrote at once to my superintendent, telling him that what I needed was not activity, nor a new building, but a new experience in my heart. I received no reply to that letter."

"The reason I have now come to you is this: Last night, at the close of the service in my church, one of my church officers came to me, and said, 'Pastor, why is it that when you preach nothing happens? You have been with us now for several years, but we see no tears in the audience, no

broken hearts over sin, and really you do not teach very much of the Scriptures. What is wrong?"

"I felt that I had kept up my hypocrisy too long and should not continue it another day. 'My brother, it is because it has never happened to me, I answered him. I have never been really converted myself. This has been a burden on my heart for some months, and I give you my word that I will never again preach in this pulpit, or any other, until I have found CHRIST for myself and experienced in my own soul that change of heart which I have been preaching about to others, with so little success.' That, doctor, is why I am here to see you this morning."

This confession from my friend at once presented to me a difficult problem. Here was a man who knew the Bible fairly well, had received four years of training in the study of it, had preached on its texts for fourteen years, and still was in profound darkness and ignorant of the way of salvation?

"How shall I begin with you?" I asked. "You are well acquainted with the Bible."

"Just begin with me," he said, "as you would with a heathen. Just forget that I know anything at all about the Bible and start right at the beginning of the Gospel story. As you tell it to me, I will find where I have missed the way; so just start in."

"We will begin our conversation," I said, "by seeing your need of this Saviour. Let us read GOD's indictment in Romans 3:9:19."

**"What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;
As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:
There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.
They are all gone out of the way,
they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.
Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips:
Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness:
Their feet are swift to shed blood:
Destruction and misery are in their ways:
And the way of peace have they not known:
There is no fear of God before their eyes.
Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law:
that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God"**

We read the passage through carefully. After each verse I asked him, "Is this true of you? Is this what the Lord thinks of you?" We spent quite a little time on those verses because his heart until then was really not ready to admit that he was that bad.

"This is not what I think of you, my friend, it is what GOD thinks of you. If GOD in His love, tells us what He sees in our hearts, we should bow to it. We should not set our judgment of ourselves in opposition to GOD's revealed judgment of us."

"No," he said, "that is right, and though I had not thought until now that I was that bad, I accept His accusation and confess my guilt."

We next turned to Romans 5:6, which reads, "**When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.**"

"Are you helpless?" I asked him, "and are you the ungodly one -- quite unable to help yourself?"

"Yes, that describes me," he answered. "I know that only the Saviour can save, and I want Him to save me this morning."

We next read "**For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.**" (John 3:16) and "**Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life**" (John 5:24). Both of these verses were explained to my preacher friend in some detail. The explanations did not bring light to his heart, nor peace. His countenance remained sad.

The HOLY SPIRIT was working in his heart, and we realized His blessed presence. I quickly prayed to Him for wisdom and guidance, and then turned to John 1:12, where we read together this passage: "**But as many as received him, to them gave He power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.**" With this verse we joined I John 5:12, where it is recorded: "**He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.**"

These two Scriptures were used of the Lord to bring the light to his darkened heart. "That," said he, "is the very place where I have missed being a Christian. I have read about CHRIST and believed what I read. I have preached about CHRIST and believed what I preached, but I have never made Him my own. There never was a time when I went to CHRIST JESUS personally and told Him that I would take Him as my Lord and Saviour. But I will accept Him just now. He knows that my heart is hungry and I believe His Word which says: '**Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out**'" (John 6:37).

Two years later, when I met this pastor again in a different city at a Christian Endeavor Conference, he greeted me with unusual affection and said: "Not only do I have the peace with GOD myself, but the Lord is now saving souls through my ministry constantly."

Are you, my friend, seeking to preach or teach without first having been saved yourself? Do take JESUS CHRIST NOW. He will save you and you will be His own child.
