SPIRIT LIFE CLASSICS

Personal Testimony

by C.T. Studd

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I was brought up in the Church of England and was pretty religious — so most people thought. I was taken to church and baptized the right day, and after a time I was confirmed and took communion. But I did not know anything about Jesus Christ personally. I knew a little about Him, as I may know a little about President Taft, but I did not know Him. There was not a moment in my life when I ever doubted that there was a God, or that Jesus Christ was the Saviour of the world; but I did not know Him as my personal Saviour. We boys were brought up to go to church regularly, but, although we had a kind of religion, it was not a religion that amounted to much. It was just like having a toothache. We were always sorry to have Sunday come, and glad when we came to Monday morning. The Sabbath was the dullest day of the whole week, and just because we got hold of the wrong end of religion. A man may get hold of the wrong end of a poker, and I got hold of the wrong end of religion and had to pay dearly for it. We had lots of ministers and lots of churches all around us, but we never saw such a thing as a real convert. We didn't believe much in converts in those days. We thought that the Chinese and Africans had to be converted; but the idea of an Englishman being converted was absurd, because it made him out a heathen before he was converted.

My father was just a man of the world, loving all sorts of worldly things. He had made a fortune in India and had come back to England to spend it. He was very fond of sports of all kinds. He would go into regular training that he might go fox hunting, but above all he was an enthusiast on horse racing. He was passionately fond of horses to begin with and when he saw fine horses he would buy them and train them, and

then he would race them. He had a large place in the country, where he made a race course, and he won the biggest steeple-chase in London three times. At last he got hold of a horse better than anyone he had ever had, and so certain was he of winning the race that he wrote to a friend in London and said, "If you are a wise man you will come to the race tomorrow and put every penny you have on my horse."

Unknown to my father this man had been converted. Mr. Moody had come to England and had been preaching. Nobody believed very much at that time in a man getting up to preach the Gospel unless he had two things — the title of Reverend, and a white tie round his neck. The papers could not understand such a preacher as Mr. Moody, who had neither, and of course they printed column after column against him. But they could not help seeing that he could get more people to his meetings than half a dozen archbishops, and that more were converted than by twenty ordinary ministers. Of course they did not put the right construction on things. They said that Mr. Sankey had come over to sell organs, and Mr. Moody to sell his hymn books. My father read the papers day after day and these things tickled him immensely. I remember one evening he threw the paper down and said, "Well, anyhow, when this man comes to London I am going to hear him. There must be some good about the man or he would never be abused so much by the papers."

Well, father went up to London the next day according to promise, and met his friend. This man had been over to Ireland when Mr. Moody was there, and as he was about to leave Dublin had missed his train. God was even in that,

missing a train. It was Saturday night, and the man had to remain over Sunday. As he was looking about the streets that evening he saw the big bills advertising Moody and Sankey, and he thought, "I will just go and hear those Americans." He went and God met him; he went again and God converted him. He was a new man, and yet when my father wrote that letter he never said anything about it. When they met and drove along in a carriage father talked of nothing but horses, and told this man if he were a wise man he would put up every penny he had on that horse. After father had finished his business he came back to this friend and said, "How much money have you put on my horse?" "Nothing." My father said, "You are the biggest fool I ever saw; didn't I tell you what a good horse he was? But though you are a fool, come along with me to dinner." After dinner my father said, "Now, where shall we go to amuse ourselves?" His friend said, "Anywhere." My father said, "Well, you are the guest; you shall choose where we shall go." "Well, we will go and hear Moody." My father said, "Oh, no, this isn't Sunday. We will go to the theater, or concert." But, the man said, "You promised to go wherever I chose." So my father had to go. They found the building was full and there were no seats in the hall except special ones. This man knew he would never get my father there again, so he worked himself into the crowd until he came across one of the committee. He said to him, "Look here; I have brought a wealthy sporting gentleman here, but I will never get him here again if we do not get a seat." The man took them in and put them right straight in front of Mr. Moody. My father never took his eyes off Mr. Moody until he finished his address. After the

meeting my father said, "I will come and hear this man again. He just told me everything I had ever done." My father kept going until he was right soundly converted.

That afternoon my father had been full of a thing that takes possession of a man's heart and head more than anything else — that passion for horse racing; and in the evening he was a changed man. It was the same skin, but a new man altogether inside. When we boys came home from college we didn't understand what had come over him, but father kept continually telling us that he was born again. We thought he was just born upside down, because he was always asking us about our souls, and we didn't like it. Of course, he took us to hear Mr. Moody, and we were impressed a good deal, but were not converted.

When my father was converted of course he could not go on living the same life as before. He could not go to balls, card parties, and all that sort of thing. His conscience told him so, and he said to Mr. Moody: "I want to be straight with you. If I become a Christian will I have to give up racing, and shooting, and hunting, and theaters, and balls?" "Well," Mr. Moody said, "Mr. Studd, you have been straight with me; I will be straight with you. Racing means betting, and betting means gambling, and I don't see how a gambler is going to be a Christian. Do the other things as long as you like." My father asked again about the theater and cards, and Mr. Moody said, "Mr. Studd, you have children and people you love; and now you are a saved man yourself, and you want to get them saved. God will give you some souls and as soon as ever you have won a soul you won't care about any of the other things." Sure enough, we found to our astonishment

that father didn't care for any of those things any longer; he only cared about one thing, and that was saving souls.

He took us to hear Mr. Moody and other men, and when Mr. Moody left England my father opened his country house, and held meetings there in the evenings. He asked ministers and business men from London to come down and speak to the people about their souls. The people would come for miles to attend the meetings, and many were converted. One of these gentlemen came down to preach one day and as I was going out to play cricket he caught me unawares and said, "Are you a Christian?" I said, "I am not what you call a Christian. I have believed on Jesus Christ since I was knee high. Of course I believe in the church, too." I thought by answering him pretty close I would get rid of him, but he stuck tight as wax and said, "Look here, God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. You believe Jesus Christ died?" "Yes." "You believe He died for you?" "Yes." "Do you believe the other half of the verse — 'shall have everlasting life?'" "No," I said, "I don't believe that." He said, "Don't you think you are a bit inconsistent, believing one half of the verse and not the other half?" "I suppose I am." "Well," he said, "are you always going to be inconsistent?" "No," I said, "I suppose not always." He said, "Will you be consistent now?" I saw that I was cornered and I began to think, "If I go out of this room inconsistent, I won't carry very much self-respect." I said, "Yes, I will be consistent." "Well, don't you see that eternal life is a gift? When somebody gives you a present at Christmas, what do you do?" "I take it and say, 'Thank you.'" He said, "Will you

say 'Thank you' to God for this gift?" Then I got down on my knees and I did say "Thank you" to God. And right then and there joy and peace came into my soul. I knew then what it was to be born again, and the Bible, which had been so dry to me before, became everything.

One day when I was in London, a friend asked me to come to tea with him and his wife who were Christians. After tea, when we were talking about the Bible around the open fire, this friend said, "Have you heard of the wonderful blessing Mrs. Watson has got lately?" I said, "Why, she has been a Christian a long time." He said, "Yes, but she is quite different now." I had heard people talking about getting other blessings besides conversion, but I would not believe it. Then my friend opened his Bible and showed plainly enough from the Scriptures that there were other blessings besides conversion. Then he said, "Have you these other blessings?" I said, "No, I have not." I was just angry because I wanted to know what I was going to do for God. We knelt down and asked God very simply that God would give us all He had for us. When I went back to my room I got hold of "The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life." That night I just meant business, and it seemed to come so plain — old truths, it may be, but they seemed to grip me that time. I had known about Jesus Christ's dying for me, but I had never understood that if he had died for me, then I didn't belong to myself. Redemption means "buying back" so that if I belonged to Him, either I had to be a thief and keep what wasn't mine, or else I had to give up everything to God. When I came to see that Jesus Christ had died for me, it didn't seem hard to give up all to Him. It seemed just common, ordinary honesty.

Then I read in the book: "When you have surrendered all to God, you have given him all the responsibility, as well as everything else. It is God who is responsible to look after you and all you have to do is to trust. Put your hand in His and the Lord will lead you. It seemed quite a different thing after that and in a very short time God had told me what to do and where to go. God doesn't tell a person first by his head; He tells him first by the heart. God put it in my heart and made me long to go to China.

There were lots of difficulties in the way. Possibly some of you have difficulties in your way. Don't you turn aside because of the difficulties. There was not one of all my relatives but thought that I had gone clean mad. My elder brother, who was a true Christian, said to me one evening, "Charlie, I think you are making a great mistake." I said, "There is no mistake about it." He said: "You are away every night at the meetings and you do not see mother. I see her, and this is just breaking her heart. I think you are wrong." I said, "Let us ask God. I do not want to be pig-headed and go out there of my own accord, I just want to do God's will." It was hard to have this brother, who had been such a help, think it was a mistake. We got down on our knees and put the whole matter in God's hands. That night I could not get to sleep, but it seemed as though I heard someone say this verse over and over, "Ask of me and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." I knew it was God's voice speaking to me. When I got to China I knew why He said that verse so often. Winning souls out there is the same thing as here, only more difficult. The devil comes to one and says, "Why don't you

go home? You can save more souls there than here." But I had received marching orders to go to China and I had God to give them as plain to go back. Not only did God make it right with the brother, but the night I was leaving home God made my mother willing that I should go to China.

My father made me become of age at twenty-five. I was twenty-three when I went to China; and for two or three years it seemed as if God kept me walking up and down that country. Finally I was sent to a station where there had been a riot. Every missionary's house had been knocked down, and they had been sent away; but the British consul was there, although he had been nearly killed. When a friend and myself got into that town we meant to hold the fort. When the consul saw us it was as though he had seen a couple of ghosts. He said, "However did you get here? There are guards in every gate of the city to prevent any foreign devil from coming in." We said that God had brought us in and told him what we had come for. He said, "No; you cannot stay here; I can give you a passport up or down the river, but no foreigners are allowed here except myself." After a little he said, "If you would like to stay in that hovel there you can; but there is not room for more than one." Then we began to discuss which should stay. My friend was going to be married and I was not, but he wanted to stay. Finally the consul asked us to dinner, and in the midst of dinner he turned to me and said, "Studd, will you stay with me?' That settled the matter. I didn't know why God had sent me to that place until some time afterwards.

One day when I was reading the harmony of the Gospels I came to where Christ talked with the rich young man. Then

God seemed to bring all the vows I had made back to me. A few days later the post, which came only every half-month, brought letters from the solicitor and banker to show what I had become heir to. Then God made me just ordinarily honest and told me what to do. Then I learned why I had been sent to that particular place. I needed to draw up papers giving the "power of attorney," and for that I had to have the signature of one of Her Majesty's officers. I went to this consul and when he saw the paper he said, "I won't sign it. You don't know what you are doing." Finally, he said that he would give me two weeks to think it over and then if I wished he would sign it. I took it back at the end of two weeks and he signed it and off the stuff went.

God has promised to give a hundredfold for everything we give to him. An hundredfold is a wonderful percentage; it is ten thousand per cent. God began to give me back the hundredfold wonderfully quick. Not long after this I was sent down to Shanghai. My brother, who had been very ill, had gone right back into the world again. On account of his health the doctors sent him round the world in search of better. He thought he would just come and touch at Shanghai and see me. He said he was not going to stay very long for he was mighty afraid he would get too much religion. He took his berth for Japan about the next day after he arrived. But God soon gave him as much religion as he could hold and he cancelled that passage to Japan and stayed with me six months. When I saw that brother right soundly converted I said, "This is ten thousand per cent and more."