

THE MAN WHO WAS WANTED

"And he went forth to Tarsus to seek for Saul." Acts 11:25.

Humanity is continually on a man-hunt. Men are always needed and wanted. There is a standing order, in each generation, for men or proved worth. Such leadership is always essential. The influence of good and intelligent people was never more needed. True progress cannot be made apart from contribution of such lives.

When Christian movement was young and serious problems were confronting it as well as opening of doors of opportunity, able leadership was sorely needed. In Antioch of Syria, Barnabas, faithful worker in cause of Christ, meditating upon kind of man who could assist in that critical hour, remembered young man Saul. They had been associated in work at Jerusalem. Barnabas knew his qualifications; believed fitted for the difficult task before them. So he went to lay on Saul's heart the needs and opportunities of the situation. He listened, accepted the challenge and went back with Barnabas. A new chapter was begun in the life of this marvelous man — chapter full of heroic sacrifices, thrilling adventures, and unsurpassed achievements.

Why are some people in demand while others are not? What are the qualities of character that cause some persons to make a much-needed contribution to the life of their generation and the progress of their race? What elements are in the life of the man who was wanted?

I. Preparation.

1. Physical.

Bodies are temples of souls. A strong body is needed. I do not mean to infer that one cannot win in life's struggle unless he is a perfect physical specimen. We are impressed by many who have blessed the world who have had to struggle against physical handicap. Paul suffered much from afflictions; for a while he was attended by a physician. Paul's body was the instrument of his will. The world's benefactors faced life bearing marks of disease, physical defects, and weaknesses.

Herbert Spencer and Robert Louis Stevenson were able to work less than an hour per day because of physical suffering. Pasteur was paralyzed but he made discoveries that blessed mankind in the alleviation of suffering and the prevention of disease. Beethoven, composer, was so deaf he was unable to hear his greatest symphony. Milton was blind at forty-three, and out of darkness brought his matchless messages. The noble-hearted George Matheson lost his sight in his youth, but found unfailing light, and wrote:

"O light that follow'st all my way,
I yield my flick'ring torch to Thee;
My heart restores its borrowed ray,
That in Thy sunshine's glow its day
May brighter, fairer be."

Booker T. Washington, who rose from slavery to trusted leadership and gained the respect of a nation said, "Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome while trying to succeed."

2. Mental.

The man who was wanted had prepared mentally for life's challenge. Paul is acknowledged to be one of the most profound thinkers of all time. He was naturally gifted, but he developed through the years of rigid training. He cultivated the talents which God had given him. Each of the two men who wrote the most books in the Bible was highly trained. "Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds."

3. Spiritual.

The most far-reaching and revolutionary of all Paul's experiences was the one which befell him as he journeyed to Damascus. God convinced him that it was a mistake to set himself against God. He was not disobedient to the heavenly vision. From that hour he was a different man. His whole outlook on life was changed. There was harmony within where discord once ruled, and peace where conflicts had raged. Through his remaining years, all the experiences of hardships, physical privations, sufferings, disappointments, mighty responsibilities, and persecutions, strengthened and made nobler the soul of this man.

In preparation for life, the call that merits first consideration and fullest response is the voice of God.

II. Perception.

The man who was wanted perceived clearly the nature and needs of life. We often suffer because of our blindness to the issues of life. We sometimes persuade ourselves that facts do not exist because we do not want them to exist. The wise person perceives that there are laws which govern life, physically, mentally and spiritually.

We need to see clearly the issues involved in our living. We ought not to be ignorant of what we are. We are more than physical beings. In each individual there are two natures, the higher and the lower, and these are in ceaseless conflict. Only cowards and weaklings surrender to the call of lower nature. Someone said, "The greatest saints are always made of the same material as the greatest sinners." The difference is in attitude of two classes toward powers entrusted to them. Our instincts are to be controlled and directed upward and not given free rein that they may pull us downward. All our innate powers were given to us for a noble purpose.

III. Presentation.

The man who was wanted presented himself as his answer to the world's needs. He could not answer all calls, but he could answer some. He could not do all that needed to be done, but he could do his part. He never sought to evade or shirk when duty called him. We may have part, wherever we are and whatever we do, in lifting the world's burden and easing the world's pain. Beyond the making of a living we can serve our generation by the will of God.

Some thirty years ago a young man -- Albert Schweitzer read an article in a religious journal entitled, "The Needs of the Congo Mission." The writer pointed out the lack of men in that important mission field and how, as a result, the work was suffering. He appealed for workers in these words, "Men and women who can reply simply to the Master's call, 'Lord, I am coming, ' those are the people the mission needs."

This message found a responsive chord in the heart of this brilliant young student who by his thirtieth year was the author of well-known books, a professor at Strasburg University, and an organist of the Bach Society of Paris. Young Schweitzer did a most unexpected thing. He turned from the organ and the professor's chair and entered a medical school. When he completed his training, he offered himself as a medical missionary to the natives of the dark continent. He followed in the steps of Him "who went about doing good." This is how one man made his answer to world's needs.

The man who was wanted was prepared to answer the challenge of life, he perceived the nature and the needs of life, and he presented himself as his answer to the world's needs.