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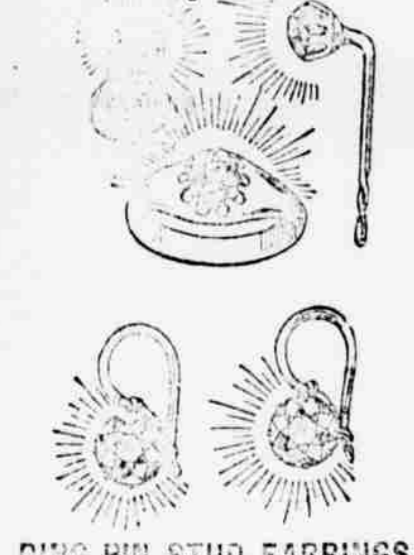
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Consumption.

THE CRUCIFIXION OF PHILIP STRONG.

By **REV. CHARLES M. SHELDON,**
 Author of "In His Steps: What Would Jesus Do?" "Malcolm Kirk," "Robert Hardy's Seven Days," Etc.

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[CONTINUED.]

CHAPTER VII.

The anonymous letters, or rather scrawls, which Philip found by the side of his unconscious wife as he stooped to raise her up read as follows:

Preacher—Better pack up and leave. Milton is not big enough to hold you alive. Take warning in time.

Preacher's Wife—As long as you stay in Milton there is danger of two funerals. Dynamite kills women as well as men.

Philip sat by the study lounge holding those scrawls in his hand as his wife recovered from her fainting fit after he had applied restoratives. His heart was filled with horror at the thought of the complete cowardice which could threaten the life of an innocent woman. There was with it a feeling of intense contempt of such childish, diabolical methods of intimidation as that of sticking a knife into the study desk. If it had not been for its effect on his wife, Philip would have laughed at the whole thing. As it was, he was surprised and alarmed that she had fainted, a thing he had never known her to do, and as soon as she was able to speak he listened anxiously to her story.

"It must have been an hour after you had gone, Philip, that I thought I heard a noise up stairs, and, thinking perhaps you had left one of your windows down at the top and the curtain was flapping, I went right up, and the minute I stepped into the room I had the feeling that some one was there."

"Didn't you carry up a light?"

"No. The lamp was burning at the end of the upper hall, and so I never thought of needing more. Well, as I moved over toward the window, still feeling that strange, unaccountable knowledge of some one there, a man stepped out from behind your desk, walked right up to me and held out those letters in one hand, while with the other he threw the light from a small bull's eye or burglar's lantern upon them."

Philip listened in amazement.

"Sarah, you must have dreamed all that. It isn't likely that any man would do such a thing."

"Philip, I did not dream. I was terribly wide awake and so scared that I couldn't even scream. My tongue seemed to be entirely useless. But I felt compelled to read what was written, and the man held the papers there until the words seemed to burn my eyes. He then walked over to the desk and with one blow drove the knife down into the wood, and then I fainted away, and that is all I can remember."

"And what became of the man?"

asked Philip, still inclined to think that his wife had in some way fallen asleep and dreamed at least a part of this strange scene, perhaps before she went up to the study and discovered the letters. "I don't know; maybe he is in the house yet. Philip, I am almost dead for fear—not for myself, but for your life."

"I never had any fear of anonymous letters or of threats," replied Philip, contemptuously eyeing the knife, which was still sticking in the desk. "Evidently the saloon men think I am a child to be frightened with these bugaboos, which have figured in every sensational story since the time of Captain Kidd."

"Then you think this is the work of the saloon men?"

"Who else can it be? We have no other enemies of this sort in Milton."

"But they will kill you. Oh, Philip, I cannot bear the thought of living here in this way! Let us leave this dreadful place."

"Little woman," said Philip, while he bravely drove away any slight anxiety he may have had for himself, "don't you think it would be cowardly to run away so soon?"

"Wouldn't it be better to run away so soon than to be killed? Is there any bravery in staying in a place where you are likely to be murdered by some coward?"

"I don't think I shall be," said Philip confidently. "And I don't want you to be afraid. They will not dare to harm you."

"No, Philip!" exclaimed his wife eagerly; "you must not be mistaken. I did not faint away tonight because I was afraid for myself. Surely I have no fear there. It was the thought of the peril in which you stand daily as you go out among these men, and as you go back and forth to your meetings in the dark. I am growing nervous and anxious ever since the shooting, and when I was startled by the man here tonight I was so weak that I fainted. But I am sure that they do not care to harm me; you are the object of their hatred. If they strike any one it will be you. That is the reason I want to leave this place. Say you will, Philip. Surely there are other churches where you could preach as you want to and still not be in such constant danger."

It required all of Philip's wisdom and love and consciousness of his immediate duty to answer his wife's appeal and say no to it. It was one of the severest struggles he ever had. There was to be taken into the account not only his own safety, but that of his wife as well. For, think what he would, he could not shake off the feel-

ery atmosphere. The seven largest churches in the place were all on one street, well up in the wealthy residence portion and not more than two or three blocks apart. Down in the tenement district there was not a single church building and only one or two weak mission schools which did not touch the problem of the district at all. The distance from this poor part of the town to the churches was fully a mile, a distance that certainly stood as a geographical obstacle to the church attendance of the neighborhood, even supposing the people were eager to go to the large churches, which was not at all the fact. Indeed, Philip soon discovered that the people were indifferent in the matter. The churches on the fashionable street in town meant less than nothing to them. They never would go to them, and there was little hope that anything the pastor or members could do would draw the people that distance to come within church influence. The fact of the matter was the seven churches of different denominations in Milton had no living connection whatever with nearly one-half the population, and that the most needy half of the place.

The longer Philip studied the situation the more un-Christian it looked to him and the more he longed to change it. He went over the ground again and again very carefully. He talked with the different ministers and the most advanced Christians in his own church. There was a variety of opinion as to what might be done, but no one was ready for the radical move which Philip advocated when he came to speak on the subject the first Sunday of the month.

CHAPTER VIII.

The first Sunday was beginning to be more or less dreaded or anticipated by Calvary church people. They were learning to expect something radical, sweeping, almost revolutionary in Philip's utterances on "Christ and Modern Society." Some agreed with him as far as he had gone. Very many had been hurt at his plainness of speech. This was especially true of the property owners and the fashionable part of the membership. Yet there was a fascination about Philip's preaching that prevented so far any very serious outbreak or dissension in the church. He was a recognized leader. In his presentation of truth he was large minded. He had the faculty of holding men's respect. There was no mistaking the situation, however. Mr. Winter, with others, was working against him. Philip was vaguely conscious of much that did not work out into open, apparent fact. Nevertheless, when he came up on the first Sunday of the next month and began to announce his subject, he found an audience that crowded the house to the doors, and among them were scattered numbers of men from the working-men's district with whom Philip had talked while down there. It was, as before, an inspiring congregation, and Philip faced it, feeling sure in his heart that he had a great subject to unfold and a message to deliver to the church of Christ such as he could not but believe Christ would most certainly present if he were living today in Milton.

He began by describing the exact condition of affairs in Milton. To assist this description he had brought with him into the church his map of the town.

"Look now," he said, pointing out the different localities, "at B street, where we now are. Here are seven of the largest churches of the place on this street. The entire distance between the first of these church buildings and the last one is a little over a mile. Three of these churches are only two blocks apart. Then consider the character of the residences and people in the vicinity of this street. It is what is called desirable—that is, the homes are the very finest, and the people, almost without exception, are refined, respectable, well educated and Christian in training. All the wealth of the town centers about B street. All the society life extends out from it on each side. It is considered the most fashionable street for drives and promenades. It is well lighted, well paved, well kept. The people who come out of the houses on B street are always well dressed. The people who go into these seven churches are as a rule well dressed and comfortable looking. Mind you," continued Philip, raising his hand with a significant gesture, "I do not want to have you think that I consider good clothes and comfortable looks as un-Christian or anything against the people who present such an appearance. Far from it. I simply mention this fact to make the contrast I am going to show you all the plainer. For let us leave B street now and go down into the flats by the river, where nearly all the mill people have their homes. I wish you would note first the distance from B street and the churches to this tenement district. It is nine blocks—that is, a little over a mile. To the edge of the tenement houses farthest from our own church building it is a mile and three-quarters. And within that entire district, measuring nearly two by three miles, there is not a church building. There are two feeble mission schools, which are held in plain, unattractive halls, where every Sunday a handful of children meet, but nothing practically is being done by the church of Christ in this place to give the people in that part of the town the privileges and power of the life of Christ, the life more abundantly."

"The houses down there are of the cheapest description. The people who come out of them are far from well dressed. The streets and alleys are dirty and ill smelling, and no one cares to promenade for pleasure up and down the sidewalks in that neighborhood. It is not a safe place to go to at night. The most frequent disturbances come from that part of the town. All the hard characters find ref-

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[LETTER TO MRS. PINKHAM NO. 26,791]

"DEAR MRS. PINKHAM—I have many, many thanks to give you for what your Vegetable Compound has done for me. After first confinement I was sick for nine years with prolapsus of the womb, had pain in left side, in small of back, a great deal of headache, palpitation of heart and leucorrhoea. I felt so weak and tired that I could not do my work. I became pregnant again and took your Compound all through, and now have a sweet baby girl. I never before had such an easy time during labor, and I feel it was due to Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound. I am now able to do my work and feel better than I have for years. I cannot thank you enough."—MRS. ED. ENGLINGER, DEVINE, TEX.

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ourselves? What have we done to show the poor or the sif ful that we care anything for their souls or that Christianity is anything but a comfortable, select religion for those who can afford the good things of the world? What has the church in Milton done to make the workman here feel that it is an institution that throbs with the brotherhood of man? But suppose we actually move our church down there and then go there ourselves weekdays and Sundays to work for the uplift of immortal beings. Shall we not then have the satisfaction of knowing that we are at last trying to do something more than enjoy our church all by ourselves? Shall we not be able to hope that we have at least attempted to obey the spirit of our sacrificing Lord, who commanded his disciples to go and disciple the nations? It seems to me that the plan is a Christian plan. If the churches in this neighborhood were not so numerous, if the circumstances were different, it might not be wise or necessary to do what I propose. But as the facts are, I solemnly believe that this church has an opportunity before it to show Milton and the other churches and the world that it is willing to do an unusual thing, that it has within it the spirit of complete willingness to reach and lift up mankind in the way that will do it best and most speedily. If individuals are commanded to sacrifice and endure for Christ's sake and the kingdom's, I do not know why organizations should not do the same. And in this instance something on a large scale, something that represents large sacrifice, something that will convince the people of the love of man for man, is the only thing that will strike deep enough into the problem of the tenement district in Milton to begin to solve it in any satisfactory or Christian way.

"I do not expect the church to act on my plan without due deliberation. I have arrived at my own conclusions after a careful going over the entire ground. And in the sight of all the need and degradation of the people and in the light of all that Christ has made clear to be our duty as his disciples it seems to me there is but one path open to us. If we neglect to follow him as he beckons us, I believe we shall neglect the one opportunity of Calvary church to put itself in the position of the church of the crucified Lamb of God, who did not please himself, who came to minister to others, who would certainly approve of any steps his church on earth in this age might honestly make to reach men and

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