**THE FUNDAMENTALS: A TESTIMONY TO THE TRUTH**

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Every man, I believe, if asked to record his own spiritual experiences, would be ready to acknowledge that in his case at least - while he. owes very much to the holy zeal of some beloved relation or friend - the work of the Holy Spirit was so wonderfully carried on that none but Divine wisdom could possibly have met and overcome the needs which arose from day to day, from the moment that he was first "convinced" or convicted "of sin" and made to realize his true position before God. At all events, in seeking to record my own personal experiences (as I have been earnestly requested to do, or I would never have thought of so writing) I can only marvel and rejoice at the wonderful way in which God so graciously provided for my spiritual wants as they arose. The one real wonder in such a case is that the love of God could continue to exhibit itself towards one who so ungratefully sought to resist it, till at length He has enabled "even me" to say from the heart:

"Higher than the highest heaven,

Deeper than the deepest sea,

Lord, Thy love at last hath conquered;

None of self, and all of Thee."

To my honored parents I owe practically more than I can tell. From my earliest youth I had every spiritual advantage and help. I cannot doubt that, in after days, the instruction received from both their words and example did tend to make me obedient to the voice of God in my soul. Indeed, I could never give way to temptation without sore prickings of conscience; and especially after my confirmation (for which I was prepared by Dr. Boyd, afterwards Dean of Exeter) I went through pains and sorrows for a time whenever I had sinned against the light.

But neither warnings nor pleadings had any lasting effects, till at length in the autumn of 1856, while I was residing with Mr. Jenkins, Vicar of Hazlewood, Derbyshire, as a private pupil before going to Cambridge, I was invited to stay for a night at Osmaston Manor, the splendid home of the late Mr. Frank Wright. In the evening his son (to be later the Rev. Henry Wright, Hon. Secretary of the Church Missionary Society) - at that time just entering manhood like myself - asked me to go with him on the roof to see the moonlight effects.

His invitation was with a purpose - for he was even then "a master" in soul winning; and though I cannot now remember any particular arguments that he used, I know that he sent me to my room deeply moved with the sense of my own folly and sin in giving my life to the world instead of to God. Next morning he gave me a Bible (for I had not, I believe, taken one to my tutor's), after writing in it the words of St. Paul to Titus, "Holding fast the faithful word." That Bible I have and treasure still after forty-seven years of time.

From Osmaston Manor I drove to the town of Derby, and by the time I arrived there I had begun to think myself a fool for listening so readily to one who had indeed convicted me of sin, but had not succeeded in persuading me to accept Christ Jesus as my Lord. Consequently I began (as so many others have done in like circumstances) to wish that I could get rid of the painful impressions produced; and having observed on the town walls that the races were going on at Derby that day, and having a few hours to spare before I was due at my tutor's, I thought I would see if by my first visit to the race course I could shake off my sense of heaviness and distress.

As I reached the course the gates were closed to allow a race being run without danger of interruption, and as I came to those gates the horses dashed by, and I saw the only horse-race I have ever witnessed in my life.

At that moment a young man - almost as young as myself- touched his hat and, holding out a small piece of paper to me, said, "I beg pardon, sir; would you kindly read this?"

I thought that he wanted me to read it for him, so I took it and looked at it as if to help him. What was my astonishment to find only these (printed) words on the paper: "Reader, if you died tonight, would your soul be IN HELL?"

I simply turned and fled like a terrified coward (as I was), no longer thinking of the races, but only how to escape from the judgment of God and from the awful grasp of the devil, both of which seemed to be equally terrible.

I had some six or seven miles to go to my tutor's, but I believe I accomplished this distance (uphill) in an hour, so eager was I to flee from the wrath that I had invoked. But still, as it will be observed, I was only convicted of my own folly, and was not resting my soul on Christ. "By the law is the knowledge of sin," and "The law is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ." "Knowing the terrors of the law" God had, through His messenger, "persuaded me" so far that I was utterly ashamed of the past; but though the impression was deep, I dare not say what would have happened if the good Lord had not raised up in a remarkable way other helpers for my soul.

My tutor's kind words now began to impress me, and my good friend Henry Wright wrote me beautiful letters; but (for the few weeks that remained before I was to meet the temptations of Cambridge) perhaps my chief and most valuable helper was a young farmer named Stephens, who lived in the parish. Him I had hitherto avoided carefully, because I had heard that he had "been converted in a most remarkable manner after living a life of grievous folly and sin," and that "he was always now trying to speak to people about their souls."

Some two or three days after my experience in Derby, I came to one of the so-called "stiles" in Derbyshire, which are simply like a narrow "V." As I put my foot through it, my friend Stephens met me in the stile and suddenly said, "At last we are face to face. Now, why did you avoid me? I wish you would come and read the Bible with me. I want to know more of it, and I am sure you must, too." Here was at least a third person who, in the course of one week, had been led of God to offer a special call to my soul! How could I resist the voice of grace, mercy and peace?

Thank God, I did not! I went regularly and often, for the short time that remained, to read the Word of God and to pray with my young friend; and though I have never seen him or the stranger of Derby again, I feel it only a duty and a privilege to acknowledge (when asked to narrate my conversion) how much under God I owe to His two humble messengers.

And was the life consistent and spiritual ever afterwards? I am asked. Alas, no! There were many ups and downs, and many declensions from grace. So weak did the Lord see His servant to be, that in mercy and love He had to save me from temptation by allowing a terrible fall of some fifteen or sixteen feet to take place, when I was showing off as champion gymnast soon after I went up to Cambridge. From that time I had to spend three years almost entirely on my couch, passing all my examinations (even that of my ordination) in a recumbent position. From this I twice rose, as if determined to have my own way. One year I gained the University cup for high and broad jumping, and the next I secured the cup for diving and swimming; but on each occasion I had to go back to my couch to learn of God for another whole year.

Much more could be told of the Lord's merciful dealings with a sinner; but what has been said will, I hope, suffice to prove the truth of the words with which I opened this account, and also to show how entirely the work is the Lord's, though He deigns to make use of His human vessels to carry grace to the soul. To Him let me offer my tribute of thanks, and give all possible glory and praise that He has deigned to take such a poor sinner and number him among His sons, enabling me to say with all my heart, "Whereas I was blind, now I see." Jesus Christ is indeed to me all in all, and "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift."