

Christ's Ambassadors

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"Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's place, be you reconciled to God." [2 Corinthians 5:20](#).

[Other Sermons by Mr. Spurgeon, on verses 18 to 21, are as follows—Sermons #1123, Volume 19—GOD BESEECHING SINNERS BY HIS MINISTERS and #1910, Volume 32—THE HEART OF THE GOSPEL.]

So, then, there is war between man and God. It seems preposterous that man should be in arms against his God, but it is all too sadly true. Shall the gnat contend with the flame? Shall an insect fight against an angel? Even this would not be as absurd as for man, who is utterly insignificant, to make war with God who is Infinite! Man, who is but as the ephemera of an hour, to enter into the lists against the dread, eternal and Almighty God? Accursed was that hour in which our first mother put forth her hand to take the forbidden fruit! From that moment war began between man and his Maker and from the Garden of Eden right on until now man has been an enemy of God! And although God has constantly returned good for evil, and is still the God of love and condescension, yet has man continued to fight against Him—there still is war between Heaven and earth. Otherwise, there would be no need for ambassadors between God and men. This would be proof enough that a state of war prevails. But, alas, in our own hearts we bear, each one of us, sad proofs of the enmity of man and God. And we see, besides, in our fellow men, ten thousand sorrowful instances which prove that they have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God and are not the friends of the great Friend of man.

Our text tells us that the ministers of Christ, the Apostles and all others who are sent of God to preach the Gospel, are "ambassadors for Christ." In speaking upon that matter, we must make some references to ourselves and I especially shall have to ask the earnest prayers of the congregation for myself. I feel that I may well do so, for if Apostles said, "Brethren, pray for us," how much more may we, who are not worthy to be numbered among the least of our Master's servants, urge the same plea!

In our text, I think I see, first, a great mercy implied. Secondly, a great office mentioned. And, thirdly, a great duty involved.

I. First, here is A GREAT MERCY IMPLIED—"We are ambassadors for Christ."

Well, then, it is clear that there is some hope of peace. When an ambassador comes upon the stage of action, it is evident that war is not to be waged to the bitter end. But observe

that the ambassador is not an ambassador from man to God, but an ambassador from God to man! "We are ambassadors"—not for you, but "for Christ."

I learn from this, then, that the peace proposed is one quite unsought by man. Man revolted against his Maker and was determined to continue in revolt. He was evil and would have remained evil if God had not interposed. Men go astray from God by nature, but they only return to God through Grace. Further, and yet further, and yet further, still, will they go away from God! Deeper and yet deeper will they plunge into the abyss of sin! It is easy for humanity to descend into Avernus, but for it to retrace its steps, "this is the work, this is the difficulty." And until God, Himself, comes in, man is as unwilling as he is unable and as unable as he is unwilling to make peace with his God! We might have thought, if we had not known the dread nature of sin, that the first thing Adam and Eve would have done, after they had transgressed their Maker's Law, would have been to cast themselves down at His feet and say, "We have taken of the fruit of the tree of which You have said that we must not eat." But instead of doing so, they ran away to try to hide themselves from His eyes—and when His voice was heard in the Garden and they were obliged to face Him—instead of frankly confessing their sin, the evil juice of that forbidden fruit had so poisoned their nature that they both began to make excuses! The man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." And the woman would not bear the blame, herself, but cast it upon the serpent. There was clear evidence there that man, though he had become a rebel against his God, would not turn unto his God, confess that he had done wrong and beg for mercy. Never did a prodigal say, "I will arise and go to my Father," until the Grace of God had put that resolve into the prodigal's heart! The centripetal force, the force which makes us seek the center, is not in us—ours is centrifugal force which drives us further and yet further away from the great center of all Light, Truth, peace and purity. When God draws us, we shall run after Him—but until He does so—we shall still remain afar off from Him. So the sending of an ambassador from God shows clearly that it is not man who seeks peace.

But then, on the other hand, it shows that God Himself is desirous of peace, yet not because it can make any difference to Him whether man is His enemy or not. It may make some difference to the candle if the moth flies into it. The moth will certainly be destroyed by the candle, yet the candle will still shine on, though its light may be in some measure diminished. But what difference can poor creatures such as we are make to God? The blasphemer curses God, yet the sun is just as bright as ever, the dewdrops of the morning are quite as sparkling as ever, the rivers still run on to the sea and the ocean remains the same as before! And as for God, Himself, His Glory continues undiminished and His holiness is untarnished. And though all men could be leagued together in one great conspiracy and should say concerning Jehovah and Christ, His Anointed, "Let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us," what will come of their evil confederacy? "He that sits

in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision." His Glory will be just as great even if they determine to be damned! If they will go down to Hell, His Justice will be honored, for they richly deserve their doom. There is no reason, except in God's Grace, why He should send man an embassy of peace! Generally in war, it is the less who sends to the greater to entreat for peace. It is seldom that the victorious, while still they bear their banners on high, suddenly pause amid the battle and send an embassy to say to the vanquished, "Let there be peace between us." The conquerors usually wait till the beaten ones know that they are beaten and sue for terms—and they count it gracious on their part to be willing, in the full expectation of yet further victories, to pause awhile to discuss terms of peace. When the commander-in-chief has half won the campaign and sees with absolute certainty that he could utterly destroy his enemy, he does not hurry to put back his sword into its scabbard! But God does—just as though He had been defeated, or as though He was the weaker of the two combatants, or as though it would be to His best interest, He stops in the midst of the battle and sends an ambassador of peace to man! And we, His servants, are sent forth as "ambassadors for Christ" because God desires to be at peace with men!

Why is this? Certainly not because He fears man, nor because He cannot do without man, nor because He cannot crush Him as an adversary—but simply because He is very tender, and full of pity and compassion. "As I live, says the Lord God," (and that is His own oath), "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live." He is a God who is terrible in His justice, but, "He delights in mercy." To bless men and make them happy is His continual joy—judgment is "His strange work." It is, as it were, His left-handed work—not that which He delights to do. Even when Justice compels Him to smite and to slay, He says but little about it and He usually does away with the very instruments that He has used for this purpose. Great armies and great nations have been raised up to be the scourges of God, but they have not been heard of afterwards, as though God were so loathe to smite that when He does so, He burns the rod directly—He has done with it, not caring to have it any longer in His sight! But when He comes to men in mercy, God is, as we say, "all there." He puts forth His Omnipotence in His works of love. He brings out His Omniscience, He employs all His attributes when He comes to bless men. Oh, yes! God delights in Grace and mercy, but He loves not wrath! And it is for that reason—because He is a God full of tenderness, compassion and pity—that He sends an embassy to men and makes His servants to be "ambassadors for Christ."

And then, mark you, this also shows us that, as God desires peace, peace is possible. Sin has made a very great breach between God and man. God has been insulted to His face and that not merely once, nor twice, but thousands and millions of times! The sin of men would, if it could, become a deicide and kill God, Himself! And this, indeed, it did when it slew the Son of God on Calvary! Every sinner is guilty of high treason against the majesty of Heaven, for he does, as far as he can, snatch from God's hand the scepter of Sovereignty and plucks

from His brow the crown of universal dominion! Sin is not a thing at which God can wink. We sometimes hear persons talk as though God could forgive sin without Christ's

Atonement and without exacting any penalty for it—but that cannot be. Everyone who rules over men, though it is but over a petty nation or a small parish, knows that if the law has no penalties attached to it, it ceases to have any power. It would be a dreadful thing to live in any State where there were no punishments for law-breakers. I read the other day that perhaps it would be better to live where everyone was subject even to tyrannical law than to live where there was no law. It would be truly terrible to live in any place where good and bad would fare precisely alike—where there would be no prison—where the thief and the murderer and the drunkard would be left alone—where all would be regarded as on an equal footing, let them do what they might! Laws must be respected and the breakers of them must be punished.

Now, if it is so in our imperfect civil communities, it must be much more so in God's government of the entire universe! It is not merely men with whom God has to deal, though they are to be counted by thousands of millions, but He has to deal with angels, good and bad. And we know not how many—perhaps innumerable races of beings—possibly very different from ourselves, yet like us in this respect, that they are under law and under God's government! It may be that every starry world teems with myriads of intelligent inhabitants—it is much more likely that it should be so than that it should not be so, seeing that God is not in the habit of creating anything in vain—and we can scarcely imagine that He has made all those mighty orbs to circle around His Throne without suitable inhabitants to render due homage to Him! It becomes incumbent, then, on God—I say this with the utmost reverence for His sacred Majesty, that as He is the Judge of the whole universe, He must do right. If one of our judges should say, "I never can pronounce a sentence of death upon a murderer—my heart is too tender for me to ever order the lash for the thief, or to send the wife-beater to prison." What would we say to him? Why, we would say, "Then, Sir, if your heart is so tender towards the bad, you are so cruel to the good that you must retire from the bench, for you are unfit to be a judge if you do not punish the guilty." We remember Abraham's question, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" We also read that "every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward." As long as God is God, He cannot trifle with sin! You may trifle with it if you will, O foolish Sinner, but it will be at your own imminent peril! But God, the Omnipotent King, the Maker and Judge of All, will not trifle with it. He must crush rebellion. He must punish iniquity!

"But," perhaps you say, "you started by telling us that there was hope of peace. But how can that be if the Law's sentence must be carried out?" I answer that this is the reason for our embassy—this is the great reason for which we are ambassadors for Christ—to say that, in Christ, God is able, without the violation of any demand of justice, to show the fullest mercy to sinners! Through the atoning Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, God's justice will suffer no

blot, no slur if you— coming to Him and confessing your iniquities and believing in His Son—shall be completely pardoned and accepted. Salvation by Substitution was the grand invention of Omniscience—that Christ should bear—

"That we might never bear His Father's righteous ire"—

that on His back should fall the stripes that were due to us—that in His heart should be sheathed the fiery sword that ought to have been sheathed in our hearts! It was most just that Christ should stand in our place. If I am asked how His Substitution for us is consistent with justice, I reply—the first sin, by which we were ruined, was not committed by us personally, but it was committed by Adam, our representative. It is therefore perfectly consistent with the highest justice that, as we fell representatively, we should be lifted up representatively! We died through Adam's sin—we live again through Christ's life and death! And every soul that believes in Jesus may know that Christ was punished in his place. Christ, as his Representative, bore his griefs and carried his sorrows. Christ was wounded for his transgressions and bruised for his iniquities—and now all the sins of every such person are blotted out and forever cease to be because Jesus Christ bore the full penalty for them! The Believer's debt is paid, so it cannot again be demanded of any soul for whom Jesus died!

These are the terms of peace, then, and this is the blessed Gospel of Peace—"To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and has committed unto us the word of reconciliation." This is the Gospel that we preach—that whoever believes in Jesus Christ is reconciled to God through the death of His Son. Peace is possible! O blessed news! Blessed are the people that know this joyful sound! Bright should be the eyes of those who see the feet of the messengers that bring the glad tidings of peace possible between man and God!—

"How beauteous are their feet

Who stand on Zion's hill!

Who bring salvation on their tongues, And words of peace reveal!"

Let me add to this the comforting assurance that peace has been effectually made already in tens of thousands of instances. There are many of us, now present, who are enjoying the peace that Christ has made on our behalf. Having looked, by faith, to His Sacrifice on Calvary, our sins have gone forever. Having rested where God has rested, even in Jesus, for Jesus is to God a Sacrifice of rest, we now feel perfect peace toward God! We are no longer His enemies, but love Him and desire to obey Him perfectly. And though we do still err and mourn a thousand imperfections, yet we can truly say that we do love Him and that we long to be like He is! Whatever He commands, we at least desire to do and by His Grace we are helped to do it. And whatever He forbids, we desire to abhor and to flee from it as from a poisonous serpent. Blessed be the name of God, we can speak to Him, now, without being afraid that He will destroy us, but saying, "Our Father, who are in Heaven, the Spirit of adoption in

our hearts makes us say unto You, 'Abba, Father, we love You and adore You. Oh, for Grace to love You more!'"

Thus much, then, upon the great mercy that is implied in the Apostle's declaration that we are "ambassadors for Christ."

II. Now, secondly, we have here A GREAT OFFICE MENTIONED—"We are ambassadors for Christ."

Why did God send ambassadors to men? He might have made peace without doing so, but He has chosen to put honor upon instrumentality and He has dealt with us as with reasonable beings. Further, why did God send men as His ambassadors? Would not angels have been better messengers? The probability is that an angel would have been quite unfit for such work as this. When a man, a sinful man who has, himself, been forgiven, talks to other sinners, he talks very tenderly and sympathetically—at least he ought to do so—and when he meets with any distressed souls, he recollects the time when he was in distress. And when he hears about their doubts and fears, he remembers his own. And when he mourns over their rebellions, he recollects what a rebel he used to be. And therefore he is gentle with them, and longs that, if possible, peace may be made between the rebel and his God. But if an angel had been Christ's ambassador, after he had preached most earnestly, you would always be able to make this excuse to him, "Ah, you cannot enter into our feelings, for you have never had our temptations and trials." As you went home, you would say to one another, "That was a grand oration that the angel gave us, but it did not help us much. It was all very well for him to talk as he did, but he has not a wife and children to provide for. He has no poverty to bear. He has not to feel the cold. He has not to suffer through being tempted, as we are, by evil passions and the like." Possibly, if an angel were to take my place here next Lord's-Day, there would be many of you who would be very pleased with the change. But I think by the time two or three Sabbaths had passed, you would want your old friend back again, because you would feel that there was, after all, a warmth of brotherhood within the human being's breast which you could never expect to find in cherubim or seraphim! When we, who once were enemies to God, tell you, who are still at enmity against Him, about our own rebellion and how it was ended by Divine Love, how the Lord melted us down by His Infinite Pity and abounding condescension—you will say to one another, "Let us also go to Jesus. Perhaps we shall find Him equally kind to us." You will be thus graciously drawn to the Savior by the example of another who was in a similar case to your own. And if we tell you what a loving Lord we have proved Him to be, how easy His yoke has been and how light His burden, perhaps some who are laboring and heavy laden, will say, "We also will accept His gracious invitation which says, 'Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden,' and He will give rest to us even as He has given it to these, His messengers." It was wise and kind, on God's part, to send men to be "ambassadors for Christ."

That word, "ambassadors," suggests to us a few reflections. First, every true minister of Christ is engaged upon royal business. He is doing business for the King of Kings, the great Lord of All! He does not come in his own name, nor in the name of any church nor in the name of any earthly potentate, but he comes in the name of Him who made Heaven and earth and who governs all things by the word of His power! I will, therefore, listen to him, even though he may be an illiterate man, for he is the servant of God. If it was really the Gospel of Jesus Christ that I heard, little would it matter to me whether the lips that uttered it spoke in such tones as the golden-mouthed Chrysostom used of old, or in plain and rugged language like that of Simon Peter. It was his Master who sent him and it was his Master's business to choose whom He would have as His ambassador! Therefore let me see the Master in the man and hear the Master's voice in the

Gospel which His servant preaches! And let me bless God both for the Gospel and for the man who preaches it. And let me pray that since he has royal business to do, he may have Grace to do it rightly.

For, as it is royal business, it is important business. I know there are some who fancy that to some of us who have preached so long, it is easy work to deliver a sermon. Martin Luther used to say that he never went into his pulpit without having his knees knocking together through fear, although he was a man of dauntless courage. And I can assure you that I never address you without feeling that it would be better for me to engage in breaking stones on the road, or in any job, however hard it might be, than to have to preach the Gospel because if I am unfaithful to the many souls committed to my charge, what must be my portion at the last? Whether you think so or not, to me it seems that every sermon involves me in most dire peril unless Divine Grace makes me faithful. I have not, like a banker, to deal with gold and silver, but with immortal souls which are far more precious! Not with the interests of a State, in which my mistake might be rectified by some abler statesman—but I am concerned about souls which, if once lost, are lost forever! Since God has warned His watchmen against unfaithfulness, He may require the blood of souls at our hands if we warn them not—and He will call us to account if we have kept back any Truth that He has taught us. Sometimes, when we speak faithfully concerning error, people ask, "What need is there of such preaching as that? What have you to do with other people's religion?" Why, some of us were sent into the world for this very purpose—that we might have to do with other people's religion! No man under Heaven shall be able to say that we knew that he was believing a lie and yet did not tell him that it was a lie! Not our business to interfere with others when we were sent here on purpose to interfere? If Christ's ambassador sees others attempting to keep up the war between his King and the rebellious subjects in His Kingdom, it is his business to speak sternly of those enemies of God and man, and to plead with all his soul with the offending subjects to be at peace with his great King and Lord! So, as "ambassadors for Christ," we have royal business and we have important business—

"'Tis not a cause of small import The pastor's care demands! But what might fill an angel's heart, And filled a Savior's hands."

And next, all ambassadors have to act in accordance with their commission. An ambassador must never go beyond his commission. His power comes from his king—he has no power of his own. And if a man who professes to be Christ's ambassador, puts on the airs of priestcraft and says that he has authority in himself—do not believe him! I have all necessary authority! I speak according to this blessed Book, but I have none at all if I wander from it. Regard not a single syllable that any man, or even an angel from Heaven may say to you if it is not according to Scripture! But when the humblest of us speak according to God's Word, woe be to those who reject the Truth! The Gospel has such majesty in it that it demands acceptance from all who hear it!

Again, an ambassador has no power to make terms with men on his own account. The "ambassadors for Christ" have simply to declare God's terms of peace. How pleased some people would be if we could alter this Truth of God just a little and take the corners off that one—if this Doctrine were not so strict and if that precept were not so severe! But what have we to do with that? I have often said, when I have preached what I believed to be the Truth and men have found fault with me for doing so, "the fault is none of mine." If I send my servant to the door with a message and she delivers the message, saying word for word what I told her to say—and if the man at the door should be angry with her because of the terms of the message, it would be most absurd and wrong! Let him be angry with her master who sent her with the message! And if I speak God's Word and you object to it, your objection should be against my Master, not against me. I have nothing to do and no minister under Heaven has anything to do—but to preach that which is here in this Book and to explain it in the simplest language possible—and to enforce it in the most earnest manner that he can! And as long as he does that, he speaks with authority. But if he gets away from that, his word is of no more account than the songs that men sing in the street—and he deserves to have no respect from any man!

Let it be remembered, too, that the ambassador will have to give an account of how he does his business and, therefore, it is that I appeal to my beloved friends, the members of the Church, that we may always have their prayers. We shall have to report to our Master how men treated our message and whether they would have peace or not. Sometimes, while preaching, I have felt as if I could imitate that Roman ambassador who met a certain king and told him that the Romans

forbade him to advance further. The king somewhat jested at the stern command of the Roman, but the ambassador stooped down and with his stick drew a ring in the dust round the king and said, "You must give your answer before you come out of that circle, for if you step over that line, the Romans will accept it as a signal of war." I have sometimes felt, when preaching to this great congregation, as if there were some who had to decide for God or

for the world before they stepped out of this place, for God's ambassador had, as it were, drawn a line all round them and said to them, "choose this day whom you will serve. If Jehovah is God, serve Him. Or if Baal is God, serve him." As we have gone to our home, we have prayed, "O Lord, we have again told the people Your message! We have not told it with the broken heart that we wanted to feel, but we have truly told it as far as the matter of it is concerned, though we have failed in the spirit of our telling it. Now, O Lord, make the people willing in the day of Your power, to accept the peace that Christ has made, for unless You work in them by Your gracious Spirit, we shall have to cry, 'Who has believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?' for they will reject the Savior, refuse His peace and remain Your enemies even to the end of their lives." The "ambassadors for Christ" must give to their King an account of how they have done their work. May we be able to do it with joy and not with grief!

So, then, you see that the ambassador needs to be careful at all points and he needs to be very faithful. If he should be unfaithful, surely it must be woe, woe, woe to him forever! The murderer of men used to be hung in chains as a terror to other evil-doers, but what shall be done to the man who is the murderer of souls by his unfaithfulness? As for anyone who buys "the cure of souls" in the market, so mercenary a beginning, so like to the proposal of Simon Magus, looks as though he who acted thus would prove to be like Simon, "in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." "Ambassadors for Christ" must start right with clean hands. There must be no bribing in order to get into the ambassadorial office. And they must go on right—no frowns must ever make them turn aside from the Truth of God and no smiles must ever make them soften their speech so as to please the ungodly! If there is any place where the thunderbolts of Divine Wrath fall most heavily, it must be the head and heart of the man whose ministry was an unfaithful one and who went down to Hell with the blood of souls upon his skirts! Brothers and Sisters in Christ, pray for us! Pray for us! PRAY FOR US who are called to be ambassadors for Christ!" The choice even of a hymn has often been the means of the conversion of a soul. A sympathetic expression in prayer has given great comfort to mourners. Our very look has sometimes carried conviction to a hearer, though we did not know the person at whom we were looking. And our mode of speech and even our pronunciation has, under God, had some gracious results when He has willed to make it so! Pray for us, then, that we may be always so guided and directed by God that peace may be made between Him and thousands of immortal souls through our instrumentality!

III. I will not detain you many minutes while I speak upon the last point which is A GREAT DUTY INVOLVED.

And, first, to all to whom the "ambassadors for Christ" may come, let me say, give us a hearing. "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ," so give us a hearing that we may deliver our message. Do not say, "We will not hear it." Shall we tell our great King that although He

sent us as messengers of peace, the reply of the rebels was, "We do not even want to hear what the King has to say?" Even if you object to us, do not object to our message! Is there something objectionable about ourselves? We are sorry if it is so. But a sensible man, when he knows himself to be in danger, will be glad to accept help even from one whom he does not in all things admire. If you find fault with our tones and censure our manners, and bespatter our persons, do give good heed to our message! When Caesar swam across the river, he held up his Commentaries, so that they should not be injured by getting wet. Surely, if we had to swim through a sea of persecution, we would hold up the Gospel and pray that it might not be carried down by the flood. Strike us if you will, but hear our message! Yes, "hear, and your soul shall live." If it really is a message from God, hear it! Perhaps some of you say that you do not believe that it is God's message—but suppose it is? God grant that you may never know, by sad experience, what will follow the rejection of God's Word of Reconciliation!

A gentleman from London one day met a poor countryman. It was a Sabbath and the person from London had come down for a holiday. When he met the countryman, thinking himself to be a very wise man, he said to him, "Well, Hodge, I suppose you have been taking a walk through the fields." "No, Sir," replied the man, "I don't waste my time on the Lord's-Day in that way. I have been worshipping Him and listening to His Word." "So you shut yourself up in a stuffy building for a couple of hours and listen to somebody talking all because you believe the Bible? Don't you know that it is a pack of nonsense? The learned men have proved that it is so and everyone who believes it is a fool." "Yes," said Hodge,

"very likely we are great fools. But yet, after all, we country people do know one or two things." "What do you know?" asked the gentleman. "Well, we know that it is a good thing to have two strings to your bow." "What do you mean, my good man?" "Well, I mean that I have got two strings to my bow. If this Book should not prove to be true, it has given me a deal of comfort and made me a better man than I was before I learned to value it. So that is one good thing. And if it should prove to be true, that is the second string to my bow—and what a blessed thing it will be to me that I have received it, and have enjoyed it! But look at you, Sir," he said, "you have not one string to your bow. If the Bible is not true, I am as well off as you are and I think I am happier, on the whole, than you are, whoever you may be. But if it should prove to be true, what will become of you, Sir?" That is the question that I should like to put to anyone who says that the Bible is not true. Suppose it should be true, Friend? What will become of you? We who know it is true ask you to listen to the Word.

The next thing is, embrace the message. It does seem to me to be a most blessed message that I have to bring to everyone here. It is this—

"There is life for a look at the Crucified One There is life at this moment for you."

Whoever trusts Jesus Christ is at once forgiven and accepted! The war is over and peace is proclaimed the moment that the soul repents of sin and believes in Jesus Christ. There cannot be a simpler, sweeter and safer Gospel than that! Dr. Watts truly wrote—

"Let everlasting glories crown
Your head, my Savior and my Lord!
Your hands have brought salvation down
And writ the blessings in Your Word!
What if we trace the globe around,
And search from Britain to Japan?
There shall be no religion found

So just to God, so safe for man!" So embrace the message, we pray you, as you love your souls, and would not destroy yourselves! Accept the peace which the Gospel brings to you!

And then, lastly, I say again to you who have embraced it, and who rejoice in it, pray for us, pray for us. I mean not for me, only, but for all who preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, or who teach it in any shape or form. I sometimes think that if all our friends knew our many anxieties, cares, and heartbreaks, they would never forget to pray for us. I thank God that many of you do remember us in your prayers, but there are some, perhaps, who forget that we are always in need of prayer—and if there is one person in this world who needs your prayers beyond all others, I am sure that I am that one! Think of the thousands of souls that gather here from Sabbath to Sabbath, drinking in every syllable that falls from our lips. Have you ever calculated how many thousands of persons pass through this place in one year? And then, week by week, the printed sermon goes over nearly the whole earth, not only in the English language, but in the language of all civilized men, almost without exception, so that no man knows where he may not find the sermon that was preached here. We constantly have information from persons who, for instance, have been lying dying of the yellow fever in the hospitals of Havana, or have been in Rio Janeiro, or in Australia, or have wandered into the vast prairies and have come across a log cabin and have found there that same word that was preached here within a short space of time after it dropped from our lips! Pray for us that all this may not be in vain!

And then, Beloved, this Church has sent out hundreds of ministers who are now located in all parts of the world and, almost without exception, preaching that same Gospel that we have declared unto you! Think, also, of the thousands of members in this Church—some very good people and some very strange ones—many sick, some dying, and always some needing counsel, or warning, or exhortation that requires all our wit and wisdom—and a great deal more to say the right word at the right time! Then there is that which comes upon us daily—the care of scores and hundreds of churches which, if they have any trouble, resort to us and bring their burdens to one who is burdened enough already! We are wretched to the last degree if we have not your prayers! But if you pray for us, nothing can stagger us!

If you uphold us by your prayers, God will make us strong! But if you leave us, we shall be weakness itself. Pray for us, for "we are ambassadors for Christ."

There are strangers here to whom this part of my discourse may seem egotistic. I cannot help its seeming so to you! But I am speaking to my own friends here about what they know, but of which they sometimes need to be reminded. And if they will pray for me as the result of it, I shall not feel very much troubled in my conscience for having seemed to be egotistic to those who do not know. After all, our reliance is not even upon the prayers of the saints. God is our Helper, and we have done His work in reliance upon His Grace, but we shall be unfaithful tomorrow unless He shall guide and teach and uphold us. Therefore, again we say, Brethren, pray for us! By the love you bear to Christ, pray for us! Amen