

Our Contributors.

HOW ONE MAN FOUND JESUS.

BY REV. J. E. GOSLINE.

Human experiences will ever be full of interest to men. It matters little whether it is the rescue of men from a sinking vessel, a burning mine, a railway accident, or whether the rescue refers to the mind or spirit of man. Personal experiences will always interest.

This story which is now about to be told is very old. It occurred hundreds of years ago. The story is true. A true story never grows old. The person of whom this is related is an old man. We have no portrait of him; but imagination can paint a picture. He is not at so advanced an age as to be decrepit or to have retired from business; his eyes are not dim nor are his faculties losing their natural vitality. But care and business have written marks of years upon him; his hair is gray.

Through many years of government employment he has grown rich. He is the chief, or head officer in the customs department of the Roman Government at Jericho, an important office of entry in Palestine.

He is one of those sharp, shrewd men, willing to make patriotism and religion secondary that he might get a good position. By birth and education he is a Jew, but he is in Roman employ. This has brought him reproach and many jeers, till with his love of gain he has been much hardened. I think from this fact and from what will appear later on he cared little for the opinions of men generally.

One day—a dull business day—Zacchaeus is sitting in his office when suddenly his mind went on what might be called an excursion. Some thing started a train of thought and almost before the owner is aware, he is thinking of a new teacher who has of late been attracting considerable attention. He had heard of Jesus before this, but till this time, thought little of him. Now the subject will not be dismissed. He turns to his work only to find the mind engaged in the Great Teacher.

"The only way to get rid of this matter is to go and see Him," thought Zacchaeus. His work is laid aside. Instructions are given to his clerks, and Zacchaeus passes out into the street with a distinct purpose to find Jesus.

Zacchaeus is a man of business and there is no chance in his method. His curiosity and interest in the New Teacher has kept him somewhat posted. He now recalls the fact that He is coming to Jericho on his way to Jerusalem. It is only a few steps from the customs' office to a splendid location on the main thoroughfare. Thither goes our official. He has time at his disposal. He recalls how this same Jesus has received one tax collector and made him one of his private company. Will Jesus receive him? Then he thinks of his business and sets it with all its attendant temptations and evils, its

many bad officials, in contrast with the teachings and the reported character of Jesus. Zacchaeus questioned his work and life. He was not ignorant of the many chances to oppress men. Many had been oppressed. Much injustice had been done. But Zacchaeus, while in a business held in disrepute, and compelled to share the stigma attached to its officers, had not permitted himself to indulge in the roguing of the trade. He became rich by shrewdness, not by fraud. He was a sharp collector. Doubtless there were wrongs, but these he made right according to Jewish law. His offences in this respect must have been few, or his riches would soon have melted away under four-fold restoration. Moreover he was generous to the needy. He remembered them generously.

Amid his meditations on raising his eyes a multitude in the distance is seen approaching. Zacchaeus is now sorely perplexed. Perhaps he had thought Jesus would be pretty nearly alone, or at most, accompanied by only his immediate followers. But instead there are hundreds, if not thousands, and in that press all his efforts to see Jesus would be vain. He is small of stature. But he is there for a purpose, and he is not to be defeated. He can run and climb. These he did. Beside the road is a wide spreading mulberry fig tree. It is easy of access. Interest and purpose will make a way for itself. Zacchaeus could stand the sneers of his fellows as he started in business, so now he does not allow the conventionalities of society to hinder his purpose. It might not be dignified to run or climb. Dignity was not now the object, it was a sight of Jesus the great wonder worker.

Hardly has he got seated when the first of the throng is upon him. He is eagerly looking down, when he meets the gaze of one who is eagerly looking up. Somehow I think Jesus was always looking as he travelled. His eager desire to help found an opportunity in him who was unconsciously putting himself in the way of help. Their eyes met and they both found what they wanted. Zacchaeus found a Saviour. Jesus found a sinner who was willing to be transformed into a saint.

Now one whose interest has led him to do so much will willingly do more. He needed not a second order to descend. He soon has swung off the branches to the ground. While Zacchaeus' heart is fairly bursting with honorable pride because of the undeserved honor of entertaining Jesus, a thrill goes over the company and Jesus is reproached for choosing the home of a sinner instead of the hospitality of the priests. Little did the company know the change that Zacchaeus passed through, somewhere between the time when he ascended and the time when he descended the sycomore tree.

The home so near is soon reached. Before any meal is served Zacchaeus has a message for the Master. He

must speak to him. Though Jesus knows all, yet till his own lips have made the confession Zacchaeus will not rest. He hides nothing, he palliates nothing, he confesses all his wrongs and enunciates his new purpose. Zacchaeus' curiosity grew to interest. His interest has been answered by fact; Jesus is his guest.

What a strange, what a pleasing, what a profitable experience the old man had that day. He went out of his office hoping to see the stranger. He entertained him in his home. Thus the tax collector found Jesus. How easy. How simple. How wondrous. How blessed. He put himself in the way, he overcame all the obstacles, he made humble confession, and full restitutions for wrongs done. He opened his heart and his home. To all of these Jesus fully responded, and fulfilled this scripture: In the day thou seekest Me with all thine heart I will be found of thee!

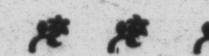


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—Just a few weeks ago, in an Italian village, near Lake Maggiore, the Communion was administered by a Protestant evangelist to twenty-six persons, the place of worship being the evangelist's own house. It is said that nearly the entire village has become Protestant.

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