

How Love Can Cure Insanity

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Evangeline Booth, who for a number of years was the leading officer in the Salvation Army, shared a story of a powerful experience she had. Here it is in Miss Booth's own words:

One morning, I stood outside the large iron gates of a local police court and temporary prison. There were people waiting there, some out of curiosity and some because they had a relative inside. I waited expectantly for the opening of the gate. I heard the shuffling of heavy feet. They came close. Then I heard sounds of loud voices and one especially that got louder and more shrill. It was the voice of a woman. The gates opened wide. And I witnessed a sight which if eternity could wash away from my mind, time never can. It was a woman. Two policemen walked in front and two behind. One stalwart man firmly held the right arm and another the left. Her hair was uncombed and matted; her right temple was blackened with bruises. Clots of dried blood stood upon her left temple. Her clothes were torn and blood stained. She tried to wrench her arms from the grasp of the policemen. The very atmosphere of the morning was laden with her curses and her oaths. She tossed her head wildly as the six policemen dragged her down the passageway. What could I do? One more moment and the golden opportunity to be of help would be gone. ...

Could I offer a prayer? No, there was not time. Could I sing? It would be absurd. Could I give her money? She could not take it. Could I quote a verse of Scripture? She would not heed it. Whether it was a divine suggestion or not, I did not stop to think, but the impulse of a burning desire which filled my heart as she passed made me step forward and kiss her on the cheek. Whether the police were taken off their guard by my extraordinary action and relaxed their grasp, I do not know. But with one wrench, she freed her arms and clasped her hands as the wind spread her matted hair and she looked toward the gray skies and said, "My God." She looked around wildly for a moment and then said, "My God, who kissed me? Nobody has kissed me since my mother died." Lifting her tattered apron, she buried her face in her hands and like a little lamb she was led to the vehicle which took her to prison.

Later, I went to the prison in the hope of seeing her, and at the door stood the warden. When I approached the warden, she said, "We think her mind is gone. She does nothing but pace up and down her cell asking me every time I go in if I know her kissed her."

"Would you let me go in and speak to her?" I asked. "I am her only and best friend."

The door was opened and I slipped in. Her face was clean, her eyes were large and beautiful, and she said, "Do you know who kissed me?"

Then she told me her story.

"When I was a little girl, seven years old, my widowed mother died. She died very poor although she was of gentle birth. She died in a back basement in the dark. When she was dying, she called me to her, took my little face in her hands and kissed it, and said to me, 'My poor little girl, my defenseless little girl. Oh God, have pity on my little girl and when I am gone, protect her and take care of her.' From that day to this, nobody ever put a kiss upon my face - until recently."

Then again she asked me, "Do you know who kissed me?"

"Yes. I did." Then I told her of Him whose life was so much more tender than mine could ever be. And how He went to the cross and bore our sins upon Himself and was wounded for our transgressions that He might put the kiss of pardon upon our brow. In Him, she found light, and joy, and comfort, and salvation, and healing, and love. Before she was released from prison, the warden testified not only to the change in her life, but to its beauty. She was made, through Christ, the means of salvation to numbers of others who were down as low as she had been, and who were bound with as heavy fetters as those with which she herself had been bound.

Here was a woman who was bound for the insane asylum. But what did it take to cure her? Love. That's all it took, but it took all of that. And may I tell you, friends, all the *talking* about love will never *make* it. Love is a plant of heavenly origin. The unconsecrated heart cannot originate or produce it. It is found only in the heart where Jesus reigns.

Soul-winning can't be taught, it must be caught. As people catch infectious diseases through contact with somebody who *has* the disease, so you and I can receive love only in contact with the living, loving Christ. He wants to share it with us.

Nothing in this world can take the place of love. Without love, all the rest is valueless.

God teaches us that *without* this love, you are poor; without this love, you are cold or lukewarm. *With* this love, you will have a rich, warm, vibrant, heavenly experience. Let's seek for it – what do you say, friends?