

Give Me That Experience

by Walter Lewis Wilson, M.D.

THE WORDS used in the title of this story were said to me by a friend who rode twenty-four hundred miles in a bus, in order to obtain an experience such as some of the characters had experienced in *Miracle's in a Doctor's Life*.

One day I received a letter from a gentleman in a far Eastern city which read in part as follows: "I have been reading your book, '*Miracles in a Doctor's Life*,' and would like to have in my life the same experience that those people had. Please let me know when you will be at home and whether you will talk with me if I come to see you." Of course, I replied at once and gave him the dates when I would be in my office. At the same time, I sought in my letter to clearly explain the gospel, and assured him that it was really not necessary for him to make the journey, because he could accept the Saviour in his own home.

Approximately two weeks went by before I received a very short letter, saying that he would arrive Saturday afternoon at four o'clock, and would like to see me as soon as possible. He did not tell whether he would come by train or by bus, so I had no way of meeting him. About ten o'clock Saturday night my telephone rang, and a voice informed me that it was the visitor who had arrived and had taken a room in one of the downtown hotels. It was too late to arrange a meeting then and he assured me that he would rather see me the next day, because he was very tired from the twelve hundred mile journey on the bus. I gave him the address of the church where I would be preaching the next morning and asked him to meet me there.

He came early and introduced himself. I could see that life had been rather difficult for him. He had had many sorrows which had left their mark upon his body. He seemed weary with the struggle and worn with the strife. His face revealed that there was no peace in his heart, and his deep-set eyes revealed a haunting fear. He found a seat near the front of the church and listened attentively.

At the close of the service I went at once to him and asked if the message had brought him in touch with the Lord. He replied without hesitation, "No, that is not what I came for. Give me the experience which those fellows had in the book."

This was a new idea to me. I had never before had anyone insist that he must have the experience of another. I had talked with those who wanted the same kind of an experience, but never with one who insisted on it. To each of my questions and suggestions about Christ, he gave me the same answer, "I want the experience that those fellows had."

It is quite difficult to follow out a line of thought in the midst of a crowd of people who are visiting, talking and laughing. Others were waiting to speak to me and conversations were being carried on all around me. I saw that we were making no progress. I asked my friend if he would permit me to come to the hotel immediately after lunch. To this he agreed and I promised to call at two o'clock. My mind and heart were quite exercised about this case, for it is not often that anyone will travel so far in order to obtain help for his soul. This man was in such deep earnestness and had gone to such an expense that there was no doubt about the pressure on his soul in regard to his spiritual welfare. His case was difficult because he was along in years, and had a background of wrong religious training which would be hard for him to overcome. He had his heart set on receiving a certain experience which probably he would never receive. I knew it would be necessary to turn him from this path and to turn his eye and heart to Christ.

At the appointed hour, I went to his room in the hotel and found him waiting for me. His first statement was "Remember, I want to have the experience of those men in your book; that is what I came for." I replied that we would turn to the precious Word of God and see there what remedy the Lord might have for his heart. He had not brought a Bible, so he used the Gideon Bible that was on the hotel bureau. We turned to John 4:46 and began to read the story concerning the nobleman's son who was sick at Capernaum. As we read down through the message, I called his attention to the fact that this father had secretly in his heart a desire to have a certain experience before he would believe the word of Christ. We read in verse 48, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." Jesus said this to the sorrowing father, because he saw in that father's heart a lack of faith and a desire for signs. I could see plainly that my friend was in the same position. He, too, was more occupied with signs and experiences than he was with the Word of the Lord.

We studied this story very carefully and I particularly emphasized verse 50, where we read, "And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way." My friend did not seem to be very much interested in anything that I read to him from the

Scripture. It was not the Word of God that he wanted; it was some strange experience. He had read about the experiences of others, and the peace and joy which they had received, and he had decided in his own mind that if some strange thing could happen to him, then he, too, would have peace and joy.

In order to overcome this attitude, I said to him, "Which would you rather have, the Word of the Lord from the Bible, or a strange experience and an unusual feeling in your heart?" He replied without hesitation, "I would rather have the feeling." This honest expression of his heart made it easy for me to say to him, "If you rest on your feelings, then your peace will disappear when your feelings are gone. If you rest upon an experience, then you will have no rest when the memory of the experience grows dim. The Lord does not want you to rest on anything that is within yourself. No ship anchors to itself. It always fastens its anchor to some firm rock or pier outside of itself. Surely you can see that this is true."

He gave his assent to this, but still did not seem to want to know what God said in His Word. I knew that nothing but the Word could give him light and life, and so I asked him to kneel with me in prayer about it.

We rose from prayer and I turned again to the Word which I felt would surely bring the deliverance which his heart needed. The passage I chose was Acts 13:38,39. I helped him to find the place and then we read the passage together: "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."

The passage did not seem clear to him, and so I tried to explain it to him. "God sent the Lord Jesus to die for us at Calvary, to bear our sins, to take our place under the judgment of God, so that now any man who will trust the Lord Jesus, believe in Him and accept Him, has both forgiveness and justification. The reason for this is that God in His great love for us planned with the full consent of the Lord Jesus Christ that He (the Lord Jesus) would take our guilt and our place, in order that we might become righteous and live with Him."

My friend seemed by this time to have his mind turned away from desiring the experience of those about whom he had read, and was considering carefully what he had read. I urged him to pay no attention to what had happened in the lives of others, but to come personally to the Lord Jesus and to turn his case over to this wonderful Saviour. I

told him that he could hardly expect Christ to give him the heart experience that he wanted, until he had given himself to Christ. He realized that this was true and finally said, "Certainly, I can hardly expect to have the blessing that Christ gives, until I go to Christ for it. I will come to Him now the best way I can and will put my case in His hands."

We kneeled together in the hotel room and I prayed that the Holy Spirit would reveal Christ to him. I then suggested that he tell the Lord Jesus whatever was in his heart. He did so and said in his prayer, "Jesus, I have been wanting the experience that others have had who came to You. I do not know just what kind of an experience You will give me, but I will trust you anyway, right now, and I believe You will save me and will do whatever should be done to me." This brought peace to his heart and he rose to his feet saying, "Well, I am glad I got to Christ. Now I can go back home satisfied."

He returned to his home on the bus—another ride of twelve hundred miles, and the Saviour accompanied him.

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