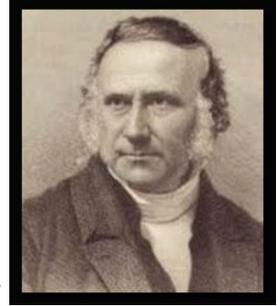


# *The Word of a Companion*



On Monday, the day after the administration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, a young man of my congregation called upon me in great agitation of mind. He said he felt that he was "a great sinner," that he could "not bear to live in the condition he was in," that his "attention had been anxiously turned to the subject of salvation several times before, but he soon forgot it again," and he "was afraid it would be so now." Said he, "I have wanted to come and see you a good many times, but I never could make up my mind to do it till yesterday."

I was not surprised to see him. The exercises of the communion Sabbath had been more solemn and joyful for the people of God, than any such exercises that I have ever witnessed; and as similar occasions of communion had often before been times of awakening for those who were not communicants, I had expected that the same things would be experienced now. I told him this, and aimed to make him realize the solemnity of the fact, that the Holy Spirit was striving with him. I noticed in him two things, which particularly characterized his state of mind,—the depth of his convictions, and his fixed determination to turn unto God.

As I was to leave home that day, and should not see him again for several weeks, I took the more care to teach him the gospel truths, and to impress them upon his mind. And because his attention had been arrested before, and he had gone back to indifference; I aimed to convince him that his danger lay on that very spot, and his only security was to be found in a full and instant determination to 'deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Jesus Christ.'

He left me, and such was my impression of his fixed purpose, that I had little doubt or fear about the result.

On my return home a few weeks afterwards, he immediately called upon me. He came to tell me of his happy “hope in God through Jesus Christ my Saviour,” as he emphatically expressed it.

Some months afterwards he united with the church. But in making, at that time, a statement of the exercises of his mind at the period when he first came to see me; he mentioned one thing which astonished, instructed and humbled me. After mentioning his anxieties, his sense of sin, and his interview with myself, he added, “that day one of my companions spoke to me on the subject of religion. That determined me.”

This was the turning point therefore. I thought he was “determined” before: he thought so: he appeared to be. Indeed I had never witnessed the appearance of a more full and fixed determination in any anxious inquirer, save one; and it was the very thing which gave me such a confident expectation of his conversion. But I was greatly mistaken. His heart wavered and hesitated and hung round the world, till one of his “companions spoke to him.” That young companion was the successful preacher after all. Suppose that “companion” had not spoken to him; what would this young man have done? We cannot tell; but there is a high degree of probability that he would have done just what he had so often done before,—would have quenched the Spirit and gone back to the world. Such companions are greatly needed.

Salvation ought to be urged upon the will, the choice, the “determination” of sinners, up to the very point of their “receiving Christ and resting upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered in the gospel.” Such an urgency is never out of place. The will is wanting, the determination is wanting, in every unconverted sinner, whether he believes it or not. The Bible has it right,—‘choose ye this day whom ye will serve.’