

"Widow Brown was the first to speak. "Pears to me we've all been doubting the Lord, and that's why sinners ain't converted. We're just like the disciples when they asked the Lord "Why couldn't we cast them out? and the Lord told them, "Because of your little faith. This kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer." If we believed as much in the Lord's readiness and power to save old Bill Whitman or Charlie Sprague as we believe in his power to save us, religion would mean a good deal more in this town than it does now. And I believe she continued, with her eyes full of tears, "that the Lord is right here in this meeting to-night to rebuke us, same as He did the disciples when he said, "O ye of little faith."

"Then John Coburn got up, and everybody was surprised as they saw him through their tears, 'cause he never somehow had anything to say in meetings 'cept to pray, and he said, "Tain't no use for us to be awkward in religion 'cause the disciples were. They was all helpless and discouraged like, same as we, and they made an awful poor showing of religion 'fore them Pharisees and that poor, unbelieving father who wanted his boy cured. But when they see Jesus was among 'em then they knew it was all right, as it will be here in Sardis when we make our religion a real thing among scoffers and unbelievers. Don't you remember the Lord turned his sad face to those faithless disciples and told them, "Bring that poor boy hitner to me"?"

"And don't we all know that that's what we've got to do here in Sardis—bring Bill Whitman and Charlie Sprague and all the rest of 'em to the Lord in prayer, with the same faith that the disciples had when they brought that boy to be cured? They knew the Lord could cure him, and I believe the Lord can save Bill Whitman and wants to, too."

"Yes, and my boy Charlie," sobbed Mother Sprague. "And my husband," said another. "And mine," "and mine," said several women with eager, trembling voices.

"Well, there the Lord was in that meeting. Our hearts all sort o' melted in common sympathy, and we all see each other heart to heart, and the Lord helped us mightily to pray, and when the parson raised his hands for the benediction, and in broken voice asked that the Lord would go with us as he sent us out into the world, we somehow all fel' as the Lord had come to Sardis, and souls was going to be saved.

"We didn't have no methods to speak of, but every one of us went first to God in prayer, and then from prayer to men and women about us, and it wan't long 'fore we began to rejoice in the most remarkable conversions. Old Bill Whitman come into the meeting one night and said as how he had always hated religion and Christians. No man had seemed to care for his soul, and he'd made up his mind that he was going to die game, and never let anybody know that he ever thought about God and the hereafter and his own wickedness. 'But blessed be the Lord,' he said, 'there was an angel from heaven come to me one day when I was sawin' wood, and talked with me so tender like, and come again, and again, and prayed with me, and here I am, old Bill Whitman, saved by the grace of God! And the angel that the Lord sent was that woman over there in the corner God bless ner!'

"I can't tell you about the rest, 'cause their ain't time. We had a great refreshing and their wasn't a home in Sardis that didn't have reason to praise God and rejoice with the angels in heaven over a sinner repenting and turning to God. It does seem as if the Lord had come to Sardis to stay, blessed be his name for ever."

There was not a dry eye as that group of honest men looked into the