

TRACTS AND THEIR USE

"In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good" (Ecclesiastes 11:6).

By Tom M. Olson

Even in my unsaved days, tracts interested me; and since the Lord apprehended me, tracts intrigue me.

It is my contention that anyone may propagate the gospel of Christ by tract distribution; a Christian who does not habitually use sound, scriptural tracts is constantly losing wonderful opportunities of increasing his usefulness toward man and his fruitfulness toward God.

Tracts can be tactfully given to fellow workers or travelers; they can be enclosed in letters and bills; they can be left on counters, seats, and windows. They can be dropped from automobiles, buses, and trains—also from boats, if first placed in waterproof containers.

Tracts can be read to the blind, ill, and dying; in fact, to all classes of humanity. They can be displayed in show windows and on bulletin boards. They can be reproduced in newspapers, magazines, and books. The messages in tracts can be repeated in conversations, speeches, and sermons. Tracts can be translated and printed in all languages and dialects.

Do you know a less expensive method of spreading the gospel of Christ than tract distribution? (Many tracts are absolutely free—others can be had for but a few cents per hundred copies.) Do you know of a surer way of "sowing bountifully" and "reaping bountifully"?

The Lord graciously saved me shortly after I entered my teens. I distributed tracts in boyish fashion then, but craved and prayed for the privilege of handing out a million tracts in my life time. (By distributing a thousand tracts each week, one can place a million tracts in twenty years!)

After giving myself to the Lord for "full-time service," it was my happy privilege to work many towns from door to door, placing up to 500 tracts per day—hence my yearning to distribute a million tracts with my own hands was soon realized, for which I heartily praise the Lord.

Another desire of my heart was the privilege of writing tracts, and still another to supply workers with free tracts. These desires are being fulfilled in Ephesians 3:20 fashion; for tracts have been written by the score and tracts by the million have been given to workers throughout the world. Praise his name!

There are those who object to tract work because they have seen tracts on sidewalks which were discarded by the recipients. True, some of the tracts distributed may be wasted, but the work is abundantly worthwhile even making that allowance. (See Luke 8:5-8.)

When tracts are printed in very large quantities, an attractive two-page tract can often be produced for the fraction of a cent. At that rate one must see several tracts thrown away before the thought of wasting one cent could be entertained.

On the other hand, seeing a tract on the sidewalk by no means proves it wasted. A man wrote from Newark, New York, saying he was walking to his work one rainy morning and noticed a piece of printed paper on the sidewalk which had been trampled upon. He was in a reading mood and although the paper was wet and dirty, he stooped, picked it up, and perused it. He said: "The paper proved to be a tract entitled: '\$35,000 Spurned for a Son.' As I read it, I thought of ten persons to whom I should like to give a copy. The tract bears your imprint, so would you please send me some extra copies of it?" The extra copies were cheerfully sent—so that discarded tract led to an increased circulation of itself.

Someone may say, "I have seen a tract taken from an envelope and hurled into the wastepaper basket." Granted. But even then you cannot be positive that it is wasted. A janitress in New York City wrote saying she had found a tract in a wastepaper basket and she liked it so well she was sending a dime for a quantity.

Another person may say, "I saw tracts torn to pieces and scattered to the winds." Maybe so—but if you concluded that that was wasted effort and material on the part of the tract worker, you may be mistaken! A person writing from a distance said he had found a piece of paper the title of which he did not know for it was torn off.

"But," said he, "there was sufficient left to show me my condition and my Saviour and to inform me where I could secure more such literature. So I am sending to you for a sample packet of all your literature as I should love to read the missing part of this paper."

If you are asking, "Who uses tracts and in what ways?" the following incidents will answer.

A newsboy wrote for a quantity to enable him to place one in each newspaper delivered.

A man and his wife who have a mail order business sent for a generous quantity of tracts as they desired to send the gospel in print to each person on their mailing list.

An optometrist asked for a thousand copies of the tract entitled: "My Eyes" in order to give a copy to each of his patrons.

A Christian woman, proprietor of a pet shop, requested a quantity of the tract entitled: "Would You Leave Your Canary in Care of Your Cat?" to give to her customers.

Jail, hospital, mission, and open-air workers use tracts to advantage in their important work.

Door-to-door salesmen leave tracts in the homes at which they call.

Preachers, teachers, and personal workers use tracts in their visitation work.

One satisfactory way of getting the gospel to your grocer, butcher, and filling-station master is to give them tracts when paying for purchases.

Some Christians taking motor trips like to throw tracts rolled in cellophane to children and pedestrians and onto the driveways enroute.

Many cases could be cited wherein tracts have been instrumental in the salvation of precious souls.

Are we not justified in saying gospel tracts constitute the most economical, popular, and fruitful medium of evangelization in this age?

Do you use tracts? If not, why not?

HE DID WHAT HE COULD

A young man accepted for the African missionary field, reported at New York for passage, but found on further examination that his wife could not stand the climate. He was heartbroken. But he prayerfully returned to his home and determined to make all the money he could, to be used in spreading the Kingdom of God over the world.

His father, a dentist, had started to make, on the side, an unfermented wine for the communion service. The young man took the business over and developed it until it assumed vast proportions. His name was "Welch," whose family still manufactures grape juice. He has given literally hundreds of thousands of dollars to the work of missions.

Every job is missionary work when we interpret it by stewardship—The Presbyterian Advance

Prayer takes the very highest energy of which the human is capable.

—John Coleridge.

The King's Highway