

A Singular Story

D.L. Moody:

When I was a young boy—before I was a Christian—I was in a field one day with a man who was hoeing. He was weeping, and he told me a strange story, which I have never forgotten. When he left home his mother gave him this text, "See first the kingdom of God." But he paid no heed to it. He said when he got settled in life, and his ambition to get money was gratified, it would be time enough then to seek the kingdom of God. He went from one village to another, and got nothing to do. When Sunday came he went into a village church, and what was his great surprise to hear the minister give out the text, "Seek first the kingdom of God." He said the text went down to the bottom of his heart. He thought that it was but his mother's prayer following him, and that some one must have written to that minister about him. He felt very uncomfortable, and when the meeting was over he could not get that sermon out of his mind. He went away from that town, and at the end of a week went into another church, and he heard the minister give out the same text, "Seek first the kingdom of God." He felt sure this time that it was the prayers of his mother, but he said calmly and deliberately, "No; I will first get wealthy." He said he went on, and did not go into a church for a few months, but the first place of worship he went into he heard a third minister preaching a sermon from the same text. He tried to drown, to stifle his feelings; tried to get the sermon out of his mind, and resolved that he would keep away from church altogether, and for a few years did keep out of God's house. "My mother died," he said, "and the text kept coming up in my mind, and I said I will try to become a Christian." The tears rolled down his cheeks as he said, "I could not; no sermon ever touches me; my heart is as hard as that stone," pointing to one in the field. I couldn't understand what it was all about; it was fresh to me then. I went to Boston and got converted, and the first thought that came to me was about this man. When I got back, I asked my mother, "Is Mr. L— living in such a place?" "Didn't I write to you about him?" she asked. "They have taken him to an insane asylum, and to every one who goes there, he points with his finger up there, and tells him to "seek first the kingdom of God." There was that man with his eyes dull with the loss of reason, but the text had sunk into his soul; it had burned down deep. O, may the Spirit of God burn the text into your hearts to-night! When I got home again my mother told me he was in her house, and I went to see him. I found him in a rocking chair, with that vacant, idiotic look upon him. Whenever he saw me he pointed at me, and said, "Young man, seek first the kingdom of God." Reason was gone, but the text was there. Last month when I was laying my brother down in his grave, I could not help thinking of that poor man who was lying so near him, and wishing that the prayer of his mother had been heard, and that he had found the kingdom of God.