

## The Intern Was Surprised

by Walter L. Wilson, M.D.

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In one of our great hospitals, there worked a fine young man of about thirty years of age as an intern. He had only recently graduated from an eastern school of medicine. His parents were missionaries in China, but had left the young man at home, after arranging a course of education for him, in college and in medicine, anticipating his return to them on the mission field to labor as the Lord's servant after his graduation.

The faith which the young man professed was the faith of his parents and not his own. When he entered college, he found that this faith was considered out of date. Those in the social circles of the college did not desire his type of Christianity, nor was any conversation on this subject agreeable to his companions. The arguments of infidels and atheists, together with the sneers and the jeers of his associates, soon robbed him of the religion which he inherited from his devoted parents. Not many months after he had matriculated, he renounced all religious faith and became indifferent to his former confession.

During the four years of his college education and another four years of medical training, he drifted farther and farther into ways of worldliness and paths of sin. There was no restraining influence in his life, no one cared for his soul. His fellow-students had no interest in his spiritual welfare; everything about him tended to drive him farther and farther from the Lord. What a tragedy it is that those who are invited into the very heart-secrets of the family, pay so little attention to the welfare of their own souls! An atmosphere of godlessness pervades the halls of most medical institutions, and on commencement day the doctor leaves the college trained in medicine, but practically abandoned to a life in which God and His claims are not recognized. This was the experience of the intern portrayed in this story.

One summer morning, while praying about the matters of the day, I sought the counsel of the Holy Spirit in directing my path, and asked Him to make the contacts which would bring glory to the Lord. It was necessary that I spend part of the morning in the operating room at the hospital heretofore mentioned. We made

preparation for the operation in the surgeon's dressing room, scrubbing the hands, and donning the white suits which were worn on such occasions. The conversation turned to the things of God, and I had the privilege of directing the attention of both the surgeons and the interns present to the things of God and to the Cross of Calvary. It was only a short ministry, for the patients from the wards were being brought to the operating room and must be cared for immediately.

Several days elapsed, in consequence of which I had practically forgotten the incident in the dressing room. While seated in my study, the telephone rang, and a voice said: "Doctor, I would like very much to come out and have a personal interview with you."

"Who is it?" I inquired.

"It is Dr. --," he answered. "I am one of the interns at the hospital. I was in the dressing room the other morning when you were talking about our responsibility to God, and it is concerning that matter that I wish this interview."

I assured him that he would be quite welcome and made a four o'clock appointment for the afternoon, when he would be free from his duties at the hospital.

My young doctor friend was a fine specimen of manhood. Tall, erect, and well poised, one could readily detect the culture and splendid training he had gained throughout the years at college. He seemed tremendously in earnest as he seated himself beside my desk.

"Do you know my father and mother?" he asked. "They are missionaries in China and their names have appeared rather frequently in the press for meritorious services."

I expressed my sorrow as I told him that I had not had the privilege of knowing his parents, nor of reading about them.

"They were very godly folks," he continued. "They taught me the Bible, prayed with me ever since I can remember, and sought to bring me up as a Christian boy, until they went to China."

As the thought of his former habits, compared with his present life, crowded his memory, emotion overwhelmed his heart for the moment and he remained silent. I refrained from interrupting

as he regained his composure. Resuming his story, he said: "When the folks left for China, I entered college as they had instructed and arranged, fully intending to prepare myself for the work of a medical missionary. It was not long until I realized that I was not rooted and grounded in the truths my parents had taught me. The things I once held dear gradually slipped from my grasp, until I abandoned myself to a life of unbelief and sin. Father soon discovered from my letters that I was not going on well, and after more than a year, I finally unburdened to him the whole truth. This nearly broke the hearts of father and mother, for it never occurred to them that their boy would become an enemy of God and a lover of the ways of the world. They began at once to tell me in their letters how they were praying for me, gave me passage after passage from the Scriptures, and sought to turn me back to Christianity. This rather angered me and I determined more than ever that I would not be tied to their apron strings."

"Tell me, doctor," I asked, "what has happened in your life that brings about your present desire to know the Lord?"

"The death of my mother," he replied quickly. "I did not know that she was ill. In fact she became sick very suddenly and died before help could be obtained. It hurts my heart deeply to think that mother passed away knowing that the son of her love was a wayward wanderer, living for the devil. Father's letter told me of her prayers for me right up to the end. It is not right that I should continue as I am. I must get to God. I must get rid of these habits that are wrecking my life. I have come to you to ascertain how it may be done."

Taking my Bible from the desk I turned to Luke 19:10. "Here, Dr. --, is a message which I believe will be a blessing to your heart."

He leaned over toward the desk and we read the verse together: "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." "There is a Saviour for you. It is Jesus. He came to seek you and to save you. He alone can break the power of sin. He only can conquer Satan. He is the life-giver. It is through His blood that you may be forgiven."

"Yes, doctor, I know it," he said, "but I used to be a Christian and turned my back on it. Do you think that God would take me

back again after treating Him as I have done?"

"Yes, I answered. "The father took the prodigal son when he returned. The Lord welcomed Naomi when she came back from Moab. He will welcome you and will save you, if you, too, will turn to Him with your whole heart and will accept the Lord Jesus Christ."

With drooped head, my friend was soon lost in meditation as he thought over the past life, the lost opportunities, the mother who had died with a broken heart, the father whose hopes and ambitions for his son had been blasted. He was considering also the price that he must pay should he make a decision for the Saviour. He would be exposed to the sneers and the jeers of those whose lives were given over to personal gain and sinful satisfaction. As he meditated, I prayed, asking the Holy Spirit to do His good work in this troubled heart. I knew that only He could reveal Christ to this man and bring peace through the saving power of Jesus Christ.

The young doctor weighed the case from every angle. He thought of what the future held. He knew that judgment and condemnation lay at the end of the road that he was traveling. Knowing, too, that he was lost and that Satan was his master, he trembled at the thought of meeting an angry God, after all the opportunities he had neglected. Suddenly he looked up, and with intense earnestness said: "If you will show me how to come to Christ, I will come right now. I am ready to pay the price. I am ready to be a Christian out-and-out. What shall I do?"

I turned to John 3:16 and read the passage aloud, and quite slowly: "'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' God has given Christ to you, doctor. It is your privilege to accept that gift. Christ will save you. He will blot out your sins. He will write your name in the book of life. No one else can do it. God has given Christ to you. Will you take the gift just now? Will you tell God that you do accept His Son?"

"Yes," he replied, "I will do so at once."

He knelt beside the wicker chair near my desk and I knelt also with him, as he poured out his heart to God in thanksgiving and praise.

I was struck with the note of thanksgiving in his prayer, when he said: "I did not know, God, that You were so good. I did not think that You would let me come to You after treating You as I have. I thank You for sending Jesus Christ to save me. I accept Him as Your gift to me. I believe He died for me and has blotted out my sins."

As we arose to our feet, he remarked: "I must send word at once to my father. How glad he will be to know that his prayers and mother's tears have not been unavailing! How I do wish that mother had lived to see and know that I have been saved! I wonder if God took my mother away to bring me to my senses. What a terrible price to pay! How the Lord must have loved me to follow me up as He has and to love me so freely!"

The doctor returned to the hospital, resumed his duties as an intern, and at the close of the year left the city to serve the Lord in his chosen field. The parents prayed in China; the Lord answered in Kansas City. The Holy Spirit knows neither time nor distance. He works out the will of God and reaches hearts in His own blessed way. How we should wait on Him more often to do His blessed work in the lives of those we love!

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