

The Romance of the Doctor's Visits

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THE HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER WAS CHANGED

During the course of a revival meeting in the Memorial Church, a group of friends attended regularly in a body and sat near the rear of the auditorium. It was quite evident that the message had been of such a character they it instilled a deep interest and aroused some surprise in their hearts.

The ministry followed the lines of salvation by grace alone, without human merit or personal virtue. The text chosen one night was: "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" (Ephesians 2:8-9). On another night, the text was taken from Romans 4:5 -- "**But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justified the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.**" As the interest of these friends deepened from night to night, they were led to move forward a few rows.

At the close of the first week, a lady who seemed to be the leader of this group, approached me with the statement: "This Gospel which you preach is a new one to me. Being a Sunday school teacher in a church in another part of this city, I have been active in Christian work among young people. I am also a school teacher in the public schools of this city. Your messages from night to night have caused me considerable self-examination, and I think I am beginning to understand the reason why CHRIST has seemed so far away from me, and why I have experienced so little in the way of spiritual results in my church work. I fear I have never been saved at all."

The earnestness of this friend, together with her frank admission of failure, assured me that the HOLY SPIRIT was effectively working in her heart.

"What are you depending upon for salvation, Mrs. B--?"

"I do not know that I am really depending upon anything," she answered. "I know that it is right to be religious; I strive to be good; I seek to be as useful as possible in the church; and for that reason I suppose that GOD will be kind and merciful to me."

Do you find anything like that in the Bible?" I asked. "What Scriptures would lead you to think that GOD will forgive you if you try to be good? Where have you read in the Bible that religious activities and desires for good things are sufficient to blot out the sins that you have committed?"

She looked puzzled for a moment. That she must find her instructions in the Bible seemed an entirely new thought to her.

"I will look it up," she said, "and when I return another day, I will let you know."

She did return Sunday and Monday and on through the week, but avoided giving me the opportunity of speaking with her -- leaving immediately, with the others in the group, as soon as the service closed. Throughout the meetings, she paid close attention to the messages, turning up the passages in her Bible as they were quoted, and checked up the speaker continually. Not until Friday night did the burden of her heart impel her come forward for further help.

At the close of the meeting on that night, I observed Mrs. B-- coming towards the front of the auditorium and so I made an opportunity for a personal conversation with her. Stepping to one side where we might be quiet, she said rather impulsively: "I am ready now to be saved. These two weeks have caused me to examine my heart carefully, and my life as well, and I find that all I have is religion. It has been a good religion and orthodox in every way as far as I can find, but there never has been a personal meeting with CHRIST in my experience."

Seating ourselves, I turned to the Scriptures and read to her: "**Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us**" (Titus 3:5).

"Do you suppose that this passage is true?" I asked her.

"It must be true," she replied, "although I never knew before that such a statement was in the Bible. Even now I do not understand it. It seems to me that if I do not work for salvation I will never get it. Do you mean that I should just do nothing at all to be saved? If I quit trying to be saved, will GOD save me anyway?"

This statement caused me to turn to Romans 5:6, which reads: "**When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.**"

"You will never be saved, Mrs. B--, until you acknowledge your helplessness, your weakness, and your inability to save yourself."

Her response to this statement was one that I have often heard, and one that is very commonly made by those who do not see that CHRIST JESUS alone is the Saviour from hell and the GIVER of eternal life: "But doesn't the Bible say somewhere that 'faith without works is dead'? Doesn't that mean that we should believe what the Bible says and then do all the good we can, in order that we may be saved?"

"Yes," I answered, "the Bible does make that statement in James 2:20, and two examples are given in that chapter of the kind of works referred to. Neither one of the examples, however, is the kind that you have in mind. The two incidents recorded there tell of a wonderful faith and confidence in the Word of GOD and the will of GOD. The good works that you are picking out, such as helping the poor, caring for the sick, looking after the various kinds of church work and such like, only prove that you do not believe in the salvation that is in CHRIST JESUS, but that you believe that salvation is by works and not by CHRIST at all."

"I can readily see that so far nothing I have done has produced any change in my life. I have never received eternal life, although I have often read about it in the Bible, but never understood

what it meant. I pray and work but seemingly it is without result, and certainly does not bring any peace or joy to my soul. It must be that there is something wrong with my faith and that I am on the wrong track. Do explain this 'Grace' business more fully to me."

Such a cordial invitation was not to be refused and I undertook to call her attention to CHRIST and to His cross. The passage chosen for our consideration was I Peter 2:24, wherein we read: **"What his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree."**

"Whose sins did He bare, Mrs. B--?"

"He must have borne mine," she said, "for there is no other Saviour, and certainly He will never return to die again for me. How strange that I never saw that passage before. Is this truth found anywhere else?"

We then turned to I Peter 3:18, and read: **"Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God."**

"May I ask you again, Mrs. B--, for whom was JESUS dying, and for whose sins was He suffering? Do you know?"

The thought that JESUS had died for her own personal sins was such a new experience to the heart of this friend, that she seemed staggered by the wonderful revelation. It seemed too good to be true. She read and re-read the passage several times, thought carefully of each word, and then said: "I see now what I have never seen before, that CHRIST JESUS came to save me, and to put away my own personal sins."

"Then will you just now tell Him that you believe Him, and accept Him as GOD's gift to you? He says in John 1:12 -- **'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.'** Let us look, too, at this passage in John 3:36 -- **'He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth on the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.'**"

The work was finished in her heart, and so she said, "May I come to CHRIST just now and tell Him that I trust Him, and that I take Him for my very own?"

"Yes, indeed," I answered quickly, "I am sure His heart will be filled with joy as He hears you tell Him of your faith and trust."

We knelt together and with deep emotion, she said: "Lord JESUS, you have been wonderful to me. You have borne with me through the years, but in my ignorance I stayed away from you, and did not know that I could come to you as a guilty sinner. I do come now, Lord JESUS, and take you as my own Saviour and Lord. I believe you have blotted out my sins with your precious blood. I love you and trust you."

The heart that had been in the dark was flooded with light. The soul once dead in sins had received eternal life. The life heretofore fruitless was not on the threshold of a life of blessing and power.

Perhaps others who read this message may be passing through a similar experience. Is there a question in your heart as to why you lack peace; why the things of GOD are so difficult to understand; and why so little fruit is evident in your ministry and labors? Go to the Lord JESUS CHRIST quickly. He is GOD's remedy for every need of the human soul.
