

The Great Commission in Song
by
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I think it is interesting to note that, while on earth, the last thing our Lord told us to do was to tell people of the life-saving message (Matthew 28: 18-20) One might say He has appointed His children to be “life savers” and to throw out the lifeline that others might be saved. This mission has been the same down through the years; and in 1888, a pastor in Massachusetts would give us a hymn to encourage in that endeavor.

Reverend Edward Smith Ufford was visiting Point Alverton, near Boston. During his visit at a life-saving station, he witnessed a crew of men practicing rescue drills for storm weary ships. The pastor could see vessels that had crashed on the rocky shores and thought of the tragic loss of life. As he watched the life-saving crew throw the life-line out over the water, in practice drills, a seed thought for a song was planted

Later that day, at home, Pastor Ufford would put on paper the inspiration he had received at the life-saving drill and, in 15 minutes, compose the melody to go with it. In 1890, the famous composer and hymn writer, George Stebbins, improved upon the music a bit giving it the wings it needed to take flight.

Apparently, Pastor Ufford understood our Lord’s last command very well; for in his song, we are encouraged to “throw out the life-line” to get involved in rescuing people from Hell, to save lost souls from sinking further into sin and to do it today—not tomorrow. Like a ship lost and tossed upon the storms of life, we all need a port of safety. For those who are safe and dry, we have a responsibility to throw out the life-line to guide others to that safe harbor. May Reverend Edwin Ufford’s words encourage us to do just that:

Throw out the Life-line across the dark wave.
There is a brother whom someone should save;
Somebody’s brother! Oh, who, then will dare
To throw out the Life-line, his peril to share?

Throw out the Life-line!
Throw out the Life-line!
Someone is drifting away;
Throw out the Life-line!
Throw out the Life-line!
Someone is sinking today.

If you know Christ as your personal savior, then you are the one. Why not purpose for 2018 to “Throw out the Lifeline” to your loved ones, people you meet—even your enemies. Play a part in God’s plan to win souls to His honor and glory before it is too late. Be a “Life Saver.”