

The Light of the World

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"Then spoke Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." [John 8:12](#).

OUR Lord did not speak in this way at the beginning of His ministry. He did not thus bear witness to Himself, saying, "I am the light of the world." But it was befitting on this occasion, when the people before Him had already received sufficient evidence from other quarters. John the Baptist, whom all men counted for a Prophet, had testified that Christ was the true Light of God which lights every man that comes into the world. The witness of John they rejected—startling, if not conclusive, as it must have been—considering the esteem in which his oracular voice was held. Moreover, Jesus, Himself, had worked conviction in their hearts by His teaching. Had they not listened to His famous Sermon on the Mount? Could they not feel the authority with which He spoke? Did they not confess to the impressions He produced on them? The weight and the wisdom of His discourse manifested a power that could melt their thoughts into the very mold of His ministry. Nor was it merely His teaching, transparent though that was, but the signs He showed and the miracles He worked with the majesty of His voice and the virtue of His touch proclaimed that He was the Light of the world! Thus the infirmities of the creature called forth His Divine compassion. With radiant eyes of pity He looked on the wretched and gave them quick relief—He shone on their sadness like the Sun of Righteousness, with healing in His beams. They hailed His visit in every town and village as the Healer of all who were diseased. Might not the quick sense of every unprejudiced spectator detect in Him the Messiah and welcome His advent to the worlds? At length, as though aggrieved by their unbelief, He speaks loudly and proclaims plainly, "I am the light of the world." Such high ground does He take before His adversaries. Well might He say it to their teeth. Hardly an hour before He had flashed that Light into their eyes and blinded them with its brilliance! They had stood before Him, with the unhappy woman whom they sought to make the instrument of entangling Him, and soon they had sneaked out of His Presence conscience-stricken, when He said, "He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone at her." One ray of His Omniscience had lighted up the secret chambers of their memory and exposed, at least to themselves, the righteous Law they had broken, and the crimes they had to answer for. He who could thus convince them, is able to convince the world of sin! He who lit up the deepest recesses of the heart is the Light of the world! So Jesus here boldly and openly avowed the truth concerning Himself when He said, "I am the light of the world."

Let our meditation now be directed to our Lord Jesus Christ as the Light of the world—the true Light—the guiding Light—and the universal Light!

I. JESUS IS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

That Jesus is the Light—the Light of the world—is to be seen in all parts of His blessed history. Look at Him in His cradle. Shines there a star above the house wherein the young Child sleeps? Brighter far than yonder star is He, who lies cradled in the manger! He has come, the predictions of whose Advent had illumined centuries of darkness! As a Baby, devout men hail Him, "A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of His people Israel." To the eye of faith, what radiance emanates from the new-born Baby! Look, for the like was never looked on before! There God is veiled in human flesh. Behold the mystery of the Incarnation! God is manifest in our nature! He dwells among us. The Light is clear and dazzling.

Well might the angels have, sung, "Glory to God in the highest; on earth peace, goodwill towards men." Sweet Baby! You have pierced the thick darkness of earth's sorrow! You have enlightened her scenes of sadness, infusing joy into

her gloom! Your coming revealed the love of God, His sweet compassion and His tender pity towards the guilty sons of men. With growing years, while His increasing wisdom kept pace with His increasing stature, He shone, exhibiting a Child's delight in the two tables of the Law. His first concern being to do His heavenly Father's business and His constant habit being to submit Himself and to honor His earthly parent. Not rashly or recklessly did He begin to teach. His Baptism throws a wonderful light upon consecration to God—and the dire temptations that quickly followed, in all of which He foiled the tempter—have thrown a brilliant light on the pathway of Christian ministers! As a Preacher, He was luminous. He expounded the spirituality of the Law of God. Light penetrated the precept through and through as He made the very essence of purity apparent! His Light cleared the Law of the mists and fogs that the Rabbinical writers had gathered around it. He shed Light, too, upon the Covenant of Grace. He promulgated the Gospel of peace among the sons of men. He told of God the Father, willing to receive His prodigal children back again into His bosom. His parables threw wondrous Light upon the dispensation of the Kingdom of Heaven. His counsels and His cautions brought the final destinies of the righteous and the wicked into full view. Eternity dawned on His hearers while He spoke. His own life exhibited the power of love, the value of sympathy and the virtue of forgiving injuries. His death gave yet more palpable evidence of unflinching submission to the will of God—and unflinching self-sacrifice for the welfare of men!

Oh, Beloved, the Light of Christ comes out brightest upon the Cross! Someone called it the Lighthouse of this world's sea. So it is. This is the Lighthouse that throws its beams across the dark waters of human guilt and misery, warns men of the rocks, and guides them to the haven. A Savior! God in human flesh! He whom the Seers predicted—"A king shall reign in righteousness," appears as the Divine symbol represented Him—"a Lamb slain."

Behold Him shedding His precious blood to atone for the sins of men! Never did such Light shine on the Law and the Prophets! Never did such Light gleam on the faith and hope of pure hearts! Never did such Light irradiate the repentance and conversion by which sinners are retrieved! Behold the Sun as He comes forth from His chamber and rejoices to finish His course! He before whose eyes Jesus Christ has been evidently set forth crucified, has seen a Light which outshines all earthly splendor! The sin and the sorrow, the shame and the sentence, all vanish when we see the Redeemer die for us! And if from the gloom of His death so much comfort can be extracted, what shall we say when He rose again from the dead? His dark sepulcher reflects Glory now that He has arisen from the dead! The shroud, the mattock, and the grave are shorn of their terrors—

"No more a morgue, to fence
The relics of lost innocence,
A vault of ruin and decay—
The imprisoning stone is rolled away."

Into the sepulcher you can peer now that Christ has broken down the door and torn away the veil. Through it you can look. For those that follow Christ, it is a passage into everlasting life! He has brought life and immortality to light. Since He has risen from the tomb and left the dead, the Light of God, clear and transparent, shines on the exodus of the soul from earth! On, onward still, track His path as in His ascension He goes flaming up the skies! There, there is a road of Light that shows us the way to God! He enters Heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. There, as our Representative, He sheds the Light of comfort down upon us. There He waits—and while He waits—He wills that where He is, there should His people be! Oh, happy thought, today, my Brothers and Sisters! Among the sons of men, Christ is still the Light. He has sent the Holy Spirit to be His Representative here on earth. He testifies of Christ. The Divine Paraclete occupies the place of our departed Teacher. The Church, inspired by the blessed Spirit, with ten thousand tongues, proclaims the Gospel of salvation. "You are the light of the world," said Jesus. In His people, Christ still shines forth with even a brighter light than in the days of His earthly sojourn! He has ten thousand reflectors, instead of twelve. Ten thousand times ten thousand tongues proclaim His Gospel and ten thousand times ten thousand hearts burn and blaze with the Light of the Divine Word! Christ is the Light of the world! From His cradle to His Throne, and onward till He comes in full splendor at the Second Advent, the Lamb is the Light of God that illuminates this dark earth! "Then spoke Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world."

II. JESUS IS THE TRUE LIGHT.

There are other lights. Before His Coming there had been some typical light. Do you not remember that a golden lamp stood in the Holy Place, with its seven branches? It was

an admirable piece of sacred furniture, and highly instructive—but Jesus seems to put it away. In fact, it had been already put away. He had come to put an end to its meaning by fulfilling its intent. "This was not the Light of God—it was only the type of the Light. "I am the true light," He says. Even that light which flamed across the desert way when Moses led the host of God through the wilderness was but a typical light. The veritable Pillar of Cloud and Fire is Jesus, who leads the whole host of God's elect through this weary wilderness to the Canaan of the blessed!

Jesus Christ was the true Light in opposition to the smoking flax of tradition. Listen to those Rabbis! They think themselves the light of the world! Their sophism is an endless strife of words—their research is not worth your study—their knowledge is not worth the knowing! They can tell you exactly which is the middle verse of the Bible and which is the middle letter of the middle word! They discussed their paradoxes till they became addle-headed! They refined on their subtleties till doctrine dwindled down into doubt, simple Truth was degraded into silly twaddle, their translations of Scripture were a travesty and their commentaries an outrage upon commonsense! But Christ, the true, the heavenly Light of God, extinguishes all your earthly luminaries! The Jewish Rabbi, the Greek philosopher, the ecclesiastical father, and the modern theological thinker are meteors that dissolve into mist! They make void the Word of God through their traditions or their conjectures. Flee away from the nebulous forms and noxious fumes of their old traditions and new discoveries! Believe what Jesus said, His Apostles taught, and what you have had revealed to you in His own pure Word! Christ is the true Light of God!

In opposition to the glare of priestcraft, with which so many in all ages have been enamored, Christ is the Light of the world! There is some reason to suppose that this declaration of our Lord bore allusion to a custom observed among the Jews at that time in connection with the Feast of Tabernacles. Maimonides says that on the previous evening two enormous candelabra—golden lamps—of a vast size were set up in the court of the women in the open air, and that these flamed with such a brilliant light that they appeared to illuminate the whole city of Jerusalem. And the women came with a torchlight procession and stood around these flaming candelabra, and there executed a sort of sacred dance and solemn pageant. This was done, not on the authority of Moses, but on the authority of tradition—to keep the people in mind of the cloudy and fiery pillar of the wilderness! The Feast of Tabernacles, you know, was designed as a memorial of the 40 years that the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness, dwelling in tents. But this particular rite was of their own invention—a supplementary observance intended to remind the people of the fiery pillar that illumined the camp in those days of yore. Now it is supposed, not, I think, without good reason, that it was on the morning after this celebration that Jesus stood in the court. The lamps were gone out, but the golden columns that the night before had flamed, still remained in their places—the remnant of a spectacle—the lamps minus the light. Just then the sun was rising

in its own peerless splendor. The scene they beheld gave force to the sentence He uttered. The contrast between the lamps which the priests had lit—a fit emblem of superstition—were all going out, perhaps with a noxious smell, while the mighty orb of day was rising when Jesus said, "I am the light of the world; He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness." Whether the scene and the circumstances were as has been so well imagined, or not, the truth is fitly illustrated by the similitude. When every lamp that ever man has kindled, and fed with the oil of superstition, shall have died out, as they must expire, our Lord Jesus Christ shall, like the morning sun, make glad the sons of men! Away you go, you bright meteors of the night, around which the children of superstition execute their maddened dance of implicit belief! Away you go! Already you begin to go out! I see how you all flicker, even now. The day comes on apace in which the blast of God's eternal Spirit shall blow you out in everlasting night. But Jesus shines! He is the true Light of God and will shine on forever! "I live in the twilight of Christianity," said Voltaire, and he unwittingly spoke a truth. He thought that it was the twilight of the evening, but it was the twilight of the morning, for Jesus still shines brighter and brighter—the true Light of God before which the lamps of superstition and priestcraft must pale their ineffectual fires! This is what the Savior meant—He was the true Light.

Very different, too, is the Light of Christ from the sparks which are to be seen all the world over. Every now and then a scientific gentleman picks up a flint arrowhead and he strikes a wonderful light with it. And he that has his tinder-box ready and a brimstone match may soon think he has got the true light—till another philosopher comes and, with the lid of the aforesaid tinderbox, puts out that light! This is the cardinal virtue of philosophers—they extinguish one another! Their fine spun theories do not often survive the fleeting generation that admires them! A fresh race starts fresh theories of unbelief, which live their day, like ephemera, and then expire. Not so the Light of Christ! It burns on and beams forever! We have friends who have been dazed by the light of "public opinion"—a very bright light is that. And

we have known some decent scholars who have been enraptured with "the light of the 19th Century"—a wonderful luminary, indeed, but slightly darkened by the follies, frauds and crimes which every day's newspaper reveals! We have had the light of knowledge which lauded Aristotle, and made the heathen author supply a textbook for Christian colleges! We have heard more than enough of the light of the Church in which we can discern nothing but colors and conceits, borrowed from the medieval darkness of Christendom. But we have the trustworthy and the true when we hear Him exclaim, "I am the light." Where else shall light be found? Where shall the bewildered sons of men find a reliable guide? In the teaching of the Person, the Life, the Death, the Sacrifice of the Christ of Nazareth, we have the Light of God self-evidential, palpable by its own brilliance! Guiding Light is here, alike, clearly visible. This to follow is not fallacious. "I am the light of the world; He that follows Me shall

not walk in darkness." Thus, then, is He a Light that is to be followed! Do any of you want to enjoy the light that streams from Christ? Be assured you cannot realize it by reading about it—you must follow it! If a man could travel so fast as always to follow the sun, of course he would always be in the light. If the day should ever come when the speed of the railway shall be equal to the speed of the world's motion, then a man may so live as to never lose the light. Now he that follows Christ shall never walk in darkness! To follow Him means to commit yourselves to Him, to believe Him and yield yourselves up—obediently doing what He bids—and implicitly accepting what He says. You must have no other Master. Say not, "I will be taught by Calvin," or, "by Luther," or, "by Wesley," or, "by someone else." Jesus Christ, only, must be your Light! His Word, by the testimony of His Spirit, must be your sole authority!

III. JESUS IS THE GUIDING LIGHT FOR THE SOUL. For the soul that pants after God. Do you say, with Philip, "show us the Father, and it suffices us"? Jesus says, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man comes unto the Father but by Me." Christ is the guiding light through the multitude of authors. If you want to thread your way among them, let the early Fathers, the sturdy Reformers, the rigid Puritans and the modern Evangelists be your companions, if it so please you. But let Him be your Guide and His counsel your stay till you reach the gates of Glory. Amidst the conflict of opinions, His sure Word will prove your safe chart! He is the guiding Light through sickness and suffering—trust Him, and He will make your bed in your sickness—He will bring lasting benefits out of your most lamentable afflictions. He is the guiding Light through death's dark vale. In those gloomy shades you need fear no ill if you keep close to Him—

"Sun of my Soul, You Savior dear, It is not night if You are near." Christ has said, "He that follows Me shall not walk in darkness"—so the terror of night flies at His Presence! The atoning blood shall speak peace to you. Ignorance shall vanish before the brightness He manifests. Christ shall teach you. Despair shall dissolve before the sweet beams of hope. Even doubt, with all the indecision that comes of it, melts at the sound of His animating voice, "This is the way; walk you in it." Thrice happy the man who commits himself to Jesus! He shall always have the Light of God and shall never walk in darkness!

IV. JESUS IS THE UNIVERSAL LIGHT.

He says, "I am the light of the world." He does not merely say, "I am the light of the Jews," or, "I am the light of the Gentiles." He is both. He is the Light of all mankind! There is no clear light in which any man can discern God, or rightly understand himself, perceive the bitterness of sin, or apprehend the destiny and the doom of Heaven and Hell, but what flows through Jesus Christ! I do not doubt that among the various religious professions spread over the world—in many of which Christianity is much debased—there are devout persons who enjoy a share of communion with God and a sense of pardoned sin, though the tone of their thoughts, like the tongue of their utterances, widely differs from our

own—but it is all through one common Lord, our Savior, Jesus Christ, they find acceptance! When I get hold of a book that teaches erroneous things, yet if there is a savor of Jesus Christ in it, I censure the faults without condemning the author. Never let my strong criticisms be mistaken for anathemas. I sometimes perceive that the man who wrote it has evidently found salvation because he has laid hold of our Lord Jesus Christ. He that follows Him is on the right tack. Though he may err in a thousand minor considerations, by following Christ in the main thing, he is safe. Learn of Him and obey Him in all things—then shall you be blessed, yourself, and useful to others! Happy the man who has seen this Light and walks in this Light of Christ, for "this is the light that lights every man that comes into the world!" There is a little Light in Mohammedanism. Indeed, considering the age in which Mohammed lived, he had a great deal of Light—the religion of the Koran is immeasurably superior to the religions of the age in which the prophet flourished. He even

taught the Unity of the Godhead most clearly. Yet the light in the Koran is borrowed from the Old and New Testament. It is borrowed light. The intelligence is pilfered. The light of the Parsee, the light of Zoroaster, the light of Confucius came originally from the sacred books of the Jews. From one source they must have all come, for all light comes from the great Father of Lights. Wherever you alight upon any truth in strange places about man's state and condition, or about God and the way to safety, you may rest assured that the light, if tracked to its dawn, would lead you up to Jesus Christ—for all the true Light comes from Him.

Christ is the Light of the world, destined to shed His beams over the whole earth. The day comes when all mankind will see this Light. How often I have been told of late that the world is all going to rack and ruin, and that all that we ought to do is to try and man a lifeboat and save a few strugglers, hastening ourselves to leave the wreck before she breaks up! Well now, I am not so desponding as that. I am of opinion that, by God's good Grace, we shall tug the old vessel off the rocks, and that the kingdoms of this world will become the Kingdoms of our God and of His Christ, for the Lord has sworn that all flesh shall see the salvation of God! I cannot believe that this dispensation will be wound up as a tremendous failure, that the Gospel zealously preached everywhere shall result in only a few being saved, and that the whole economy shall go out in darkness as the snuff of a candle is extinguished. No, I look for better things! They who dwell in the wilderness shall bow before Him and His enemies shall lick the dust. The isles shall bring Him tribute. Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts, yes, all kings shall fall down before Him. I cannot help believing that the Gospel is yet to be triumphant. I look for the coming of Christ. Let Him come when He may, our hearts will leap for joy to greet Him! But for this dispensation to end without success would almost seem to me like thwarting the purposes of God. It is not His way in the world. He has deliberately entered into battle with Satan, choosing poor feeble instruments like ourselves to confound the forces confronted against Him! And if He should withdraw His troops from

the field, or come, Himself, to the front and take up the fight single-handed which His chosen legions could not conduct, it would look as if He had not wisely foreseen the engagement, or had needed to alter His plans to compass His ends! His Spirit can inspire inveterate feebleness with irresistible force. He can use means without miracles, or He can work wonders without wantonness. His first act foretold auspiciously. The twelve Apostles, like a little compact square of grenadiers to fight against the foe, is no ill omen! It surely does not mean that the battle shall not end till the enemy has turned his back and fled! Moreover, He keeps on sending fresh battalions. He raises up new traps and, every now and then, when the battle seems to waver, He recruits the ranks and sends out new enlistments, strengthening the ranks that are thinned and harassing the enemy with His reserves. Courage, my Brothers and Sisters! There shall be revival after revival! There shall be reformation after reformation, shock of battle after shock of battle, and the dread artillery of God's great Gospel shall be fired off against the hosts of Hell! The gods of the heathen shall fall. Antichrist shall be overthrown! Babylon shall sink, like a millstone, in the flood. The crescent of Mohamed must wane into eternal darkness! Israel shall behold her King, and the fullness of the Gentiles shall be gathered at His feet. So let our faith excite our courage, our courage stimulate our patience and our patience give zest to the full assurance of hope while we worship our Lord Jesus Christ as the Light of the world!

Thus have I carried out my design of amplifying on the four points that I propounded to you at the outset. Let me wind up with a personal question—Since Christ is the Light of the world, I would ask—

V. HOW ARE WE ACTING TOWARDS HIM?

Do any of us shun the Light? I know some men slight the privileges they ought to prize. They do not want to know Him whose going forth is as the light of the morning when the sun rises. They never read the Bible, or search into the history, the prophecy and the promises. They do not like an earnest ministry. They have a sort of happy-go-lucky style of religion—they take in whatever anybody else tells them—they attend their place of worship as a matter of habit, and observe all the proprieties of fashion. But as to doing right or seeking the Light of God, they seldom or never give it a thought! They do not count it desirable. Too much of the Light of God could expose much that would not bear inspection. Dear Friend, if you are afraid of the Light of God, be suspicious of yourself, for it is deceit that dreads detection! Who are the people who like darkness rather than light? If it were put to a meeting of the inhabitants of London, who would vote for putting out the gas at night? Well, I guarantee you, every burglar would! Every murderer would—and there are certain libertines who would rather like it. Every man that does evil hates the light! I do not mean to compare you with those gentlemen. Still, the saying is very comprehensive, "He that does evil hates the light, neither comes to the light lest his deeds should be reprov'd." Of course, when some men sneer, we can appreciate their sensitiveness. The Doc-

trine of Christ does not suit the dissolute. Lax living never does lead up to an admiration of pure piety. What a price the profligate have to pay for their pleasures! Are you, my Friend, conscious of anything you need to conceal? Look closely at it. Recollect that you will have to look at it in that Great Day when the secrets of all hearts will be exposed. When Jesus comes "to judge the world with righteousness and His people with equity," from the light of justice, from the heat of judgment, nothing whatever shall be hid! Be wise, therefore, to repent now of the evil, lest calamity reach you when there is none to commiserate.

Do I see a curl of the lip, a shrug of the shoulder, a cynical expression of the countenance, as someone asks, "Are we really, then, to regard the Christ you speak of, the Atonement you preach, the resurrection you are so confident about, as the Light of the present age, the Light of other ages—in fact, the Light of the world?" You put it well, my Friend, and you look well as you ask the question. It occurs to me that I might meet you in altered circumstances, when your tone would be altered likewise. Flesh is frail. Your eyes will not be always full of luster. Your spirits will not be always blithe and gay. Your health will not be always strong and vigorous. Not yet have you felt your need of the Light of God which has irradiated past ages, can enlighten this age and will shine with undiminished Glory in the everlasting age! Proud man, are you a philosopher or a politician? Are you a man of science, or a mere pretender? Know this, that in darkness you did enter this world—years passed before you dreamed that life had a purpose and in darkness, still denser—you must make your exit, if, pleased with a fancy or enamored of a fallacy, you fail to see the Light that makes time and eternity resplendent! When we preach the Gospel purely and simply, we seem to be challenging the question on the part of some of you. To what purpose? The Light of God we propound, you do not need! How can I answer you? No arguments of mine will avail while you are blind to the perils you must meet with in traversing those unknown paths and untried experiences that lie before you! And as to the objections that any of you raise, let the man that takes objection to God's counsel and spurns His kindness, answer for the rashness he will have to rue!

Petty scruples! Paltry excuses! They betray your insincerity! It is absurd to trifle when the outlook might well make you tremble to plead for yourselves. You will not put your cause in the hands of the Counselor. Hence the gloom that comes of your doubts! Hence the wretchedness of a sinner's reflections on the Grace of his Redeemer! Do you quibble at the Light of God? Do you know the reason why? Well, I think it is for very much the same reason that made the Brahmin break the microscope. He thought it wicked to destroy life of any kind. He would not eat meat, or feed upon flesh, fish, or fowl, for anybody who destroyed life would destroy his own soul. "Well," said a missionary, "but you must do violence to your own conscience every time you drink, for the water you swallow teems with animalcule—living, moving creatures." Then he showed him a drop of water magnified by a microscope. The evidence was clear, but instead of yielding to conviction, the Brahmin was enraged

at the instrument which worked the discovery, so he broke the microscope! In like manner, men despise and attempt to disprove the Gospel because it reveals Truths of God that are unwelcome. It explodes their traditions! It disparages their opinions, it debases their cherished tastes and so it destroys their peace of mind! It will not let them live comfortably in sin. The love of sin and superstition, a zeal for your clan and your craft, animate your opposition to malevolence and madness! I think I hear somebody say, "I wish I could see it." Well, dear Friend, I wish I could credit your candor. The Light of God that streams from Christ is visible, but not to eyes that are shut! Not to hearts that are hardened! Not to consciences that are seared! "Open your eyes—it is all you have to do." Look, Sinner—look and live! All around you is the Light of everlasting Love. Do but open those poor eyes of yours that unbelief has kept closed so long! O Lord, open the sinner's eyes that he may now see! The Light of God is all around you, Brother! The Light is all around you, Sister! Others see it and rejoice. Only let your eyes be opened, and you shall hail the glorious orb which makes manifest all that is obscure and awful to your present apprehension!

Have you seen the Light? Is there one who says? "Well, thank God, I have seen that Light"? Then, dear Brother, dear Sister, be grateful and give thanks! We are, none of us, as thankful as we ought to be for the Light that shines in the face of Jesus Christ. There was a custom on the Alps in the olden time, which, I fear, has dropped into disuse. Someone was appointed to stand upon the topmost Alp with a great cow horn, and as soon as he beheld the rising of the sun, with a loud blast he gave notice. From peak to peak of the Alps might then be heard, in those good old days, a Psalm of praise! Oh, you happy souls that have beheld the rising of the Sun of Righteousness, tell it forth with trumpet tongue! Well may a thousand voices take up His praise! Blessed be the name of Jesus! Forever be His name adored! Magnify His Grace for the Light that shines, for the goodness it diffuses—for the joy, the abounding joy, it awakens on every side!

And now, Brothers and Sisters, let gratitude and benevolence prompt your zeal to spread the Light, to reflect it all around, near and far! I am very anxious that all the members of this Church should endeavor to disseminate the Light of the knowledge of Christ which has shone in their own hearts. I pray you, Brothers and Sisters, do not get cold, formal, or indifferent. The Truth of God you have believed through Grace is a precious trust committed to your charge. You have been a praying people, and you are still so—blessed be God's name. Do not forsake the Prayer Meetings—frequent them regularly and conspire together to make them still more full of life and energy. I have been known to say with honest gratitude that most, if not all, the members in fellowship with us were actually engaged in some work for Jesus. Is it so now? Are you all interested and occupied in telling and teaching the good news and the great lessons of the Gospel? We have no notion of leaving to pastors the whole work of the Christian ministry in which every faithful disciple should take earnest part. One man, alone, perhaps, may preach to such a throng as this, but if we are to have preaching

everywhere, you must all preach by word and deed to circulate the heavenly wisdom in every sphere of earthly resort!

Oh, my Sisters and my Brothers, the best of all preaching, because the most simple and unostentatious, is to be found in the ordinary communion you hold with your fellow creatures when, with a good conversation, you avail yourselves of all the occurrences and opportunities of daily life! In your families the sweetness of your temper, the gentleness of your manners and the purity of your actions should bear witness that you have been with Jesus and learned of Him. The integrity of your business habits should speak for the sanctity of your morals and commend the school in which you have been trained. Your character must be clear, or the utterance of your lips will be despised. Then an outspoken testimony will take hold of men's hearts. Tell your children, your brothers, your sisters, and your intimate friends the way to Jesus! Tell the strangers who sit by your side, if you can, something of your own sweet experience of the Light of God that there is in Jesus! God has recently taken away some of our best workers, as you know. Oh, Brothers and Sisters, make up for the loss of one of the best of men, long known as a deacon and Elder in our midst, who is now laid aside—his health departed, his strength prostrate. Oh, Sisters, try to make up by double energy for the loss of that good Sister who was a mother among you all! Oh, let us all see to it that there are no gaps in the ranks of Christ's army which are not quickly filled up with fresh recruits! If there should happen to be a vacancy, and the man has fallen who stood next to me, I will try, by God's strength, to fight with both hands at this time till some other shall step up to take his place. Since Christ is our Light and He has ordained us to be lights in the world, let us shine to the utmost of our capacity until the Master shall take us to dwell with Him in the Light of God forever! Amen.