

"Come to look back on't, it does seem cur'ous how we all acted so sort o' blind-like. There we was all waiting for the Lord to come, and all praying that He would come. And every time our reg'lar prayer meeting was through we shook hands all round and said we'd had a blessed meeting, and it did seem as though the Lord was going to come to Sardis, and then we all went home, and things run on just the same till next week's meeting, and then the parson would ask us 'What are we going to do about these people round us that ain't Christians?'"

"They we'd pray and exhort each other to be up and doing, and the meeting would close and we'd shake hands and say the Lord was good, and we hoped he would come to Sardis. and then we'd go home again, and all the time there didn't seem to be no sinners in Sardis that wanted to be saved and somehow we began to get discouraged like 'cause the Lord didn't come."

"Well, one night, right in the meeting, when everybody was waiting and listening o' the clock, parson says right up quick like, "Deacon Hart, do you know anybody in this town that needs to be saved?"

"You see I'd already prayed and made some remarks, and the parson's question come so sort o' sudden like that I was took all aback, and I stammered out, 'I—I—suppose there are. Why, of course there are. Lots of 'em.'"

"'Deacon Hart', said he, 'will you name one person that needs to be saved?'"

"Well, now, do you believe it? I was dumb as a post. There were lots of people I thought about. But somehow I couldn't seem to bring myself to name a single one. There was Joe Smith. I knew he needed to be saved. His wife joined 'fore she was married, but Joe, he always said, 'I don't mind coming to church once in a while 'cause it can't do no harm if it don't do no

good.'" And he would say that every time on religion, and you couldn't get no further with him. So when I thought of Joe I said to myself, 'It's no use to name him 'cause 'tain't likely Joe wants to be saved.'

"There was old Bill Whitman, a quarrelsome, mean sort o' chap. I knew he needed to be saved if anybody did. No one could remember ever seeing him to church. But when I thought of him I thought, 'Why, Bill Whitman! why, it's no use to think of him as being saved.' There was Charlie Sprague, bright, but wild and full of ridicule for religion, but how could I bring myself to think of him as a hopeful subject for our prayers that he might be saved? Then there was George Slocum, a respectable citizen, with his mind full of politics, but with no use for religion."

"And so I thought of Frank Skillings, who was breaking his mother's heart by his love of drink; and of Aleck Danvers, whose wife with tears had told me only the day before that he seemed to get farther and farther away till it almost seemed as if she must go with him and give up being a Christian; and of James Brown, who was disgracing the church every day with his backsiding. And so on, pretty much all over town. I thought of men that needed to be saved."

"I knew the parson was waiting to say, as soon as I named anybody, 'Deacon Hart, will you lead us in prayer for him?' and so, sort o' helpless like, I just said, 'There's men enough as needs to be saved, but I don't see no encouragement to pray for 'em.' Now, I guess everybody there thought just the way I did, but, you see, nobody had ever said it out loud, and so when I said, 'I don't see no encouragement to pray for 'em,' everybody looked up quick, just as if their own consciences had spoke, and they was ashamed to be caught distrusting God's power to save