

STRANGE EXPERIENCES OF THE DOCTOR

by

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CHAPTER THREE

“IF I ONLY KNEW WHAT WAS RIGHT”

These words were spoken to me by a lady at the close of an afternoon service in one of our western cities. She had been attending my meetings for several days and had listened very attentively to the story of God’s grace as it was given. She had taken notes on the messages each day, and this pleased me, for I knew then that she was not a careless listener.

The occasion for the above remark came about because she remained after the service and requested an interview. It was a pleasure to grant her desire because she evinced such a deep interest and her face revealed the turmoil that was in her soul. As I sat beside her in the pew I was greeted with the words which form the title of this story.

“Tell me what is going on in your heart,” I said.

It is always well to let your friend do the talking when the acquaintance has just been newly made, because in this way you will be able to diagnose the case and ascertain just what is going on in the heart of the person with whom you are speaking.

Mrs. Jarvis was quite willing to open her heart in response to my inquiry. “Yes, I would like to tell you the battle that is going on in my soul,” she answered. “The messages you have been bringing have caused me to search my heart and life to see why it is that I have had so little joy in my religion, and so little peace in my faith. I have been quite attentive to religious matters since I was a girl. I have been very active in Church life and Church work. I learned the catechism and was baptized by sprinkling when I entered the Church. Somehow nothing ever seemed to happen within my soul as I went through these various steps. I have thought all along that I believed the right things and still I do not know what is the right thing to believe.”

It was quite evident that Mrs. Jarvis was in a muddle in her mind. Her orthodoxy gave her no peace. Her faith had not wrought a miracle in her heart. Her religion had not affected her soul. How often this is the case! Young people attend confirmation classes, are taught many of the good, basic doctrines of the Bible, become more or less familiar with Bible theology, and then after sprinkling are received into the Church as members.

Nothing has happened in the heart; no new life has been imparted; no regeneration has taken place. The sinful nature has been made religious; the old life has been spiced with Church life and good desires, but perhaps the Holy Spirit has not entered and made that boy or girl a new creature in Christ.

I asked my friend, "In the story that you have told me, why did you omit the Lord Jesus? You said nothing at all about His work or His lovely Person; you only told me what you did and how you felt. Does the Lord Jesus not have any place at all in your conversion?"

"Oh, yes! Of course, He died for sinners, and we must believe if we are to be Christians."

"Quite right," I said, "but what are we to believe? Tell me in your own words what, in your judgment, constitutes saving faith?"

The reply which Mrs. Jarvis made to this question is quite typical of those who have been raised in similar surroundings, and it reveals the tragic darkness in which these dear friends are enveloped and from which very few of them ever escape. Her reply was, "One must believe the Bible, all of it; one must believe that Jesus died to save sinners; one must believe that there is a God and that sinners will be punished."

You will recognize at once that this is a faith in facts which are undeniable and which are, of course, essential. It is not, however, the conclusion of the matter. I might describe to you the various ingredients of a loaf of bread, tell you how it was baked and where the wheat grew. If, however, I should fail to give you the bread to eat, you would have learned much but profited little. You must eat the bread to obtain the strength it gives.

I called the attention of Mrs. Jarvis to the fact that believing that certain things are true will not produce any blessing in the soul unless those facts are applied to the soul. Because her answer was lucid and correctly given, I felt free to begin at once to apply the facts to her own heart. "If the Lord Jesus came to save you, my friend, when are you going to let Him do it?" I asked.

This seemed to be a new thought to my hearer, and she paused a moment in meditation before saying, "I would like very much to have Him do this for me whenever He is willing. I wish He would do it. What should I do to bring this about?"

I answered her, "You are still thinking about something that you are to do, Mrs. Jarvis, and I want you to turn away from yourself entirely to think of what Christ has done and is doing for you now. Do you know for whom He was dying at Calvary?"

It is always well to turn the sinner's eyes away from self, whether good or bad, and cause the gaze to rest on the Lord Jesus. The devil would like to hide from the eyes of the seeking sinner the sufficiency of our wonderful Lord Jesus Christ.

- It is His Word that reaches the heart.
- It is His work that satisfies the demands of the law.
- It is His person that meets the need of a hungry soul.

We should always turn the attention of the sinner to Christ Jesus Himself. I sought to do so in the case of this Church member. She was quite willing to hear, and really desirous of learning. Hungry hearts will be fed and thirsty souls will find the Water of Life when they turn to Him.

The thought of applying the work of Christ, and of appropriating His Person for herself, had evidently never entered the mind of this lady. She knew that it was a general matter, but had not been satisfied in her soul. Of course, it was for this reason that she had no peace in her heart. She said to me, "I had never thought about that angle of it. Please explain to me what you mean by a personal application. I am so anxious to do what I should, and I do want to be right, so please give me all the help that you can, Dr. Wilson."

In a situation such as this, proper illustrations are necessary to carry home the application of the truth. I replied to her question with some stories. The first one was concerning the physician, and I said, "You know that I am a physician, Mrs. Jarvis, but I am not your physician. I suppose you believe that I am a good doctor, able and efficient, and yet I am not your doctor. Why am I not your physician?"

She replied, "Because I never engaged you, nor turned my case over to you."

"You are right," I answered, and I will never be your physician unless you turn your case over to me personally."

I had another story to illustrate this same truth, and so I continued. "There are buses in this city, Mrs. Jarvis, and they are for everybody. Anyone who wishes in do so may ride in them. I am sure you will agree with me that no amount of believing in these buses will take you to the city, unless you get on them, and commit yourself to one of them." Of course, she saw that this was true, and understood the application quickly.

There was a time of silence following this conversation in which my friend was meditating on this new truth which had been presented to her heart. There is a time to keep still when dealing with souls, in order that the Holy Spirit may do His own good work in the heart without hindrance.

It is a wise thing to deal father slowly with cases that are under conviction. We should permit the truth of God to penetrate and permeate the soul when God is speaking.

Turning to me, Mrs. Jarvis said quietly, "I believe that I see where I have made the mistake in my Christian life. I have thought that a correct knowledge of the facts was sufficient. I have tried to find rest in assuring myself that I believed everything that was told me and everything that I read in the Scriptures, What I really needed, and now need to-day, is to apply those truths to my heart, and I wish to do so. Please tell me how I shall do it."

This blessed opportunity and privilege was quickly appropriated, and I opened my Bible to Galatians 2:20, calling the attention of my friend particularly to the expression, "**Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.**"

I pointed out that the Apostle Paul spoke as though the Lord Jesus belonged entirely to him, had died just for him, had laid down His life that he might live. Paul made a personal application.

I also read to her Second Timothy 1:12, “**I know Whom I have believed.**” This again was a personal application. I urged her personally to accept the gift of the Lord Jesus, to trust her soul individually to Him, and to claim from Him the gift of Eternal Life.

It was a great joy to my heart as I saw the light dawn in the mind and heart of this troubled soul. The Holy Spirit revealed to her that Christ Jesus had come for her and to her. She trusted her soul to the Saviour that afternoon, and the peace of God filled her heart.

A few days after the incident just mentioned, Mrs. Jarvis came to me with such a happy heart and said, “Christ is real to me now, Dr. Wilson. He is not only a Saviour for everybody, but He is my Saviour, and my heart is filled with peace.” You trust Him too, my friend.

~ end of chapter 3 ~

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