

CHAPTER FIVE

In which we see

"The Wanderer" in Action.

I stood transfixed on the platform of the small, newly-built Union depot after "The Wanderer" and I had bade each other "Good-bye". Just before boarding the train, he had turned and waved to me, and I, in turn, had waved back to him. His expression as he boarded the train was sad. Yet, mingled with it's sadness, I thought I could discern there a light of joy.

Sadness and joy. That was it. That was what I saw in the expression on the face of "The Wanderer". Why he should be both sad and joyful at the same time I did not know. Nor did I know why either sadness or joy should be so evident on the face of one so young. At thirty-three this man was in the very prime of life. Evidently he had no financial worries, for he was well-dressed and gave every evidence of affluence.

I usually feel very happy when I return to this little City of Moscow after a trip, but this time it was different. As the train "chug-chugged" out of the station and disappeared from sight round the bend by the water-tank, I felt that it was carrying out of my life something that it had brought into my life, back there at Spangle where "The Wanderer" had boarded it.

So I stood there for a few moments, wrapped in thought, and quite oblivious of my good wife who was holding my arm. She knows me pretty well after living with me for thirty years. She knows when I wish to be left strictly alone, and she usually knows when I am deep in thought. This was one of the moments in which I wanted to just stand there and think--in spite of the cold. So there I stood, even after the train had disappeared on it's way to Juliaetta, it's next stop.

I was thinking about "The Wanderer". Who was he? Why had he boarded this particular train? And what was he doing in the little City of Spangle? And why was there only one vacant seat on that train? And why was that one opposite me?

What did this "Wanderer" man do for a living? How did it happen that he knew so much about the Christian Bible, being a Jew? Not once had he mentioned the Talmud--always his talk had been about things pertaining to Jesus and the Christian Bible. That he had a grasp on both Jesus and the Bible which few men have, I knew from his conversation. That he was Christian, I suspected although he had, in a way, denied it by saying "No Jew can be a Christian."

Despite that statement, I knew that he was, to say the least, deeply sympathetic to the Man of Calvary whom Christians claim, was the Infinite Creator of the universe, and at the same time, a man--even as you and I. All these questions must remain answerless however for the time being.

That I should see him again, and know him better, I had no doubt at all. I remembered his parting statement to the effect that if I ever really needed him, all I had to do was to ask my Heavenly Father for him, and he would be there, no matter where I might be.

What sort of talk was this? Did he really mean that he would appear from out of the nowhere whenever I needed him? And what made him think I should ever need him? Had anyone helped me so far in my labors for God? Had I not, like Jesus, been forced to "tread the wine-press alone?" Yet this man had offered to give me his overcoat if I really wanted it?

The thing I noticed most however about this man, was the feeling of absolute loneliness which pressed hard on me as I stood there watching the train bear him away. I instinctively knew that we should meet again, but why should the feeling of sadness, and sorrow, and loneliness which I was experiencing at this moment, come to me?

I had met many strange men and women over the past twenty years, but never one like this. Who was he? Born in Bethlehem of Judea, living in Nazareth, born ~~at~~ ~~but~~ but thirty-three short years ago? All this mystified me. I probably would

have stood there trying to think this strange man out for an hour or so, had I not been awakened from my reverie by a rather firm tug on my arm, and the voice of Mrs. Robinson, saying: "Robbie--had 'nt we better get home? It's pretty cold out here."

Climbing into the green Cadillac, I closed the door and the good wife started the motor. Soon we were turning the corner of Eighth Street in to Main, then up Third into Howard, where we came to a stop in front of number 122, which is the number of the house in which I live.

Little Florence and Alfie were there to greet me, and after the usual kisses and hugs, we sat down to a dinner which the good wife had prepared. Both Florence and Alfie were in school, so at about a quarter to one, they left, leaving me alone with Mrs. Robinson.

Usually, after returning from a trip, the first thing I do on arriving home is to throw the pipe-organ switch, sit down at the console and play the old hymns I love so very much, for at least half an hour. Sometimes I play a full hour, and have been known to sit there playing all night.

That organ, and those old hymns seem to open up the Realm of God as nothing else can. I am not much of an organist. Alfred is the organ player in our family. He studied under Poister at Oberlin, and that boy can make an organ talk. But even Alfie cannot play the old hymns like his Dad.

Years have passed since the strange happenings I am here recording. The war came along and Alfie enlisted as a Seaman 2nd Class in the U.S. Navy. Then he took up flying, and became a Flying Ensign. Then Lieut second class, and was discharged as a first lieutenant. He was flying a TBF in the Pacific and saw action everywhere from Truk to Nagasaki. He saw service on the Hornet and the Shangri-La, and wears the Presidential Unit Citation, The Purple Heart, The Air Medal and some more bars, denoting other engagements.

At the present writing Alfred is attending Stanford University. He is

married to a beautiful Moscow girl, a school-days sweetheart. They have the cutest little "Alfred Bruce" who is six months old, and, of course, worshipped by both of his parents. Incidentally by his grandfather and grandmother too.

This happy family lives in Los Trancos Woods, just a few miles from Stanford. Alfred drives to and from his classes twice each day. On one occasion during this last horrible war, Alf had been ordered to take some planes and perform a certain bombing attack on the fortified Island of ChiChi Jima. A twenty millimeter Jap shell exploded in the cock-pit of his plane, scattering shrapnel all over the pilots seat, blowing out the hydraulic oil, and destroying the landing-gear.

We have a photograph of Alfie going into the dive which met the Japanese twenty millimeter shell head on. A few moments after the photograph was taken, our boy was bleeding from both legs, and was almost unconscious. Had it not been for the valor and courage of his two assistants, the radio-man and the bomber, none of that trio of beautiful American boys would have returned. Instead, they would have met their deaths in a watery grave, unknown to anyone, out there in the far Pacific.

But his two crew-men kept him alive, by telling him that if he lapsed into unconsciousness, all would be killed. (There is one pilot and two crew-members on a TBF) Anyway, Alf retained consciousness and flew his plane over one hundred miles to a carrier, and while he was in pretty serious conditions, he did land his plane safely, saving his crew and receiving a wonderful citation from Admiral Mitscher.

I shall mention many little details of our family life like this so that you may know that the "American family Robinson" is a perfectly normal family, acting very much as other American families act, and having their sorrows as well as their joys, like every other American family does.

Alfred is a great student of everything his Dad writes. He took his Dad's books into action with him, and through them, I believe he has developed the same faith in the over-all goodness of God his father tries to possess.

This book would not be complete without a word about our Florence, one of the sweetest little things God ever gave life to. Florence, at this writing, is fifteen years old, and is in~~h~~ her first year of high-school here in Moscow. She was born here, in the Magee Hospital.

I believe it will interest the reader if I~~h~~ recite~~as~~ a battle I had with myself and my faith to save her life some years ago. I have much joy over what I have been able to do countless other families throughout the world. I feel almost as keenly as if it were my own, when someone wires or calls me long-distance, asking me to do what I can to save a life. However, when serious illness strikes into one's own family, one feels it much more than one would in the case of the family of another.

Florence was stricken with acute appendicitis. The appendix burst. I was away at the time, and was recalled by a wire from Mrs. Robinson. There had been a divergence of opinion among the local physicians as to the nature of her illness. When I returned however, one look at Florence was all I needed to tell me that she was dangerously ill--probably dying.

We called an ambulance and ~~#####~~ rushed her into St. Luke's Hospital in Spokane, where we secured the services of two of the best surgeons we could find, and a diagnostician as well. The case was pronounced almost hopeless as little Florence had been living with a ruptured appendix for two or three days. It was serious. The attending physicians stated that there was little hope, even if an operation were performed, but I insisted that they an operation~~s~~ and by doing it, they would have done everything in~~h~~ their power. I would do the rest.

Mrs. Robinson took a room at the Davenport Hotel. I drove to Moscow every night and back to Spokane the next day, as the Movement even then was so large that it required my personal attention every day. There were days of anxiety I assure you. The attending physicians opened her up, got rid of as much pus as they could,

and then closed the incision just as fast as they could get it closed. They were afraid to keep it open any longer than absolutely necessary.

For days little Florence hovered between life and death. I had the night nurse call me long-distance every morning at 5.30 to tell me how she was getting along. Every means known to medical science was resorted to. On the fifth day however, an ~~abscess~~ abscess had formed in the intestines, and a second operation was necessary. It was performed.

Throughout all this, I maintained a calm confidence in God, and although my faith was not as strong as it is today, and although I had not then seen as many of the workings of the Spirit of God as I have seen to date, this second operation made her condition doubly serious. Now hoping that the recital of my technique with God may be helpful to the reader, I shall detail to you here exactly what I was doing here at home, to make sure Florence lived, even though the chances were all against it.

Instead of going to bed when I arrived home every evening from Spokane, I spent the night hours alone with God. There was no "praying" as we usually understand praying. Instead, I was trying to establish the spiritual contact in the case of Florence which I invariably establish in the thousands of other cases which come to me. For it is nothing less than actual belief in God, on the part of someone, which makes these recoveries so very sure. The belief itself is the key to the Kingdom of God, and it makes no difference if physical healing is required or what other thing it may be. Jesus knew whereof He spake when He said: "All things are possible to him that believeth--if thou canst believe." Mark 9:23

(It is this absolute faith in God I am trying so hard to instill into our churches, and into the general public. Once the American people come to a realization of the fathomless ocean of Power there is in the Spirit of God, they will rush to the Source of that Power, and a "nation shall be born in a day".)

There seemed to be something in the case of little Florence, which baffled me. I had the impression that I was going to lose this case. Where that impression came from I do not know. Why it came I do not know either. I do know it was there. I also knew that I had to do something to increase my faith in the absolute Power of God in this particular case. I had never had any trouble in other cases--just in the case of my own daughter.

Perhaps it was a test. Maybe so. But I made up my mind that the fault was not on the part of God. It must have been on my part. Was there something I had left undone which I should have done? Where is the trouble---thought I. As one should always do when the avenue through which the Power of God descends seem to be temporarily closed, I got alone with myself--and with the Spirit of God. Night after night I would sit in my little bedroom-study and try to think what there was which was preventing me from having the assurance of complete victory over the impending death of little "Hinch" as we call her.

I shall never forget the agony of soul that morning when I gained the victory over my doubts and fears. I was standing in the kitchen, leaning against the oven on our Hotpoint range. My head was bowed. My eyes were closed. I was just waiting. Waiting to see what God would do. I had done everything in my power to re-establish the very sweet communion which I always try to keep constant between the Spirit of God and me.

Suddenly, like a bolt out of the blue, there came to me a passage from the Gospel of John. In my earlier days in theological seminary, there were few who knew the Christian Bible as I knew it. I could quote whole chapters by the hour. But this particular passage came into my mind, and in the moment it came, I knew I had the victory.
I knew Florence would live.

What was the passage? Here it is:- "Said I not unto thee that if thou wouldst believe thou shouldst see the glory of God?" It is from John 11:40

In a flash I saw what the trouble had been. I had neglected, in
thank
this particular instance, to ~~thank~~ God for having already done what I wanted Him to do.

The moment I saw that, my face was wreathed in smiles. I brewed a Silez full of coffee, made some toast, and awaited the usual early morning phone call from the night nurse. "Glory to God--Florence is healed" I shouted at the top of my voice.

I am not in the habit of making that sort of demonstration. It has not happened half a dozen times in my life. But it happened this day. And the streams of peace, power, and joy which came flooding in on me, bathing my soul with the infinite love which is God, will never be forgotten.

There are those who, under the impulse of the Power of the Spirit of God, go into raptures of joy. There are others who, when the Spirit of God is upon them, sink into the solitude of their inner selves, there, all alone, to enjoy the marvellous Power of God which every American, church-member or non-church-member should know as something as natural and normal as breathing. I happen to be one of the latter kind, usually.

The coffee was made. The eggs were boiled. The toast wade. Then the phone rang. I knew what that message would be certainly. There was no doubt in my mind then. Taking the receiver off the hook, I heard the voice of the night special say:- "He llo--Dr. Robinson?"

"Yes this is Dr. Robinson."

"Well you'll be interested in knowing Doctor Robinson that florence's temperature is down to normal this morning, she has had a good night, and the crisis is past--she will recover."

I thanker her for the call, went to the office, and later drove to Spokane, there to find a very remarkable change had come over my baby. I still call her a baby but at fifteen, she doesn't like that.

It is little incidents like these which will perhaps impress upon the reader, how very close the Power of God is, and how very natural ~~it~~ it is to call that Power into action. Usually it takes a war, or a threat of impending national calamity before we Americans will direct our thoughts to God. That is all wrong. The Power of God should be the most talked of thing in the earth. It should be the one Power with which we are the best acquainted. When the Power of God does finally become the all-illuminating source of ~~all~~ all human life, then shall we know what Jesus meant when He said:—"I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."

You will note carefully that Jesus did not say "He that believeth on me", but "He that believeth in me." And there is a vast difference in those two little words. Surely Jesus did not mean anyone to believe on his as God. Nor did He mean that anyone should believe on Him, as a physical body. What Jesus did mean was this:— "He that believeth in the message that I bring—the message I have so often expressed—the message that it is the Father within me that doeth the work—that man, even though he were dead, yet shall he live."

The statement quoted from John 10:25 was made by Jesus in connection with the raising of a dead man—Lazarus. Note the 42nd verse of that same chapter—"Father—I thank Thee that Thou hast heard me, and I know that Thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me".

Jesus knew that the Spirit of God was always within Him, just as that Spirit is always within us. It was given to us at birth, and just so long as we desire that Spirit to remain with us—It will remain. None can take It away if Its presence is known.

The Spirit of God has sent many men since the time of Jesus. Most of those He has sent have met with the same refusal to acknowledge the Power of God

which Jesus met with. Faith in God does not exist on the earth. If it not brought to the earth by someone, and that very rapidly, we face almost complete annihilation. A blind man can see that.

But shall we get back to "The Wanderer"? Perhaps he may be able to help us a little bit in our search for a method by which all men and women may know the Power of God.

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As is my custom, I took my place at the console of the organ, after having helped Mrs. Robinson wash and wipe the dishes. I always do that when I am in Moscow.

On the organ, there may always be found several old hymn books. The older they are, the better I like them. I have quite a collection of these old books. Picking up one of them at random, I ~~was~~ ran across a beautiful old hymn, the words of which are printed on the inside of my down-town study door. The hymn was written by Cardinal Newman who was born in London England, within the sound of Bow Bells.

At the time he wrote this hymn, John A. Newman was a clergyman of the Church of England. Like many another religious leader, he had his troubles with the church. Finally he lost his Protestant faith and became a Roman Catholic. In his unrest, he travelled to Sicily where he became violently ill. After his recovery he waited three weeks for a boat to carry him to Palermo. On his way to Marseilles, he wrote the ever-beautiful hymn I was about to play---Lead Kindly Light.

I usually play hymns with the Vox Humana, the Flute, and the Tibia stops ~~thron~~ ^{thrown} on. That makes a wonderful combination of tone on my organ. Soon, the melody was softly stealing through the nine rooms of our home--

"Lead, Kindly Light--amid the encircling gloom,
Lead Thou me on.
The night is dark, and I am far from home,
Lead Thou me on.
Keep Thou my feet, I do not as to see the distant scene,
One step enough for me.

I had played all four verses of this beloved hymn when I felt two arms steal around my neck, and heard the voice of Mrs. Robinson say:-

"Robbie--who was the man I met at the depot?"

"Shut the organ off and I'll tell you about him" I replied.

After the motor was stilled, we both sat in the living-room and I told her all I knew about "The Wanderer".

"He got on the train at Spangle. There was only one vacane seat and that was opposite mine" I said.

"Well who is he--what does he do?"

"I do not know. He would not tell me. He wouldn't even tell me his name, but asked me to call him "The Wanderer" saying that it would not be long before I knew who he was."

"Did he tell you what his business is?"

"Well, yes and no. He said he was about his father's business but he meant God's business, not his earthly father."

"Is he a preacher or priest?"

"No, he is neither. I dont believe he is a rabbi either, although he is a Jew. A Syrian Jew. And here's something which is amazing--he says he was born in Bethlehem of Judea, but that his home in in Nazareth. Do you remember my telling you about a Jew who stole my motion-picture machine and the car I had rented the last time I was in the Holy Land?"

"Yes I do--but you got them back again didn't you?"

"I did--but this "Wandered" fellow knew all about that--in fact he told me it was his brother who had stoeln the car."

"Well that's certainly a coincidence" said Mrs. Robinson.

"There is something about this whole business which is much more than a coincidence" I told her, ~~###~~

"He is the most magnetic man I have evr known. There's something about him which seems to come from another world. Something I cannot figure out at all. No man I have ever met has so changed me as that man has, in so short a time."

"Maybe he's ~~#~~ representing some oriental rug concern" my wife said.

"But what would an oriental rug salesman be doing here? in this place--there are no oriental rug dealers here. Nor are there any Jews in this whole Palouse Empire, so he couldn't have been visiting friends."

"Did he say where he was going?"

"Not a word did he tell me about where he came from or where he is going. He did not tell me whether he was in this country for a short or long period. In fact he told me just exactly nothing."

"Oh well--I dont suppose you'll ever see him again--just some man wandering through the country--probably on a pleasure trip" relined the good wife.

"No--that man is not on a pleasure trip. He told me he is about his Father's business, and he really meant that too."

"There's something about that man which gives me the impression that we have met somewhere, but this he denies, and for the love of me I can't place him at all. I wish I could have had more time with him. He did tell me though, that if I ever really needed him, to tell my Heavenly Father, and he said that would bring him."

"Well but how can he help you?."

"I do not know" I replied, "But I have an idea that man can help me a whole lot. I have an idea he has forgotten more about the Power of God