

# ALL THE PEOPLE AT WORK FOR JESUS

## NO. 1358

A SERMON  
DELIVERED ON WEDNESDAY MORNING, MAY 9, 1877  
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[On Behalf of the London Missionary Society]

I HAVE taken two texts from two successive chapters of the book of Joshua. The first is from Joshua the seventh, at the third verse. The spies who were sent to Ai returned to Joshua, and said to him, “*Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai.*” This policy led to a disastrous defeat, and our other text gives us the Lord’s command concerning the new attack.

You will find it in the eighth of Joshua and the first verse, “*The LORD said unto Joshua, Fear not, neither be thou dismayed: take all the people of war with thee, and arise, go up to Ai: see, I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land.*”

The two texts may be condensed into—first, *the advice of the spies*, to employ only a part of the people in the assault upon Ai, “*Let not all the people go up.*” And secondly, *the command of God*, to let every fighting man go forth to the war, “*Take all the people of war with thee.*”

Brethren, like Israel, we are called to war, and we have a greater than Joshua at our head, in whose name we conquer. There is an inheritance which as yet has been held by the adversary, and in the name of God we have to drive him out.

We are likely to experience difficulties very similar to those which were met with by the tribes. And I doubt not that their history (is it not written for our learning?) will prove exceedingly interesting to us, if we have a mind to consider it. We shall meet with the same defeats as they did if we fall into the same sins, and we shall win like victories if we are obedient to the commands which God has given us, which are very similar to those addressed to Israel of old.

As in a glass we see ourselves in the twelve tribes, from the first day even until now, and in the texts before us there is a lesson for us, which may God, by His grace, enable us to learn. I pray the Holy Spirit to illuminate our minds while we read in the book of the wars of the Lord, and as soldiers of Christ learn from warriors of old time.

**I.** Let us consider THE ADVICE OF THE SPIES which led to such a shameful defeat.

And here we shall have to deal with *the error of supposing that only a part of the church will be sufficient to perform the work of the whole*—that a large proportion may be idle, and that the rest will be quite enough to fight the Lord’s battles. I feel it to be an error which, though not perhaps theoretically held by any of us, is practically to be seen abroad in our churches, and needs to be met and put to an end.

In Joshua’s day *this error sprang up among the Israelites because, on account of their sins, God was displeased with them.* The commencement of the chapter tells us that the Lord God was wroth because the children of Israel had committed a trespass in the accursed thing. For the sin of Achan, the anger of the Lord was kindled against the people. That was the real reason of their defeat before Ai.

But out of that secret cause grew the more manifest source of defeat—which was, that because God was displeased with them, they were left to themselves, and hence they adopted a fatal policy. When God is in the midst of a church, He guides its counsels, and directs the hearts of men to go about His work in the wisest manner.

Is it not an old saying that, “Whom the gods wish to destroy they first make mad”? And is not the heathen proverb the shadow of the fact that men become foolish when they have broken the commands of God, and thus they are chastened for one fault by being permitted to fall into another? Even upon the Lord’s own people a measure of judicial blindness may come.

You may depend upon it that when it becomes a doctrine that only special classes of men are to be expected to work in the church, there is some great wrong in the background. In that church which most of all has fallen into this fallacy, and has drawn the sharpest line between those called the clergy and the poor unfortunate laymen, who perchance may do *something* for God, but who cannot be expected, or indeed allowed to do anything in particular—in that church, I say, the deadliest errors have found a home.

We, too, may take it for granted that when we begin to leave Christian work to be performed by a minister, or the visitation of the poor to be solely done by a paid missionary, we have some Achan in the camp, with a goodly Babylonian garment hidden in his tent. There must be an accursed thing somewhere or other which has caused us to be left to so gross a folly.

Either worldliness, or lukewarmness, or love of ease, or deep declension of heart must lie at the root of this slovenly and sluggish policy. It is not God's mind that it should be so, and He has evidently left us to ourselves when this fatal method is adopted.

When the Holy Ghost rests upon the church, this folly is practically avoided, nay, it is not even thought of. God grant to the churches represented here today that they may walk in such soundness of doctrine, and have such spirituality of life that they may be full of the divine presence, and never dream for a moment of sending only a portion of their members out to war, and leave the rest to sit still!

We cannot leave the battles of our Lord to be fought by mercenary troops. The whole army of men made willing in the day of the Lord's power must go out under the command of our divine Joshua to meet the foe.

Furthermore, *this evil policy arose out of presumption engendered by success*. But a little while ago all Israel had marched around Jericho for seven days, and on the seventh day, when they shouted, the city walls fell flat to the ground.

Perhaps they began to say, "Did those massive walls fall when we compassed them about? O Israel, you are a great nation! And did they fall with nothing but a shout? Then the Hittite and the Hivite, and every other enemy shall flee before us like chaff before the wind! What need can there be to carry all our baggage up the hill to Ai? What need to march so many men? Two or three thousand will be quite sufficient to carry that small city by storm. We can do wonders, and therefore we need not put forth all our strength!"

Brethren, many dangers surround success. It is not much of it that any of us can bear. The full sail needs much ballast lest the boat be overset. When in this or any other part of the world the church sees many converts as the fruit of her labors, when there are great gatherings, and a good deal of shouting, great interest excited, and multitudinous conversions, it is very natural to calculate that the work has been easily done, and needs no very severe or general effort.

The idea is fostered that there is no need now for continued house-to-house visitation, no need for more missionaries, no need for regular plodding service in school and cottage meetings, no need to set our young men and women to work for Christ!

The drill and organization of the regular army is in danger of being lightly esteemed. Blow the trumpet and the walls will come down easily enough. Jericho has fallen with shouting and marching—let us gather ourselves together and show that we are a mighty people, who no longer need to go up unanimously and laboriously in rank and order to the fight, as our fathers did.

Ah, brethren, this evil spirit must be exorcised, for it comes from the devil. God will not bless us if we tolerate this spirit. Why, some of us are altogether too great for our Lord Jesus to use in His work. Like Saul's armor, we are unfit for our David to put on if Goliath is to be slain. We must be more sensible of weakness, more mindful that the conversion of souls is the work of omnipotence, or we shall see but little done.

We must ourselves believe more fully in the need of earnest work for God, and put forth all our strength, and strain every sinew for Him, knowing that it is His power that works in us mightily when we strive with all our hearts. We must learn that our great Leader means us not only to shout and blow

rams' horns, but to employ all the strength of every man in our ranks in His glorious cause. May we be delivered from the presumption which leads to the foolish course which Israel pursued.

Let us not forget that these children of Israel were *forgetting their commission and violating the command of God*. It is a terrible truth that the tribes had been brought out of Egypt that they might be the executioners of divine vengeance upon races which had committed capital crimes, for which the Lord had condemned them to be rooted out. The reward of the ministers of justice was to be the land which the infamous ones had polluted.

They were charged to make no alliances with them, nor to intermarry with them, but to execute them for their crimes, and the commission was not given to some of the Israelites, but to all of them, for all were to be rewarded by a portion of the land. The charge was not given to Joshua and to the elders only, but to all the tribes.

As they all expected to have a dwelling place in Canaan, so they were all expected to conquer the territory by their own exertions. They were *all* an enlisted host for God, and He never ordained that only a part should go forth in His great controversy with the condemned Canaanites.

If we ever neglect to render universal service as a church in the cause of Christ, we shall depart from our trust and call, for the Lord has sent all His disciples to testify of Him, and contend against sin. He has sent us all to make known everywhere, according to our ability, the glad tidings of His salvation.

And He has not given this command to this or that man, or to this or that body of men, but to all His chosen. Every member of the body has its own office, and no part of it can be allowed to lie dormant. To none has He said, "Go your way, eat the fat and drink the sweet, and find fault with those who do the work."

But to all His saints our Lord Jesus says, "As my Father hath sent me, even so I send you." Every Christian is described in Scripture as being a light, a light not to be hidden, but seen of men. Every child of God is described as forming a part of that "city set on a hill which cannot be hid." It is not only the ministers who are the salt of the earth and the light of the world, but "ye are the salt of the earth." "Ye are the light of the world"—all of you without exception.

Each one, in his own proportion, and in his own place, must be used as a vessel in the great house of the Lord. And we shall get away from our true position and our high calling if we excuse ourselves or our brethren from personal service, and then go and take part in public meetings and thank God for what other people have done on our behalf.

These Israelites, in the new fashion which they were trying to set up, were *departing from their own model*. That model was, doubtless, the siege of Jericho. In that siege there was much dependence upon God, but there was no neglect of instrumentality. And though all they did was to go round the city and shout, yet in so doing they were literally fulfilling orders, and doing all that was commanded.

Yes, if this would bring down the walls, they did it thoroughly—they marched as bidden and shouted as desired. They *all* went round Jericho. They did not some of them sit in their tents and look on while the others paraded, but they all filed out in order. It might seem to be a perfectly needless procession, but it was commanded by God, and they all united in it.

In martial array they all compassed the city, and *all* gave the shout, and down came the walls, and there and then every man went up to the prey, leaping over the ruined walls to strike his foe in the name of the Lord! That was their precedent and pattern, and they were departing from it very sadly when they said, "Let not all the people labour thither."

What, then, is our model as a church? Is it not Pentecost? Is it not those earliest days, that dawn of Christianity, that golden era to which we always look back as the heroic age of our holy faith? In that day did they not break bread from house to house, all of them? Did they not sell their lands and lay the price of them at the apostles' feet? Was there not a burning enthusiasm throughout the entire company of disciples?

We know it was so, and if we are to see again the triumphs of those primitive times, we must go back to primitive practice, and every man and woman and child in the church must be consecrated to the

divine service. “Child,” did I say? Yes, verily, for, “out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise.”

I suppose there is not one person present who heard that famous sermon by Matthew Wilks upon the universal service rendered by idolaters to their false gods, from the text, “The children gathered wood, and the fathers kindled the fire, and the women kneaded their dough to make cakes to the queen of heaven.”

The preacher’s argument on that occasion was that which I would now press upon you, that all should take part in the work of the Lord. Distinct offices, but united aims. Diverse operations, but the same spirit. Many and yet one—so let it be. Would to God that the church would recognize this more fully, and so come back to the great precedents of her warfare.

Again, this error which we are carefully to avoid was no doubt *the dictate of carnal wisdom*. Spies were never of much use to Israel—two only of the first twelve were faithful—what did Israel want with spies? Better far had it been to walk by faith. To Ai they must send spies instead of going up at once in the confidence of faith. Evil came of it, for these spies counseled that only part of the people need labor up the hill.

And brethren, the best ministers of Christ, worthy of all honor, would be the cause of great mischief if once their carnal wisdom should make them think that they can supersede primitive plans with wiser inventions. I dare say the men-at-arms would have said that Israel’s numbers were a hindrance to efficient fighting, and that the common sort were in the way of trained warriors and encumbered the battle.

I know that some able brethren are of this mind. Have they not said in acts, if not in words, “That young man is preaching—we wish he would be quiet. He makes such blunders in the Queen’s English! He has a great deal of zeal, but there is no little danger in it. And those good sisters—we know they do a good deal of work which was never done before, but,” and they shake their heads at them. That is often the main contribution of the more prudent sort to the service of God!

They generously lavish upon the younger folks their grave looks, and their shakes of the head at innovation and zeal. There is the Sunday school—well, that is a proper thing, because it is a recognized agency—but if it were started today for the first time, many would shake their heads at that also.

City mission work, again, is a tried and proved mode of operation, but in days gone by there was thought to be peril in lay agency, especially as the men were not college trained. Well, my brethren, there are many more holy agencies yet to be invented, and though they will none of them be perfect, our wet blankets will not improve them.

Better far will it be to help the good, and as for the *little* mischief which may come of imperfect agencies, let the wise men supply the antidote and rectify the blunders. Anything is better than lethargy and death. Thank God that our people have a mind to do good, and if their zeal be inclined to wildfire, let us not quench it, but try to use it for holy purposes. For, after all, fire, wild or otherwise, is what we want. If we have the fire from heaven in the form of zeal for God’s glory, it can easily be regulated, but the most terrible calamity is to have no fire at all.

“But,” says one, “may not the ignorant and indiscreet advocacy of truth by unqualified persons do a great deal of harm to the cause we love?” It may, but is the truth you believe so weak as to be in any serious danger from such an accident? Is not truth invincible, and fully able to take care of herself?

All she has to fear is the cramping and imprisoning agency of excessive prudence. With weakness for her guardian and folly for her defender, she is yet safe! The God who protects her from her foes can assuredly save her from her friends. The danger lies in our carnal wisdom which would cover the light with a bushel to prevent its being blown out, and wrap the talent in a napkin because it is only one.

We very frequently hear it said that there is no need for so much excitement and exertion. And this, too, has come from our prudent men—we ought to take it coolly, the thing went rightly enough in our grandfather’s days, the great men of the past did very well without all this stir! Well, we have observed that wet blankets are still on sale, and may be had at wholesale prices!

Now, brethren, I do not know what you think about it, but I for one feel that there is much work to be done, and very little time to do it in. If I plunge into the work with all my might, I shall do none too much, but at any rate, all my little might is demanded by such a cause. There is a blessed leisure of the heart which sits at Jesus' feet, but I am sure that it is not inconsistent with that violence which the kingdom of heaven suffers—"and the violent take it by force."

There were people who complained, in the days of Wesley and Whitefield, because their zeal caused a great deal of fanaticism. But thank God, the blessed fanaticism spread throughout the land, and it is not extinct even now, nor shall it be by God's grace, but it shall go on increasing till Christ shall come!

Let us bring up our men, the whole of the tribes, weak though they be, and though their weapons be no better than the axes and coulters with which Israel fought the Philistines! Let us spring upon our foe as one man, even as in the days of old. Let us all go up to Ai, and as surely as God was with His people then, so surely will He be with our compacted hosts today, and the world shall learn again that there is a God in Israel!

Only once more upon this point. These children of Israel, in sending to the war only part of the men, were *breaking in upon the divine design*. The Lord never intended to have two peoples, but one. And so we read that the Reubenites and the Gadites came over Jordan to the war, although their portion was already conquered. It was the divine intent that they should be one army of the living God, each separate son of the seed of Abraham belonging to that army and fighting in it.

He meant, that not some only, but all should see the mighty works of His hand, working with them to overthrow their adversaries. When Jericho fell, all saw it. And if Ai should fall before the divine power, they must all be there to see with their own eyes the glory of the Lord.

I am sure it is so with the church of God today. Our Lord means to keep all His chosen ones as one army, and to instruct them all as one band. And when are we most manifestly one? When we get to work. If you come to declamation upon your own peculiar points, I shall wish you good morning. But if you are going to work for Jesus, suffer me to go with you.

I have marked the history of organizations formed for no practical purpose, and they have invariably come to an end, and I do not know that we need weep over the fact. But work to be done for Jesus is a mighty bond of union.

Our God does not mean that His ministers should alone see all the death-beds, and be the sole spectators of the dying triumphs of His people. No, our brothers and sisters must visit too, and have their faith strengthened and their prospects brightened.

He does not wish that preachers alone should see all the converts and encourage all the desponding ones. No, His wisdom perceives that it is good for all His servants to behold the trophies of His grace, and know how to use the encouragements of His promises. The Lord does not ordain that one or two should mourn over the evil of the hearts of men, and do battle with sinners alone. No, He means all His servants in their measure to learn the lessons which holy warfare would teach them.

Not to deal practically with souls is perilous to ourselves. Men who spend their time providing us with marvelous essays and papers in the reviews are most of them unsound in the faith. But if they went out into the world of real life, to save men, if they had to battle personally with hard hearts and evil passions in actual conversion work, they would find that their fine-spun theories are of no use.

They would learn that the Puritan faith of our forefathers is the sturdiest of all weapons, and the best adapted for the world as it is, and that the old truth is the sword with which alone you can pierce the hearts of men. Work for Jesus is an education for a Christian.

What an education it would be for the philanthropist to see what the agricultural laborer eats, or rather does not eat! What a lesson for the sanitary reformer to see with his own eyes where the people lodge! What an education for a man of wealth to spend a night or two in the crowded chambers where our London workmen dwell!

And in the same way, holy service is a training for us. In order to really know man's fall and the way of redemption, we must go among the people and labor for their conversion. Hence our Lord will not

excuse any of us from service in this war, because it would be to our great damage to be away from it, and it is for our encouragement and growth that we should take our share in it.

I will finish this part of my subject with a parable. In the days of chivalry, a certain band of knights had never known defeat. In all battles their name was terrible to the foe. On their banners was emblazoned a long list of victories, but in an evil hour the leader of the knights summoned them in chapter, and said, "My brothers, we cause ourselves too much toil. We have a band of skilled warriors versed in all the arts of battle. These are quite sufficient for ordinary conflicts, and it will be wise for the many if they tarry in the camp and rest, or furbish their weapons for extraordinary occasions.

"Let the champions go alone. Yonder knight with his sword can cleave a man in two at a single stroke, and his comrade can break a bar of iron with his axe. Others among us are equally powerful, each one being a host in himself. With the terror of our name behind them, the chosen champions can carry on the war while the rest divide the spoil."

The saying pleased the warriors well, but from that hour the knell of their fame was rung, and defeat defiled their standard. When they came together they complained of the champions because they had not sustained the honor of the order, and they bade them exert themselves more heroically. They did so, but with small success.

Louder and louder were the notes of discontent, and the demands for new champions. Then one of the oldest of the knights said, "Brethren, why do you blame us? The mistake lies here. In the old time, when the enemy assailed us, a thousand men were up in arms, and we who led the van knew that a gallant army followed at our heels. But now you have made us solitary champions, and the adversary takes heart to defy us, finding us unsustained. Come you all with us to the fray as aforetime, and none shall stand against us."

Brethren, you need not that a man interpret this unto you.

**II.** In the second place, my text contains THE COMMAND THAT ALL ISRAEL SHOULD GO FORTH TO THE FIGHT.

"Take all the men of war with thee." I will mainly address myself to my brethren in Christ, and what I have to say to them I say humbly, speaking mainly to myself. Brethren, we must have all our church members go to the war. I know this is our theory, but in practice we do not accomplish it. The baggage of our army is too heavy. The sutlers and camp followers are too many. We want to turn out the drones, and we need an increase of true working bees.

How is it to be done? *We must be ourselves deeply impressed with the evil brought upon idle Christians by their idleness*, and the evil which they bring upon the rest of the church. Only suppose a Christian—I will treat it as a mere supposition—living an idle life. Give him nothing to do and he will become morbid with introspection. Or he will grow quarrelsome, contending with all who hold opinions contrary to his own. Or he will dishonor the name of Christ by sin.

You know when it was that David fell with regard to Bathsheba. It was at the time when kings go forth to battle, and he tarried still at Jerusalem. He had not fallen into that sin if he had not played the sluggard at home. Where was his duty as commander-in-chief? Was it not in the camp? Indolence is temptation.

Certain of our churches are suffering from unsound teaching, but they are suffering as much from want of work. The moss is growing upon them, the rust is eating them up. The gold becomes dim, the silver is losing its brightness, and all for want of use.

Oh, brethren, if we stand at the foot of a barren tree in the vineyard of Christ, we know what must happen. As we look upon it and see no fruit, our emotions ought to be those of bitterest sorrow, for the axe is prepared for those that bear no fruit. Alas, that we should have church members, not inconsistent in moral character, but excellent in many ways, and yet cumberers of the ground!

There is a great deal of charity about of an evil sort, because it does not face the truth in honest desire for men's good. Let us be too truly charitable to indulge in such fatal charity. Let us sigh and cry when we think of our useless church members as branches of the vine that bear no fruit, of whom the

Master has said that they shall be taken away, "For every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away," and "Men gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."

What sorrow will fill our hearts if we reflect upon this! If we regard fruitless professors in this light, it will go further than anything else to make us successful in exciting all our brethren to active service.

*We need to be impressed with the mischief which idlers cause to others.* One sickly sheep infects the flock. One member who does nothing lowers the tone of the whole body. The indolence of prominent professors is not merely the waste of their own labor, but of that of scores of others. Leading persons are looked upon as a sort of model for the rest, and if so and so is content merely to fill his place in the pew, and subscribe so much (or rather, *so little*) per annum, then others will say, "We shall be up to the standard if we do the same."

Every man in an army who is not efficient and really serviceable is on the enemy's side. What can the enemy more desire than that the opposite army may be encumbered with the sick? What can be better news for them than to hear that the hospitals are crowded, for then they know that a large number of men are occupied with the sick and detained from the fight. The enemy claps his hands and cries, "These sick men are worth many a gun to us." Oh, useless professor, you cannot serve the devil better than by joining a church and doing nothing.

I want my brethren to feel all this most keenly. I doubt not they do feel it, but I want to feel it more vividly myself. For when we get into a truly sensitive condition—when we who are ministers are alive upon this point—we shall stir up the people of God, *all of them*, and we shall see greater things than these.

Moreover, brethren, *we must hunt out the sin which leads to the evil against which we contend*, and I believe it is lack of vital godliness in many cases. I do not know how my friend Mr. Newman Hall finds it—I suppose he does not suffer much from it. But I know pastors who say they have very respectable members, but nothing can be done with them.

In some cases, prayer meetings are given up because the rich members come home from the city and dine at the hour which is usually selected for the prayer meeting, and so they cannot attend. Dining is a most important business—it would seem to be more important than praying.

Businessmen are so fatigued. It is true that we find carpenters and bricklayers and other workmen delighting in our prayer meetings. Is this because they do not work so hard as your city men?

In some quarters it is found impossible to carry on church work effectively because the very persons who should be workers and officers are resolved that their liberal subscriptions and Sabbath worship shall be the whole of their assistance to the cause of Christ. As to laying themselves out for holy work, they look in your face with wonder, as if they thought you had lost your senses when you propose any very arduous service to them.

Now, this shirking of prayer and service is to be exposed and denounced in all faithfulness. It is often the sin which grows out of too much ease, self-indulgence, and luxurious living. It seems as if the more God gives a man, the less return he is inclined to offer.

Whatever the secret sin of the church may be, let us try to discover it and then by the aid of the Holy Spirit endeavor to educate all our members to work for the Lord. *There must be a continual insisting upon the personal obligations of Christians.* We who are known as Baptists are of opinion that baptism, as the personal act of a believer, is a good lesson to our people as to their personal responsibilities. But I will not for a moment suppose that my Paedobaptist brethren are less earnest in enforcing the same truth.

You also believe firmly in the personality of true religion. You teach the need of personal faith and consecration. Then we are agreed upon the great benefit of urging upon each man the duty of personal work for Christ. "What are you doing for Christ?" is a question to be asked of all.

We must make every believer feel that he is not his own, but bought with a price—that no amount of giving can compensate for personal labor for his Lord—that even he who by sickness and infirmity cannot actually work should render his contribution to the general effort by continual prayer. No one

must appear before the Lord empty, but either by active or passive service must prove his gratitude to God.

And then, while each is responsible, neglect by one is injurious to the common service of the whole. I saw a cart standing this morning on the roadside with one wheel chained—there was no fear of its moving with that one wheel fast.

Sometimes one chained wheel in a church will hinder all. We are all parts of a great machine, and the stopping of one part does not simply mean the one stoppage, but the hindering of the whole organization. If a piece of bone in the body becomes dead, it is not simply useless, but it becomes the nidus of mischief, and the cause of pain.

It begins to decay, disease forms, and serious evil comes of it to the entire frame. A dead professor who is content to enjoy the doctrines without fulfilling the precepts of the Gospel becomes a source of serious danger in the church of Jesus Christ, and we know it to be indeed so.

My brethren,  *dwell upon the importance of the enterprise in which we are engaged*, and so act as to make others feel its importance. Why take all that trouble about furbishing up a doubtful point of divinity, which is of no earthly use when it is furbished up? Why all that Sunday morning spent in discussing far-fetched points of belief? What is this but sheer trifling?

Some are greatly given to what they call “thinking,”—“dreaming” is the truer word. Better by half, plunge the old Gospel sword at once into men’s hearts, and slay their sins in the name of the Lord, than stand quibbling about certain characters upon the hilt of the weapon. One sermon about nothing will do more harm than all your speculations will do good.

Men come to forget that the Gospel is meant to save souls, and look upon it as a mass of interesting subjects. Certain sermons are said to be “intellectual treats”—I think that is what I have heard them called. Our religion does not mean that, it means fighting with sin. It is, if anything at all, one of real downright practical work for Jesus Christ, and we must show that it is so.

Our teaching nothing in elaborate language will make our people think that practical godliness is a small matter, and that intellect is better than piety. We must make men feel that to save a soul is better than to possess all knowledge, or even to gain the whole world! While others are making a new Gospel, let us labor to save souls by the old one. May God enable us to preach in awful earnest, and by this means, God the Holy Spirit quickening us, we shall get all our people to march forward to the battle of their God!

Above all,  *let us pray for more grace*. We must never read the story of old times and say, “What a splendid denomination ours has been. Can we not rest on our laurels?” Impossible. You must win fresh ones. Napoleon used to say, “Conquest has made me what I am, and conquest must maintain me.”

And it is so with Christians. You must advance. You must outdo the exploits of the past, and eclipse the deeds of your sires, or you will show yourselves unworthy of them. The battle thickens, and how shall we meet the growing demands upon us except by seeking for sevenfold grace? Our spiritual stamina needs to be increased.

If we were to collect a number of men all wheezing and coughing, and only fit for the Consumption Hospital, and set them to work upon a railway, we might commend them for their diligence, but they would never accomplish much.

On the other hand, gather together a company of burly, brawny men, and they will say, “Who are you, O strong mountain?” and before it can answer, it will be turned to a plain! See how they use the pick and the shovel! Vital strength is their motive force.

O God, strengthen us! We are willing, some of us, but our strokes are feeble! Grant us, we beseech You, more of Your Holy Spirit, and we shall accomplish great things. Strength delights in work, feebleness is afraid of it. Spiritual strength will produce universal spiritual service for the Lord Jesus Christ.

I have done when I have looked into the future for a moment. If it should ever come to pass that the minister and all his people went forth to the war for King Jesus, what would happen? I seem to be in paradise when I think of it!

If all, without exception, who name the name of Jesus, went earnestly into His vineyard, what life there would be, and what unity in all the churches! There would be no longer a name to live, but real living! There would be no divisions if all were alike zealous for the glory of the common Master. You would not hear of church meetings which are scenes of disturbance, and churches where pastors are unhappy—such things would be regarded as extinct animals of the ages gone by.

Then we should hear no complaints of our not being strong enough to do the work of our great cities and scattered hamlets. The very feeblest church, if every one did his share, would be strong enough for its position.

Moreover, there would be no lack of funds for any holy enterprise. Ah, if God's treasure received from all as it receives from some, we should almost have to tell the people to stay their hands, because we should scarcely know how to use all their gifts. But the wealth which belongs to Christ, and the service kept back from Him canker in men's coffers, and the amount of which the Lord is robbed is almost beyond computation.

The missionary societies, very well sustained on the whole, do not receive more than a tenth or a hundredth part of what God's people ought to give to so divine a work. If the merchant prince who contributes what is thought to be a handsome sum to Christ, only gave in the same proportion as many a pious girl who has to earn her living at so many stitches for a penny, and if all gave as the few are giving, we should soon supply all nations with missionaries.

And if this were the case, what enterprises would be undertaken? What overflowings of Christian zeal should we perceive? We should be sending out messengers to discover every region which remained unsubdued, and we should at once be up and doing. Then the mission field would be strong with men of most noble fitness.

I do not know how you think about it, but it does seem strange to me that we here in this little island are so close packed together, and yet a few scores or hundreds only go into the mission field. "Some of us have large spheres here, and we cannot be expected to go, can we?" I answer, the ablest preacher that ever lived is not too good for missionary work. The most useful man at home is probably the fittest for the foreign field.

Let us each question his own heart as to the claims of the heathen. For my own part, I dare not sleep till I have honestly considered whether *I* ought to go or not. We tell our young men in the College that they must prove that they have *not* to go, or else their duty is clear. If some of the men of Israel had said to Joshua, "We cannot go to Ai," Joshua would have replied, "You must prove that you cannot go or you may not be excused."

All other things being equal, ministers should take it for granted that it is their duty to invade new territory unless they can prove to the contrary. When I think of the number of young men who are well-educated, and can read a capital paper at the Mechanics' Institution, and profess to be regenerated by the Holy Spirit, it grieves me to see their talents dedicated so largely to meaner ends. Oh, bleeding Lamb, it does seem strange that we have a greater passion for literature than for You! We care more for fleeting than for enduring things!

France is wanting the Gospel. See what one beloved brother in Paris has been able to do—are there none who can do the like for other cities in that neighbor country? Here and there a good man can say, "I have made a competency"—why not live and employ it where you can lay it out personally for the spread of the Redeemer's kingdom?

Such a thing is being done by a few, it is not therefore impossible, and you who follow the grand example shall have your reward. See what Pastor Harms did in the village of Hermansburg, how he stirred up all the people until they gave themselves and their property to the Lord, and built a ship for the mission and went forth in it to Africa—company after company—to evangelize.

Should it not be the ambition of a minister to feel that if he stays at home he will at least, by the Holy Spirit's help, produce missionaries by the scores in the village where he labors. I know the day comes that he will be thought most happy who suffered and labored most for Christ. When this great fight is over, he who is most scarred will be most honored, and he who dwelt at home at ease will think himself but sparsely blest because he put not in for his share of the war.

Let us be all at work for Christ and His redeemed church! All at work, at all times, and in all ways for Christ! It is for that I plead, and then we will take another motto and say—The world for Christ, and Christ for every nation under heaven! This will be accomplished when the Spirit has aroused us all.

O blessed Spirit, convert the church and it will convert the world!

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Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at [www.spurgeongems.org](http://www.spurgeongems.org).