

## The Wrong Address, But the Right Persons

by Walter L. Wilson, M.D.

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The train had just entered the boundary limits of a great city, when the porter aroused me from my deep sleep and informed me that we would soon be in the depot. There was no time for reading the Word, nor for a season of prayer, for the train had come to a stop by the time I was fully dressed and all the passengers were leaving.

Because I intended spending only a day in that city, I checked my baggage at the station, took my sample case and went at once to the office of my customer. At four o'clock, after completing our business transactions together, I left him and started back to the station. Because I had been deprived of my morning period of meditation, this lack of spiritual food and preparation caused me to feel not only heavy of heart, but disappointment filled my soul as I walked down the street.

A large hotel was located on that street. Entering, I went up to the mezzanine floor where I sought to be alone with the Lord. I confessed to Him my failure that day, my neglect of prayer, and also my omission to read the Scriptures. I then asked Him whether in His infinite grace He would not find some way to give a message through my lips to some troubled heart in that strange city. Having waited on the Lord a while, I felt convicted that He would find some work to do through me that evening.

About 5:30, while sitting in the coffee shop, the Lord reminded me that there abode in that city the son of a friend of mine who lived out West. I knew that this son was not saved, and at once accepted it as from the Lord that I should visit this young man and give him the gospel. Obtaining a telephone book, I soon found his address and decided to call at his home. Arriving there, I found a duplex building with his name on a plate by the door leading upstairs. I rang the bell which opened the door, permitting me to enter the hall. At the top of the stairs stood a young woman who inquired what I wanted. I was not surprised to see a young woman, for I had been told that my young friend had recently been married.

"Is this where Charlie Johnson lives?" I asked. "I am a friend of his and came to visit him."

"Yes, come right up," she invited, very courteously.

As I reached the top of the stairs, she escorted me into a very attractive living room, nicely furnished, but dimly lighted. On the opposite side of the room, stood a lady and a gentleman whom she introduced to me as the sister and brother-in-law of Mr. Johnson. Taking my overcoat and hat, I was invited to be seated, whereupon I inquired whether or not Charlie was at home.

My heart was impressed with the opportunity presented of giving the gospel, and I was much in prayer that the Holy Spirit would give the right words and would guide in the conversation. In reply to my inquiry, Mrs. Johnson said: "I am sorry, but Charlie is not at home; he is working nights now."

"How splendid that is," I said. "His business must have increased greatly since he has found it necessary to put on both a day and a night shift."

She looked quite surprised upon hearing this, and said, "Charlie is not in business; he is an engineer and just now is working on a night shift at the city water-works."

"Is not his father a merchant in Logansville?" I asked.

"Why no," she said, "his father is a carpenter and lives in Jackson. I married him there."

A look of astonishment came over all our faces, for it was quite evident that I was in the wrong house. "I cannot understand this," I said, "for Charlie's father told me that he was engaged in manufacturing small motors for washing machines, and that he was doing quite well at the business. It is evident that I doubtless secured the wrong address of my friend. and I shall leave. I trust you will pardon me for intruding, and I am sorry if your evening's visit has been interrupted by my coming."

Mrs. Johnson smiled, while all three of them arose to tell me good-bye. "I believe I know what your trouble is, doctor," she said. "There is another Charlie Johnson who lives at this same number and on this same street, but he lives on the east side of

town and we are on the west side. His home is just forty blocks straight east of us on this very street. I know that his father lives in Logansville, for we get his mail frequently and I have noticed the postmark on the envelope."

This peculiar coincidence caused my heart to cry out to God, for I felt that this visit was planned by the Lord. Many thoughts were going through my mind while putting on the overcoat. Approaching the center of the room to bid good-bye to the sister and her husband, I observed, lying on the center table, a well-worn Bible with dog-eared corners. I knew that dog-ears on books could not be purchased at the bookstore. These come only by long and frequent usage. Picking up the Bible, carefully and prayerfully, I inquired: "Do you read this book, Mrs. Johnson, and do you love it?" At once all three of them became deeply interested. They looked at each other with astonishment, and then at me, as though their minds were stirred to ask some important question. "Yes," she answered quickly and firmly. "We love that Book in this home."

"Have you found out from its pages how you may be saved and know it?" I inquired.

By this time the hearts of these friends were so stirred that they could not restrain the tears. They looked at each other in such a peculiar way that I sensed immediately that some strange thing was transpiring with which I was not familiar. After she regained control of her feelings, Mrs. Johnson asked, "Do you understand that Bible? Can you tell us how we may be saved?"

"Yes, indeed, that is my principal business in life." I assured her. "I would be so glad if I could help you with it."

She urged me to remove my overcoat again and to be seated. We now drew up our chairs near the table, were comfortably seated, when Mrs. Johnson said, "Dr. Wilson, when you rang the doorbell, we three were on our knees, praying that God would send someone to show us the way of salvation. We have been meeting here every Friday night to pray for help. All summer long we have gone to services here and there, and have heard some wonderful messages. Somehow none of these sermons have helped us. What we want to know is how to get rid of our sins and to obtain eternal life. We know that Jesus does it, but how does He do it? Can you answer this question?"

It was not difficult to see that the blessed Lord of the harvest had answered my prayer, and led me to the very place where the Lord Jesus was working and wanted to enter in. Each one obtained a Bible, while I took mine from my pocket, and we all turned to Luke 19:10, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

"It is you three that He came to save," I continued. "Your heart should be very glad indeed to know that God saw your need and provided for you a Saviour who is both able and willing to save. Will you let Him save you tonight?"

Their faces now were aglow with anticipation. They were drinking in every word, and reading the message for themselves out of their own Bibles. Mrs. Johnson then asked: "But how does He save anyone, doctor? That is exactly what we want to know."

Turning to I Peter 3:18, we read aloud: "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." "By suffering for you," I explained to them, "He took the punishment for your sin, He took the whipping you should have had. God made Him suffer for your sins, that you might trust Him with the saving of your soul, and enjoy God's favor and forgiveness."

We then turned to I Peter 2:24, and read: "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." "He bore them for you three friends," I said. "It was your own sins which God laid upon Him and took off of you. God now invites you to accept the Lord Jesus as His gift to you. He is at God's right hand, able to save, and will save you now, if you will trust Him with your soul."

Hesitating here in the conversation, I perceived that these three friends, while observing each other, were apparently meditating as though permitting the Word of God to bring light to their hearts. Presently Mrs. Johnson arose, and said, slowly and deliberately, "We want to take Christ and are ready to accept Him right now; we have just been waiting through these long months for someone to tell us how we could come to Him and how He would save us."

"Let us kneel together then," I suggested, "and tell Him so." We knelt around the table and each one of them spoke personally to

Christ, thanking Him for dying for them and bearing their sins away. They spoke to God and thanked Him for sending Jesus to save them from their sins. What a precious sight it was that night to see these three turn to Christ and find in Him all that their hungry souls longed for!

After we arose, I told them the interesting story of my experience that day; how I had looked to the Spirit of God to plan the evening for His glory. How I had given to Him again my lips and my feet that He might through the use of them find some troubled hearts. We thanked the Lord together for the wrong address where I found the right persons ready to receive the redeeming grace of God.

What a joy it is to the Christian worker when the discovery is made that the Spirit is ready and willing to direct us to that home or that heart where He is working and where He wants us to deliver His message. Let us learn to expect and rely upon His guidance in our daily lives.

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