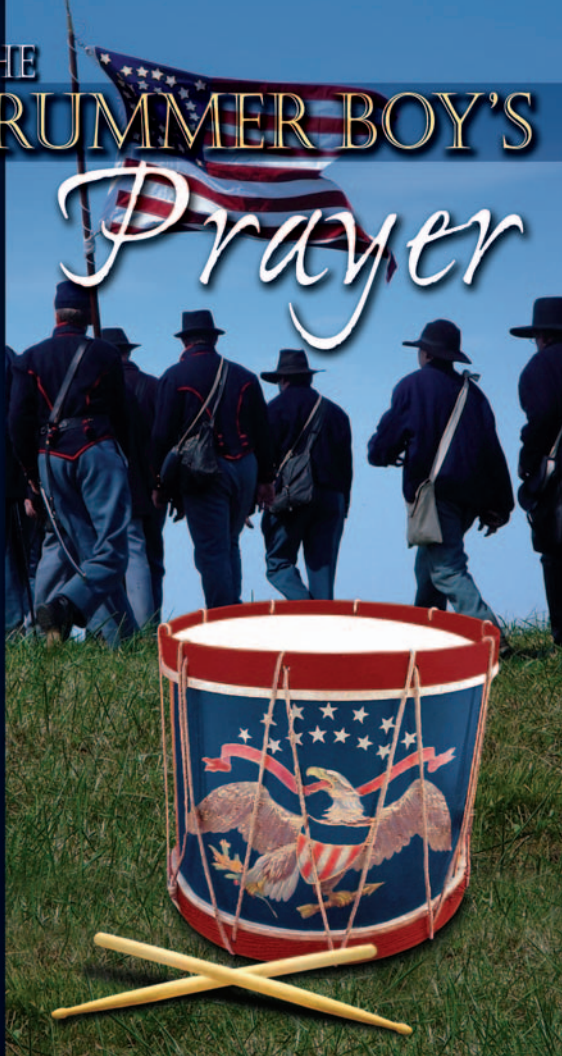


THE
DRUMMER BOY'S

Prayer

M. L. ROSSVALLY



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BY
M. L. ROSSVALLY

Two or three times in my life God in His mercy touched my heart, and twice before my conversion I was under deep conviction.

During the American war I was surgeon in the United States army, and after the battle of Gettysburg, there were many hundreds of wounded soldiers in the hospital, twenty-eight of whom had been wounded so severely that they required my

services at once; some whose legs had to be amputated, some their arms, and others both an arm and leg. One of the latter was a boy who had been but three months in the service, and, being too young for a soldier, had enlisted as a drummer. When my assistant surgeon, and one of my stewards, wished to administer chloroform, previous to the amputation, he turned his head aside, and positively refused to receive it. When the steward told him that it was the doctor's orders, he said, "Send the doctor to me."

When I came to his bedside, I said, "Young man, why do you refuse chloroform? When I found you on the battlefield you were so far gone that I thought it hardly worthwhile to pick you up, but when you opened those large blue eyes I thought you had a mother somewhere, who might at that moment be thinking of her boy. I did not want you to die on the field, so I ordered you to be brought here; but you have lost so much blood that you are too weak to endure an operation without chloroform, therefore you had better let me give you some."

He laid his hands on mine, and looking me in the face, said, "Doctor, one Sunday afternoon, in the Sunday-school, when I was nine-and-a-half years old, I gave my heart to Christ. I learned to trust Him then. I have been trusting Him ever since, and I know I can trust Him now. He is my strength and my stimulant; He will support me while you amputate my arm and leg."

I then asked him if he would allow me to give him a little brandy.

Again he looked me in the face, saying, "Doctor, when I was about five years old my mother knelt by my side, with her arm around my neck, and said, 'Charlie, I am now praying to Jesus that you may never know the taste of strong drink. Your papa died a drunkard, and went down to a drunkard's grave, and I promised God, if it was His will that you should grow up, that you would warn young men against the bitter cup.' I am now seventeen years old, but I have never tasted anything stronger than tea and coffee; and as I am, in all probability, about to go into the presence of my God, would you send me there with brandy on my stomach?"

The look that boy gave me I shall never forget. At that time I hated Jesus, but I respected that boy's loyalty to his Saviour, and, when I saw how he loved and trusted Him to the last, there was something that touched my heart, and I did for that boy what I have never done for any other soldier—I asked him if he wished to see his chaplain.

"Oh, yes, sir!" was the answer.

When Chaplain R_____ came, he at once knew the boy from having often met him at the tent prayer meetings, and, taking him by the hand, said:

"Well, Charlie, I am sorry to see you in this sad condition."

"Oh, I am all right, sir," he answered. "The doctor offered me chloroform, but I declined it; then he wished to give me brandy which I also declined; and now if my Saviour calls me, I can go to Him in my right mind."

“You may not die, Charlie,” said the chaplain; “but, if the Lord should call you away, is there anything I can do for you after you are gone?”

“Chaplain, please put your hand under my pillow and take my little Bible, in which you will find my mother’s address. Please send it to her, and write a letter, and tell her that, since the day I left home, I have never let a day pass without reading a portion of God’s Word, and daily praying that God would bless my dear mother, no matter whether on the march, on the battlefield, or in the hospital.”

“Is there anything else I can do for you, my lad?” said the chaplain.

“Yes, please write a letter to the superintendent of the Sands Street Sunday School, Brooklyn, N.Y., and tell him that the kind words, many prayers, and good advice he gave me I have never forgotten; they have followed me through all the dangers of battle, and now, in my dying hour, I ask my dear Saviour to bless my dear old superintendent; that is all.”

Turning towards me, the boy said, “Now, doctor, I am ready, and I promise you that I will not even groan while you take off my arm and leg, if you will not offer me chloroform.”

I promised, but I had not the courage to take the knife in my hand to perform the operation without first going to the next room and taking a little stimulant to nerve myself to perform my duty.

While cutting through the flesh, Charlie Coulson never groaned, but when I took the saw to separate the bone, the lad took the corner of his pillow in his

mouth, and all that I could hear him utter was, "Oh, Jesus, blessed Jesus! Stand by me now." He kept his promise and never groaned.

That night I could not sleep, for whichever way I turned, I saw those soft blue eyes, and when I closed mine, the words, "Blessed Jesus, stand by me now," kept ringing in my ears. Between twelve and one o'clock I left my bed and visited the hospital—a thing I had never done before, unless especially called, but such was my desire to see that boy. Upon my arrival there, I was informed by the night steward that sixteen of the hopeless cases had died, and had been carried down to the dead-house.

"How is Charlie Coulson? Is he among the dead?" I asked.

"No, sir," answered the steward, "he is sleeping as sweetly as a babe."

When I came up to the bed where he lay, one of the nurses informed me that about nine o'clock two members of the Young Men's Christian Association came through the hospital to read and to sing a hymn; they were accompanied by Chaplain R_____, who knelt by Charlie Coulson's bed and offered up a fervent and soul-stirring prayer, after which they sang, while still upon their knees, the sweetest of all hymns, "Jesus Lover of My Soul," in which Charlie joined. I could not understand how that boy, who had undergone such excruciating pain, could sing.

Five days after I had amputated that dear boy's arm and leg he sent for me, and it was from him that day I heard my first gospel sermon.

“Doctor,” he said, “my time has come. I do not expect to see another sunrise, but thank God, I am ready to go; and before I die I desire to thank you with all my heart for your kindness to me. Doctor, you are a Jew, you do not believe in Jesus; will you please stand here and see me die trusting my Saviour to the last moment of my life?”

I tried to stay, but I could not; for I had not the courage to stand by and see a Christian boy die rejoicing in the love of that Jesus I had been taught to hate, so I hurriedly left the room. About twenty minutes later, a steward, who found me sitting in my private office covering my face with my hands, said, “Doctor, Charlie Coulson wishes to see you.”

“I have just seen him,” I answered, “and can not see him again.”

“But, doctor, he says he must see you once more before he dies.”

I now made up my mind to see him, say an endearing word and let him die, but I was determined that no word of his should influence me in the least, so far as his Jesus was concerned. When I entered the hospital I saw he was sinking fast, so I sat down by his bed. Asking me to take his hand, he said:

“Doctor, I love you because you are a Jew; the best Friend I have found in this world was a Jew.”

I asked, “Who was that?”

He answered, “Jesus Christ, to whom I want to introduce you before I die; and will you promise me, doctor, that what I am about to say to you, you will never forget?”

I promised, and he said, "Five days ago when you amputated my arm and leg, I prayed to the Lord Jesus Christ to convert your soul."

These words went deep into my heart. I could not understand how, when I was causing him the most intense pain, he could forget all about himself, and think of nothing but his Saviour and my unconverted soul. All I could say to him was, "Well, my dear boy, you will soon be all right." With these words I left him, and twelve minutes later he fell asleep, "Safe in the arms of Jesus."

Hundreds of soldiers died in my hospital during the war, but I followed only one to the grave, and that one was Charlie Coulson, the drummer boy, and I rode three miles to see him buried. I had him dressed in a new uniform, and placed in an officer's coffin, with a new United States flag over it.

That dear boy's dying words made a deep impression upon me. I was rich at that time, so far as money is concerned, but I would have given every penny I possessed if I could have felt towards Christ as Charlie did. But that feeling can not be bought with money.

For several months after his death, I could not get rid of the words of that dear boy. They kept ringing in my ears, but, being in the company of worldly officers, I gradually forgot the sermon Charlie preached in his dying hour; but I could never forget

his wonderful patience under acute suffering, and his simple trust in that Jesus whose name to me at that time was a byword and a reproach.

For ten long years I fought against Christ with all the hatred of an orthodox Jew, until God in His mercy brought me in contact with a Christian barber, who proved himself a second instrument in my conversion to Christianity.

At the close of the American war I was detailed as inspecting surgeon, to take charge of the military hospital in Galveston, Texas. Returning one day from an inspecting tour, and on my way to Washington, I stopped to rest a few hours at New York. After dinner I stepped down stairs to the barber's shop (which, it may be remarked, is attached to every hotel of note in the United States). On entering the room I was surprised to see hung around it beautifully framed scripture texts, in different colors. Sitting down in one of the barber's chairs, I saw directly opposite me, hanging up in a frame on the wall, this notice: "Please do not swear in this room." No sooner had the barber put the brush to my face than he began also to talk to me about Jesus. He spoke in such an attractive and loving manner that my prejudices were disarmed, and I listened with growing attention to what he said.

All the while he was talking, Charlie Coulson, the drummer boy, came welling up in my mind, although he had been dead ten years. I was so well pleased with the words and deportment of the barber that, no sooner had he done shaving me, than

I told him next to cut my hair, although when I entered the room I had no such thought or intention. All the while he was cutting my hair, he kept steadily on with this sermon, preaching Christ to me, and telling me that, although not a Jew himself, he was at one time as far away from Christ as I was then.

I listened attentively, my interest increasing with every word he said, to such an extent that, when he had finished cutting my hair, I said: "Barber, you may now give me a shampoo;" in fact, I allowed him to do all that one in his profession could do for a gentleman at one sitting. There is, however, an end to all things, and, my time being short, I prepared to leave. I paid my bill, thanked the barber for his remarks, and said, "I must catch the next train." He, however, was not yet satisfied.

It was a bitter cold February day, and the ice on the ground made it somewhat dangerous to walk on the streets. It was only a two minutes walk to the station from the hotel, and the kind barber at once offered to walk to the station with me. I accepted his offer gladly, and no sooner had we reached the street than he put his arm in mine to keep me from falling. He said but little as we were walking along the street until we arrived at our destination; when we got to the station, however, he broke the silence by saying—"Stranger, perhaps you do not understand why I chose to talk to you upon a subject so dear to me. When you entered my shop, I saw by your face that you were a Jew."

He still continued to talk to me about his "dear Saviour," and said he felt it his duty, whenever he came in contact with a Jew, to try to introduce him to the One whom he felt was his best Friend, both for this world and the world to come. On looking a second time into his face, I saw tears trickling down his cheeks, and he was evidently under deep emotion. I could not understand how it was that this man, a total stranger to me, should take such a deep interest in my welfare, and also shed tears while talking to me.

I reached out my hand to bid him good-bye. He took it in both of his and gently pressed it, the tears still continuing to run down his face, and said, "Stranger, if it is any satisfaction for you to know it, if you will give me your card or name, I promise you on my honor as a Christian man that during the next three months I will not retire to rest at night without making mention of you by name in my prayers. And now, may my Christ follow you, trouble you, give you no rest, until you find Him what I have found him to be—a precious Saviour and the Messiah you are looking for."

I thanked him for his attention and his consideration, and after handing him my card, I said, rather sneeringly, I fear, "There is not much danger of my ever becoming a Christian."

He then handed me his card, saying, as he did so, "Will you please drop me a note or letter if God should answer my prayer on your behalf?"

I smiled incredulously, and said, "Certainly I will," never dreaming that within the next forty-eight

hours God in His mercy would answer that barber's prayer. I shook his hand heartily and said good-bye, but in spite of outward appearance of unconcern, I felt he had made a deep impression upon my mind, as the sequel will show.

As is well known, the American railway carriage is much longer than the ordinary English railway carriage. It has only one compartment which will seat from sixty to eighty persons. As the weather was bitterly cold, the passengers were not numerous on this train. The carriage I had entered was not more than half filled, and, without being conscious of the fact, in less than ten or fifteen minutes I had occupied every empty seat in the compartment.

The passengers began to look upon me with some suspicion as they saw me change my seat so frequently in so short a time without any apparent object. For my part I did not think at that time the wrong was in my heart, although I could not account for my erratic movement. Finally I went to an empty seat in the corner of the carriage with the firm intention of going to sleep. The moment I closed my eyes, however, I felt myself between two fires. On the one side there was the Christian barber of New York, and on the other side there was the drummer boy of Gettysburg—both talking to me about that Jesus whose very name I hated. I felt it impossible either to go to sleep or to shake off the impression made upon my mind by these two faithful young Christians—one of whom had bid me good-bye only an hour previously, whilst the other had been dead nearly ten

years—and so continued troubled and perplexed all the while I was on the train.

On my arrival in Washington, I purchased a morning newspaper, and one of the first things that caught my attention was the announcement of a revival service in Dr. Rankin's Congregational Church, the largest church in Washington. No sooner had I seen that announcement, than an inward monitor seemed to say to me "Go to that church." I had never been inside a Christian church during divine service, and at any other time I should have counted such a thought as from the devil. It was my father's intention, when I was a boy, that I should become a rabbi, and so I promised him that I would never enter a place where "Jesus, the Impostor," was worshipped as God, and that I would never attempt to read a book containing that name; and I had faithfully kept my word up to that moment.

In connection with the revival meetings just referred to, it was stated that there would be a united choir from the various churches in the city, who would sing at each of the services. Being a passionate lover of music, this attracted my attention, and I made it my excuse for seeking to visit the church during the revival service that night. When I entered the church, which was filled with worshippers, one of the ushers, attracted doubtless by my gold epaulets (for I had not changed my uniform), led me to the front seat of the church, right in front of the preacher—an evangelist well known both in England and America. I was charmed with the beautiful singing; but the speaker

had not been talking more than five minutes before I came to the conclusion that some one must have been informing him who I was, for I thought he pointed his finger at me. He kept watching me, and every now and then appeared to be shaking his fist at me. In spite of all this, however, I felt deeply interested in what he said. But this was not all, for still ringing in my ears were the words of the two former preachers—the Christian barber of New York, and the drummer boy of Gettysburg—emphasizing the utterances of the evangelist, and in my mind I could plainly see those two dear friends also repeating their sermons. Growing more and more interested in the words of the preacher, I felt tears trickling down my face. This startled me, and I began to feel ashamed that I, an orthodox Jew, should be childish enough to shed tears in a Christian church, the first I had ever shed in such a place.

I omitted to say that, during the service, and whilst the preacher was watching me, the thought occurred to me that possibly he might be pointing his finger at some person behind me, and I turned round in my seat to discover who the individual was, when, to my astonishment, a congregation of more than two thousand persons, of all grades of society, seemed to be looking at me. I at once came to the conclusion that I was the only Jew in the place, and heartily wished myself out of the building, for I felt I had got into bad company. Being well known in Washington, both by Jews and Gentiles, the thought flashed across my mind, how will it read in a Washington paper that, “Dr. Rossvally, a Jew, was present at the revival

services, not five minutes' walk from the synagogue he usually attends, and was seen to shed tears during the sermon." Not wishing to make myself conspicuous (for there were faces there I recognized) I made up my mind not to take out my handkerchief to wipe off the tears; they must dry up of themselves; but, blessed be God, I could not keep them back, for they came flowing faster and faster.

After a while the preacher finished his sermon, and I was surprised to hear him announce an after-meeting, and invite all who could do so to remain. I did not accept the invitation, being only too glad of the opportunity to leave the church. With that intention, I got up from my seat, and had reached the door when I felt that someone held me by the tail of my coat. Turning round I saw an elderly-looking lady, who proved to be Mrs. Young, of Washington, a well-known Christian worker.

Addressing me, she said, "Pardon me, stranger, I see you are an officer in the army. I have been watching you all this evening, and I beg of you not to leave this house, for I think you are under conviction of sin. I believe you came here to seek the Saviour, and you have not found Him yet. Do come back; I would like to talk to you, and, if you will permit me, I will pray for you."

"Madam," I answered, "I am a Jew."

She replied, "I do not care if you are a Jew; Christ Jesus died for Jews as well as Gentiles."

The persuasive manner in which she said these words was not without effect. I followed her back to

the very spot which I had just left so abruptly, and when we came up to the front she said:

“If you will kneel I will pray for you.”

“Madam, that is something I have never done and never will do.”

Mrs. Young looked me calmly in the face and said, “Dear stranger, I have found such a dear, loving, and forgiving Saviour in my Jesus that I firmly believe in my heart He can convert a Jew standing on his feet, and I will go on my knees and pray for that.”

She suited the action to the word, and fell on her knees, and began to pray, talking to her Saviour in a simple, child-like manner that completely unnerved me. I felt so ashamed of myself, to see that dear old lady kneeling near me while I was standing, and praying so fervently on my behalf. My whole past life floated so vividly before my mind that I heartily wished the floor would open, and that I might sink out of sight. When she arose from her knees, she extended her hand, and, with a motherly sympathy, said: “Will you pray to Jesus before you sleep tonight?”

“Madam,” I replied, “I will pray to my God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but not to Jesus.”

“Bless your soul!” she said, “your God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, is my Christ and your Messiah.”

“Good-night, madam, and thank you for your kindness,” I said, as I slowly left the church.

On my way home, reflecting on my recent strange experiences, I began to reason with myself: “Why is it that these Christians take such an interest in Jew or Gentile, perfect strangers to them. Is it possible that

all these millions of men and women, who, during the last eighteen hundred years, have lived and died, trusting in Christ, are mistaken, and a little handful of Jews, scattered all over the world, are right? Why should that dying drummer-boy think only of what he was pleased to call my unconverted soul? And why, also, should that Christian barber of New York manifest such a deep interest in me? Why should the preacher tonight single me out and point his finger at me, or that dear woman follow me to the door, and hold me back? It must be all for the love they bear for their Jesus, whom I despise so much." The more I thought of this, the worse I felt. On the other hand, I argued:

"Is it possible that my father and mother, who loved me so dearly, should teach me anything that is wrong? In my childhood they taught me to hate Jesus: that there was but one God, and that He had no Son." I now felt a desire springing up in my heart to become acquainted with that Jesus whom the Christians so much loved. I started to walk faster, fully determined that if there was a reality in the religion of Jesus Christ, I would know something before I slept.

When I arrived at home, my wife (who was a very strict orthodox Jewess) thought I looked rather excited, and asked me where I had been. The truth I dared not tell her, and a falsehood I would not, so I said:

"Wife, please do not ask me any questions. I have some very important business to attend to. I will go to my private study where I can be alone."

I went at once to my study, locked the door, and began to pray, standing with my face towards the east, as I always had done. The more I prayed the worse I felt. I could not account for the feeling that had come over me. I was in great perplexity as to the meaning of many prophecies in the Old Testament which deeply interested me. My prayer gave me no satisfaction, and then it occurred to me that Christians kneel when they pray. Was there anything in that? Having been brought up a strict orthodox Jew, and taught never to kneel in prayer, a fear came over me that if I should kneel I might be deceived in thus bowing my knee to that Jesus whom I had been taught to believe in childhood to be an impostor.

Although the night was bitterly cold, and there was no fire in my study (it was not thought that I should use the room that night), yet I never perspired so much in my life as I did that night. My phylacteries were hanging in my study, on the wall, and I caught sight of them. Never since I was thirteen years of age had I missed a day wearing them, except on Jewish Sabbaths and feasts. I loved them dearly. I took them in my hand, and, while looking at them, Genesis 49:10, came flashing across my mind:

“The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come: and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be.”

Two other passages also, which I had often read and pondered over, presented themselves vividly to my mind; the first of them being from Micah 5:2:

“But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah...”

The other passage is the well-known prediction in Isaiah 7:14:

“Therefore, the Lord himself shall give you a sign: Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”

These three passages impressed themselves so forcibly on my mind, that I cried out: “O, Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Thou knowest I am sincere in this thing. If Jesus Christ is the Son of God, reveal Him to me tonight, and I will accept Him as my Messiah.”

No sooner had I said this than almost unconsciously I flung my phylacteries into a corner of the room, and in less time than I can tell it, I was on my knees, praying in the same corner, where my phylacteries were lying on the floor by my side. To throw the phylacteries on the floor as I had done was, for a Jew, an act of blasphemy. I was now on my knees praying for the first time in my life, and my mind was much agitated and in doubt as to the wisdom of my proceedings.

My first prayer to Jesus I shall never forget. It was as follows: “O Lord Jesus Christ, if Thou art the Son of God; if Thou art the Saviour of the world; if Thou art

the Jew's Messiah, for whom we Jews are still looking; and if Thou canst convert sinners as Christians say Thou canst, convert me, for I am a sinner, and I will promise to serve Thee all the days of my life."

This prayer of mine, however, went no higher than my head. The reason was not far to seek. I had tried to make a bargain with Jesus, that if He would do what I asked of Him, I, on my part, would do what I then promised Him. I remained on my knees for about half an hour, and, whilst so engaged, drops of sweat came running down my face. My head also felt hot, and I put it against the wall of my study to cool it. I was in agony, but I was not converted. I arose, and paced to and fro in my room, and then the thought came to me that I had gone too far already, and I vowed I would never go on my knees again. I began to reason with myself: "Why should I go on my knees? Can not the God of Abraham, whom I have loved, served, and worshipped all the days of my life, do for me what Christ is said to do for the Gentiles?" I looked at it of course, from a Jewish standpoint, and went on reasoning: "Why should I go to the Son? Is not the Father above the Son?"

The more I reasoned, the worse I felt, and I became increasingly perplexed. In one corner of the room lay my phylacteries, which still possessed a magnetic influence over me; I instinctively turned towards them, and I involuntarily fell on my knees again, but could not utter any words. My heart ached, for I had a sincere desire to become acquainted with Christ if He was the Messiah. I changed my posture

time after time, alternately kneeling and then walking about the room, from a quarter to ten until five minutes to two in the morning. At that time light began to dawn on my mind, and I began to feel and believe in my soul that Jesus Christ was really the true Messiah. No sooner had I realized this, than, for the last time that night, I fell on my knees; but this time my doubts were gone, and I began to praise God, for a joy and happiness had penetrated my soul such as I had never known before. I knew I was converted, and that God, for Christ's sake, had pardoned my sin. I now felt that neither circumcision availed anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.

With unspeakable joy I arose from my knees, and in my new-found happiness thought that my dear wife would at once share my joy when I told her of the great change which had come over me. With that thought uppermost in my mind, I rushed out of my study into the bedroom (for my wife had already retired to rest, although the gas had not been turned off); I threw my arms around her neck, and began to kiss her eagerly, saying:

“Wife, I have found the Messiah.”

She looked annoyed, and pushing me from her, coldly asked, “Found who?”

“Jesus Christ, my Messiah and Saviour,” was my ready reply.

She spoke not another word, but in less than five minutes was dressed, and had left the house, although it was then two in the morning and bitterly cold, and went across the street to the house of her parents, who

lived immediately opposite. I did not follow her, but dropped on my knees, imploring my newly-found Saviour that my wife might also have her eyes opened as I had, and afterwards went to sleep.

On the following morning my poor wife was told by her parents that, if she ever called me husband again, she would be disinherited, excommunicated from the synagogue, and accursed. At the same time my two children were sent for by their grandparents, and told that they must never call me father again; that I, in praying to Jesus, the "Impostor," was fully as bad and as mean as He was.

Five days after my conversion I received orders from the Surgeon-General at Washington, to proceed west on Government business. I tried all the means in my power to communicate personally with my wife and to bid her good-bye, but she would neither see me nor write to me. She, however, sent me a message by a neighbor to the effect that so long as I called Jesus Christ my Saviour, I should not call her my wife, for she would not live with me. I did not expect to receive such a message from my wife, for I loved her and my children dearly, and it was with a sad heart, therefore, that I left home that morning to travel thirteen hundred miles to my sphere of duty, without being able to see my wife and children.

For fifty-four days my wife would not answer any of my letters, although I wrote her one daily;

and with every letter sent I prayed that God would incline her heart to read at least one of them. I felt that if she would but read one of my letters (for Christ was preached in every one of them), she would consider what she had said and done before I had left home.

Never in my experience were Cooper's words more signally fulfilled, "God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform," for it was through the disobedience of my daughter that my wife was converted. My daughter was the younger of my two children, and generally considered her father's pet, and, after my conversion to Christ, a duty to her mother on one hand, and her love for her father on the other, kept her mind in continual agitation.

On the fifty-third night my daughter dreamt she saw her father die, and a fear came over her, and she made up her mind that come what may, she would not destroy the next letter in her father's handwriting. The following morning the postman brought a letter in the familiar handwriting (and by the way, she had waited for him at the door). As the postman handed the letters to her, she took her father's letter and quickly slipped it into her bosom, and ran upstairs into her room, locked the door, and opened the letter. She began to read it, and then read it three times before she laid it quickly down. That letter made her sad at heart to such an extent, that when she went downstairs, her mother saw that she had been crying, and asked her the cause of her grief.

“Mother, if I tell you, you will be offended, but if you promise me not to be grieved, I will tell you all about it.”

“What is it, my child,” said her mother.

Taking out my letter from under her dress, she told her mother of her dream of the night previous, and added: “I have opened my papa’s letter this morning, and now I can not and will not believe what my grandpa and grandma or anybody else says about my papa being a bad man, for a bad man could not write such a letter to his wife and children. I beg of you to read this, mother,” she added, as she handed her the letter.

My wife took the letter and carried it into the next room and locked it in her desk. That afternoon she locked herself in the room, and, opening the desk, took my letter and began to read it. The more she read the worse she felt. She afterward told me she read it through five times before she finally laid it down.

After the last reading of the letter, my wife returned it to the desk, and went back to the room she had just left. Her eyes were full of tears, and now it was my daughter’s turn to ask, “Mother, why are you crying?”

“Child, my heart aches,” was the reply; “I wish to lie down on the lounge.” She did so. The servant made her a cup of tea, thinking that was all that was needed to take away the heartache of which she complained. But the cup of tea brought no relief to my poor wife.

After a while my wife's mother came across the street to our house. Thinking my wife to be very ill, she administered some simple home remedies, as mothers frequently do. These also failed to give relief. At half-past seven in the evening my mother-in-law sent for Dr. R_____. He came at once and prescribed a treatment for her, but his medicine likewise failed to remove the heartache of which my wife complained.

My mother-in-law stayed in our house that night, attending to my wife until a quarter-past eleven o'clock. I heard my wife say afterwards, that the desire of her heart was that her mother should leave the room, for she had fully made up her mind to go on her knees as I had previously done, as soon as her mother had gone. No sooner therefore had she left the house, than my wife locked the door and fell on her knees by the side of her bed, and in less than two minutes Christ, the Great Physician, met her, healed her, and converted her.

On the following morning I received a telegram worded as follows:

“Dear Husband: Come home at once; I thought you were in the wrong and I was in the right, but I have found that you were in the right and I was in the wrong. Your Christ is my Messiah, your Jesus my Saviour. Last night at nineteen minutes past eleven, while on my knees for the first time in my life, the Lord Jesus converted my soul.”

After reading that telegram, I felt for a moment as if I did not care a cent for the government under which I served. I left my business unfinished, took the first express train and started for Washington. My house at that time being well known there, especially amongst the Jews (for I frequently sang in the synagogue), I did not wish to create a sensation, and so I telegraphed to my wife not to meet me at the station, for I would take a carriage on my arrival at Washington and drive quietly home.

When I got to the front of my home, I saw my wife standing in the open door expecting me. Her face beamed with joy. She ran to meet me as I stepped out of my carriage, threw her arms round my neck, and kissed me. Her father and mother were also standing at their open door across the street, and when they saw us in each other's arms, they began to curse both me and my wife.

Ten days after my wife had given her heart to Christ my daughter was converted. She is now the wife of a Christian minister, co-worker with her husband in Christ's vineyard.

My son (would to God I could say the same of him as of his sister), was promised by his grandparents on his mother's side, that if he would never call me "father" again, or my wife "mother," they would leave all their property to him, and thus far he has kept his promise.

A year and nine months after her conversion, my wife died. The desire of her heart, previous to her death, was to see her son who resided about seven minutes' walk from our house. I sent again and again to him, begging of him to come and see his dying mother. One of the ministers of the city, along with his wife, personally saw my son, and tried to persuade him to grant his dying mother's request, but his only reply was: "Curse her! Let her die; she is no mother of mine."

On Thursday morning (the day of her death), my wife asked me to send for as many members of the congregation where she had worshipped as could come, to be with her in her dying hour. At half-past ten she asked Mrs. Ryle, the minister's wife, who was a very dear friend of hers, to take her left hand, and let all the ladies in the room join hands with her. I stood at the other side of the bed and took hold of her right hand, and the gentlemen joined hands with me, and at my wife's request we formed a circle, about thirty-eight of us, and then we sang:

*"Jesus lover of my soul,
Let me to Thy bosom fly,"*

very softly. As we began to sing,

"Thou, O Christ, art all I want,"

my wife in a feeble, though clear voice, said: "Yes, it is all I want, it is all I have; come, blessed Jesus, take me home," and she fell asleep.

My son would not come to the funeral, nor so far as I have known, has he ever visited his mother's grave; neither has he called me "father," nor answered any letter of mine since my conversion, although I have three times crossed the Atlantic, from America to Germany, trying to see him and be reconciled, but have failed in every instance, for he would not see me. This, however, has called forth more fervent prayer on his behalf, that he also may be emancipated from the thralldom of Jewish prejudice, and in Jesus, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." A fourth visit to Germany in July, 1887, has strengthened and confirmed my faith, for my son not only consented to see me, but shed bitter tears on the remembrance of the past, and at once declared his determination to see his dear sister in America.

I wrote to my mother, who resided in Germany, immediately after my conversion, recounting to her how I had found the true Messiah. I could not keep the good news from her, and in my heart thought that she would believe the eldest of her fourteen children. Indeed, I may say that the first desire of my heart after my conversion was that all my friends, Jews as well as Gentiles, might share with me in my new-found joy. I felt like the Psalmist when he wrote, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul." This hope, so far as my mother was concerned, was destined to be bitterly disappointed,

for she wrote me but one letter (if a curse can be called a letter), prolonged silence awakening within me a suspicion that if she did write at all, it would be to send me that curse which every Jew must expect from his nearest relations when he embraces Christianity. This suspicion was only too fully confirmed after a lapse of five and a half months, during which time I was in suspense—for previous to my conversion, my mother had written to me once in a month.

One morning, when the postman brought me my letters, I saw amongst them one bearing the German postmark, and in the old familiar handwriting of my dear mother. As soon as I saw it I said to my wife, who was in the room,

“Wife, it has come at last.”

Needless to say I opened that letter first. There was no heading to it, no date, no “My dear son,” as all her former letters to me began, but it read as follows:

“Max: You are no longer my son; we have buried you in effigy; we mourn you as one dead. And now may the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob strike you blind, deaf, and dumb, and damn your soul forever. You have left your father’s religion and the synagogue for that of Jesus the ‘Impostor,’ and now take your mother’s curse. Clara.”

Although I had by this time fully counted what it would cost me in embracing the religion of Jesus Christ, and knew what I had to expect from my relatives because I had turned my back on the synagogue,

I confess I was hardly prepared for such a letter from my mother. My dear wife and I could now, however, more fully sympathize with each other in our new religious life; for, as stated before, her parents had already cursed her to her face for believing in Christ. It was not all sadness, however, for never before did the Psalmist's words seem so full of meaning and encouragement both to my wife and myself: "When my father and mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up."

Let not anyone think that it is an easy thing for a Jew to become a Christian. He must be prepared to forsake father, mother, and wife for the sake of the kingdom of God; for the considerations which appeal alike to his affections and to his self-interest are brought to bear upon every Jew who is suspected of looking with favor towards Christianity.

I answered my mother's letter, a few days later, in the following words:

ANSWER TO MY MOTHER'S CURSE

*"Far away from home, my mother,
Daily will I pray for thee;
Why should I be cursed, my mother?
Why such message sent to me?
Once convinced of sin, my mother,
I cried, 'Jesus, set me free!'
I am happy now, my mother;
Christ, the Jew, has died for me.*

*“Him you taught me to hate, my mother,
Him you still ‘Impostor’ call,
Died for me on Calvary, mother,
Died to save me from the fall.
Let me lead you to Him, mother,
While I pray on bended knee:
‘Jesus, now accept my mother;
Loving Jesus, set her free.’*

*“Be persuaded, dearest mother,
Do not now so hardened be;
Jesus Christ, the Jew’s Messiah,
Surely died for you and me.
Can you spurn such mercy, mother?
Can you turn away your face?
Come to Jesus, come, dear mother,
Fly, oh, fly to His embrace!”*

Although she never wrote to me afterwards, I was told the last word she uttered, when life was ebbing away, was my own name, “Max.”

The sequel to the story of the drummer boy, Charlie Coulson, remains to be told:

About eighteen months after my conversion, I attended a prayer-meeting in the city of Brooklyn. It was one of those meetings where Christians testify to the loving-kindness of their Saviour.

After several of them had spoken, an elderly lady arose, and said, "Dear friends, this may be the last time it is my privilege to testify for Christ. My family physician told me yesterday that my right lung is very nearly gone, and my left lung is very much affected, so at the best I have but a short time to be with you, but what is left of me belongs to Jesus. Oh! It is a great joy to know that I shall meet my boy with Jesus in heaven. My son was not only a soldier for his country, but a soldier for Christ. He was wounded at the battle of Gettysburg, and fell into the hands of a Jewish doctor, who amputated his arm and leg, but my son died five days after the operation. The chaplain of the regiment wrote me a letter, and sent my boy's Bible. In that letter I was informed that my Charlie, in his dying hour, sent for that Jewish doctor and said to him, 'Doctor, before I die, I wish to tell you, that five days ago, while you amputated my arm and leg, I prayed to the Lord Jesus Christ to convert your soul.'"

When I heard this lady's testimony, I could sit still no longer. I left my seat, crossed the room, and taking her by the hand, said, "God bless you, my dear sister. Your boy's prayer has been answered. I am the Jewish doctor for whom your Charlie prayed, and his Saviour is now my Saviour."

It is with great joy and thankfulness of heart that I record the conversion of my dear son:

I firmly believe that the dear Saviour had been troubling his heart some time prior to our meeting in July, 1887. For the first time in fourteen years he called me "father;" he wept bitterly at our meeting, and, it seemed, his soul's desire was to see his sister again. My heart leaped with joy to hear this, for I knew with his sister (a devoted Christian in America), he would be in good hands. He left for America, where he met his sister, on Monday afternoon, August 15. On the following Friday, my son begged his sister to take him to his mother's grave.

On Friday, August 29th, he again visited his mother's grave (but this time alone), and while there, God in His mercy, for Christ's sake, pardoned his sins and converted his soul.

He went home and told his sister the good news, and then wrote to me that same night.

And now, in conclusion, I earnestly pray that God may spare my life, that I may be permitted to hear my son preach the gospel of that dear Saviour whom he had so long rejected.

Having been frequently asked whether all the details of this story are strictly true, I take this opportunity of stating that every incident occurred exactly as related.

M. L. R.



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