

STRANGE EXPERIENCES OF THE DOCTOR

by

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

GRACE IN THE BUTCHER'S SHOP

Mr. and Mrs. Harris own a very attractive grocery store in a Western city. They, with their grown daughter, take care of the trade and are well-loved in the community. All three are devoted Christians, and never lose an opportunity of seeking the glory of their blessed Lord and the blessing of their fellow men. Their kindly manner and their earnest zeal have provoked many to a life of greater usefulness, and to a desire for more godliness.

One day as I was visiting the neighborhood of the store, I went to visit these friends, and to leave a short message from the Scriptures for the encouragement of their hearts and as a help to their faith. I found Mr. Harris in the butcher's shop, which was at the rear of the grocery store. He was cutting off some slices of ham for a customer, a young lady who was standing at the counter waiting for her purchase.

After greeting Mrs. Harris, I passed on back to speak to Mr. Harris, who said, "Good morning, beloved brother, I am so glad you came in to-day. I love to have you stop for a word of greeting, I am sorry that I cannot shake hands with you for my hands are greasy with this meat. I want you to know a very good customer of mine, Mrs. Grace Black. She visits my store usually twice a day, always pays cash, and never complains. It is a great joy to have a customer like her. I wish there were more of them."

Turning from him I stepped over to the counter and said, "Good morning, Mrs. Black. It is a pleasure to meet you, and Mr. Harris has certainly given you a very excellent reputation. May I ask you whether the Lord Jesus has washed you white?"

Mrs. Black wore a hat with a very wide brim which completely covered her face as her head drooped forward slightly. She said without looking up, "I know you, Dr. Wilson, though you may not know me. When you held meetings in the Presbyterian Church up the street, I attended every one of them and enjoyed the preaching very much,"

This was interesting to me, because I did not remember seeing this lady at all in the services. Usually I remember the faces of those who attend a service more than three or four times, but this friend had in some way escaped my attention.

I asked the Holy Spirit for wisdom, and then said to her, “I am so glad that you came; I cannot remember that you came forward during those services and expressed your faith in the Lord Jesus, or confessed that He was your Lord and Saviour. Did you do that at any time?” (Romans 10:9).

Because her head was bowed and the brim of the hat was broad, I could not discern her face. I could see, however, that there was some agitation going on in her heart, and that I had struck a responsive chord with this question. She slowly shook her head from side to side, and said, “No, Dr. Wilson, I am very sorry to say that I did not make a confession at that time. I should have done so, and have been sorry ever since that I permitted the opportunity to go by unheeded.”

I readily perceived that this friend was a lady of some culture and refinement. She evidently had been trained in her thinking, and was not to be easily led into a path that she did not understand, or that she did not fully approve. Our dealings with souls must be arranged and planned according to the kind of heart that is before us. Paul said that **“we must be all things to all men, that we might by all means save some.”**

This lady was so near the door of the Kingdom that a wee bit of fear came over my heart lest I should do or say the wrong thing, and thus hinder her faith instead of helping her. The presence and the ministry of the Holy Spirit was again invoked as I paused a moment to receive from the Lord the proper words to answer.

“Mrs. Black, the Lord Jesus will wash you white right now, if you wish. You did let the opportunity go by unclaimed over at the church, but since your heart has been sorry for it, and since there is in your soul even yet a desire to know the Lord Jesus, I would counsel you to accept Him right now” (John 1:12).

As I thus spoke with her, I saw a few tears falling on the counter before her. Her hands were trembling a bit as she took the handkerchief to dry her eyes. It was not necessary to use many words. The Lord was working, and that was sufficient. The thought of getting saved in the butcher’s shop was so strange to her, and so foreign to her conception of Christianity, that she seemed a bit startled by the suggestion.

“You don’t mean to tell me, Dr. Wilson, that I can be saved here in this butcher’s shop, do you? I thought people had to get saved in the church, and by going forward at the invitation of the preacher. This plan seems all so strange to me. Are you sure I can be saved here and now?”

“Quite sure,” I answered quickly. “I myself was saved on a street corner in front of a saloon. I have seen a man saved on the railroad track outside the town, I have seen a doctor saved in my own medical office, I have seen a farmer saved out in his wheat field, and I have seen the Principal of a High School saved right on the platform in the High School auditorium. Certainly you can be saved right here and right now.”

Such a glorious opportunity presented so suddenly rather shocked Mrs. Black.

She had never thought that salvation could take place so quickly. In her mind salvation was a process, a program to be followed out, an arrangement of certain rules or things to be done. She hesitated for a few moments because of the new truth presented to her. I saw that there was some hindrance in her mind, and so I sought to explain to her that God's salvation is a gift.

- In John 3:16 the gift is *the Lord Jesus*.
- The gift in Romans 6:23 is *eternal life*.
- The gift in John 14:27 is *peace*.
- The gift in Acts 2:38 is the *Holy Spirit*.

In every case that which God has to give us is a gift, and a gift may be taken in a moment.

I sought to apply this truth to her personally by saying, "Mrs. Black, God is offering to you right now, this very moment, here in this butcher's shop, the gift of His own blessed Son. You may accept that gift right now. With Christ, God gives you every other thing that your heart needs; salvation, eternal life, forgiveness, peace and rest will all be yours as soon as you take God's wonderful Son to be your own Lord and Saviour" (Romans 8:32).

"Is that all there is to it, Dr. Wilson?" she inquired. "Is there nothing at all for me to do? This seems to be too easy. There must be something else to do, because I want to be sure that I am saved and do not want to make any mistake."

Of course, this friend had been deceived by Satan into believing that we must have some part in the saving of our soul.

It is the general teaching in religious circles. Even the very wicked themselves have a feeling somewhere in their hearts that they can make up for their sins by a certain amount of religious ceremony. Some will go very early in the morning to carry through a religious program demanded by their Church, and then with a satisfied conscience will go away to live as they please. Others will enter a life of self-denial, mistreating their bodies, and devoting their time to religious observances in the hope of thereby putting away some of their sins.

"No, Mrs. Black, there is nothing else to do. God has said that salvation is NOT OF WORKS. A dead man can do nothing to obtain life, and we read in Ephesians 2:1 that the sinner is dead in his sins. A condemned man can do nothing to obtain a pardon. The Lord Jesus said, '**He that believeth not is condemned already**' (John 3:18). A guilty man can do nothing to clear his record and destroy his guilt; only the blood of the Lord Jesus can blot out sins (I John 1:7). You can see how helpless you are, my friend. If you do not accept God's salvation as a gift, then you will never be saved, because you cannot buy Heaven or forgiveness or a place in the glory with anything that you have to give, or by anything that you can do. If you should try to buy salvation from God, you would be bribing the Judge, and bribery is a terrible sin."

All of this time, while I was thus explaining the Word, Mrs. Black was silently weeping as the struggle went on in her soul. What a blessed sight it is to see one with whom the Holy Spirit is dealing, bowing submissively to the precious Word, and opening the heart to the call of God.

“Would you not like to accept this wonderful gift of God this morning, Mrs. Black? He will save you if you will take Him. Do you realize that it was for you that He was dying at Calvary, and that it is for you that He is living in the glory? Every blessing must be applied to the heart, and Christ will be your Saviour when you take Him for yourself.”

The Holy Spirit was revealing to this friend the truth of the Scriptures. Only He can do it! We can tell it, but the Spirit must make it true and real to the heart. The seed that had been sown a year before in the meetings at the Presbyterian Church had matured and ripened, and now the grain was ready for the gathering.

Mrs. Black lifted her head until I could see her face beneath the broad brim, and I saw that deep earnestness which presages a victory. “Yes, I will accept the Lord Jesus, Dr. Wilson. I have always thought of Him as a Saviour for everybody, but now He is my own Saviour I trust Him with my own soul.”

Thus the Lord Jesus revealed Himself, and Mrs. Black was washed white. Are you?

~ end of chapter 11 ~

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