

Ringing Words

about

Seeking the Lost

By Thomas M. Slater, D.D.

WE ARE not equally gifted, nor are we all able to tell the story "of Jesus and His love" with equal persuasiveness and power; but we all may repeat and set our seal to what others have said, thus giving the original message a wider hearing.

This is the purpose I now have in bringing together in one appeal some words that others have said about what we as Christians owe to those within the circle of our influence who are strangers to the Saviour whom we know. We meet them every day, and perhaps talk to them about other things. Have we nothing to say to them about salvation, or are we indifferent about doing anything for them in this way?

The quotations here made are some that came under my eye from time to time, which arrested my attention, and I am glad to testify that all have helped me — one of them having been used of the Holy Spirit to work a revolution in my own personal attitude toward this duty. The authors from whose hearts these words came have all finished their testimony, with a very few exceptions, and entered into the joy of their Lord,

put their words should be allowed to die, for their truth is needed more now than ever.

WHAT OTHERS HAVE SAID

When God would save a man, He does it by way of a man.—*Jeremy Taylor*.

Every Christian of every age and calling is appointed as an ambassador for Christ.—*James H. Brooks*.

My obligation to disciple men to Jesus Christ rests upon me, not because I am a clergyman, but because I myself am a disciple.—*Josiah Strong*.

The nearer a soul is to me, the greater the responsibility for it.—*Theodore L. Cuyler*.

This is a lost world. We belong to the Lifesaving Service, and it is our business to help seek and save the lost.—*Howard W. Pope*.

If God gave the command to angels to evangelize the world, Heaven would be empty in five minutes.—*Anonymous*.

If we have been forgiven, and know it; then we, and not angels, are commissioned to minister this same salvation unto men.—*Paget Wilkes*.

Our first concern is not to be successful in winning souls, but to be faithful to God's truth.—*Matthew B. Riddle*.

Souls have to be won; and this requires a winning way—a kind of winsomeness—in those who seek them.—*James Stalker*.

There is no other way to win a soul than by seeing in him one whom Christ your Saviour would have you win to Him.—*L. W. Munhall*.

We do not need to be preaching in public in order to carry Christ to others. The workshop, the warehouse, the college, and at home will yield us hearers,

our hearts are set on winning men to Christ.—*Alexander Maclaren*.

God often sends the impulse to go and see some very wicked and apparently incorrigible man. That impulse should not be defeated by unbelief in God's power to change such a heart.—*The Pilgrim Teacher*.

While we aim at few, we shall win but few. Our successes shall take their proportion from our faith in the universal law of the service of Christ.—*William Arthur*.

No convert is too recent, too uneducated, to bring others to Christ. Convinced in his own heart that Jesus is his Saviour, he can, with Philip, at least echo our Lord's own words to say, "Come and see."—*Record of Christian Work*.

I know that it is only in so far as I keep a close fellowship with my risen Saviour, that I can in any way be fit for winning souls.—*Alexander M. McKay*.

No man has ever been a winner of souls who did not know and believe in the Devil. Men are taken captive by him at his will. If we first know that, then we shall know that the victory on Calvary, and the efficacy of the blood of the Son of God, believed and pleaded in prayer, are the only things that will make him give way, and enable us to pluck the prey out of the hand of the mighty.—*Paget Wilkes*.

If we have no concern for the unsaved, and are making no effort in their behalf, we have sin in our own lives. I care not who you are—minister, missionary, Bible teacher, or Christian worker of any kind—no amount of religious activities of other kinds can exempt us from the charge of having in

our heart some sort of sin that is keeping us from this duty. It may be fear, some kind of shame, or just plain neglect. But we know that he who "knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."—*Charles M. Alexander*.

I do not believe in the Christianity of him who would keep salvation to himself, who would make no effort to save others.—*Thomas Guthrie*.

Our task is not to bring all the world to Christ; our task is unquestionably to bring Christ to all the world. The theology of missions, like the theology of redemption, is Christocentric; that is to say, we take our stand at the cross and move out to the uttermost parts of the earth, instead of grasping the uttermost parts of the earth to move them to Christ. The tide of the world's desire is not toward Christ, but the tide of Christ's desire is toward the world; as it is written: "Who will have all men to be saved." And shall we not move most strongly by going with the tide instead of going against it?—*A. J. Gordon*.

"Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you," said Jesus to His disciples after giving them the Great Commission to go out and bring men to Himself. The supreme condition of soul-winning power is the same today.—*R. A. Torrey*.

Never shall I forget the gain to conscious faith and peace which came to my soul, not long after my first decisive and appropriating view of the crucified Redeemer as the sinner's sacrifice, from a more intelligent and conscious hold upon the living and most gracious personality of the Holy Spirit, through whose mercy my soul had got that blessed view. It was a new development of insight into the love of God.

It was a new contact, as it were, with the inner and eternal movements of redeeming grace and power, a new discovery of divine resources.—*H. C. G. Moule*.

WHAT OTHERS HAVE DONE

I have never seen a city so completely stirred from center to circumference as the city of Albany was stirred by the word "lost" a few years ago. A child had disappeared from his home. Hundreds of men were ready to join in the search. They scoured the hills and woods. Detectives followed every possible clew. Large sums of money were offered in reward. When at last the lad was rescued from the hands of those who had led him away, there was scarcely a heart that did not utter a note of praise.

The Book tells us that everyone who has failed to make a choice of Christ is lost. Lost to God, lost to holiness, lost to Heaven; and we are unmoved. Surely it must be because we have no realization of this awful distress.—*Edwin F. Hallenbeck*.

Professor Tholuck was remarkably successful in turning wayward youths into right paths. He gives the following account of the growth of this passion for Christ:

"From the age of seventeen I have always asked myself, 'What is the chief end of man's life?' Just then God brought me into contact with a venerable saint who lived in fellowship with Christ, and from that time I have had but one passion, and that is Christ, and Christ alone. Everyone out of Christ I look upon as a fortress which I must storm and win."—*Quoted by Henry M. Tyndall*.

This passion burned in the breast of Rowland Hill. The people of Wotton called him a madman. This was his defense:

"While I passed along yonder road I saw a gravel pit cave in, and bury three men alive. I hastened to the rescue, and shouted for help until they heard me in the town almost a mile away. No one called me a madman then.

"But when I see destruction about to fall on sinners, and entomb them in the eternal mass of woe, and cry aloud, if perchance they may behold their danger and escape, they say I am beside myself. Perhaps I am, but oh, that all God's children might be thus fired with desire to save their fellows."—*Selected.*

It was this that led Shaftsbury to turn aside from the attractions of a brilliant social life that he might minister to the riffraff of London. He literally turned his nights into day, making himself the companion of thieves and harlots that he might win their souls.

This drove Robert McAll from his beautiful English home to the slums of Paris. He was a cultured man, fond of art and letters, but he put these aside and took up his abode amid the moral destitution of the French metropolis that he might point wretched souls to the cross.

Matthew Henry said: "I would think it greater happiness to win one soul for Christ than to gain mountains of gold and silver for myself." Dodderidge cried: "I long for the conversion of souls more sensibly than for anything besides." The sainted Bernard, after years of such toil and sacrifice as have seldom been equaled wrote: "I cared not where or how I lived, if only I could win souls for Christ. While I was asleep I

dreamed of these things; when I waked my first thought was of this great work."

In the neighborhood of Poughkeepsie everyone knew of John Vassar whose attainment in worldly things was not conspicuous, but who found recognition as living for the salvation of men. He delighted to call himself "the Shepherd's dog." He would say, "My business is not to preach, but to go over the hills to seek for the sheep that are lost." This was the man's life. To him the lost were his meat. He sought no other joy. He was greedy for opportunities to point the unsaved to Christ. In a Boston hotel he had the courage to approach a fashionably dressed lady with the question of her salvation. This she resented, and reported her experience to her husband who advised her to tell John Vassar to go about his business—to which she was constrained to answer: "Oh, husband, if you had seen that expression upon the face and heard the earnestness with which he spoke, you would have thought it was his business."—*From "Passion for Souls," by Hallenbeck.*

NEED OF A LIFE-RESOLVE

Dr. H. Clay Trumbull, for many years Editor of THE SUNDAY SCHOOL TIMES, testified that he was brought to Christ through a personal letter that was addressed to him on that subject—though he had been brought up in a Christian home—and at the time he received the letter was working in an office along with other Christians, none of whom ever mentioned Christ in his presence. As a new convert he began testifying to one of these associates who answered: "Trumbull, your words cut me to the heart. You little know how they rebuke me. I've long been a professed

follower of Christ; and you have never suspected this, though we've been in close association in house and office for years. I've never said a word to you for the Saviour whom I trust. I've never urged you to trust Him. And here are you, inviting me to come to the Saviour of whom I have been a silent follower for years. May God forgive me for my lack of faithfulness."

Of this incident Dr. Trumbull says: "Then it was that I made a purpose and resolve for life. The purpose I formed was, as an imperative duty, not to fail in my Christian life in the particular way just confessed. I determined that as I loved Christ, and as Christ loved souls, I would press Christ on the individual souls of others, and that whenever I was in such intimacy with a soul as to be justified in choosing my subject of conversation, the theme of themes would have prominence between us, so that I might learn his need, and, if possible, meet it."—*From "Taking Men Alive," by C. G. Trumbull.*

He who has collected the above ringing words about seeking the lost is glad to reaffirm and re-emphasize them as expressing his own faith; and desires no greater joy on earth than the hope that they may help others also.

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