

WIN ONE

THE nicest work ever committed to mortal man is the work of soul winning. There is no line of work in which he can engage, no matter how necessary or important to the welfare of humanity here below, that brings so rich a compensation as that of soul winning. When God asked us to join Him in this grand work He conferred upon us the highest honor that is possible for Him to bestow.

The Joy of Soul Winning

The greatest joy known to the human heart is the joy of leading someone to the Saviour. We well remember the peace and happiness that came into our hearts when we first accepted Christ and received forgiveness of our sins.

But that joy, wonderful and soul-satisfying as it was, is eclipsed by the radiant bliss that floods our souls when, under the guidance

and leadership of the Spirit of God, we are able to lead some other soul to Jesus Christ. We read in 3 John 4, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth."

One Minister has this to say about his first experience in bringing someone to Jesus: "How well I remember the joy that filled my heart when I, for the first time, had the privilege of leading my first soul to Christ, and seeing him step down into the watery grave and join the family of God. From then on everything else seemed to take on secondary importance in my life. A hunger was created in my heart to go on out into the wide open harvest field in search of more precious souls, that that blessed experience might be repeated."

During revival meetings in one of our schools a number of young men interested themselves in winning their comrades to Christ. After they had been successful in helping them to make a decision they were so overjoyed with this new experience that they stayed up until the late hours of the night to talk about it and pray about it. One night they awoke the minister-evangelist about one o'clock in the

morning, and asked him to come down to the room where they had been wrestling with one of the boys who had now made a decision for Christ. They said, "We are so excited and so thrilled over this victory we have gained that we would like to spend the remaining hours of the night endeavouring to win more. The next morning before breakfast they were visiting in the room of one of their other school-mates, and led him to the Saviour. That morning during chapel exercises these young men came forward, leading their comrades to the front, where they publicly surrendered themselves to Christ. Such joy must be experienced to be fully appreciated.

We are told that the angels of heaven rejoice over one soul that repents, and according to Hebrews 12:2 we read that there was joy in the heart of Christ as He went to the cross with the thought that someday there would stand in the kingdom of God the host of the redeemed. But the greatest joy will come some sweet day when we shall stand around the sea of glass with those whom we have helped to the kingdom of God, singing redemption's song.

The Necessity of Soul Winning

God has always used men to win men. That is the way we were found and saved. He did not send an angel to us to teach us and pray with us and lead us over the line. How thankful we are that there were those who were willing to come, to go out of their way to be used by the Spirit of God, to help us! What if they had neglected their duty? Where would we be today? And now that we are in, shall we stop the whole plan of God and let others go on in darkness without help?

No wonder Paul said, "I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians." "For necessity is laid upon me; yea, and woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" We cannot shirk it or shift it or pass it on to someone else. What God has committed to our hands we must do, or suffer the consequences. "To save souls should be the life-work of every one who professes Christ." — *Testimonies*, Vol. 4, p.53. "To every one work has been allotted, and no one can be a substitute for another. Each one has a mission of wonderful

importance, which he cannot neglect or ignore, as the fulfillment of it involves the weal of some soul, and the neglect of one for whom Christ died." — *Review and Herald*, Dec. 12, 1893.

Soul winning should be a life-and-death matter with us, for the destiny of our own souls is wrapped up in this great divinely appointed task.

The Call to Soul Winning

Notice the great command of our Saviour that will challenge Christ's followers until the work is done, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Mark 16:15.

To the man who had been miraculously saved by Christ from the power of the demons and was anxious to follow Him, the command was given: "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee." He accepted this as a call from God, went home to his friends, and we read that later on he had the privilege of presenting

many of his friends and loved ones to the Saviour.

This call of God to take the news of the kingdom to all mankind is too great a task to be committed into the hands of a few preachers. It calls for a mass movement, for the witnessing of everyone who has received Christ into his heart.

How do I know that I am personally called to save others? I know it, first of all, because that is the way He saved me. I know it because every time I go out and do something to help someone find Christ, God blesses me. I know it because the nearer I come to Christ and the more distinctly His spirit whispers to my soul, the clearer I hear the call from Him to go out and help somebody else. I know it because the personified help of those all around me equals a call to help.

Such a call is illustrated by the experience of the little boy, who, in a revival meeting, gave his heart to God, and at once worked his way back under the seats until he came to the pew where his father, in a voice that all present

could hear, he cried, "Oh, Dad, why aren't you a Christian?" After a few moments of struggle that dear boy had the privilege of leading his father to surrender himself to Christ. That's the way the Spirit calls. "Every soul whom Christ has rescued is called to work in His name for the saving of the lost." — *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 191. "Not upon the ordained minister only rests the responsibility of going forth to fulfill this commission. Every one who has received Christ is called to work for the salvation of his fellow-men." — *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 110.

The Responsibility for Soul Winning

The work of soul winning cannot be dealt with lightly. Influencing the destiny of individuals is a sacred matter. The call to soul winning is a holy calling, because it means working with a holy God, who sends us forth on a holy mission. It carries with it a responsibility fraught with grave consequences. Many a person will be lost on the day of God because he has neglected his duty to his fellow men. Of him it will be said, "I was sick and ye visited me not; I was in prison, and ye

came not unto me. I was hungry, and ye gave me no meat. Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity." We are held as responsible to carry out our own part of the contract, according to the great gospel plan to save others, as Christ was to carry out His mission when He came and lived and died for us on Calvary's cross. "The Lord holds the church responsible for the souls of those whom they might be the means of saving. . . . You are guilty before God if you do not make every effort possible to dispense this living water to others." — *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 435.

The Preparation for Soul Winning

A preparation for this work is necessary. First of all we must make the necessary heart preparation, for we read: "Be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord." It is necessary for us to have an experience with God so that we may know He can save a sinner. My deliverance from sin is the best proof. Another thing we must know as we go forward in this work is that God has a great message for the world, and that our acceptance or rejection of that message will decide our destiny as well as

the destiny of others. As we go forth we should know in our own hearts that we live in peace with our brethren, for how can we bring peace to others if we do not live in peace with those who belong to the family of God? then, too, we should become acquainted with some of the fundamentals of soul winning. That can easily be secured by reading some of the wonderful books that we have to offer on this great question as to how God blessed other men in saving souls.

The Requirements of Soul Winning

To be successful in this work of soul winning we must be willing to study as well as to work. Seek counsel from those who have been over the road and willing to make sacrifice. you will soon find that it takes time and effort to lead others to Christ. It will also cost us something in a material way to supply others with books and pamphlets and tracts and Bibles. Some equipment is also needed to help attract their attention, hold their interest, and make the great truths of the Bible plain. Those endeavouring to win people may have to suffer criticism and persecution for the

sake of others. No one can go out into the camp of the enemy and rescue souls from darkness without a sacrifice.

The Place to Begin Soul Winning

The best place to begin is right where you are. It may be in your own family. Father, mother, brother, or sister may be in need of help. This will take courage, and a little planning. There may be some one in your own home church who is drifting away from God. There are those in our Sabbath school classes and in our church services each week who are of baptismal age but who have not made a decision for Christ. We are told that there are those in every meeting who are making a decision. It may be bringing back a backslider who is lonely out there in the cold world, waiting for somebody to help him. There are many all around us who have passed through that experience.

A mother attending camp meeting was in a meeting where soul-winning work was discussed. Her thoughts turned to two boys who had been in her Sabbath school class at home

for a number of years, but who were not baptized Christians. These boys were to leave within a few weeks to serve their country in the Army. She made up her mind at this meeting that she would go out and find these boys, for they were on the campground. She went and confessed her sins to them, and in tears asked for forgiveness, and the boys surprised her by saying that the reason they had come to camp meeting was to find Christ. They did not want to go into the Army without God, and she led both boys to Christ.

One of our brethren whose heart was stirred pledged to go back home and do something about it, so he filled his pockets with small books. When he came to town he went to the lumberman, a young man who was not a Christian, told him about the great signs of our times and the soon coming of Christ, and aroused an interest. Before the year was up this young businessman had accepted Christ and the Sabbath. Then he too wanted to do something for someone else, and began to work for his mother, who was about eighty three years of age. Before the year was closed he had won his mother to the truth. then she

went out to tell her married daughter, who soon accepted Christ and was baptized into the church. Lost souls who are longing for light and help are all around us. When once we are ready and willing to work, the Spirit of God will lead us to those whom we can help best.

The Burden for Soul Winning

There are individuals who enjoy listening to the story of the soul-winning efforts of others, but who have no desire or thoughts of engaging in such work themselves. To such we would recommend trying just once to help those in need. You will never deny yourself that privilege again.

One of our sisters who anxiously prayed for a burden to go out was told to start working in her own home town, right around the block where she lived. So she took some of our literature and went from door to door. At the third or fourth house she came to, only the maid was in. As she explained her mission this maid said that she knew all about Adventists, for she had once been one. She had

run away from home and hadn't seen her mother for more than two years. Our sister went in and had prayer with her, and later brought her to Sabbath school and church. It was not long until she was back again in the church, and she and her mother were reunited. She has a burden for others, and each year she goes to our camp meeting and reports a number of souls that she has won.

That is the way Christ worked, for we read that as He went about in every town and village, when He saw the people His heart was moved with compassion for them. (Matt. 9:35-38). So He told His disciples to go out into the field and see how white it was for the harvest, and to pray. As they went forth they also got a burden. The burden comes as we go out.

Obstacles in Soul Winning

There are, of course, many obstacles thrown across our pathway as we go out to search for souls. There are many things to be given up by the individual who accepts Jesus Christ, many habits to be changed, many ties to be

broken; and often the struggle is a fierce one. Many have to change their business occupation, and their whole manner of life must be revolutionized. Christ's ambassador will be very sympathetic and patient with his spiritual children leading them step by step. Smoking, drinking, and worldly pleasures have a strangle hold on some. How wonderfully God works to sever those chains of habit when Christ comes into the life!

A boy about sixteen was a slave to the cigarette. He had made a start toward the kingdom many times, but had always fallen back. His faith was gone, and he believed that God had rejected him; yet after an hour or so of prayer and study and the confessing of sins, this young man was dedicated to God, and he arose with a shout of victory in his heart. From that day he went steadily forward — confident of victory through Christ. there are obstacles to be met, but as we go forward in faith God will be with us and give us wisdom and ability to equal the need.

Helpers in Soul Winning

We are told, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." When we go forth in search of souls we never go alone. For God is so eager to have this work done by us that He will surely never desert us when we go forth in His name. We are given the aid of the Holy Spirit as our chief helper. It is He who impresses us to go out and help others, who leads us to those who are in need. He prepares the way and gives us word to speak. He moves upon their hearts. He convicts them of sin and brings them to a decision.

We are also told that angels will be our helpers. As in the case of Philip of old, His angels will lead us to the individuals who have been prepared by the Spirit to receive God's message through our lips. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" "All who engage in ministry are God's helping hand. They are co-workers with the angels; rather, they are the human agencies through whom the angels accomplish their mission. Angels

“speak through their voices, and work by their hands.” — *Education*, p. 271.

Helpers may be found among the brethren who are willing to encourage and assist us in our work. God works wonders for us as we go out. The elder of one of our churches dedicated himself to the task of winning his neighbors. When his own sons, who were not baptized Christians, saw how sincere their father was in his burden for the lost, they joined him in the singing and in inviting people to come to the meetings. Before that series of meetings ended, both young men, the pride of their father's heart, had made their decisions for Christ.

Methods in Soul Winning

There are ways open to everyone which, if followed through, will result in souls won. The person to person contact is best. A visit to the home or shop, while sometimes a bit difficult to arrange, is almost always effective. Inviting people to our own homes and talking about spiritual things is effective also.

Then there is the distribution of our message-filled literature. A tract, a magazine, a boo given or lent, will open the door for further effort. Inviting people to church or Sabbath school or conducting Sunday school in the community brings a rich harvest. A visit to a sick room, a prayer with a family when in need or distress, opens the door of the heart. Giving food and clothing to the needy breaks down prejudice and makes lifelong friends. A thousand ways will be opened to us as we move out among the masses.

Delays in Soul Winning

Many in our churches hope someday to take an active part in soul-winning work, but they keep putting it off — someday, but not now. The tragedy of the church today is that we postpone the day of great things. If we would only do today what we dream of doing sometime in the near future, we would surprise the world. With this continued procrastination, we lose our first love, doubt fills our minds, and soon our lives bear the false witness that "my Lord delayeth His coming."

One of our brethren who had just this kind of lethargic experience was aroused finally. He determined in his heart that his manner of living must be changed — right now. He was running a gas station on the highway. He decided he would give out literature to everyone who came to buy. He would stop and talk to them about the things of the kingdom, and even pray with those who were willing. It wasn't long until he had a great interest in the community and was giving Bible studies almost every night. A Sabbath school, and later a church, was organized. What a day of rejoicing and victory that was for our dear brother and his wife and their children! They had all helped in this wonderful soul winning effort, and shared the resulting joys.

Patience in Soul Winning

It takes time to change one's mind. It takes time to break old habits. It takes time to study one's way into this wonderful truth. So, as we labor for souls we must labor in patience. A man who tills the soil and puts in the seed waits patiently for the glorious harvest as the months go by. He prays for rain,

for sunshine, and for growth, and he does his part. Then the glorious harvest comes!

We should also remember how long it took some of us to change from the old life to the new and how patiently others worked with us. Satan has many helpers. Every influence in this world is often set against the soul that is seeking deliverance. Therefore we must be persistent in our labors, and toil on and on. If we faint not, someday we shall see the fruitage of our labors. "Work disinterestedly, lovingly, patiently, for all with whom you are brought into contact. Show no impatience. Utter not one unkind word. Let the love of Christ be in your hearts, the law of kindness on your lips." — *Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 41.

Risks in Soul Winning

To rescue souls from darkness we must often go into the camp of the enemy, where going is dangerous. We must be willing to be hated of all men for the sake of winning souls. Yes, we may get personal threats. Paul says, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him." But the sufferings of this life are not to be compared

with the joys that will follow after. And if ye fail ninety-nine times, but the hundredth time win a soul for Christ, we should feel well repaid.

A conference president was asked to baptize new believers who had been brought out of Catholicism. The enemy was stirred up; the sons of one sister came with their shotguns and threatened to kill the minister who would take their mother into the water and baptize her. Our minister heroically went forth in faith. No harm came to him, and it was a day of great rejoicing. In like manner we must bear as we go forth. "God calls for men like Elijah, Nathan, and John the Baptist, — men who will bear His message with faithfulness, regardless of the consequences; men who will speak the truth bravely, though it call for the sacrifice of all they have." — *Prophets and Kings*, p. 142.

Decisions in Soul Winning

What would you think of a farmer who worked hard in the spring of the year, waited all summer for the grain to grow and ripen,

but made no provision to gather in the beautiful harvest? What would you think of a fisherman who started out early in the morning while fishing was good, and when the fish began to bite would not pull in the line? What would you think of a trapper who would forget or neglect the traps, and let his prey die in the traps? What can we think of a soul winner who, after having done all the preparatory work — interested people in the truth and brought them to a decision — lost them through careless neglect or lack of interest? It is tragic that so many who have been convinced are not being helped over the line to a full experience in Christ.

To step over the line means a new-birth experience, a change of heart, the mind, and the soul; and it is here where those of us who have passed through that experience can help them the most. By relating a personal experience to them — how God found us, how He helped us, how He solved our problems, how He changed our desires and our longings and, where necessary how He found a new job for us where we were happier and could serve God with a full heart — they must be

strengthened in faith. It is well also to take others with us to relate their experiences of deliverance from trial and answered prayer. Such a testimony might encourage a halting one to make a right decision. Join in an earnest season of prayer on behalf of those who are in the valley of decision. If necessary, take them by the hand and lead them over. As we lay hold of Christ's arm by faith and press the question of decision, the Spirit of the Lord will come in and soften the heart. We must step into the water with these struggling souls. It cannot be done from a pedestal — standing in a higher place and asking them to come — we must go right down with them and then with earnestness, perhaps with weeping, help them in the struggle. If we fail here, we have failed in everything. We must not fail, and we need not fail. God will work wonders for us. We will be amazed at the things God will do for us and through us in behalf of others when we do our part. The Good Book tells us that those who sow in tears will reap in joy. It is not easy work, but it is wonderful work. How richly God blesses us!

Promises in Soul Winning

As we go forth in this soul-winning work we are sometimes tempted to feel that nobody takes an interest in or pays any attention to what we are doing. When things go really hard and the interest drags on a bit and obstacles arise, we may think even God does not care. When those experiences come to us we must not counsel with our feelings, but remember the promise that He will be with us, for He has told us, "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy," and "Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days."

In *Testimonies*, volume 9, page 86, we read: "When we labor diligently for the salvation of our fellow men, God will prosper our every effort." And in *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 332, we read: "The heavenly intelligences will work with the human agent who seeks with determined faith that perfection of character which will reach out to perfection in action. To everyone engaged in this work Christ says, I am at your right hand to help you."

We find in *Gospel Workers*, page 19: "Workers for Christ are never to think, much less speak, of failure in their work." *Prophets and Kings*, page 263, says: "When God opens the way for the accomplishment of a certain work, and gives assurance of success, the chosen instrumentality must do all in his power to bring about the promised result. In proportion to the enthusiasm and perseverance with which the work is carried forward, will be the success given."

Anyone who has labored long for souls has had plenty of evidence that God really cares and that He is with him every step of the way. As he looks back over those experiences he marvels at how much God was willing to do for him in response to the feeble efforts he put forth for others.

The Reward of Soul Winning

God is a good paymaster. He will reward us for every good deed, for has He not promised us an hundredfold in this life and in the end eternal life above? As He sends us forth He tells us that whatsoever is right we shall re-

ceive. Christ even told us that the passing out of a cup of cold water in the name of a prophet will be rewarded. Motives count with God. When we fail in our attempts because of human weakness — or lack of experience, God considers that, and will reward us someday for what we were willing to do even though we failed.

The joys and the blessings received here below in helping someone to find Christ, are so overwhelming that we sometimes think if that were the only reward, we would be more than repaid for the services rendered. But this is only a foretaste. Someday over yonder we shall receive a full reward as only God can mete it out to us. When we shall see the saved and hear them tell us of the joys of salvation and thank us for all that we have done to lead them into the kingdom of God, we shall see more and more how wonderfully well God pays us for our efforts.

We read for our encouragement from *Gospel Workers*, page 519, “What rejoicing there will be as these redeemed ones meet and greet those who have had a burden in their behalf!

And those who have lived, not to please themselves, but to be a blessing to the unfortunate who have so few blessings, — how their hearts will thrill with satisfaction! They will realize the promise, “Thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: but thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.” “

“Others will say: ‘I was a heathen in heathen lands. You left your friends and comfortable home, and came to teach me how to find Jesus, and believe in Him as the only true God. I demolished my idols, and worshiped God, and now I see Him face to face. I am saved, eternally saved, ever to behold Him whom I love. I then saw Him only with the eye of faith, but now I see Him as He is. I can now express my gratitude for His redeeming mercy to Him loved me, and washed me from my sins in His own blood.’ “ — *Ibid.*, p. 518.

Yes, the redeemed ones will meet and recognize those whose attention they have directed to the uplifted Saviour and hold blessed converse with them!

“There the redeemed ones greet those who directed them to the uplifted Saviour. They unite in praising Him who died that human

beings might have the life that measures with the life of God. The conflict is over. All tribulations and strife are at an end. Songs of victory fill all heaven, as the redeemed stand around the throne of God. All take up the joyful strain, 'Worthy, worthy is the Lamb that was slain,' and hath redeemed us to God." — *The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 506, 507.

THE END.

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