

The Christian's Great Business

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

"Restore unto me the joy of Your salvation; and uphold me with Your free Spirit. Then will I teach transgressors Your ways; and sinners shall be converted unto You." [Psalm 51:12-13](#).

BELOVED Brothers and Sisters, sinners are all around us living in their sins. Tens of thousands in our great cities and our country towns and villages are abiding in the densest spiritual darkness. They do not know their right hand from their left as to eternal things. And an equally numerous class who do know something of the letter of the Gospel are yet as men who see but perceive not, who hear but understand not. Some of these wandering ones are in great misery everyday, as the result of their sins, and if we knew what they suffered we would greatly pity them. It would be impossible for us to remain indifferent if we heard their secret groans. And all these sinners, whether they are suffering or not, are living to the dishonor of God, robbing God of the Glory which is due Him as Creator, and more or less dishonoring the Lord Jesus who receives no reward from them as Redeemer. If we were in a right state of heart we could not live where we are without feeling daily anguish on account of abounding sin.

Meanwhile, all around us there are potent agencies at work to hold these sinners in their present condition and prevent their escape into a better life. We may be idle, but the powers of darkness and their agents are busy—busy in working mischief, leading men into one form of error or another, or casting one or other of the nets of infidelity around them. Hell from beneath is stirred at this moment! If there is no revival in the Church of God, there is certainly a revival among her enemies! They are compassing sea and land to make proselytes, though, when they make them, they will be tenfold more the children of Hell than they were before. The activity of the hosts of the Evil One should act as the sound of the alarm to awake the slumbering army of the living God! What are you doing, O sleepers? Arise, for the Philistines are at your gates!

Meanwhile, the case is still graver. Sinners are dying! Every hour hurries a company of them into eternity. They are carried away as with a flood! They fall like grass before the mower's scythe! And where do they go? Alas, we know, but how little do we consider! They are driven from the Presence of God and from all hope of restoration. Their woe is such as cannot be described in language, though in the Book of God the Holy Spirit has employed terms of extreme expressions, whose meaning it would be hardly possible to exaggerate. I

might say, eye has not seen, nor has ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of man the doom which awaits all those who perish in impenitence!

Beloved, the thought of souls sinking into everlasting woes stirs me with the desire to awake you. I feel that if my heart is cold I may share the responsibility of any lack of zeal in you, but if I shall be helped to be earnest, I shall hope that the sacred contagion will spread and that Believers in Christ all around will be deeply concerned for the souls of others. Our topic, then, is the life business of the Christian—to teach transgressors God's ways—that sinners may be converted unto Him.

We shall handle our subject thus—first, we shall show who are to teach others. Secondly, what they are to aim at in their teaching. Thirdly, why they should thus seek the conversion of others. And, fourthly, how they can do this, for there may be some who will need a little practical guidance as to what they shall attempt.

I. First, dear Brethren, WHO ARE TO TEACH TRANSGRESSORS THAT THEY MAY BE CONVERTED UNTO GOD? The reply is easy. The text is found in a Psalm which is deeply penitential all through, but ends in the joy of forgiven sin. The words before us relate to joy restored by a sense of pardon—therefore the men who should teach others the ways of God are those who have, themselves, been pardoned. Who else can tell of the guilt of sin but men upon whom the burden of sin has pressed, who have felt the arrows of conviction in their own soul, who have been bowed into the dust because they have felt that the wrath of God rested upon them?

They can speak with authority concerning what they have personally felt. When such men speak of pardoning love and of the blood which cleanses, how sweetly do they tell of that blessed moment when their transgressions were forgiven and their sins were covered! These are not the men to descant upon the dignity of human nature, the excellencies of virtue and the merit of moral reformation. Their story is of quite another kind. They cry, "We have destroyed ourselves and all our help is found in Jesus! We are condemned and have no means of self-justification! But there is a precious blood that speaks better things than that of Abel, which pleads for us!"

Pardoned Sinners, go and publish the story of what God's Grace has done for you! You are the men, and none others in the world, who can tell it to advantage. Tell it with the hope that your fellow men will hear it and live. While, however, all pardoned sinners ought to do this, we should remember that we are most fit for the doing of it when we are full of the joy of God's salvation. Notice the prayer—"Restore unto me the joy of Your salvation. Then will I teach transgressors Your ways." If you are doubtful as to whether you are saved or not. If the sword of the Spirit is rusted in your hand, or hidden in a scabbard, you cannot wield the weapons of your holy war with any force while your arm is trembling with doubt. You must know in yourself that you are forgiven and that you have proved the power of the

precious blood, before you can speak to others with the hope that they will believe your message.

When Luther lay sick and sorrowing, before he had found peace with God, a truly gracious monk came to his bedside and said, "I believe in the forgiveness of sins." Luther looked at him, for he had often repeated those words in the creed, but had never felt their power before. The man of God said, "You believe in the forgiveness of David. You believe in the forgiveness of Peter. Believe you in the like forgiveness of your own sins through the precious blood of Jesus." And Luther did believe it—and from that time he spoke like a man whom God had sent—speaking mightily because he believed confidently. In preaching justification by faith he roared like a lion in the glory of his strength, for the joy of the Lord in his own soul had become his strength to bear testimony to others!

I wonder not that some men doubt, and waver, and vacillate in their doctrinal sentiments and teachings, and talk about views and opinions. O Sirs, if they had once felt a broken heart and the terrors of a broken Law—if they had once known the power of the blood to bind up the wounds of the heart—they would speak of certainties and soon would come to be accused, as some of us are, of being positive and dogmatic! Who can help being dogmatic about a thing which is his very life and is as sure to him as his existence itself? While we believe in the joy of the Lord we shall not come to sinners with, "ifs" and "buts," but with a faith which will, by God's Grace, help them, also, to believe! To prepare us to win souls, we must have the Holy Spirit resting upon us, for the text says, "Uphold me with Your free Spirit."

The Spirit of God in the Church is the standing miracle which proves that she is of God. Were the Spirit of God gone from her, it would be impossible for the Church to hold her ground. But the Holy Spirit abiding in the Church is the testimony of God to His Church and the strength of her testimony for her God. Beloved, if the Holy Spirit shall come upon you and rest on you continually, you will sweetly tell of your Lord's Grace and of His dying love. The right words will come, for it shall be often given you in the same hour what you shall speak! The right emotions will attend the words, for the Spirit of God creates tenderness and pity! The ice will melt in your spirit, the hard frosts of your long backsliding winter will yield to the returning Sun of Righteousness—the season of cold and death shall be over and gone—and the time of the singing of birds shall have come to your soul. Then will you be able to teach transgressors God's ways. O Brothers and Sisters, pray for a revival in your own souls! Beseech the Holy Spirit to come upon you! Entreat the Lord to send the Breath from the four winds, not only upon the dry bones, but also upon the men who have to prophesy in the valley of the dead!

Note, also, that if we would bear good testimony for God to the conversion of souls, we must, by the Spirit of God, be upheld in consistency of life, "Uphold me with Your free Spirit." Brethren, if you are inconsistent in your own daily lives, how can you hope to be

useful to others? The old proverb is a true one, "Actions speak louder than words." If we speak to men upon the evil of sin and yet indulge in it, what can they infer from our conduct? If we tell them of the wrath of God against evil and yet find pleasure in it ourselves, will they believe us? If we speak of a Savior's dying love and yet are, ourselves, unloving, how will they believe us to be Christ's disciples? Vain must it be for us to converse upon the power of Grace when it never appears in our own conduct! Inconsistency will mar the most eloquent testimony and make it no better than silence.

If we are unholy we shall pull down with our right hand dexterously what we in a clumsy manner attempt to build up with our left. We must be consistent and our prayer must be—"Uphold me with Your free Spirit," or we cannot teach transgressors. Then, Brethren, we shall not say, "Stand by, for I am holier than you!" But feeling that we owe our preservation entirely to Divine Grace, we shall not reckon it any condescension on our part to come down to teach even the most guilty transgressors God's ways so that the most notorious sinners may be converted unto God. Brethren, the text plainly shows us that pardoned sinners, possessed of the Holy Spirit, rejoicing in salvation and upheld in consistency of life, are the chosen instruments of God for the conversion of their fellow men. Let us note this and act accordingly.

I see nothing in the text and, indeed, nothing in the Scriptures, about a certain class of officials being set apart to convert sinners to the exclusion of others. One of the most deadly injuries ever inflicted upon the Church of God was the invention of the distinction of clergy and laity—there really is no such distinction in the Word of God. On the contrary, the Apostle says to the saints, "You are God's clerics"—you are God's clergy—you are God's heritage, all of you! And another Apostle tells you that the Lord Jesus has made you kings and priests unto God, not some of you, but all His people. God forbid that we should ever arrogate any superiority over our fellows! The ministry is not ours, alone—you, also, are all to minister according as you have gifts and Grace.

All the members of Christ's body have a ministry to discharge—not the tongue alone, but the hand and the feet. Even those parts of the body which are least observable and even less comely, are all necessary for the health of the entire system and therefore should occupy themselves in their own peculiar service. Do not excuse yourselves, therefore, by saying, "We will pray for you, that you may teach transgressors, and sinners may be converted unto God." Do it, my Brothers and Sisters, for greatly do I need your prayers, but do not, when you have prayed for me, forget that you, also, are bought with the blood of Christ! And therefore use all your strength to His service. Neither does the text suggest that persons of superior abilities are the only persons who should addict themselves to teaching transgressors. The least in ability—the man of one talent—should as diligently serve his Lord as the servant whose talents are more numerous.

Neither does it appear that men, because of the pressure of business, are to think themselves excused, for David was a king and kings have much to do. In any kingdom much thought and activity must be required and David might, therefore, have claimed exemption from spiritual work. But he knew that he had been a sinner and he knew that he had been saved—therefore he was ready to help others. Have you been saved? Then, dear Brother, though you are up to your throat in business cares, still, nevertheless, say, "I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners shall be converted unto You." For, Beloved, if the saved ones do not communicate the Gospel to the unconverted, who will?

Will the devil try to save them? Will the devil's servants try to save them? Will the men who are, themselves, in error or in unbelief try to convert others to Jesus? You know they will not! Who else ought to do so? "Unto the wicked God says, What have you to do to declare My statutes." Nobody ought to teach the things of God but the regenerate—and these are bound by a thousand ties to give themselves to the service. My Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ—if there are no bonds laid upon us to seek the wandering souls of men, upon whom can the labor be laid? Who else can do it? Shall the blind lead the blind? Shall the dead prophesy to the dead? What other heart but that which has, itself, been renewed, can tell of regeneration and the Spirit's quickening power?

Remember, if the tongues of the saints speak not for Jesus, then the testimony for Jesus has ceased from among men. If the saints do not preach the Gospel, the angels cannot, for no such ministry has been assigned to them—therefore sinners must perish for lack of knowledge! O Church of God, to you is this commission given! Be not faithless in it, but be clear of the blood of all men!

II. We will consider WHAT THE BELIEVER OUGHT TO AIM AT IN HIS WORK WITH SOULS. Brethren, our great aim is conversion—the conversion of transgressors. "I will teach transgressors Your ways; and sinners shall be converted unto You." We are to aim at the conversion of all men—of whatever sort they may be—for Christ has a people redeemed by blood in all ranks of society. We should seek for the conversion of our children and of those who sit constantly with us under the shadow of the means of Grace. Still, lest it should be forgotten, I will mainly dwell upon this point—that if there are any in the world who peculiarly and above all others are transgressors, these are the persons whom our own sense of love to Christ should induce us to teach God's ways—for if there is glory brought to God by one person more than another when he is converted, it is by one who was a notorious sinner.

The forgiveness of great sin, the reclaiming of a man from gross habits of vice, the deliverance of a woman who has fallen—these are the things which make the Grace of God illustrious. The Church of God should remember that the light is most needed where the darkness is darkest—that the physician is most required where disease is most rife. Therefore should she spend her utmost strength against the most fully developed sin. The point to aim at is

the conversion of sinners, not merely their reformation. It is a good thing to improve a man by reforming him—he is all the better for being sober, honest, and industrious. It was a good thing that the beasts, when they were in Noah's ark, were so tame. But they came out as they went in—lions were lions and vipers were still vipers.

The work we long to see accomplished is far greater than mere restraint or education, it is a thorough transformation. We pray that the lions may become lambs and the serpents become doves. Less than this it is not worthwhile for the Christian to live for, for there are philanthropic minds abroad apart from the Church who will look after moral reformation and sufficiently discharge the service. Let us help them if we can, but it is a side issue—our business is a more radical one—the one of the axe to the root of the tree by the change of the nature. Our object is more lasting. We have to do with immortal souls and their eternal future. Beloved, we must keep to this and be content with nothing short of the conversion of men. But it must be their conversion to God—"Sinners shall be converted unto You."

I am very glad to convert a Brother to Scriptural views upon Baptism, Church government and the higher doctrines. It is always desirable to see Brethren learn the Truth—but what will be the use of it if the individual is not, first, converted to God? The main object of all Christian work should be that sinners may be converted unto God—that they may love the God whom they have forgotten. That they may adore the Christ whom they have despised. That they may feel the power of the Holy Spirit whom they have grieved. This is what we desire, O Sinners! It is not your outward washing to make you appear as Christians—it is your inward renewing—it is your possession of a new heart and right spirit that we desire. "You must be born again." It will not do for us to mince matters with you—our prayer is that you may be turned to God, as the prodigal son was when he said—"I have sinned against Heaven and before you." May such a blessed turning as this come to you, for this, and only this, can fit you for Glory. Except you are converted and become as little children, you can in no wise enter the kingdom of Heaven.

This work is to be accomplished by teaching. "Then will I teach transgressors Your ways; and sinners shall be converted." It cannot be done by processions, pictures, incense and performances after the manner of the Romanist and the Anglican. And it cannot be accomplished by excitement, bawling, stamping and shouting, after the manner of certain brethren of our acquaintance, who cry, "Believe! Believe! Believe!" but who do not tell the people what they are to believe, nor instruct them in the faith. Teaching is needed. All the earnestness possible should go with the teaching, but there must be sound doctrine, real instruction, solemn Truths of God made known. It is by such means that sinners will be converted to God.

The most important teaching is that which dwells upon the Lord's ways—God's way of punishing sin, God's way of forgiving sin, God's way of mercy through a Sacrifice. God's way of pardon through faith in Jesus. God's ways of wounding, of healing, of killing, of

making alive. God's ways of sending forth the Eternal Spirit and working as He wills among the sons of men, neither waiting for man nor tarrying for the sons of men. The more of God's ways we proclaim, the more likely is it that sinners will be converted unto God! You see, then, Brothers and Sisters, what you are to aim at and you are not to be satisfied without it. Did we not, at the beginning of this year, propose the one to the other—that we would, each one, seek for the conversion of at least one soul? Brethren, we have now passed into September! Has your desire been fulfilled? Has your labor of love been blessed?

I know that some of you have been the means of bringing several to Jesus. I could point, at this moment, if I chose, to one who would blush to have his name known—who during the last few months has led several to Jesus and that by inducing them to attend here, lending them his seat, and taking care that they were comfortably accommodated. He has also a kind, encouraging word for them and he looks after them with much anxiety—and therefore he has had the joy of bringing them to Jesus! God be thanked for this! May this be the joy of you all! Brothers and Sisters, are you doing something of that sort, or striving for Jesus in some other way? If not, God grant that in the few weeks of the year we have left you may yet accomplish something for the Lord, by the power of His Spirit.

III. And now, thirdly, gathering up all my strength for it, let me try to show you, my beloved Brothers and Sisters,

WHY WE SHOULD SEEK THE CONVERSION OF SINNERS. And it should be done first—and I will begin with the

lowest motive—because it will save us from many ills. I believe that the not seeking to win souls brings many spiritual maladies upon Christian men. The lepers outside the gates of Samaria found that the Syrians had fled. They went from tent to tent and feasted and at last they said, "We do not well. Let us go and tell this to the king's household, lest some mischief befall us." They felt that if they did not reveal the good news some evil might happen to them. And I tell you solemnly, God, in discipline, often brings sorrow upon His own people because of their unholy silence as to gracious things.

An eminent surgeon, who was also an eminent Christian, visited a lady who was a professed Believer in Christ, but who, like some ladies I have heard of, was frequently troubled with imaginary diseases. The good doctor was frequently called in, until at last he said to her, "Madam, I will give you a prescription which I am certain will make a healthy woman of you, if you will follow it." "Sir," she said, "I shall be so glad to have good health that I will be sure to follow it." "Madam, I will send you the prescription this evening." When it arrived it consisted of these words, "Do good to somebody." She roused herself to relieve a poor neighbor and then sought out others who needed her help, and the Christian woman, who had been so constantly desponding, nervous and fanciful, became a healthy, cheerful woman, for she had an objective to live for and found joy in doing good to others!

I can recommend that medicine to many whose lives are subject to bondage, for I know Brothers and Sisters who are never a day free from pain who are, nevertheless, full of happiness because they live to serve the Lord with their substance. Some of you might do great good with articles which you might very readily spare. You have ornaments which Christian men and women are better without, which, if broken up or sold, would aid the good cause. I wish many would follow the example of Oliver Cromwell when he went into Exeter Cathedral and saw 12 massive images of the Apostles in silver. "Oh, oh," he said, "why are these gentlemen here?" "They are the 12 Apostles," was the reply. "Very well," he said, "melt them down and send them about doing good." I wish Christians would do that with some of their gold and silver jewelry. Anyway, for our own sakes, lest the canker get into our gold and the rust into our silver, use it for doing good. Yes, by all means, seek the souls of men for God. Some evil will befall you if you keep the Gospel to yourselves.

Secondly, it will greatly add to your joy. Who does not like to be the bearer of good news? The pleasant tale of redeeming Grace and dying love. The pleasant story of a Savior who came from Heaven to earth to lift us up from earth to Heaven. The story of our own conversion, the story of God's goodness since our conversion—why, it must be delightful to tell it! And when you have spoken for Jesus, if you succeed in converting a sinner to God, then comes the pleasure! Great is the mother's joy when she looks upon her first-born child. She remembers no more her travail for joy that a man is born into the world! I am sure, however, there is more pleasure looking upon a new-born child of God and remembering no more your anguish over that soul—and your care in seeking to bring it to Jesus—because you have such bliss in knowing that there is one soul the more to decorate the Redeemer's crown!

Happy are our lives who can win souls! I am very apt to be cast down and distressed in soul, but, next to fellowship with my Lord, my greatest consolation is found in receiving glad tidings of souls saved. Here comes a letter of loving thanks from Ceylon and another from the north of Norway, saying, "Blessed be God that I read your sermons and found a Savior." From America I hear of an eminent Jewish Rabbi who has become a Baptist minister through reading one of my discourses. And recently I received a letter from Havana from a sailor who had just left the hospital. He told me how the man who died in the next bed told him that he had a treasure which he would give him if he would take care of it. And he then handed him a number of my sermons stitched together. "They have saved my soul," he said, "and I hope they will save yours." The sailor who writes blesses God in a warm-hearted way that it is so and the sermons have led him to Jesus!

Is this not joy? Would you not like to share it? From almost every quarter of the globe the good news comes to me— comes like manna, almost every day, and my heart is glad within me! I want you to know the same gladness, all of you in your measure. This honey is so sweet that I would have your mouths filled with it! You are, each one, helping me in

the work of the College which aims at helping our young Brothers to preach and, therefore, I do not speak as if I found fault, but still, dear Brothers and Sisters, you may personally be engaged in the Master's work and so, in a larger degree, have a share in the joy of seeing transgressors converted unto God. I have, however, better reasons than these. We will get out of these selfish motives into something higher. Unless you tell abroad the Gospel, how will you prove the sincerity of your

prayers? You bow your knees and say, "Your kingdom come; Your will be done in earth as it is in Heaven." How can it be if you never try to speak a word for Jesus and never seek to bring new subjects into His kingdom?

Your prayers—what can they be but hypocritical if they are not supported by your actions? Again, what proof is there of the sincerity of your love to Christ? You say you love Him and I believe you do. I believe there are thousands here to whom Christ is dearer than all besides. Show, then, a proof of your love! Do you ask, "How?" Out of your Master's mouth shall you receive the answer, "Simon, son of Jonas, do you love Me?" Do you answer, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You"? Here, then, is the proof which He demands—"Feed My sheep. Feed My lambs. Distribute unto others the heavenly food which you receive from Me. What I tell you, speak upon the housetops!" Abundantly yield to your Lord this proof of your affection!

Indeed, Beloved, is there any proof of the sincerity of any man's religion who does not try to spread it? You have found this good thing—if it is, indeed, good—you will wish others to have it. What a disgrace it is that Christians should be so indifferent to the spread of the Truth of God in these days! There has been, lately, a revival among Muslims. We had all thought that the crescent was waning and that Muslims would never endeavor to make converts again. Instead, there appears to have been, in many parts of the world, a singular awakening of the old enthusiasm which marked the early days of Islam. What? And shall the false prophet command the zeal of his followers and shall not the Son of God possess the souls of His people? Let it not be said Christians are cold! Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Ashkalon, lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice over us! Can lies and falsehoods lead men to martyrdom, as popery has done full many a time—does it lead men and women to seclude themselves and give all their lives to the service of Antichrist—and is there no zeal left among the Believers in Jesus? Followers of God, is there no zeal left among you? The Lord help us to answer this question, as we shall wish to have answered it when the Judge sits upon His Throne!

I will go further and say that if we do not try to bring sinners to Christ, let alone our religion, where is our humanity? If I believed that sinners could be annihilated I should have no particular reason for preaching to them. In fact, I should have a very urgent reason for never doing anything of the kind! Certain heretics teach that if men do not hear the Gospel at all they will be annihilated at death—but if they do hear it and reject it—they will live and

be punished for a time. Then, I say, let them die, they will be better without hearing the Gospel—and he is a traitor who preaches it to them and makes them run so great a risk! But we, Beloved, who believe the solemn Truth of God which has often made us tremble from head to foot—that the wrath of God abides upon the ungodly forever—if we do not attempt their salvation, we are demons!

That was a harsh word, but I will not change it. I leave it where it stands. I care not what pretensions you are making to Christianity—if you are doing nothing in any way for the souls of men—you act like demons! If there is a wreck at sea and a mariner refuses to aid in saving when he is strong and able, men cry shame of him. A man is dying for need of bread at your door. If you have plenty, but refuse to give him a crust and let him die on your doorstep, the whole neighborhood will censure you! But a soul perishing, a soul perishing for lack of knowledge! For lack of the Bread of Life and you have it and do not hand it to him—O Sirs, how dwells the love of God in you? Is there a spark left? You are without Grace, for you have fallen below the humanity of Nature! In vain your years of profession, your long prayers and loud professions, if neither your substance nor your tongue is consecrated to God!

Beloved, there is one argument which ought to touch us all, and it is this. Can any of us refuse to teach the sons of men if he has really seen and known the Savior? There, stand a minute and look at Him upon the Cross. Do you see His wounds and the blood distilling from them? Do you mark the traces of agony in that dear face, so lovely and yet so marred? Have you caught a glimpse of your Master's shoulders, where the plowers made deep furrows with their scourges? Can you gaze through His body into His heart and see the deeps unknown of anguish which He endured for sinners—guilty, lost, and ruined sinners—and have you no love for them? Does He come to you this morning and put His pierced hand upon you, and say, "I laid down My life for you—and as My Father has sent Me into the world, even so, I send you"—and can you look into His face and say—"My Master, I have never done anything for poor sinners, and I never shall"?

I think you will say, "My Lord, forgive the past and help me in years to come." The seraphic Summerfield, just before he died, said to those around him, "I have been looking into eternity and if ever I should rise from this bed I shall

preach very differently from what I have done." And yet he had preached most fervently the Gospel of Christ! Some of us might well say, "I have looked at Jesus. I have seen His disinterested love. I have marked His agonies and groans and I must preach differently. I must live differently. I must teach differently from anything I have ever done before." O, Holy Spirit, make it so and Yours shall be the praise!

IV. And now we have to close with the last point, which is to be most practical. The question will arise—HOW, THEN, ARE WE TO TEACH TRANSGRESSORS GOD'S WAYS that sinners may be converted unto God? I would say to you, dear Brothers and Sisters, "wait

upon the Lord for direction." But one of the directions you need not wait for is this, "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might." Some of you who could not speak, at least not to many, can assist those who do. If your own tongue will not serve your heart, get other men's tongues to help you—in connection with our College there are always needs—and by helping others into the ministry you may have a tongue to speak for you if you cannot speak for yourself.

Still, at your own house talk about the Savior or write about Him, or in some other directly personal way try to serve your Lord. To all Believers far and near, be it known at this time, that almost all our Missionary Societies are in need, not so much of money, as of men. The Baptist Missionary Society has sent out a circular requesting the prayers of the Churches that God will raise up men who will go abroad. Our older Missionaries are dying off. Many are coming home through sickness—and very few come forward to fill their places. Surely some brave young men whose hearts God has touched, who have been doing work at home, will cheerfully surrender all they are and all they have to go and proclaim among the heathen the unsearchable riches of Christ! I would be a recruiting sergeant this morning and I pray the Lord that some of the right kind may join the noble army of Missionaries.

At home we greatly need Evangelists to travel throughout the land. I do not see where funds will come from for their maintenance, but if men of some small property who can preach would retire from business and go from town to town preaching the Gospel it would be the grandest work they could undertake! If we had 100 such men in our own denomination, who would go from place to place like the Apostles—the missing link in the Church would be supplied—and we would see many sinners converted to God. When any of you move into the country, as you do when you increase in wealth, should you not feel that you ought to seek the good of the people? And if there is no Church of your own faith and order near, should you not commence one? Rest not till you see the Gospel preached in the neighborhood—and that fully—that sinners may be converted to God!

Ministers also are needed, and especially ministers who can support themselves. How much good might be done if the many merchants in London, men of education, would, on Sunday, go into the villages and preach the Gospel, bearing their own expenses and helping to find their own preaching room! It is impossible, in a poor community like the Baptist denomination, that we can ever cover the country with the Gospel if all ministers must be supported. We need a body of men who do not need support—who can do without it—who would think it their highest honor, like Paul the Apostle, to be no burden to the Churches. I feel that if I were a business man I should like to make money for Jesus. And with a prosperous business, such as some of you have, it would be delightful to me to be the father of a Church in some destitute locality where it would be a pleasure to give rather than to take.

Whereas by our present mode of action a poor little Church must need be presided over by a Brother who is pretty nearly starved and does not obtain a stipend equal to the average

wages of a common artisan—therefore the cause of God is spoken of evilly. The fault does not always lie with the Church, which may be too poor to do better, but with rich Brethren who ought to be preaching the Gospel, themselves, instead of hearing it. Many here, I daresay, among my own hearers, possess latent talent which only needs to be dug out of the earth and delivered from the napkin. Lord, stir them up and set their tongues on fire! If the Lord hears that prayer and touches your lips with a live coal from off His altar, you will say, "Here am I! Send me!"

Then there is our own Sunday school. Do you know that because I am constantly urging our friends to go out and teach anywhere, the result has been that a large number of the Sunday schools in our neighborhood are well supplied by our people and our own schools are often short of teachers? I do not desire to narrow your spirit which prompts you to work in the schools of other Churches, but do not forget your own home work! Thanks be to God for the zeal of our young people, but the best women in the Church, and the best men ought to be in the Sunday school, teaching there what

they experimentally know! I pray you see to it that our Sunday schools are well sustained—there are enough of you to do this.

Then, again, time was when we had in our Evangelist Society, for preaching in the streets, many young men and some, probably, who had better have learned a little more before they began. Now we have not so much of that. Is zeal for preaching the Gospel diminishing among us? Brothers, it ought not to be! That Society needs many more who will proclaim the Gospel of Jesus by the wayside, or in the lodging houses. Let me say to every man who can speak for Jesus, do not let that excellent work flag, no, not for a moment! And the Visiting Societies, and the Tract Societies—all these need helpers. Are there not some here who will come to their rescue?

I love to see our Brothers and Sisters opening little Prayer Meetings in back streets, in places where the Gospel is not proclaimed, or among people who do not go to hear it. Try to start fresh places of worship in regions remote from others. For all this kind of service Christ needs you, Brothers and Sisters. Shall He call in vain? We wish those we love to show their love to us. Do, therefore, by the love of Jesus—by the blood of Jesus—if there is any love in you towards Him and any gratitude for what He has done for you, go forth from this day forward and teach transgressors His ways, that sinners may be converted unto Him!

The Lord seal this address with His blessing. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Luke 5.