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**THE CRUCIFIXION OF PHILIP STRONG.**

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

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(CONTINUED.)  
 CHAPTER XIX.  
 As the man looked up at Philip in a dazed and uncertain manner Philip said slowly:

"You're not hurt badly, I hope. Why did you attack me?"

The man seemed too bewildered to answer. Philip leaned over and put one arm about him to help him rise. He struggled to his feet and almost instantly sat down on the curb at the side of the road, holding his head between his hands. For a moment Philip hesitated. Then he sat down beside him and, after finding out that he was not seriously hurt, succeeded in drawing him into a conversation which grew more and more remarkable as it went on. As he thought back upon it afterward Philip was unable to account exactly for the way in which the confidence between him and his assailant had been brought about. The incident and all that flowed out of it had such a bearing on the crucifixion that it belongs to the whole story.

"Then you say," went on Philip after they had been talking briefly in ques-



"Had a wife. She's dead—of consumption."

tion and answered for a few minutes—"You say that you meant to rob me, taking me for another man?"

"Yes, I thought you was the mill man. What is his name? Winter?"

"Why did you want to rob him?"

The man looked up and said hoarsely, almost savagely, "Because he has money, and I was hungry."

"How long have you been hungry?"

"I have not had anything to eat for almost three days."

"There is food to be had at the poor commissioners'. Did you know that fact?"

The man did not answer, and Philip asked him again. The reply came in a tone of bitter emphasis that made the minister start:

"Yes, I know it! I would starve before I would go to the poor commissioners for food."

"You steal?" asked Philip gently.

"Yes, or steal. Wouldn't you?"

Philip stared out into the darkness of the court and answered honestly, "I don't know."

There was a short pause. Then he asked:

"Can't you get work?"

It was a hopeless question to put to a man in a town of over 2,000 idle men. The answer was what he knew it would be:

"Work! Can I pick up a bushel of gold in the street out there? Can a man get work where there ain't any?"

"What have you been doing?"

"I was fireman at the Lake mills. Good job; but it when they closed down last winter."

"What have you been doing since?"

"Anything I could get."

"Are you a married man?"

The question affected the other strangely. He trembled all over, put his head between his knees, and out of his heart's anguish flowed the words: "I had a wife. She's dead—of consumption. I had a little girl. She's dead too. Thank God!" exclaimed the man, with a change from a sob to a curse. "Thank God! And curses on all rich men who had it in their power to prevent the hell on earth for other people, and which they will feel for themselves in the other world!"

Philip did not say anything for some time. What could any man say to another at once under such circumstances? Finally he said:

"What will you do with money if I give you some?"

"I don't want your money," replied the man.

"I thought you did a little while ago."

"It was the mill owner's money I wanted. You're the preacher, ain't you, up at Calvary church?"

"Yes. How did you know?"

"I've seen you; heard you preach once. I never thought I should come to this—holding up a preacher down here!" And the man laughed a hard, short laugh.

"Then you're not"—Philip hardly knew how to say it. He wanted to say that the man was not connected in any way with the saloon element. "You're driven to this desperate course on your own account? The reason I ask is because I have been threatened by the whisky men, and at first I supposed

you were one of their men."

"No, sir," was the answer, almost in disgust. "I may be pretty bad, but I've not got so low as that."

"Then your only motive was hunger?"

"That was all. Enough, ain't it?"

"We can't discuss the matter here," said Philip. He hesitated, rose and stood there looking at the man, who sat now with his head resting on his arms, which were folded across his knees. Two or three persons came out of a street near by and walked past. Philip knew them and said good evening. They thought he was helping some drunken man, a thing he had often done, and they went along without stopping. Again the street was deserted.

"What will you do now? Where will you go?"

"God knows. I am an outcast on this earth."

"Have you no home?"

"Home! Yes; the gutter, the street, the bottom of the river."

"My brother?" Philip laid his hand on the man's shoulder. "Come home with me, have something to eat, and stay with me for awhile."

It was all said so calmly, so lovingly, so honestly, that the man softened under it. A tear rolled over his cheek. He brushed his hand over his eyes. It had been a long time since any one had called him "brother."

"Come!" Philip reached out his hand and helped him to rise. The man staggered and might have fallen if Philip had not supported him. "I am faint and dizzy," he said.

"Courage, man! My home is not far off. We shall soon be there." His companion was silent. As they came up to the door Philip said, "I haven't asked your name, but it might save a little awkwardness if I knew it."

"William"—Philip did not hear the last name, it was spoken in such a low voice.

Mrs. Strong at once set food upon the table, and then she and Philip with true delicacy basted themselves in another room so as not to watch the hungry man while he ate. When he had satisfied his hunger, Philip showed him the little room where that "Brother Man" had staid one night.

"You may make it your own as long as you will," Philip said. "You may look upon it as simply a part of what has been given us to be used for the Father's children."

The man seemed dazed by the result of his encounter with the preacher. He murmured something about thanks. He was evidently very much worn, and the excitement of the evening had given place to an appearance of dejection that alarmed Philip. After a few words he went out and left the man, who said that he felt very drowsy.

"I believe he is going to have a fever or something," Mr. Strong said to his wife as he joined her in the other room. He related his meeting with the man, making very light of the attack and indeed excusing it on the ground of his desperate condition.

His fear was realized. The next morning he found his lodger in the clutch of fever. Before night he was delirious. The doctor came and pronounced him dangerously ill. And Philip, with the burden of his work weighing heavier on him every moment, took up this additional load and prayed his Lord to give him strength to carry it and save another soul.

It was at the time of this event in Mr. Strong's life that another occurred which had its special bearing upon the crisis of all his life.

The church was dear to his thought, loved by him with a love that only very few of the members understood. In spite of his apparent failure to raise them to a conception of their duty as he saw it, he was confident that the spirit of God would accomplish the miracle which he could not do. Then there were those in Calvary church who sympathized heartily with him and were ready to follow his leadership.

So he began to plan for a series of Sunday night services different from anything Milton had ever known. His life in the tenement district and his growing knowledge of the labor world had convinced him of the fact that the church was missing its opportunity in not grappling with the problem as it existed in Milton. It seemed to him that the first step to a successful solution of that problem was for the church and the workingman to get together upon some common platform for a better understanding. He accordingly planned for a series of Sunday night services, in which his one great purpose was to unite the church and the labor unions in a scheme of mutual helpfulness. His plan was very simple. He invited into the meeting one or two thoughtful leaders of the mill men and asked them to state in the plainest terms the exact condition of affairs in the labor world from their standpoint. Then he, for the church, took up their statements, their complaints or the reasons for their differences with capital and answered them from the Christian standpoint—what would Christ advise under the circumstances? He had different subjects presented on different evenings. One night it was reasons why the mill

men were not in the church. Another night it was the demand of men for better houses and how to get them. Another night it was the subject of strikes and the attitude of Christ on wages and the relative value of the wage earners' product and the capitalists' intelligence. At each meeting he allowed one or two of the invited leaders to take the platform and say very plainly what to his mind was the cause and what the remedy for the poverty and crime and suffering of the world. Then he closed the evening's discussion by a calm, clear statement of what was to him the direct application of Jesus' teaching to the point at issue.

CHAPTER XX.  
 We cannot do better than give the evening paper account of the last service in the series. With one or two slight exaggerations the account was a faithful picture of one of the most remarkable meetings ever held in Milton:

"Last night, it will be safe to say, those who were fortunate enough to secure standing room in Rev. Philip Strong's church heard and saw things that no other church in this town ever witnessed.

"In the first place, it was a most astonishing crowd of people. Several of the church members were present, but they were in the minority. The mill men swarmed in and took possession. It is not exactly correct to say that they lounged on the easy cushioned pews of the Calvary church, for there

was not room enough to lounge, but they filled up the sanctuary and seemed to enjoy the comfortable luxury of it.

"The subject of the evening was 'Wealth' and the president of the trades assembly of Milton made a statement of the view which workingmen in general have of wealth as related to labor of hand or brain. He stated what to his mind was the reason for the discontent of so many at the sight of great numbers of rich men in times of suffering or sickness or lack of work. 'Why, just look at the condition of things here and in every large city all over the world,' he said. 'Men are suffering from the lack of common necessities while men of means with money in the bank continue to live just as luxuriously and spend just as much as they ever did for things not needful for happiness. It has been in the power of men of wealth in Milton to prevent almost if not all of the suffering here last winter and spring. It has been in their power to see that the tenements were better built and arranged for health and decency. It has been in their power to do a thousand things that money, and money alone, can do, and I believe they will be held to account for not doing some of those things.'

"At this point some one in the gallery shouted out, 'Hing the aristocrats!' Instantly Rev. Mr. Strong rose and stepped to the front of the platform. Raising his long, slender arm and stretching out his open hand in appeal, he said, while the great audience was perfectly quiet: 'I will not allow any such disturbance at this meeting. We are here, not to denounce people, but to find the truth. Let every fair minded man bear that in mind.'

"The preacher sat down, and the audience cheered.

"The president of the trades assembly resumed the discussion, closing with the statement that never in the history of the country had there been so much money in the banks and so little of it in the pockets of the people, and when that was a fact something was wrong, and it was for the men who owned the money to right that wrong, for it lay in their power, not with the poor man.

"He was followed by a very clear and intensely interesting talk by Rev. Mr. Strong on the Christian teaching concerning the wealth of the world. Several times he was interrupted by applause, once with hisses, several times with questions. He was hissed when he spoke of the great selfishness of labor unions and trades organizations in their attempts to dictate to other men in the matter of work. With this one exception, in which the reverend gentleman spoke with his usual frankness, the audience cheered his presentation of the subject and was evidently in perfect sympathy with his views. Short extracts from his talk will show the drift of his entire belief on this subject:

"Every dollar that a man has should be spent to the glory of God.

"The teaching of Christianity about wealth is the same as about anything else. It all belongs to God and should be used by the man as God would use it in the man's place.

"The accumulation of vast sums of money by individuals or classes of men has always been a bad thing for society. A few very rich men and a great number of very poor men are what gave the world the French revolution and the guillotine.

"There are certain conditions true of society at certain times when it is the Christian duty of the rich to use every cent they possess to relieve the need of society. Such a condition faces us today.

"The foolish and unnecessary expenditures of society on its trivial pleasures at a time when men and women are out of work and children are crying for food is a cruel and un-Christian waste of opportunity.

"If Christ were here today, I believe he would tell the rich men of Milton that every cent they have belongs to Almighty God, and they are only trustees of his property.

"The church that thinks more of fine architecture and paid choirs than of opening its doors to the people that they may hear the gospel is a church that is mortgaged for all it is worth to the devil, who will foreclose at the first opportunity.

"The first duty of every man who has money is to ask himself, What

would Christ have me do with it? The second duty is to go and do it after hearing the answer.

"If the money owned by church members were all spent to the glory of God, there would be fewer hundred thousand dollar churches built and more model tenements.

"If Christ had been a millionaire, he would have used his money to build up character in other people rather than build a magnificent brownstone palace for himself. But we cannot imagine Christ as a millionaire.

"It is as true now as when Paul said it nearly 20 centuries ago, 'The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.' It is the curse of our civilization, the greatest god of the human race today.

"Our civilization is only partly Christian, for Christian civilization means more comforts; ours means more wants.

"If a man's pocketbook is not converted with his soul, the man will not get into heaven with it.

"There are certain things that money alone can secure, but among those things it cannot buy is character.

"All wealth from the Christian standpoint is in the nature of trust funds, to be so used as the administrator, God, shall direct. No man owns the money for himself. The gold is God's; the silver is God's. That is the plain and repeated teaching of the Bible.

"It is not wrong for a man to make money. It is wrong for him to use it selfishly or foolishly.

"The consecrated wealth of the men of Milton could provide work for every idle man in town. The Christian use of the wealth of the world would make impossible the cry for bread.

"Most of the evils of our present condition flow out of the love of money. The almighty dollar is the god of Protestant America.

"If men loved men as eagerly as they love money, the millennium would be just around the corner.

"Wealth is a curse unless the owner of it blesses the world with it.

"If any man hath the world's goods and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"

"Christian socialism teaches a man to bear other people's burdens. The very first principle of Christian socialism is unselfishness.

"We shall never see a better condition of affairs in this country until the men of wealth realize their responsibility and privilege.

"Christ never said anything against the poor. He did spend some tremendous warnings in the face of the selfish rich.

"The only safe thing for a man of wealth to do is to ask himself, What would Christ do with my money if he had it?"

"It would be impossible to describe the effect of the Rev. Mr. Strong's talk upon the audience. Once the applause was so long continued that it was a full minute before he could go on. When he finally closed with a tremendous appeal to the wealth of Milton to use its power for the good of the place, for the tearing down and remodeling of the problem of no work for thousands of desperate men, the audience rose to its feet and cheered again and again.

"At the close of the meeting the minister was surrounded by a crowd of men, and an after meeting was held, at which steps were taken to form a committee composed of prominent church people and labor leaders to work, if possible, together toward a common end.

"It was rumored yesterday that several of the leading members of Calvary church are very much dissatisfied with the way things have been going during these Sunday evening meetings and are likely to withdraw if they continue. They say that Mr. Strong's utterances are socialistic and tend to inflame the minds of the people to acts of violence. Since the attack on Mr. Winter nearly every mill owner in town goes armed and takes extra precautions. Mr. Strong was much pleased with the result of the Sunday night meetings and said they had done much to bridge the gulf between the church and the people. He refused to credit the talk about disaffection in Calvary church."

In another column of this same paper were five separate accounts of the desperate condition of affairs in the town. The midnight hold up attacks were growing in frequency and in boldness. Along with all the rest the sickness in the tenement district had assumed the nature of an epidemic of fever, clearly caused by the lack of sanitary regulations, imperfect drainage and crowding of families. Clearly the condition of matters was growing serious.

At this time the ministers of different churches in Milton held a meeting to determine on a course of action that would relieve some of the distress. Various plans were submitted. Some proposed districting the town to ascertain the number of needy families. Others proposed a union of benevolent offerings to be given the poor. Another group suggested something else. To Philip's mind not one of the plans submitted went to the root of the matter. He was not popular with the other ministers. Most of them thought he was sensational. However, he made a plea for his own plan, which was radical and as he believed went to the

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The Brother Man was kneeling at the feet of the best praying.

real heart of the subject. He predicted that every church in town, regardless of its denomination, give its pastor and members to the practical solution of the social troubles by personal contact with the suffering; sickness in the district; that churches all throw open their doors every day in the week, weekdays as well as Sundays, for the discussion and solution of the whole matter; that country and the state be petitioned to take speedy action toward the necessary labor for the unemployed and that the churches cut down all unnecessary expenses of paid officers, away with pew rents, urge members to consecrate their riches to the solving of the problem and in every way, by personal sacrifice, common union, let the churches of town as a unit work and pray and strive to make themselves felt as a power on the side of the people in the present great need. It was Christian America, but Philip's plan was adopted. It was discussed with warmth, but declared to be practically unworkable, unnecessary, not for church to undertake, beyond its

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