

**FIRST WORDS**  
**TO**  
**YOUNG CHRISTIANS**

by

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**CHAPTER SEVEN -**  
**DUTIES IN THE WORLD**

WHEN GOD converts a man he is no doubt that moment prepared for Heaven. He is washed in the blood that cleanses from all sin, and by the righteousness of JESUS fitted for the society of the sinless congregation above. Why then is he not at once taken there?

Because he has a work to do for others - a testimony to bear for the Lord JESUS, and an example of holy consistency of life to show, that may lead men to glorify his FATHER in Heaven. He is to live to purpose, to live in a way worthy of an immortal being - a probationer for eternity. He is to seek to be useful, and every day he lives to try and make the world better and happier for his having lived in it.

It is through His people that GOD carries on the mighty purposes of His love on earth. When CHRIST fed the people in a miraculous manner with a few loaves, it is said that He gave the bread to the disciples, and they gave it to the multitude. And so it is still. The church is the appointed instrument by which the Bread of life is to be distributed to the nations of the earth.

We sometimes hear it said of a professing Christian: "He is a good man, but he is not a useful man." The wonder in such a case is how he can be said to be good at all! The great difficulty is that, in the opinion of many, the indulgence of certain amiable dispositions, and good feelings, and benevolent emotions, is called goodness; whereas, if these are confined to the individual and do not bring forth fruits to bless the world, they become

**ONLY A REFINED FORM OF SELFISHNESS**

The great reason why GOD converts a soul, is not merely to secure the salvation of an individual, but to start him on a career of usefulness that may bring forth blessed results, lasting as eternity. Hence Christians in their new life are said to be "**created unto good works.**" They are as much made to be useful as the sun is made to shine, or as the air is made to be breathed. It is not enough that we "**cease to do evil**"; we must also "**learn to do well.**"

If then a Christian professor is not a useful man, it becomes a very serious question whether he is

a Christian at all. The great Master, whose name he bears, went about constantly doing good. To do good to others was the delight of His soul, His meat and His drink. By day, by night, in season and out of season, He was at this work of love. His followers trod in His footsteps, and left us not a mere record of their feelings, their emotions, or their opinions, but of "*the Acts of the Apostles.*" A Christian in a truly healthy state of mind, retiring to rest at the close of a day in which he had done nothing for JESUS, would be unable to find repose - would be disturbed by the groans and cries of those who are ready to perish, and would start from his unrefreshing pillow, resolved to work while it is called to-day.

Suppose, dear reader, that you are sitting in your own comfortable home, after the toils and the cares of the day are over, and the shadows of evening are gathering around you. All nature is calm and serene.

As the setting sun lights up the clouds into ever varying and fantastic forms, and gilds every object around you with his departing glory, you feel your mind drawn into a solemn, meditative mood, and lifted "from nature up to nature's GOD."

But you look up and see

### **A STRANGER APPROACH**

your dwelling. His first appearance awes and impresses you. His look is grave and solemn; His cast of countenance tender and benevolent; His apparel plain and travel-worn; but there is a holy dignity about Him, that makes you feel as you never did in mortal presence before. A tear trembles in His eye and rolls down His expressive face, while His bosom heaves under emotions too big for utterance. He speaks and His words are words of fire, that burn into your soul!

His thoughts thrill your heart and exert an unearthly influence upon you. The things of eternity, in their awful grandeur, are brought near to you, as living realities; and the world and its gayest scenes are made to appear very empty things.

You are wondering who this Stranger can be when all at once your eyes are opened, and you see that you are in the presence of the Man of Sorrows - your own SAVIOUR. As He did with Thomas, He shows you His hands and His side, and bids you read there the evidences of His love. He fixes upon you that look that melted Peter's heart, and those eyes that swam in tears of anguish for you, and asks if you love Him?

You fall at His feet, exclaiming:

"Blessed SAVIOUR, I do love Thee!  
O help me to love Thee more!"

Suppose then that He asks you, as an evidence of your love to Him, that you go to those who are destitute of the means of grace, and tell them the story of His love, and urge them in His stead to be reconciled to GOD. You plead, like Moses, your want of eloquence, and your inability to go, under the circumstances in which you are placed. He then asks you, if not able to go yourself,

that you will contribute of your worldly means to send others who are able and willing to go. Now could you, in His presence who agonized upon the cross for you, and who is to put the crown of glory upon your head, refuse this most reasonable request?

Now, though JESUS is not thus personally visiting us at our homes and appealing to our hearts, He is really doing so through the various organizations which He has instituted for proclaiming His truth abroad.

From His throne in Heaven He says: "Support them, and I will account it as done to Myself." Standing upon the Mount of Olives, in view of the scenes of His retirement and devotion and tragic sufferings, His farewell command was: "**Go... preach the Gospel to every creature.**"

This is

### **BINDING UPON EVERY CHRISTIAN**

We must either go or send. We live in an age of peculiar promise to the human family. In our own country new and vast fields of exertion invite the energies of the people of GOD. Forms of error, with a zeal that rebukes us, are entering these fields.

Infidelity in some of its most loathsome and dangerous forms is uttering its blasphemies against the Holy One; while the religion of mere form and ceremony plants itself everywhere to block up the pathway of true, vital godliness. Between these enemies of GOD, coming from opposite directions and with opposing watchwords, we are called to take our stand and present CHRIST's blessed Gospel.

It is ours to unfurl the banner that has been dipped in the blood shed for the ransom of a world, and go forth to the holy conflict with an unwavering faith!

It is amazing the amount of good that can be done by

### **PERSONAL EFFORT,**

if the heart is only truly alive to the work.

Two pious young men had a considerable distance to walk in order to reach their place of worship. They accordingly agreed to invite persons as they went along, to go to the house of GOD with them. In this course they persevered until they counted up no less than twenty, ten of whom were converted and became members of the church.

Another young man gathered together, by his own exertions, a class of twelve boys whom he instructed in the truths of the Bible on Sunday. He went on in spite of all discouragements, making each member of his class a subject of prayer, till everyone of them was brought to CHRIST. Two of them are ministers of the Gospel, and several of them are teachers of the young.

The great thing is to be always active in the Master's service, and watching for opportunities of doing good. Some are ready to avail themselves of what promises to be some great occasion of usefulness; but the little occasions that are occurring every hour of the day, they allow to pass by unnoticed. But if we are working away for JESUS from the motive of love, no matter how small our sphere we shall be approved as well as the missionary who influences the destiny of a nation, or the martyr who honors the truth at the stake.

It has been said that it is a great deal easier to die once for CHRIST than to live always for Him. And it is easier to do some great act that will attract the attention of the world than to go on patiently plodding through the daily duties that fall in each hour.

Many souls can be reached by our way every

### **PERSONAL CONVERSATION,**

whom the public preaching of the word fails to move. A gentleman one day went into a store to do some business, and found the clerk alone. He was a moral man, and a regular attendant upon the means of grace.

The gentleman asked if he felt any anxiety about the salvation of his soul.

"I cannot say that I do," was the reply.

"You believe that, as a sinner, you cannot be saved in any way but through faith in CHRIST?"

"Yes, I believe it, but I do not feel it."

"Then you acknowledge that you are exposed to die and be lost at any moment?"

"Yes, I know that it is so."

"Now then," said the gentleman, "you know your duty, to repent of sin and believe in CHRIST; will you begin this moment to do your duty as far as you know how?"

"I will," he replied.

In a few days that young man was a happy Christian. How many professing Christians would have let that opportunity of doing good pass, and through such neglect that soul might have been lost.

I would seek deeply to impress upon the mind of the young convert the importance of cultivating great skill and wisdom in speaking to sinners about their souls. Great injury may be done by a rash and imprudent mode of approach. There is such a thing as being wise to win souls. There is a certain skill and tact which some possess that we should seek to imitate. Let the following fact help to illustrate this.

A very wicked, passionate man became neighbor to a devoted minister of the Gospel. He began a career of sin, and declared his purpose to insult the minister if he should attempt to speak to him. In a little time after, the hardened man was taken down by a severe sickness, and the minister resolved to go and see him.

"If you do he will insult you," said the friend who had informed him of the man's sickness.

"I will see him, nevertheless, and look to GOD for guidance and blessing," replied the minister.

Accordingly he called and inquired of the sick man about his health. He received very curt and almost uncivil replies. But without saying one word on religion he opened his Bible and said:

"It you please, I will read to you."

He read the fifteenth chapter of Luke, offered a short prayer, and left.

Next day he again called, read the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, again prayed, and left as before, without saying a word of his own. This course he continued for some time, till one day the hardened sinner broke completely down, grasped the minister's hand, wept, confessed himself a sinner, and said he was a wonder to himself.

"It is God," replied the minister; "I have not spoken a word. GOD has spoken. He has done this."

"Yes," said the man, "I see it now. If you had spoken a single word of your own to me when first you came, or for some time after, I would not have borne it. Weak as I was, I should have tried to turn you out of my house. I was astonished at your daring to come to me. You took me by surprise. I could not be angry when you asked in such a kind way after my health. You read me those beautiful words. I knew they were not your own words, but

### **GOD'S OWN WORDS,**

and I was silent. You shut the Book, and I thought you would begin to reproach me, and tell me what a sinful wretch I was, and then would be my time to speak; but I looked up and saw you on your knees, and heard you praying for me, and then, without one word, you were gone."

We have here a proof of great tact and good judgment - a union of zeal and knowledge that is beautiful to look upon and worthy of imitation. When a sinner is angry or excited by intoxicating liquor, or in the presence of his wicked companions, it will often do more harm than good to speak to him about religion, or rebuke him for his sins. So, to enter into discussion with him on some matter of controversy is improper.

By getting the sinner alone, speaking to him in love, pressing the truth solemnly upon his conscience, and speaking briefly, you may expect the HOLY SPIRIT to bless your efforts. And oh, what a matter of eternal joy to win one soul to JESUS!

In conversing with inquiring souls, much prudence is required. Great care should be taken that the mind may not be diverted from the necessity of an

### **IMMEDIATE TRUST**

in CHRIST. When the mind is in an awakened state, it is ready to seek comfort anywhere but in the right place, in anything but in JESUS.

I have somewhere read of a young lady who was made to feel that she was a lost sinner. She was in an agony of mind, and could find no relief. She had a pious brother who was away from home at the time, and she began to indulge the feeling that she must wait till he come home and he would help her to come to JESUS.

When the brother came home, he was informed of the state of things, and he made up his mind to go to his own room without seeing her; but as he passed the door of her room, she sprang out and drew him back, crying out:

"Oh, brother, save me! save me! If you don't I shall die!"

The brother reflected a moment, and then pushing her away almost roughly, and yet with a voice trembling with affection, said:

"And so you will come to me rather than to JESUS? I can do nothing at all for you."

And thus left to herself, her false refuge torn away, she felt that all her trouble had been because she was unwilling to come to CHRIST, and in a short time she surrendered to Him, and was at peace.

~ end of chapter 7 ~

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