

IS IT ANYTHING TO YOU?

"Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger" (Lamentations 1:12).

When he was shut up in the cave of Engedi, pursued, caged, and surrounded by his enemies, while his friends were afar off, unable or afraid to assist him, David cried, "No man cared for my soul" (Psalm 142:4). You may think that it was strange that God did not raise up somebody to stand up for David and protect his life. But that is not as strange as that Christians go on their way careless and unconcerned over the fact that their own loved ones, their own children, their next-door neighbors, and their friends are unsaved and on their way to hell. Many lost people do not have anybody to care whether or not they are saved. This verse brings to mind one of the most tragic failures of Christians. Many sinners can truthfully say, "No man cares for my soul."

Christian concern is the only hope of lost sinners. We know that Christ paid the penalty for sin when He died on the cross. But we must never forget that God's plan is that the atonement of Christ shall be made known to sinners by Christians, or that the gospel of Christ must be proclaimed to them through God's own people. God has never had any other way of making it known to people. You will never hear of a person being saved unless somebody has brought to him the gospel of Christ. Nobody can believe on the Saviour until he has heard about Him. Somebody must tell every sinner of his sins, of his need of a Saviour, of Christ's love for him, and His offer of forgiveness and salvation. God always uses Christians to convey the gospel to the unsaved, even if it be through the printing and distribution of the scriptures.

It was God's will that lost people should have a Saviour. To this end He provided the Lord Jesus Christ, Who died on the cross for their salvation. Man's only hope of salvation is in and through the marvelous grace of Christ. Without a doubt there are many who would like to know Christ as their Saviour, if someone would introduce them to Him.

Many lost people can truthfully say, "Nobody cares for my soul." Through the years they have associated with professing Christians, who knew that they did not have any hope of heaven, and who talked to them about everything except about that which they needed most to hear them speak -- the salvation of their souls. Anyone whose relationship to the Lord is never mentioned to him can only reach one conclusion, namely, that nobody cares for his soul. The reason for his being let alone is not because he would resent such interest. Often he really hopes that some Christian friend will speak to him, for he knows that he is lost, and that he needs somebody to introduce him to Christ Who alone can save him. Neglect of souls is distressing and terrible.

The absence of this longing for the salvation of lost souls on the part of church members today is indeed appalling. Multitudes of church members never pray for the salvation of a single specific person, and never put forth enough effort to speak to one relative or friend about being saved. In all such cases there is a lack of any concern. We sing, "Rescue The Perishing," but our rescue efforts do not prove that we have any concern. In calling upon the daughter of one of his

church members, to talk with her about the salvation of her soul, among other things the pastor said, "It would give your father great joy if you should become a Christian." She replied, "I do not think it would." Thinking that she must have misunderstood him, he said, "You do not think so? Why not?" "Because I think if he cared anything about it he would have spoken to me on the subject, and he never has." Many who are not saved have wondered why their relatives, friends, and acquaintances have never cared about the salvation of their souls.

Those in heaven and those in hell are concerned about the salvation of sinners, but we, church members on earth, the only ones who can do anything about it, care so little or not at all. Christ said, "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance" (Luke 15:7). Everybody in heaven has the deepest concerns for lost sinners, but they cannot do anything about it. Surprising as it may seem, in hell people have an unceasing concern that their loved ones on earth be saved. In Luke 16 we read about the rich man pleading with Lazarus that someone should go to his five brothers and warn them "lest they also come into this place of torment."

In view of the deep concern that there is in heaven and in hell about the salvation of sinners on earth, is it not strange that church members on earth, who can do something about it, who can warn sinners and tell them how to be saved, do nothing about it! It is an awful condemnation of those who call themselves Christians that lost people whom they know can say truthfully, "Nobody cares for my soul."

Is it anything to you that some of your relatives, neighbors, and friends are lost, are living without Christ, without God, and without hope, and going to hell? Is it anything to you that the coldness of your own heart permits you to live for self, just as if Christ had never lived and had never died? If one is a child of God, and has any Christlikeness, he will talk to his relatives, friends, and acquaintances about their need of Christ. If you refuse to say anything personally to the unsaved about the salvation of their souls, it is positive proof that you do not care anything about their salvation. Doesn't the condition of lost sinners mean anything to you?

It is the responsibility of every Christian to tell the unsaved personally that they need a Saviour from sin, that Christ is the Saviour they need, and that they should repent of their sins and trust Christ as their Saviour, and that He will save them when they do so. A Christian is not responsible for what any unsaved person does with this message, after he has delivered in love and concern, but he is obligated to deliver it to him. If a Christian fails to deliver these truths and to invite his friend or loved one to receive Christ as his Saviour, he shall die in his sins, but his blood will God require of the Christian. Every Christian is responsible for performing his duty, but he is not for the results achieved.

In this wonderful privilege and tremendous responsibility of witnessing to the unsaved, we have the example of Christ. His primary concern was "to seek and to save that which was lost." To every Christian He has said, "Follow me." To be a follower of Christ is to have the same purpose in life which He had. Christ won most of His followers through personal contact with them, as was evidenced in the cases of Matthew, Nicodemus, and the woman at the well. It is only by our obedience to Christ, and in following His example, that we can prove our love for Him. If we love Christ, we will witness to our relatives, our friends, and our acquaintances.

Those who witness for Christ to the unsaved always receive wonderful blessings, among which is real joy in the soul. There is no joy like that of introducing an unsaved person to the Saviour. Christ said, "There is joy among the angels over one sinner that repenteth." If the angels rejoice when a soul is saved, when all that they can do is to watch a human being introduce him to the Saviour, how much greater will be the joy of the person who introduces the sinner to Christ! Introducing a person to Christ and getting him to receive Him as his personal Saviour is the greatest privilege that is given to a child of God. Many church members have never led a soul to Christ in all their lives. The reason that they have not done so is that they have never tried. Our Lord does not want church members to stand around like tombstones in a cemetery. The greatest joy in the Christian life is to introduce a soul to Christ. I am sorry for any church member who has never had that joyful experience. It is wonderful to experience the bliss of doing the Lord's will.

Another great reward for witnessing to the unsaved is the appreciation and commendation of Christ. We never know how far-reaching may be the results of introducing a soul to Christ. Think of Andrew. He was humble, quiet, unassuming, and consistent. Perhaps the greatest act of his life was that of bringing Simon Peter to Christ. Andrew was the acorn, Peter was the oak, and three thousand believers on Christ were the great forest. Andrew will share in the rewards for Peter's work because he introduced him to Christ.

Think of Stephen and Ananias in helping Paul to come into a saving relationship with Christ. Think of the unknown man who introduced Spurgeon to Christ. Dr. J. B. Hawthorne was an orator whose services were sought by scores of churches, and whose sermons were heard by thousands. On one occasion he went to assist a pastor and church in a two-weeks' evangelistic campaign. At the end of that period only one little unpromising boy had made a profession of faith in Christ, and Dr. Hawthorne and the church were a bit chagrined over the result. But that boy was A. T. Robertson, who became the greatest Greek and New Testament scholar of the twentieth century.

A similar thing took place in Scotland. A church went through a whole year with only one profession of faith, and, when that was reported at the annual convocation, they said: "None except Wee Bobbie, and he's so sma' he's not worth the countin'." But Wee Bobbie became the famous Robert Moffatt, the flaming torch that illuminated the night of Africa and blazed the trail for the great and marvelous David Livingstone, his son-in-law.

Illustration: the testimony of Dr. Robert Amis.

Never despise the day when a child is won to Christ. Only the Lord knows what that contribution may mean to the cause of Christ.

When and where did you ever talk to anybody about the salvation of his soul? Have you ever tried to witness personally to somebody who was not saved? If not, you certainly are not much like the Saviour. When you stand in His presence on the day of judgment, the question will not be, "How many did you win to Christ?" "but" How many did you try to win to Him?" We are not responsible for the results, but we are responsible to bear our testimony.

Several miles from Milton, Pennsylvania, when the ice was breaking up, a farmer got into one of his boats purposing to pull it out of the river. A floating mass of ice struck it, breaking it loose from the bank and carrying it and him out into the current. A neighbor, seeing the danger, mounted a horse and with all speed rode down to Milton. The people of the little town gathered all the ropes they could obtain, went out on the bridge and suspended a line of dangling ropes from the bridge across the river. They could not tell at just what point the boat with the farmer was seen, wet and cold, standing in the boat half full of water, drifting down the rapid current. When he saw the ropes dangling within reach, he seized the nearest one, was drawn up and rescued. Now one rope might not have answered the purpose. The pastor hangs out the rope of salvation from the pulpit, and sinners present do not seem to get near it, but if the church members who know Christ as their Saviour will hang out enough ropes sinners will certainly be saved. If you are a child of God, and you love Christ, you will not sit idly by in silence and watch your relatives and friends go to hell, but you will try to influence them to receive Christ.

Here are some rules which you will find helpful in dealing with those who aren't Christians.

1. Let the Holy Spirit direct you.

This will enable you to approach the right person, at the right time, and in the proper manner.

2. Be tactful in your approach.
3. Be courteous in your manner.
4. Talk with the individual alone.
5. Be sympathetic.

Instead of assuming a "holier than thou" attitude, as if you had already attained and you are urging the lost to climb up to where you are, show them that you understand their problems and that you want to be helpful.

6. Refuse to be drawn into an argument.
7. Tell him what Christ has done for you.
8. Show him his need of Christ.
9. Teach him that Christ is the only one Who can save him.
10. Depend upon the Holy Spirit.

He is the One Who convicts men of sin and persuades the sinner to trust Christ as Saviour.