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**THE CRUCIFIXION OF PHILIP STRONG.**

By REV. CHARLES M. SHELDON,  
Author of "In His Steps: What Would Jesus Do?" "Malcolm Kirk," "Robert Hardy's Seven Days," Etc.

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crazed with drink and riot, and a great wave of compassionate feeling swept over him. Those nearest never forgot that look. It was Christlike in its yearning love for lost children. His lips moved in prayer.

And just then the outer circle of the crowd seemed agitated. It had surged up nearer the light with the evident intention of hanging the mill owner on one of the crosspieces of a telegraph pole near by. The rope had again been thrown over his head. Philip stood with one arm about Mr. Winter and with the other stretched out in entreaty, when he heard a pistol shot, then another. The entire police department had been summoned and had finally arrived. There was a skirmishing rattle of shots. But the crowd began to scatter in the neighborhood of the police force. Then those nearer Philip began to run as best they could away from the officers. Philip and the mill owner were dragged along with the rest in the growing confusion until, watching his opportunity, Philip pulled Mr. Winter behind one of the large poles by which the lights of the street were suspended.

Here, sheltered a little, but struck by many a blow, Philip managed to shield with his own body the man who only a little while before had come into his own house and called him a liar and threatened to withdraw his church support because of the preaching of Christ's principles.

When finally the officers reached the two men, Mr. Winter was nearly dead from the fright. Philip was badly bruised, but not seriously, and he helped Mr. Winter back to the house, while a few of the police remained on guard the rest of the night. It was while recovering from the effects of the night's attack that Philip little by little learned of the facts that led up to the assault.

There had been a growing feeling of discontent in all the mills, and it had finally taken shape in the Ocean mill, which was largely owned and controlled by Mr. Winter. The discontent arose from a new scale of wages submitted by the company. It was not satisfactory to the men, and the afternoon of that evening on which Philip had gone down to the hall a committee of the mill men had waited on Mr. Winter and after a long conference had gone away without getting any satisfaction. They could not agree on the proposition made by the company and by their own labor organization. Later in the day one of the committee, under instructions, went to see Mr. Winter alone and came away from the interview very much excited and angry. He spent the first part of the evening in a saloon, where he related a part of his interview with the mill owner, and said that he had finally kicked him out of the office. Still later in the evening he told several of the men that he was going to see Mr. Winter again, knowing that on certain evenings he was in the habit of staying down at the mill office until nearly half past 9 for special business. The mills were undergoing repairs, and Mr. Winter was away from home more than usual.

That was the last that any one saw of the man until, about 10 o'clock, some one going home past the mill office heard a man groaning at the foot of a new excavation at the end of the building and climbing down discovered the man who had been to see Mr. Winter twice that afternoon. He had a terrible gash in his head and lived only a few minutes after he was discovered. To the half dozen men who stood over him in the saloon, where he had been carried, he had murmured the name of "Mr. Winter" and had then expired.

A very little adds fuel to the brain of men already heated with rum and hatred. The rumor spread like lightning that the wealthy mill owner had killed one of the employees who had gone to see him peaceably and arrange matters for the men. He had thrown him out of the office into one of the new mill excavations and left him there to die like a dog in a ditch. So the story ran all through the tenement district, and in an incredibly swift time the worst elements in Milton were surging toward Mr. Winter's house with murder in their hearts and the means of accomplishing it in their hands.

Mr. Winter had finished his work at the office and gone home to sit down to a late lunch, as his custom was, when he was interrupted by the mob. The rest of the incident is connected with what has been told. The crowd seized him with little ceremony, and it was only Philip's timely arrival and his saving of minutes until the police arrived that prevented a lynching in Milton that night. As it was Mr. Winter received a scare from which it took a long time to recover. He dreaded to go out alone at night. He kept on guard a special watchman and lived in more or less terror even then. It was satisfactorily proved in a few days that the man who had gone to see Mr. Winter had never reached the office door; but, coming around the corner of the building where the new work was being done, he had fallen off the stonework, striking on a rock in such a way as to produce a fatal wound. This tempered the feeling of the workmen toward Mr. Winter, but a widespread unrest and discontent

had seized on every man employed in the mills, and as the winter drew on affairs reached a crisis.

The difference between the mills and the men over the scale of wages could not be settled. The men began to talk about a strike. Philip heard of it and at once, with his usual frankness and boldness, spoke with downright plainness to the men against it. That was at the little hall a week after the attempt on Mr. Winter's life. Philip's part in that night's event had added to his reputation and his popularity with the men. They admired his courage and his grit. Most of them were ashamed of the whole affair, especially after they had sobered down and it had been proved that Mr. Winter had not touched the man. So Philip was welcomed with applause as he came out on the little platform and looked over the crowded room, seeing many faces there that had glared at him in the mob a week before. And yet his heart told him he loved these men, and his reason told him that it was the sinner and the unconverted that God loved. It was a terrible responsibility to have such men count him popular, and he prayed that wisdom might be given him in the approaching crisis, especially as he seemed to have some real influence.

He had not spoken ten words when some one by the door cried: "Come outside! Big crowd out here want to get in." It was moonlight and not very cold, so every one moved out of the hall, and Philip mounted the steps of a storehouse near by and spoke to a crowd that filled up the street in front and for a long distance right and left. His speech was very brief, but it was fortified with telling figures, and at the close he stood and answered a perfect torrent of questions. His main counsel was against a strike in the present situation. He had made himself familiar with the facts on both sides. Strikes, he argued, except in very rare cases, were demoralizing—an unhealthy, disastrous method of getting justice done.

"Why, just look at that strike in Preston, England, among the cotton spinners. There were only 600 operatives, but that strike, before it ended, threw out of employment over 7,800 weavers and other workmen who had nothing whatever to do with the quarrel of the 600 men. In the recent strike in the cotton trade in Lancashire at the end of the first 12 weeks the operatives had lost in wages alone \$4,500,000. Four strikes that occurred in England between 1870 and 1880 involved a loss in wages of more than \$25,000,000. In 22,000 strikes investigated lately by the national bureau of labor it is estimated that the employees lost about \$51,900,000, while the employers lost only \$30,700,000. Out of 353 strikes in England between 1870 and 1880 191 were lost by the strikers, 71 were gained and 91 compromised, but in the strikes that were successful it took several years to regain in wages the amount lost by the enforced idleness of the men."

There were enough hard thinking, sensible men in the audience that night to see the force of his argument. The majority, however, were in favor of a general strike to gain their point in regard to the scale of wages. When Philip went home, he carried with him the conviction that a general strike in the mills was pending. In spite of the fact that it was the worst possible season of the year for such action and in spite of the fact that the difference demanded by the men was a trifle compared with their loss of wages the very first day of idleness, there was a determination among the leaders that the 15,000 men in the mills should all go out in the course of a few days if the demands of the men in the Ocean mill were not granted.

What was the surprise of every one in Milton, therefore, the very next day when it was announced that every mill in the great system had shut down and not a man of the 15,000 laborers who marched to the buildings in the early gray of the winter morning found entrance! Statements were posted up on the doors that the mills were shut down until further notice. The mill owners had stolen a march on the employees, and the big strike was on; but it had been started by capital, not by labor, and labor went to its tenement or congregated in the saloon, sullen and gloomy, and as days went by and the mills showed no signs of opening the great army of the unemployed walked the streets of Milton in growing discontent and fast accumulating debt and poverty.

Meanwhile the trial of the man arrested for shooting Philip came on, and Philip and his wife both appeared as witnesses in the case. The man was convicted and sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment. It has nothing special to do with the history of Philip Strong, but may be of interest to the reader to know that in two years' time he was pardoned out and returned to Milton to open his old saloon, where he actually told more than once the story of his attempt on the preacher's life.

There came also during those stormy times in Milton the trial of several of the men who were arrested for the assault on Mr. Winter. Philip was also summoned as a witness in these cases. As always, he frankly testified to what he knew and saw. Several of the accused were convicted and sentenced to

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