

Pastor and People.

FOR THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

THE MASTER'S CALL.

BY JOHN IMRIE, TORONTO.

Go work to-day! the fields are white to view,
The harvest truly great, the labourers few;
To you the call is given, reapers obey!
Work mightily, while yet 'tis called to-day!
The night approacheth when no man can work,
And sin and vice do in the darkness lurk.
The fields are many and the world is wide,
O'er trackless forests, deserts, stormy tide,
Proclaim that love which makes all mankind kin,
And saves the soul through steeped in direst sin;
Which frees the captive, gladdens the oppressed,
And leads the erring to the Saviour's breast;
Where pardoning mercy, love and joy are given
To make this earth a sweet foretaste of heaven.

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PRACTICAL METHODS OF SOUL SAVING.

BY REV. WALTER M. ROGER, M.A., LONDON.

This subject might be considered as embracing every department of the minister's, and, indeed, of the Church's work, from the first step toward the conversion of the sinner to the final perfecting of the saint. But the limits of the occasion forbid, and for this reason: our attention is for the present confined to the means of securing the *conversion* or, more correctly, *regeneration* of sinful men—for this reason simply, and not because methods of progress in holiness might not be included as of co-ordinate importance. Partly for the same reason, I purposely omit the subject of *prayer*, and partly because of the essentially subordinate and distinct position it occupies among practical methods of soul-saving, understanding this last term in the sense just indicated. True prayer is indispensable to the worker. It is God's appointed means of securing the Holy Spirit's presence and power. Much prayer will be offered for the sinner, often doubtless in his presence, but it is to be feared a serious error—practical, if not theoretical—is frequently made in scenes where the salvation of souls is earnestly sought, in putting an amount of dependence upon prayer with the sinner for his entrance into light and liberty, which were far better placed upon the direct communication, in its adaptation to his carefully ascertained condition, of *that truth, the knowledge of which, Christ has promised, shall make men free*. It will greatly help to give clearness and definiteness to our work, to bear in mind that, so far as we know, it is *Gospel truth* which the Holy Spirit employs, as His word seems to indicate, "to convert the soul," "making it wise unto salvation, through faith that is in Christ Jesus." Were confirmation of this view necessary, it may suffice to indicate the line of argument by such quotations as: "Without faith it is impossible to please God," "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God," "Verily, verily, I say unto you, *he that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me*, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life," "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." Instrumentally then, our dependence must be on the Word, and for the present our attention is narrowed down to the best practical methods of bringing it home to the unsaved. The first of these in order, if not in importance, will be:

I. *The circulation of the Scriptures*. In regard to this important method of enlightening a darkened world, it is pleasing to know that the Church of Christ has in a large measure been awakened to her responsibility and is engaged in sending forth the Word of God in about 300 different languages, and in rapidly increasing numbers, already aggregating several millions annually. All who have the glory of God and the best interests of their fellow-men at heart will pray and labour for the continued progress of this blessed work, till every man, in every land, may read for himself the story of God's love and grace. May God hasten the day! Following in natural order,

II. *Gospel preaching* would next claim our attention, as a God-appointed and God-honoured method of saving souls. Considering the great commission of Christ to His people, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature," one cannot wonder at the universal prevalence of this method, and the dependence placed upon it, especially in view of the preamble, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore," etc., and the promise appended, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Our wonder rather is that, in view of these things, greater results do not attend the faithful labours of the vast host engaged in the work. Why this should be so, is a question receiving constant consideration from most earnest and able men, and it may seem presumptuous on my part to hope to throw fresh light upon the subject, but in a fraternal council like this, I may be allowed to emphasize

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some points, the importance of which have been impressed upon me by long study and extended observation.

(1) A first essential to success in the preacher is strong *faith*, arising from clear and profound conviction that "the foolishness of preaching" is the chosen plan of the All-wise and Almighty for the accomplishment of His great purpose of salvation, and that to him—worthless worm though he be—"is committed a dispensation of the Gospel." Paul indicates that this was largely the secret of his success. He magnified his office as "an ambassador for Christ." Everywhere he took his stand upon this, and said and showed that he "was not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Such a faith inspires a courage and confidence, which are half the battle. How can such a man fail, *provided always he go the right way to work*? This thought should make us exceedingly careful of our lines of action. Hence my second point, (2), *definiteness of aim*. If the preacher's great object is to attract the crowd, or to inculcate ethics in the social, commercial, or political sphere, he will adapt his measures accordingly. If it be to edify believers (of course, a large part of the pulpit labours of a pastor must be directed to this class), he will choose and treat his themes with this special object in view. But, to save sinners, he must preach to sinners as such, carefully seeking to enlighten the understanding, awaken and convince the conscience, and persuade the heart to trust and love the Saviour. This, of course, we all know but do we all do it, and perseveringly depend upon it for success? Can we be too definite in our aim, too careful in the selection of the particular shaft from our quiver to suit the special purpose or class of hearer in our view, or too confident, then, that the Spirit of God—if we are trusting Him—will give "to every bullet its billet," where He intends it to lodge? But the absence of visible results is very discouraging, and many lose faith in the simple Gospel of the cross and resort to novelties, or put their strength into ethical preaching. Is this wise or right? Should we not recognize the evidence of the continued fitness of the Gospel for the needs of man in the success of such men as Spurgeon, who are pre-eminently Gospel preachers? Would it be right to silence uneasiness with the thought of God's sovereignty, and the necessary imperfection of present conclusions as to results? Would it not be more becoming humbly to reconsider methods and aims? Am I not warranted in asking if I am a reaper in the harvest of my Lord, am I not meant to know the reaper's joy? Surely He did not promise me souls for my hire without meaning that I should at least receive here below a liberal amount of the great reward to be fully given hereafter?

(To be continued.)

THE CHRISTIAN WALK.

A true Christian walk is a reproducing in our lives of the righteousness which is already ours in Christ. Joined to the Lord by faith, we become "partakers of His holiness." But not that thereby we may be exempted from the necessity of personal holiness. It is rather that such personal holiness may have a new and higher obligation, since it has a new possibility. The double purpose of our union to Christ must never for a moment be forgotten, nor its heavenward and earthward aspects for an instant separated in our apprehension. It is in order that we may be as He is in the reckoning of God, and equally that we may be as He is before the eyes of men. "No condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus" is one phase of this blessed truth. But, O believer, forget not the other, lest you bring upon yourself the curse of a dry and barren Antinomianism. "Created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." The branches are the product and the measure of the roots, the one spreading as widely as the other strikes deeply. And how solemn the obligation resting upon those who are as truly rooted in Christ to reach forth their branches and cover that area of good works which they have undertaken, and so to speak, pre-empted by their faith. Our privileges in Jesus are glorious beyond comparison. But they are awful when we remember that they are the pledge and measure of our obligations. Never before on earth, or perhaps in heaven, was one exalted to utter so great a word as this, I in Christ. Yet if we know its meaning we shall pause lest we speak it lightly or unadvisedly, for "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked."—A. J. Gordon, D.D., in *Christian at Work*.

THE POWER OF A LIVING BIBLE.

Nowhere is it more true than in the Christian life that actions speak louder than words. A young man had become an infidel, and would no longer read the printed Bible, but he could not help seeing the fruits of faith in the life of another. We quote from the *Young Men's Christian Magazine*:

In his father's house a young lady resided, who was a relative of the family. Her fretful temper made all around her uncomfortable. She was sent to a boarding school, and was absent some time. While there

she became a true and earnest Christian. On her return she was so changed that all who knew her wondered and rejoiced. She was patient and cheerful, kind, unselfish and charitable. The lips that used to be always uttering cross and bitter words now spoke nothing but sweet, gentle, loving words. Her infidel cousin George was greatly surprised at this. He watched her closely for some time, till he was thoroughly satisfied that it was a real change that had taken place in his young cousin. Then he asked her what had caused this great change. She told him it was the grace of God which had made her a Christian and had changed her heart.

He said to himself, "I don't believe that God has anything to do with it, though she thinks He had. But it is a wonderful change that has taken place in her, and I should like to be as good as she is. I will be so." Then he formed a set of good resolutions. He tried to control his tongue and his temper, and kept a strict watch over himself. He was all the time doing and saying what he did not wish to do and say. And as he failed time after time, he would turn and study his good cousin's example. He would read this *living Bible*, and said to himself, "How does it happen that she, who has not as much knowledge or as much strength of character as I have, can do what I can't do? She must have some help that I don't know of. It must be as she says, the help of God. I will seek that help. He went into his chamber and prayed to that God whose very existence he had denied. He prayed earnestly. God heard him, helped him, and he became a Christian.

SELF-MADE POVERTY.

I would not say hard words against poverty, wherever it comes, it is bitter to all, but you will mark, as you notice carefully, that while a few are poor because of unavoidable circumstances, a very large mass of the poverty of London is the sheer and clear results of profuseness, want of forethought, idleness, and, worst of all, drunkenness. Ah, that drunkenness! that is the master of evil. If you could look at the homes to-night, the wretched homes where women will tremble at the sound of their husband's feet when he comes home, where little children will crouch down with fear upon their little heap of straw, because the human brute who calls himself "a man" will come reeling home from the place where he has been indulging his appetite—if you can look at such a sight and remember it will be seen ten thousand times over to-night, I think you would say, "God help us by all means to save some." Since the great axe to lay at the root of this deadly upas is the Gospel of Christ, may God help us to hold that axe there, and to work constantly with it, till the huge trunk of the poison tree begins to rock to and fro, and we get it down, and London is saved from the wretchedness and misery which now drips from every bough.—C. H. Spurgeon.

THE IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN'S WORK.

Because women's work is done for the most part in the privacy of home we are not for that reason to undervalue it, or regard it as of less importance than the more public work of men. In the course of a conversation with Madame Campan, Napoleon Bonaparte remarked, "The old systems of instruction seem to be worth nothing, what is yet wanting that the people should be properly educated?" "Mothers," replied Madame Campan. The reply struck the Emperor. "Yes," said he, "here is a system of education in one word." Is there any work done by men so useful as that which is done by a good mother? The work of the Prime Minister of England is no doubt very great, but it may be that the best mother of England—whoever she is—serves her country even more. One good mother is worth a hundred school-masters. She influences far more than does the father the action and conduct of the child. When people grow up and get fixed habits, clergymen can do comparatively little to reform them, but a mother can harden in goodness the pliable character of her child. Thus it is that posterity may be said to lie in the person of the child in the mother's lap.—Rev. E. J. Hardie.

The death of the Dean of Chester, the Rev. John S. Howson, D.D., was announced recently. In conjunction with the late Rev. W. J. Conybeare, he became famous as the author of "The Life and Epistles of St. Paul," a work that has proved of incalculable benefit to the students of the New Testament. Dean Howson was born in 1816, and was, therefore, sixty-nine at the time of his death. He was a graduate of Trinity College, Cambridge, Principal of the Liverpool College from 1849 to 1865, and in 1867 was made Dean of Chester. After "The Life and Epistles of St. Paul," his most popular work was "The Lectures on the Character of St. Paul," "The Metaphors of St. Paul," "The Companions of St. Paul," and "Meditations on the Miracles of Christ," all of which in serial form were published in *Good Words*, a magazine to which he was a frequent contributor.