

‘God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them.’ (Hebrews 6:10).

**N**ot long ago a visiting preacher came to my church, whose job it was to train men for the ministry, and part of his time was spent teaching them how to preach effectively. He was a well respected minister, who was noted for his orthodox theology. On this particular morning he preached an evangelically ‘sound’ sermon, with three well constructed, clear and relevant points. What he said was interesting and no doubt some in the congregation were edified. I imagine, as he stood at the door after the service, many thanked him for a ‘good word’.

I cannot say what the speaker thought of his own message, but I remember thinking to myself that there was a vital ingredient missing in the sermon and in the preacher—passion! There was no passion in what he said, no fire burning in his heart or in the words he so carefully uttered. What he said could not be criticised theologically, but it lacked the ‘life, fire, wing and force’ that characterised the sermons of men like George Whitefield. Martyn Lloyd-Jones described preaching as ‘logic on fire’, but on that morning I felt none of the glowing fervour that emanates from truly great men.

Although the five men in this book were notably different in personality and performance, they were one in purpose and passion. Their deep love for Christ and for the souls of sinners enabled them to stand strong through the storms of persecution, and to preach a message that fed not just the mind with theology and high ideals, but reached into and captivated the heart. In short, the word of life they proclaimed shook their congregations—it stirred them, stunned them, saved them—and though many did not agree with what they heard, they could not deny that here were men in love with Jesus and earnest in their desire to save souls.

I once heard a man preach with such passion that afterwards a member of the congregation said, ‘I didn’t agree with a word he said, but I loved watching him worship God as he said it.’ The gospel is not a dry and barren desert, suitable only for intellectuals, it is life and power! ‘I am not ashamed

## Preface

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of the gospel,' declares the apostle Paul, 'because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes' (Romans 1:16). In this day and age we need men to return to a simple child-like faith in the true gospel, men who are constrained by God's Spirit, whose hearts are on fire for Christ, and who will lay down their lives for the kingdom of heaven. We need men of love and truth and life in our pulpits.

Thomson, Rouquet, Scott, Simpson and Pentycross are five men who loved Jesus. They knew what he had done for them and had been gripped and challenged by the message of salvation—that was the motivation behind their ministries and why they discharged their callings so faithfully. They were prepared, whatever the cost, to obey the command of their captain, 'Go and make disciples of all nations', and to 'spend and be spent' for the benefit of others. They might not be in the top ten of great preachers, but their lives were dedicated to serve God and they played an important role in the eighteenth century revival in England; therefore they must not be forgotten.

### **Acknowledgement and Dedication**

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### **Tim Shenton**