

The Romance of the Doctor's Visits

by Dr. Walter L. Wilson

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THE WORST WOMAN IN THE CHURCH

Sunday night had come, and the meetings which had been widely advertised were ready for the opening service. The church was crowded. Even the platform, the stairs, and the aisles were filled to capacity. The choir was in its place, the leader of song was on the platform, and the pianist seated at the piano. As I sat beside the pastor on the platform, my attention was attracted to the lady at the piano because of her distinguished appearance, and the evidences of culture and wealth which she presented.

The first hymn was announced, and as the beautiful song was played, I noted that the pianist was one of no mean ability.

"Who is the lady at the piano?" I asked the pastor.

"The worst woman in the church," he said. "She certainly causes me more trouble than any other person, and I wish she were not here in this meeting."

I was not expecting such a reply as this concerning one who seemed to be so able and so attractive. Continuing my question, I asked, "What is the trouble? In what way does she disturb you?"

He answered quickly: "Being a prominent woman in our city, she exerts a great influence on the people of this church."

I could readily see that the woman could do either a great deal of good or harm by her leadership. He continued: "This lady teaches one of the classes in our Sunday school, -- a class of young matrons. She leaves the church after teaching her class and does not attend the church service, but goes to the theatre, enjoys card parties, and is just as much interested in worldly things as in spiritual, and even more so. She is a bad example to all the members of this flock. I can do nothing with her. She will not listen to counsel."

It seemed quite a sad situation to me and so I suggested to the pastor that we slip into his study while the preliminary song service was continuing so that there we might pray together for this leading lady.

"No, I do not care to go," the pastor said; "I have prayed for her and with her; I have pleaded and argued. I have preached against worldliness in her presence, but none of these things touch her, nor change her. I wish she were not in the service at all."

"Is it possible," said I, "that there is a lost soul in this congregation who should not be here -- one who is so hardened that even the living CHRIST cannot reach her heart? I will go and pray that she may be the first one to be saved."

The pastor's study was quite handy, so I slipped in alone to plead with the Lord that He would make the "worst woman in the church" the very best. When I returned to the platform, it was time for my ministry to begin. I observed that the pianist was forced to remain on the bench, because there were no seats available. Every place was filled. For the first fifteen minutes of the message she paid little or no attention. She had been to many meetings and listened to much preaching, and rather considered that none of it was of interest to her.

The message that evening was an exposition of the Gospel. I sought to tell the story from the Gospel of John of the value of the Lord JESUS CHRIST to the needy soul. A story caught her fancy and attracted her attention. The illustration seemed to appeal to her, and throughout the remainder of the service she listened attentively. I was especially stressing John 3:36 -- "**He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.**" I mentioned that it was possible to believe very much about the Son without believing on the Son Himself; that it was possible to believe the facts without accepting and appropriating them.

At the close of the service, our friend left the church without speaking to the pastor or to the evangelist. We wondered if she would return. She did return Monday night and requested one of the ushers to save her a seat in the middle of the front row. After the song service was ended, she came over and sat down immediately in front of me and listened closely to the message on "Justification." The text was Romans 5:1 -- "**Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.**" To this text was added the ninth verse -- "**Much more than, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.**"

This message evidently deepened the work of the night before. She listened closely all through the service, and at the close shook hands with the speaker, but did not wait for a personal conversation. With the soul stirred, she returned Tuesday night and again requested that a seat be reserved for her as before. The message was given on Ephesians 2:8-9 -- "**For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.**" Her deep interest was quite manifest now, and she did not lose a single word of the message.

Wednesday night arrived, and by that time the pastor saw the great change which had taken place in her attitude, and observed that she was following the message closely; so now he was happy to join me in prayer that that Wednesday night might be the night of decision. Our friend did not leave the piano that evening, for some one had taken the seat she had reserved and there was no other place to go. After I had spoken a few moments, she dropped her head in her hands and did not again look up throughout the service. The Lord was working in her heart. Some on the platform were praying while I was preaching.

At the close of the service, I hurried to her side -- for she was still sitting at the piano, and I found she was weeping.

"May I help you?" I asked kindly.

"Yes," she said, "I am a hypocrite and a terrible sinner, and I would like to have peace in my soul from GOD."

It was not possible, in the midst of the crowd, to have a quiet, personal talk with her, so I took out a card and wrote on it three Scriptures -- John 3:36; John 1:12; and I John 5:12. Handing it to her, I said: "Please read these when you go home in the order in which I have written them. The first Scripture tells you of GOD's gift, the second one tells you to accept the gift, while the third one tells you the blessing that results from accepting the gift. Please read these on your knees alone with GOD, and then tell me tomorrow night whether you have accepted JESUS CHRIST and whether He is now your Lord and Saviour."

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36))

"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" (John 1:12)

"He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." (I John 5:12)

We prayed much that evening that the Word of GOD would be effective in her heart. When she returned Thursday night and took her place at the piano, we could see a wonderful change had been wrought in her heart. the radiant face, the buoyant step, the joy in the playing, all told the story in no uncertain terms. At the close of the service, she hurried to us to tell how, in the upper room at home, she had turned her heart and soul to CHRIST, and had within her heart the **"peace which passeth understanding."**

Are you active in the church, my friend, and yet a hindrance? Are you a professing Christian without having CHRIST? Are you busy in the service of the KING without being the child of the KING? Do come to that Saviour now and He will save you to the uttermost.
