

The Romance of the Doctor's Visits

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THE LODGE ORGANIST SAW SOMETHING

An undersized Englishman came to the United States some years ago to make his home and his fortune. He was a brilliant little fellow who had been trained in the tailoring business. Mr. P-- was a very religious man, had been quite active in the little church where he was raised just south of London, and of course sought a church connection when he came to the city of L--.

Other friends had come from the same English city and had settled in L--, so Mr. P-- felt that he would be among friends and old acquaintances in his new location. The friends who had preceded Mr. P-- to this country were real believers in our Lord JESUS CHRIST. They knew the experience and joy of the new birth. These friends, however, did not believe that Mr. P-- had ever passed from death unto life, nor had a personal experience with the Saviour. When our friend applied for membership in the church at L-- he was rejected by the elders on the ground that they did not believe in his conversion.

This decision on the part of the church leaders rather embittered Mr. P--, and a separation came about between himself and those whom he had hoped to be associated with. Being disappointed in this endeavor, he joined a certain heathenistic lodge in the city and decided to throw his influence, talent and time into this new line of work.

Mr. P-- was quite a talented musician. This talent was soon recognized by the lodge members and he was elected as organist for the lodge. It was his duty to play during the bestowal of the various "degrees." He did this work so well that year after year for a period of twenty-five years Mr. P-- continued to serve in this capacity.

During the services required in one of the programs, the master in charge of the initiation would say, "Take Him away and crucify Him." Mr. P-- had often heard those words, for many candidates went through the lodge. The words had never impressed him particularly, they were only part of the ritual with no especial meaning to his heart.

Through a peculiar combination of circumstances, I had been brought rather often into the presence and company of Mr. P--. Sometimes I had the joy of being in his home; sometimes the meeting was on the street by accident. Each time my friend would remark on the harsh treatment he had received from those whom he thought were his friends. I would then seek to help him to understand the Gospel and to really trust the Saviour. None of my efforts seemed to bear fruit, for Mr. P-- was quite occupied with his own goodness, his clean life, his religious activities, and other attitudes which he was convinced would be assets in the sight of GOD.

One day word was brought to my office that Mr. P-- was quite ill in his home and was hardly expected to live. Several of us began to pray to the Lord would reveal Himself to the heart of this earnest man. The news that came from his bedside was not encouraging, until one day my telephone rang and I recognized the voice at the other end as the voice of my friend.

"I am getting better, doctor," he said. "I have had a wonderful experience and as soon as I am able I shall come down to tell you about it. Will you be in the city for a while?"

"Yes, Mr. P--," I replied. "I am so glad that our prayers have been answered and that we shall soon have the pleasure of seeing you again. I trust it will be for the glory of GOD."

About fifteen days after this conversation, Mr. P-- walked into my office. He was very frail and pale, showing plainly the ravaging effects of the disease on his body. He was about sixty years of age and not at all robust. The disease had well nigh taken him away. He seated himself beside by desk, trembling with emotion and with tears in his eyes.

"Walter," he said, "you know I have held a grudge against you and against others in the church because you never would accept me as a Christian. You did right; I was not a Christian; I was just a religious sinner. I am so glad that you were honest with me. Now I am saved and I have come to tell you how it happened."

As I sat looking into the eyes of my good friend, his white hair, his emaciated form, his intense earnestness, stirred my heart and I silently praised GOD for His wonderful love to this aged one at the end of his life.

"Do tell me about it, Mr. P--; I shall be so glad to hear the story."

"It was this way," he said. "As I was lying on my bed, terribly sick, I seemed to be in a trance or a coma, when there appeared before me quite plainly a cross. It seemed to be on the top of a hill standing out alone and silhouetted against the sky. On that cross there seemed to be a large shapeless black mass of something. It was terrible to look at. There was no form to this black object; it just seemed to hang limp and loose there on the cross. It frightened me and I was aroused.

"I could not get that vision out of my mind, while over and over again I said to myself, 'What does it mean? What is that black mass and why is it on that cross?' It seemed that each time I would fall off into a doze I was seeing that peculiar vision. It frightened me and drove away my sleepiness. Suddenly, as I lay thinking about it, those words came to me which I had heard so often in the lodge, 'Take Him away and Crucify Him.' And then the thought came to me, 'Why did they take Him away and crucify Him? Why did He need to die?' Wasn't it strange, Walter, that I never thought of that before? Now those words seemed to burn themselves in on my heart and I could not get rid of the question. My mind, of course, was not very active, due to my illness, and the effort sent me back into a drowsy semi-conscious condition. Again the cross and the black mass loomed up before me and wakened me."

The vision and question attached themselves to each other in the mind of Mr. P-- and he pondered over both of them together. The HOLY SPIRIT was watching this process. The SPIRIT of GOD was the author of both the vision and the question. The Lord had His eye on Mr.

P-- and was reaching out His arms to gather him into His fold.

Mr. P-- continued: "It seems strange to me that I could not figure out what that black shapeless thing was on the cross, nor could I understand why they took JESUS away and nailed Him to a cross. All at once the whole matter became clear in my mind. That shapeless mass was JESUS, covered all over with my black sins. The guilt of my life and the wickedness of my heart were all there covering CHRIST on the cross. They took Him away and crucified Him, so that He would put away my sins. Walter, I cannot tell you how deeply my soul rejoiced when I saw that wonderful truth. I had never seen it before. The death of CHRIST never appealed to me as a personal blessing for myself, but then and there, lying in my bed, I said: 'Oh, Lord JESUS, I worship you! You were dying for me. You were covered with my sins. You have blotted them all out, and I am saved'."

Mr. P-- leaned forward over my desk, extended his hand, and with deep emotion and with sobs, said: "Walter, I am your brother now; you can really accept me as a Christian now, for JESUS has saved me and my sins are gone."

He did not live very long to tell the story, but for three years before the Lord took him home, he witnessed in the lodge, in the church, and to his many business friends. His testimony was clear and enthusiastic. GOD made him a blessing to many.

Friend, perhaps you, too, are in the lodge with no Saviour and no forgiveness of sins. Will you not come to the Lord JESUS CHRIST as Mr. P-- did, and make Him your own personal Saviour?
