

### The Wisdom of Winning Souls.

While the B. Y. P. U. is justly proud of its educational work it sometimes needs to be reminded that the winning of souls should be its greatest work. We are by no means to love Caesar less but to love Rome more. "He that is wise winneth souls," says the proverb. How much the expression "winneth souls" meant at first it might be difficult to say, but we know it means so much today that any young peoples' society, that has not, as its chief aim, the winning of souls, is not working most wisely. Our subject is:—"The Wisdom of Winning Souls." We will consider it very briefly, in order that we may append the most of a tract that has helped so many that we are anxious to have it reach more.

1. There is need of wisdom in soul winning. In his account of the meeting and conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman, John gives us a helpful lesson from the life of Him who told his disciples to be "wise as serpents." From it we learn that it is Christlike wisdom to speak to one at a time. The masses are not to be brought into the kingdom *en masse* as Charles the Great sought to bring the Saxon tribes into the church. Even in great revivals it is the hand-to-hand work that tells and lasts. For quite obvious reasons that are strengthened by the expressed experience of successful soul-winners, it is better for the young people, while on the alert for an opportunity to save souls, to bear in mind that, as a rule, they can work best with those of their own sex and of their own age or younger, and that they should seek an opportunity of finding alone each one to whom they are anxious to press home the need of the Christ life. Charles G. Finney told of a pious woman who was very anxious for the salvation of twenty-one young men who were boarding with her. Instead of speaking to them when they were together she spoke to them and prayed with them one at a time, and soon every one of them was converted.

We learn further it is Christlike wisdom to commence courteously. A wealthy man convicted by the sermon, was making his escape from the church, but was intercepted in such a gentlemanly manner by a Mr. Tappan of a well known firm in New York city, that he was compelled to remain for conversation and prayer. Speaking of it sometime afterwards he said: "An ounce weight at my button was the means of saving my soul." A successful evangelist tells us that a few days after he had more energetically than courteously urged a certain farmer to become a Christian, he was passing the farmer's house and noticed this sign:—"No peddlers, tramps nor evangelists allowed on these premises." In the slums of cities many are reached by drastic methods, but nearly all of those with whom the young people of these provinces will be privileged to work, will be reached only in a kind courteous way. It is sad that many who would win souls commence to drag instead of to draw. It is sadder, however, that so many never commence to do either.

We learn still further it is Christlike wisdom to continue by convicting of sin. During a series of special meetings in one of our flourishing churches, an influential member invited an unconverted woman to come and be baptized, not to symbolize the burial of the old self—for there was nothing said about her sins—but simply as a means of grace. Shame on us if in our anxiety to increase the membership of our churches or societies we fail to give due emphasis to the fact that "all have sinned," and fail as fore-runners of the Christ, to give the Baptist's message,—"Repent ye."

And lastly we learn it is Christlike wisdom to conclude by speaking of Christ and urging an immediate yielding to Him. Some years ago, while I was preaching for a neighboring pastor, an immoral woman was deeply convicted of sin. After some conversation with her, I would,—through lack of soul-winning wisdom—have allowed her to have gone out unsaved, probably to return to her old life; but wiser heads were there, and before she left the church she surrendered to Christ and is now living a godly life. It is wise to begin courteously. It is wiser to continue by convicting of sin. It is wisest to conclude by presenting the claims of Christ. Soul winning, then, is not the work of chance. As Baptists, we ought to be methodists in it, and our method should be the method of Christ.

2. It is a wise thing to win souls. At the close of his practical epistle James writes "My brethren, if any among you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and cover a multitude of sins." It sometimes costs very little effort to win a soul, but if it cost a life's effort it would pay. Men invest in material things, but these take wings. Character alone remains, and he who wins souls invests in character. He it is who reaping receiveth wages, and is able to lay up treasures in Heaven. Wolfe was so impressed with the worth of Gray's

Elegy, that he said:—"I would rather be the author of that poem than take Quebec." If the young people could but be impressed with the worth of souls, they would rather be the means of saving one soul than win the wealth of Croesus, or the fame of Gladstone; they would see more common sense than humor in Moody's saying at the World's Fair:—"The monument that I want is one of two legs—a saved soul telling of the love of Jesus," they would see more reason for the frequent repetition of the text:—"And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." This text suggests the tract entitled:—"The Starless Crown." In it a man describes a dream in which he thought an angel led him to heaven where he saw much to delight.

But fairer far than all beside I saw my Saviour's face,  
And as I gazed, he smiled on me with wondrous love  
and grace,  
Lowly I bowed before His throne, o'erjoyed that I at last  
Had gained the object of my hopes; that earth at length  
was passed.

And then in solemn tones He said: "Where is the diadem  
That ought to sparkle on thy brow adorned with many a  
gem?  
I know that thou believed on me, and life through me is  
thine;  
But where are all those radiant stars that in thy crown  
should shine?"

"Yonder thou seest a glorious throng and stars on every  
brow,  
For every soul they led to me they wear a jewel now;  
And such thy bright reward had been if such had been  
thy deed,  
If thou hadst sought some wandering feet in paths of  
peace to lead.

Thou wert not called that thou shouldst tread the way of  
life alone,  
But that the clear and shining light that round thy foot-  
steps shone  
Should guide some weary feet to My bright home of rest,  
And thus in blessing those around, thou hadst thyself  
been blessed."

The vision faded from my sight, the voice no longer spake  
A spell seemed brooding o'er my soul which long I feared  
to break;  
And when at last I gazed around in morning's glimmering  
light,  
My spirit felt o'erwhelmed beneath the vision's awful  
night.

I rose and wept with chastened joy that still I dwelt below  
That yet another hour was mine my faith by works to  
show;  
That yet some sinner I might tell of Jesus' dying love,  
And help to lead some weary soul to seek a home above.  
And now while on the earth I stay, my motto this shall  
be:

"To live no longer to myself, but Him who died for me."  
And graven on my inmost soul I'll wear this truth divine  
"They that turn many to the Lord, bright as the stars  
shall shine."

H. F. WARING.

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### "How Long Was Jesus in the Grave?"

H. S. COSMAN.

This question, put to Brother M. B. Shaw while doing missionary work in India, by an educated Hindu, furnishes the subject of an article in the MESSENGER AND VISITOR of August 4.

Having heard and read several expositions of this question I have, after carefully studying the Scriptures upon this matter, arrived at the following. It can be truthfully said that it is almost the universal opinion of Bible readers that the body of Jesus lay in the grave from Friday evening until Lord's Day morning, being only about thirty-six hours or two whole nights and a day.

This theory, for several reasons, is very objectionable and gives the occasion to the infidel to attack what is considered apparent contradictions of God's Word. I fear we have been too much accustomed in the past of accepting certain statements concerning definitions of Scripture texts without carefully examining their truthfulness. I could mention just here several statements made about the Scriptures that pass currently among Bible students as being the truth, but which if called in question by them and investigated in the light of Scripture would be of no value or authority. The one before us mentioned by Brother Shaw is just to the point.

I look upon the prophecy of Jesus recorded in Matthew 12:40 as being literally true. "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." I cannot think that our Saviour would carelessly use a statement so important as this one without accurately expressing what will take place as a literal and actual fact. I look upon his utterance in this instance as a very serious matter if it can be shown that we are not to take it just as it reads. We all know very well that a day with us begins at midnight. With the Jews it began at sunset, some six hours earlier. With us the

morning would be the first part of the day, while to the Jew the evening is the first. In the account of the creation given by Moses in Genesis we are told "the evening and the morning were the first day," etc. In the book of Leviticus, 23:32, we are reminded that the time to keep the Sabbath was from evening to evening, and this is still observed by every Jewish worshipper all over the world. They celebrate the Sabbath from our Friday evening sunset to Saturday evening the same time, when it ends. So we can readily see that the Jewish mode of reckoning time precedes ours for several hours. Now Matt. 27:57 and Mark 15:42 both gives us to understand that "when the even was come" Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate, the governor, and begged the body of Jesus. Pilate, being astonished at the information of his death, asked the Centurion if Jesus was already dead? and being assured that such was the case granted Joseph's request. He takes a linen cloth, winds his way to the cross and, assisted by Nicodemus takes the body and lays it in his own new tomb. It seems very plain, therefore, taking the harmony of the evangelists that Jesus was still hanging on the cross when the evening was come, and as the even was the beginning of another day it is evident he was not crucified and buried the same day. He had cried out with a loud voice: "It is finished," and bowed his head and gave up the ghost. This took place at the ninth hour or three o'clock p. m., and about six o'clock the same day we find him still on the Cross. To a Jew, of course, a new day is ushered in at this point of time. Afterwards the visit to Pilate and the burial service occurs, whether hurriedly or done in a careful, deliberate manner we do not know, but one would naturally place the time of burial somewhere early in the first watch of the night, as the Jews were accustomed to bury their dead very much sooner than we.

To sum up my conclusions, after carefully weighing the facts surrounding the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, in the first place I argue that the crucifixion took place not on our Friday, as is generally held by Bible critics, but on Thursday, twenty-four hours, or exactly one day and night earlier than the common belief puts it.

Second, he certainly was not buried on the same day he was crucified, but on the next, which was the day of preparation. It would seem that those who had the charge of his burial were anxious to complete it as soon as possible so as not to encroach too much upon the day of preparation answering to our Friday, and consequently interfere with the duties of the Sabbath—Mark 15:42; Luke 23:54; John 19:42.

Third, that Jesus was in the grave from the Thursday evening till the morning of the first day of the week or seventy-two hours. Friday was the day of preparation. He was buried just before or during the first part of the day of preparation and not in the last as is so commonly held. Therefore Jesus' body lay in the grave the remainder of Thursday night, Friday, Friday night, Saturday, Saturday night, and "as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week," "very early in the morning," when Jesus arose from the dead.

I observe the Scriptures do not definitely state at what hour Jesus rose from the dead, but I do know that it was before sunrise, as John tells us that on the first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre—John 20:1. I am unable to see how Christ's prophecy of Matt. 12:40 can be made to reconcile with Scripture any other way. Rightly understood it takes out of the mouth of the skeptic the charge of this contradiction in the Bible, and the infidels' sneer at the inaccuracies of God's Word as he meets with what seems apparent mistakes wastes away on his lips, while to the believer the Word of God becomes richer and more stable as its truthfulness is being unfolded.

Saint John, N. B., August 5.

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### Have We the Clew to the Maze?

As to the first point. 1. "The Jewish day began and ended at sunset." That is we are to understand Christ was in the tomb 3x24 hours. Dr. Broadus says: "Our Lord was in the grave less than 36 hours, but it began before the close of Friday and closed on the morning of Sunday, and according to the mode of counting time among the Jews this would be reckoned three days, both the first and the last day being included. The only difficulty is that he not merely says three days, but three days and three nights, when he spent only two nights in the tomb. But the Jews reckoned the night and day as one period and part of this period was counted as the whole. Lightfoot quotes, from the Jerusalem Talmud, two Rabbis as saying, "A day and a night make an onah, and a part of an onah is as the whole." "The period of twenty-four hours could only be expressed in the Greek by night and day or day and night."

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