

STRANGE EXPERIENCES OF THE DOCTOR

by

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CHAPTER TWELVE

THIS CLERK TOOK INVENTORY

I shall tell you the story of a sudden transformation which took place in the heart of a young lady at the notion counter of one of our large Eastern department stores.

It was my privilege to be preaching in that city near the Christmas holidays. I entered this great department store in order to purchase some presents for the dear ones at home. There was no information desk near the front door, and therefore I stepped over to the counter to make inquiry of the young lady concerning the department where I might find the articles I wished to purchase. The clerk was very amiable and kind. She was placing some figures on a ruled chart that lay before her on the counter.

I waited a few minutes until she would look up, for I did not wish to disturb her work, especially since I did not intend to purchase anything from her. My presence near her was noted in a few minutes, and the young lady looked up with a smile and said, "May I do something for you, sir?"

I replied, "Yes, I would like to be directed to the department where I will find such and such an article for sale,"

She was quite willing to give me the information, and did give me the instructions that would lead me to the proper counter on the third floor of the building.

I apologized to her for stopping her work and said, "Are you taking inventory to-day?"

She replied, "No, sir, I am just preparing my sheets, and am entering the names of the articles I sell in order that I may be ready when we do take inventory. We take inventory on Sunday, because on that day the doors are locked and we are not bothered with customers."

At once the Spirit suggested to me that here was a probable prospect for heaven. I acted upon the suggestion at once, and said to her, "Are you not sorry to miss the church services on Sunday?"

"Yes," she replied, "I am sorry, but of course when I am working for the company I must do what they say. When they select Sunday for inventory then I have to stay here and take it."

“My, but I am sorry that is the case,” I said. “Tell me, little lady, did you ever take inventory of yourself?”

The expression of her face was most interesting. She gazed at me in a rather peculiar way, and did not reply for a moment because of the shock of the question. Her answer was deliberately given, but calmly she said, “Yes, mister, rather frequently I take inventory of myself, but it isn’t a pleasant job, because I always come out on the wrong side. I do not know why it is, but I simply cannot be as good as I know I should be.”

I saw at once that here was another heart which had been touched by the Spirit of God through some of the past years and had left in that soul some realization of a need and a lack. She did not know what it was, but she did know that she fell far short of God’s requirements.

This was such a splendid opportunity that I immediately laid aside the thought of going upstairs for a purchase in order that I might seek to win this friend for our blessed Lord. I leaned over on the glass case with my Bible in my hand and said to her, “My friend, there is a way for you to change that record and present to God an inventory that is absolutely perfect and one that He will gladly accept. How would you like to present to God a perfectly sinless life?”

A gleam of hope appeared in her face, followed by shadows of despair. “There is no use my trying that,” she said, “I have tried my best to be a Christian and found that it simply will not work. Every time I take inventory and see how bad the record is I am determined to live a different life and to be what I should be. It just isn’t of any use. I cannot be good, not even as good as I want to be, let alone as good as God says I should be.”

I was touched by the earnestness of this young lady. She was really exercised about the matter, and was not a careless listener. It was a joy to watch her face as thoughts flooded her soul, thoughts of her failures and thoughts of God’s holy demands. I said to her, “My friend, you may have a perfect life even now to present to God. God has made it possible for you to get rid of all of your sin stains, the faults and the failures, and to have a record in heaven of perfect righteousness, and one which meets all of God’s requirements.”

She came back at me at once with this statement, “Mister, you do not know me. If you knew me you never would say anything like that. I simply cannot live as I should. I cannot resist the call to sin. Some way or other my resolutions disappear when the right kind of temptation comes. Please do not make fun of me by telling me that I can live right when I know that I cannot.”

“You are quite mistaken, my friend; you did not really understand clearly my message to you and perhaps I did not make it plain. I did not say that you could LIVE a life that would be acceptable to God, but I did say that you could HAVE a life that is so blameless and so pure that God will accept it from you and give you a place in glory with Him.”

This interested my friend deeply, although I could see that she did not believe a word of it. She had never heard of the righteousness that I was referring to. It was all a mystery to her, and her mind was darkness itself.

“Let me explain to you,” I continued; “God has provided for you a godly life which you did not live, a righteousness that you cannot make, a holiness that is absolutely pure, and this wonderful blessing may be yours this morning right here behind the counter in the store.”

The astonishment of this young lady was greatly increased by this statement, and she answered quickly and with some feeling, “I never heard of such a thing. How can anybody be righteous unless they live that way? How can anybody be good when they are not good? I don’t understand you at all. This is the strangest thing I have ever heard.”

I now opened my Bible and read to her Romans 4:6, **“David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works.”**

“You see, little lady, the Lord does have a righteousness for us which you may have without working for it. It is God’s righteousness obtained because Christ lived a sinless life and died a sufficient death. If you will just now trust this lovely Lord Jesus, God in heaven will give to you the perfectly beautiful, sinless, stainless life of the Lord Jesus Christ. He will reckon your sinfulness to the Saviour and His righteousness to you. Christ takes your place. Christ was made sin for you that you might be made the righteousness of God in Him” (II Corinthians 5:21).

My friend listened very attentively. There was no resentment there. There was no repulsiveness toward my effort and no repudiating of my message. She continued to listen quietly, saying nothing. I took advantage of this lovely attitude, and said further, “May I give you another illustration of this blessed truth? Suppose that you were a very poor girl, receiving small wages and helping to support an aged mother. You lived a beautiful life. You were attractive in your personality. Your poverty had not led you away from the path of rectitude, but your life was above blame.

“Now suppose, further, that some very wealthy man would come along, a man worth millions of dollars in cash with a beautiful mansion and everything your heart could wish. He would happen by chance to purchase something from you and would be attracted by your graces. Now remember you are very poor and he is very rich. Your charm attracts this wealthy gentleman and he proposes that you would become his life companion. This proposal you accept most gladly. It seems too good to be true and too wonderful.

“Suppose now that the papers to-morrow morning come out with the pictures of both of you taken at the wedding, and with the announcement that you had become his wife. Tell me, my friend, would you not at once be a millionaire? Could you not go into the society where he is welcome and there find yourself quite welcome? Would you not have unlimited credit at the stores so that you could purchase expensive jewelry, fine furs, silk dresses and have them charged to his account?”

The clerk saw the logic of this, of course, and at once agreed that she would be all of this because of the standing of her husband. She would have imputed riches, imputed social standing, imputed credit at the stores. She would have this because she belonged to him.

I now applied this truth to her own heart and said, “It is the same way with our blessed Lord. The moment you trust the Son of God, the Father will impute to you the glories, the beauties and the perfection of His Son. You will be in God’s family because you belong to His Son. You can go where He goes because you are His own. Then when you take inventory you will not look at your righteousness at all, but at the merits and perfections of the one you have married, or trusted, the perfect Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 4:5, 6, 7).

It was as though the sun had shined into the darkness and the darkness did comprehend it. She saw for the first time how she could take inventory and find Christ dwelling in the soul, and have perfect peace and rest. What a joy it was to show this precious soul the Gospel of God’s rich grace and to bring her to a saving trust in Christ Jesus the Lord.

It may be that the reader of this story is in a similar position. Let me say to you freely that you may have Christ Jesus also, and He will give you the righteousness of God.

~ end of chapter 12 ~

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