

HIS TOUCH HAS STILL ITS ANCIENT POWER

by

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CHAPTER FOUR -

PERSEVERANCE IN PRAYER

"And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint (lose heart)" (Luke 18:1)

Shortly after my conversion a senior schoolboy was shown into my room.

"Good afternoon," he said. "My name is Peter Shelton; the vicar suggested I should come and see you. I have just become a Christian, and thought I'd like to have a talk with you." We had a chat together concerning the Christian life.

"Have you any brothers or sisters, Peter?" I said.

"I have an elder brother, Matthew - Matt we call him." "Well, what about trying to win him for CHRIST, just as Andrew won his brother Peter."

"Oh, that would be impossible. He'd never be a Christian. Father and mother will be angry enough about me turning religious, but if I tried to persuade Matt, well, he'd just laugh and they'd be mad."

"Peter," I said, "Do you believe GOD can answer prayer?"

"Yes, I'm sure He can."

"Well, why not join me in praying for Matt until he comes to CHRIST." Peter promised he would.

A very difficult time followed for him. His parents were terribly opposed to his new way of life. On one occasion his Bible was destroyed, and a photo of his Bible class leader was torn to shreds. I called to see his mother one day, and was firmly shown the door. "You have ruined one of my sons, but thank goodness you'll do nothing with Matthew! He at least is man enough to drink his beer and enjoy himself! Nothing namby-pamby about him!" Matt himself was bitterly opposed to the Gospel message, but in spite of this we prayed on faithfully, remembering that our GOD is the GOD of the impossible.

Matt's conversion certainly seemed more impossible as time went on. In due course he joined the

Army (this was some years before the war), where he found the discipline very irksome. Some months later Peter told me that his brother had deserted, and the authorities were unable to trace him. We learned then that he had escaped abroad, working his passage under an assumed name. He tramped to almost every country in the world, and, having turned his back on the SAVIOUR, sank into sin of every kind. Still we prayed on.

It was some years later, during my first visit to the United States, that the bedside telephone rang early one morning at my hotel in Philadelphia. "Hello, is that Mr. Tom Rees?"

"Yes, who is speaking?"

"You'll be surprised when I tell you that this is Matt Shelton." "Matt Shelton?" I exclaimed in surprise. "Peter's brother!" "Yes. I've just managed to contact you. My ship sails to-day, and I must see you at once."

"By all means," I said, "come and have breakfast with me." Although it was some years since I had met Matt, I could see as soon as he stepped into the hotel lobby that something had happened to change him more than the mere passage of time. As we shook hands warmly, he said, "Before we go any further, I must tell you that I have at last trusted the SAVIOUR."

He told me the long story of his wanderings. It was one of sin and degradation, but this is how it ended.

"I was absolutely at rock bottom. I hadn't had a square meal for days, and only possessed the clothes I stood up in. I had been travelling all night on the back of a freight train, and when the train stopped in the morning my fingers were so numb with cold that I could scarcely leave go of the rail. When the cop came and turned me off the railway siding, I found I was in Chicago. Hardly knowing what I was doing I walked straight to the first house, knocked at the back door, and asked the young lady for some bread.

"She looked at me and then said, 'What you need more than bread for your body is the Bread of Life for your soul. Come in and I will give you something to eat.' She made me very welcome, gave me breakfast, and on our knees in front of the kitchen fire, she pointed me to CHRIST."

Matt sailed for England, and gave himself up to the authorities. A lenient view was taken of his case, and before long he was free to tell "**how great things the Lord had done for him,**" and to "**publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter.**"

~ end of chapter 4 ~
