

He replied with some joy, "Yes, Dr. Wilson was my favorite professor. He was a sane and sensible Christian and was able to tell what he knew in a way that made me remember it."

"I am glad to know this," I said, "because he was my father. It is a joy to me to hear one of his students speak well of him." Up until now, the doctor had been somewhat formal and stiff in his attitude toward me, but now his whole demeanor changed.

"You cannot know how glad I am to meet you," he said with much joy. "I consider it an honor to know a son of Dr. Wilson, whom I esteemed so highly, and I certainly am happy to have you call on me. Are you the preacher who is preaching over at the Presbyterian church?"

"Yes," I answered, "and I came over today to ask whether you cannot spare a little time to attend the service. I believe you would enjoy it."

The doctor became quite friendly now, as he invited me to be seated opposite his desk where he took his place in his office chair. "Dr. Wilson," he began, "your father tried to talk to me about religion, but I never could see anything in it. I am an atheist. I do not believe that the Bible is true, nor do I believe in a God. Sometimes I wish it were not so and that I could really believe what you Christians believe."

This frank response pleased me. I saw that through the years, troubles of various kinds had made him more thoughtful and more considerate. To me this was a good sign. It indicated that God was working in this man's heart and that perhaps he would not be so difficult to reach as the pastor had thought. Sometimes we place men in positions of antagonism and opposition in which they really should not be placed. Oftentimes we shall find that those who seem to be hard and difficult to reach are not quite so antagonistic as we thought. Let us approach every friend whom we would win for Christ with kindness and courtesy.

"Tell me, Doctor, what it is in the Bible that you do not believe. There are many things there that you must admit are true and accurate. Perhaps you just refer to certain things

that are not pleasing to you and which you hope are not true. Is that correct?"

Those who make the broad statement that the Bible is not true should always be given an opportunity to tell just what things the Bible says which they know positively to be untrue. This will pin the friend down to specific facts and will probably take the foundation from under his feet. It was so in this case.

The doctor replied to me, "I do not know any of it that I believe. It seems to me to be just a lot of fables and oriental stories with the colorings of the civilizations of that time."

I continued my question by asking, "Do you refer, Doctor, to things that the Bible says about ants, trees, gravitation, and precipitation? Do you think that what the Scripture records about the rise and fall of certain kingdoms is not true?"

"Do you also question the veracity of the statements in the Bible about birds and their nests, sheep and their lambs, the evil results of sin in the human life? Do you believe that the Bible gives incorrect instructions when it says that the husbands should love their wives, and that the children should obey their parents, and that kings should rule in righteousness and equity? I can hardly believe, Doctor, that you deny these basic principles."

His answer was not long in coming. "Oh, no, I believe all of that. I do not know a better code of ethics or standard of morals than that which the Bible gives."

"Thank you, Doctor," I said, "this relieves my mind considerably, for now I see that you are a believer in part, and that you do admit that some parts of the Bible are quite true and dependable. Tell me, Doctor, just exactly what thing in the Bible you feel is untrue and inaccurate."

He answered at once, "I do not believe in a God who would punish anybody. The Bible says that God will put people in hell and burn them forever. That idea is repulsive to me, and I do not want anything to do with a God of that character."