

## **The Romance of the Doctor's Visits**

by Dr. Walter L. Wilson

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### **WEIR SEIR OF THE PRISON**

In the center of the old gray prison-yard, stands a brick building which has been converted into a chapel. It will seat about eight hundred men, and is often filled when men of GOD from time to time bring to these inmates the message of salvation.

One Sunday afternoon, on a dark and dreary day as the rain was falling, the men congregated in the auditorium to hear a message from the Word of GOD. The black prisoners sat on one side of the center aisle and near the front. There were perhaps two hundred of these, the white prisoners filling up the remainder of the room.

In one corner, near the platform, a choir arose to sing, as each hymn was announced. Strangely enough, in the choir there were groups from both the white and the colored races. Some were old and some young, but all dressed alike in prison garb. A group of Christians assembled themselves on the platform, prepared to render the service of prayer or song, or the ministry of the Word, as the leader might request.

As the meeting progressed and the time came for the sermon, I announced that the subject for the hour would be found in Matthew 11:28 -- "**Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.**" One of the prisoners in the colored section, I observed, was paying very close attention. He heeded not those at his side, who at times were joking and calling attention to the peculiarities of other prisoners; but his attention was riveted altogether upon the minister and his message..

The earlier part of the sermon was devoted to the preceding verse, in which the Lord JESUS said, "All things are delivered unto me." I called attention to the fact that what they had tried to obtain in paths of sin, they could receive as a gift from CHRIST JESUS the Lord. They were reminded that because the heart is hungry for many things, GOD gave CHRIST to supply that hunger and to satisfy every craving of the heart.

Frequently during this part of the message, Weir was seen to hang his head, as though agreeing with the fact, and remembering with sorrow his path of sin. He had found that the "way of the transgressor is hard." His life had not been an easy one, having been cast upon his own resources for some years. Although he seemed to be not over thirty-five years of age, yet in those few years he had seen much of sorrow and sin.

Far distant, in western Kansas, Weir had been arrested upon a rather serious charge, and being without friends or money, was soon sentenced to serve a term in the state penitentiary. Having

been an inmate in the prison for three years at the time of this incident, he would soon be eligible for parole, although he realized that when he was paroled he would be expelled from the country as an alien. In his young manhood, he had stolen away from Liberia, NW. Africa, and made his way on a tramp steamer to the great United States, because he had heard that gold lay in the streets and wealth was the portion of all who came. Such was his hallucination and his subsequent disappointment, that for a livelihood he resorted to the business of robbing by day and by night, which of course led to his final apprehension.

As the sermon continued and verse twenty-eight was explained in detail, Weir realized that CHRIST was calling him to Himself. It was not religion he needed but CHRIST, who alone could satisfy his restless, sinful heart. The "all" was stressed, and he realized that it included him. "**Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden,**" appealed to his heart as a personal invitation for him to come to CHRIST with his sins and his sorrows. He had been seeking peace for many years, being heavy laden with guilt and sorrow of a life of disobedience; wanting rest and surely needing rest.

When the invitation was given, Weir did not immediately respond. He remained seated, unable even to indicate that he would like to come to the Saviour and trust in the efficacy of His precious blood. Others professed to make CHRIST their own, but we were disappointed in Weir, for he did not come and would not accept the Saviour. Ours was a feeling of grief and disappointment over his failure to respond, for he seemed to be the most interested one in the congregation; and to all outward appearance, he listened with intelligence and seemingly understood the message as it was presented.

At the close of the address, the guards dismissed the prisoners, and immediately they formed in line to return to the cell houses. In one of these lines stood Weir Seir with bowed head. He passed out with the crowd, and we returned to the city to pray that the HOLY SPIRIT would finish in that dark heart the good work which He had begun. After a few days, I found it necessary to go to the Pacific Coast and left word in my office that personal mail be forwarded. Two days following my arrival at my destination, I received a letter from Weir in which he related the wonderful story of his meeting with the Lord in his cell.

As soon as he left the chapel that Sunday afternoon, he had gone to his cell, took his Testament and found Matthew 11:27-28, which he read while kneeling beside his bunk. His burdened heart yearned for that Saviour, and his guilty soul wanted to hear the JUDGE say, "**Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.**" He said to CHRIST: "You told me to come, and I am coming right now. You said you would give me rest, and I have come for it. I believe you do have everything I need, and that you will pardon and forgive me right now. Here I am, Lord; I accept you and I give myself to you." What peace and joy filled his heart, only his own lips could tell! The burden rolled away and was lost at the foot of the Cross.

Shortly after this happy meeting with the Lord, the warden sent word to Weir that he was eligible for parole if he wished to apply for such, having served the required time. So great was the change in Weir's life, that it was quite noticeable to the other prisoners, who began to call him nicknames, such as "The Parson," "The Preacher," "The Good Man," etc. Not only were scoffers attracted to him, but others with hungry hearts and darkened minds sought him out to find the way of salvation. When word reached him that he might apply for parole, he asked for and

received permission to see the warden personally. There in the warden's office, he related the story of his conversion and requested permission to remain the full length of his term, in order that he might be of the greatest possible help to those with whom he was associated.

The warden granted Weir's strange request, and during the remainder of his term, the Lord blessed his testimony to many hearts. When he was finally discharged from the prison, having completed his full time, a government officer met him at the gate of the prison and informed him that he was to be deported as an undesirable alien. Weir had never been naturalized, therefore the government sent him back to Liberia, -- a procedure which is constantly followed with aliens who receive prison terms.

Weir rejoiced in this procedure, and wrote me a wonderful letter of thanksgiving to GOD for the privilege of returning to his native land with his fare all paid, a new suit of clothes, and with some money in his pocket which has been given him by the government authorities. In Liberia today, Weir Seir is preaching CHRIST, teaching the Bible, and winning souls for his Lord and Saviour. In one of his messages, he said: "How I thank GOD that He permitted me to be put in prison. While I roamed around the United States, no one cared for my soul; no one spoke to me of CHRIST. In the prison, however, the Lord sent His servant with the message of salvation, and I heard of JESUS CHRIST who loved me in spite of my sins, and saved me both from the penalty and the power of my wickedness."

Let me urge every friend to read carefully Matthew 11:27-28, and see if you, too, may not find there the rest and the peace which CHRIST so freely gives.

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