

Our Contributors.

PREACHING TO WIN SOULS.

BY REV. THEODORE L. CUYLER, D.D.

"How far do your chief American preachers aim at the conversion of souls?" This question, once addressed to me by that master-workman, Charles H. Spurgeon, is pertinent yet; it showed his estimate of the highest purpose of the Christian ministry. Certainly the chief aim of our Divine Master was to seek and to save the lost; his first text of which we read was the word "repent!" To win souls to Jesus Christ by the aid of the Holy Spirit was the main purpose of the apostles. Paul struck the keynote when he declared that he was determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified; and he ceased not to warn sinners night and day with tears. The great Reformation in the sixteenth century was far more than a protest against prevailing errors; it was a direct bringing of souls to the Lord Jesus Christ. When a spiritual famine prevailed in Great Britain, the Wesleys and Whitefields rose at once to the demand of the times; they addressed their fellow-countrymen as exposed to the "wrath to come," and their one aim was to lead souls to the only Saviour. Out of these wise labors grew the mighty Methodist Church, with its world-wide labors and philanthropies.

The question which my beloved British brother addressed to me is pertinent to every minister of the Gospel: "How far do you aim mainly at the conversion of souls?" No minister is likely to succeed in what he undertakes with only half a heart; certainly he can never do what he never even attempts to do. If your whole heart is not bent on the glorious work of converting sinners by the help of God, you will never accomplish it. You may produce many able discourses freighted with valuable thought; you may wax eloquent over social evils and plead for reformatory measures and philanthropies; you may say many good things, and true things, and helpful things; but if you stop short of leading immortal souls to Christ, your ministry in one vital point will be a failure. There is much talk about "saving the masses;" but people are not saved in the mass; they must be reached and persuaded Christward one by one. Men may go to perdition by the regiment; they must be led to Jesus individually. A single soul was audience enough for the Master at the well of Sychar, and in the "inquiry-room" of Nicodemus.

Aim, therefore, to make your preaching pointed and individualizing. You are not to be a pulpit scold; but you may so present God's truth pungently and lovingly that every unconverted person in your audience may be made to feel "that means me." "Thou art the man," sent Nathan's arrow into David's heart. Pray God to help you love every sinner before you so fervently that you

will tell him plainly that if he does not repent of his sins and accept and obey Jesus Christ he will be lost forever! Don't be afraid of the word "Hell" any more than of the word "Heaven." The too common assertion that the faithful, tender and solemn presentation of the divinely revealed retributions of sin is an attempt to "scare people into religion" is utterly preposterous. As the ambassadors of Jesus Christ it is our bounden duty to "declare the whole counsel of God," and we have no right to conceal or belittle any great revealed truth. If Noah had not been "moved with fear" of predicted deluge, he never would have prepared an ark for saving himself and his household. It is a criminal cruelty to conceal from the transgressors of God's law and of God's love that the "wages of sin is death."

There is much truth in Mr. Gladstone's weighty declaration that "the decay of the sense of sin against God is one of the most serious portents of these days." Preach, therefore, my brother, most plainly and lovingly the guilt and the doom of sin, and pray that every impenitent soul before you may be convicted by the Holy Spirit. Nobody is likely to flee to the Lord Jesus Christ until he or she feels the need of him. Deep convictions of sin usually produce deep conversions; shallow convictions produce shallow conversions and half-way Christians. Go down to the roots. When you have made a sinner see himself, then point him to the all-sufficient Redeemer whose atoning blood cleanseth from all sin. This was Peter's style of preaching at the time of Pentecost, when three thousand souls were convicted and converted in a single day. When you are preaching repentance you cannot be too pungent; when you are offering salvation through the Lord Jesus you cannot be too winsome and beseeching.

It goes without saying that only a part of your soul-winning is likely to be done in the pulpit. Much of it is to be done by personal interviews. Seize opportunities. Keep your doors open to all who desire to converse with you. Pastoral visitation (which is going too much out of fashion) will give you opportunity to discover those who are anxious about their souls' welfare, and you will rejoice to converse with them, and to urge an immediate acceptance of Christ. Once when during my afternoon visits I discovered three or four inquirers, I summoned my church officers and special services were appointed every evening. They resulted in the conversion of nearly a hundred persons. Watch for the presence of the Holy Spirit! Listen for the first drops of the blessing; and then gird yourself for the happy work. There is no ecstasy this side of Heaven comparable to that of winning souls to a new life and to the life everlasting. "It is my heaven on earth," said Samuel Rutherford,

"to spend my days in gathering in some souls to Christ."

I hear some people talk about "modern methods" of evangelization; but I have not yet discovered any improvements on the methods of Paul and of Peter, of Wesley and of Whitefield, of Spurgeon and of Moody. We have not yet outgrown the Bible or the need of the Spirit, or the power of prayer. God never means that this world shall advance a single inch beyond the Cross of Calvary. Plant yourself beside that Cross! Preach Jesus Christ right there and he will "draw all men unto him." This method of soul-winning is no more obsolete than yonder sun blazing in the mid-heavens.

Brooklyn, N. Y.

"THE DEAF HEAR."

The New York *Christian Intelligencer* says: By an ingenious device called "The Accousticon," invented by Miller Reese Hutchinson, a young electrical engineer, sound is so intensified that the deaf and dumb are made to hear. Mr. Hutchinson, who is a native of Mobile, Ala., has been engaged on his invention for several years, and is now enjoying the reward of his perseverance. He recently demonstrated the efficacy of the "Accousticon" in several of the institutions for the deaf and dumb in London, Eng. Queen Alexandra witnessing one of the tests became so interested that she invited the inventor to give one at Buckingham Palace, which he did to the supreme satisfaction of all present. The Queen was so delighted that she in return gave him a gold medal. Mr. Hutchinson is now in this city (New York) and on last Friday in the presence of several physicians and a select company of gentlemen and ladies, gave tests of his invention upon several inmates of the New York Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb. The result was exceedingly gratifying. Girls and boys from eighteen to twenty-one years of age who had never heard a sound, listened in ecstasy to the strains of exquisite music from a piano. Clapping her hands in delight, one girl exclaimed "The music! The music! It was beautiful. Can't I hear some more?" A boy when asked why he made such demonstration over what he had heard, said, in the sign language: "I just couldn't stand still. I never heard anything like that noise before. It was fine." Many eyes in the witnessing company were wet. The day of wonders is not yet over. What is it not possible for science to accomplish? This little device which can be carried in one's pocket, will undoubtedly prove a benediction to suffering humanity.

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