

SAVING SOULS.

BY THE REV. JAMES SMITH, CHELTENHAM.

It is the bounden duty of every believer to seek to save souls from death. For this we should live. At this we should habitually aim. Our hearts should be set upon it, and all our talents should be employed with a view to it. But, alas! we are cold and careless, selfish and indifferent, and sinners all around us perish without any regarding it. It is not enough that we subscribe to societies, that we help to support ministers, we should labour ourselves. We pay to support the fire-brigade in the town, but whenever there is a fire, we run to render all the assistance we can personally. It is not enough that the engine, the fire-escape, and the firemen are present, we help, and in every way endeavour to save property and life. Just so, though we have our societies, our ministers, and other agencies, as sinners are perishing all around us, every Christian should lend his help. May the Lord help me to pen a few lines on this subject, which may stir up some to engage in this important work. Consider then—

1. *What sinners are.* They are immortal beings, and must live for ever. They are capable of enjoying the highest happiness, or of suffering the deepest misery. They are unfit for heaven, and are travelling the road to hell. If saved at all, they must be saved *now*. It will soon be too late. They must glorify God's mercy in the highest heavens, or endure His wrath in the lowest hell.

2. *Who sinners are.* They are our people, our kindred, our family. Every sinner around me is my brother or sister, for we are all one man's sons. God made, of one blood, all nations to dwell upon the face of the earth. If, therefore, I am accessory to the ruin of a soul, I am accessory to the ruin of the soul of a brother or a sister; and, if I can do this, where is my humanity, let alone my Christianity?

3. *The danger sinners are in.* And this danger cannot be exaggerated, it is so dreadful, so fearful, so imminent. They are in danger of falling into hell, into that lake of fire, that place of wrath, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. They are in danger of this every moment

of their lives, and may plunge into it suddenly, without any help being at hand.—Yes, the sinner you have just spoken to may be in hell in two minutes; and if he should, and you never warned him of his danger, never tried to lead him to Jesus, how will you feel?

4. *The means by which sinners are saved.* God works by means, and most generally by the living voice. Souls are saved by a word spoken in love, it may be a warning word, or a word of invitation, or a word about Jesus, or about heaven, or about hell. Souls are saved by prayer.—Oh, how many have been led to seek salvation, through hearing others pray for them! Souls are saved by a simple address, delivered in dependence on the Lord, with a view to do them good. Souls are saved by reading tracts, periodicals, good books, or God's Word, presented to them. Let us therefore speak to sinners, to every sinner we can. Let us pray, and pray much for sinners. Let us give tracts, periodicals, and good books to sinners, and urge them to read God's Holy Word.

5. *The honour of saving sinners.* To save a fellow-creature from the flames of a burning house, or to rescue a fellow-creature from drowning, is considered an honour; and it is an honour. But to save a soul from hell, what an honour is this! Jesus considers it His highest honour to save souls, and what, then, should we consider it?—To save souls on earth, with whom we shall dwell eternally in heaven, and who will for ever look upon us, and feel towards us, as the instruments of their salvation, what can compare with this? Even to be in heaven and not see one, and never to meet with one that we have been the means of bringing there, would seem to leave a blank in a loving heart. But to be in heaven, and to be constantly seeing souls there whom we have been the means of saving, oh, what thrilling pleasure, what ecstatic joy it must impart! Besides which, it is testified in God's Word that such shall be distinguished, and "shall shine as the stars for ever and ever."

6. *The way to save sinners.* Not by suffering for them, as Jesus did; nor by working in them, as the Holy Spirit does; they save meritoriously and efficiently, we only instrumentally. If we would save souls, we must set the heart upon it, and keep the heart set upon it. We must plead