

CHRIST IS GLORIOUS—LET US MAKE HIM KNOWN

NO. 560

A SERMON
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*“And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the LORD,
 in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God; and they shall abide:
 for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth.”
 Micah 5:4*

YOU have a very vivid idea of the sufferings of Christ. Your faith has seen Him sweating great drops of blood in the garden of Gethsemane. You have looked on with amazement while He gave His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them who plucked off the hair, and hid not His face from shame and spitting. With sorrowful sympathy you have followed Him through the streets of Jerusalem, weeping and bewailing Him with the women. You have sat down to watch Him when He was fastened to the tree. You have wept at His bitter complaint—“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” and you have rejoiced in His shout of victory—“It is finished!”

With Magdalene and Nicodemus you have followed His dead body to the tomb, and seen it wrapped about with spices, and left to its lonely sleep. Are your perceptions quite as keen concerning the glory which *did* follow and *is* following?

Can you see Him quite as distinctly when on the third morn the Conqueror rises, bursting the bonds of death with which He could not be holden? Can you as clearly view Him ascending up on high, leading captivity captive? Can you hear the ring of angelic clarions, as with dyed garments from Bozrah the Victor returns from the battle, dragging death and hell at His chariot wheels? Do you plainly perceive Him as He takes His seat at the right hand of the Father, henceforth expecting until His enemies be made His footstool?

And can you be as clear this morning about the reigning Christ as you have been about the suffering Christ? Lo! my brethren, “The Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, *hath* prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof!” At this hour He goes forth, riding upon His white horse, conquering and to conquer. Lo! at His girdle swing the keys of heaven, and death, and hell, for “the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” “God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow.”

Behold Him, my beloved, in His present plenitude of glory, and endeavor to get as clear a perception of it as you have had of His shame. Not only weep at His burial, but rejoice at His resurrection. Not only sorrow at His cross, but worship at His throne. Do not merely think of the nails and of the spear, but behold the imperial purple which hangs so nobly upon His royal shoulders, and of the divine crown which He wears upon His majestic brow.

I want to conduct you in such a frame of mind through the glories of my text. First, bidding you observe *the perpetual reign of Christ*, “He shall stand and feed in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.” Then I shall beg you to observe that flowing from this is *the perpetual continuance of His church*, “and they shall abide.” And then proceeding both from His continued reign and from the church’s consequent perpetual existence comes *the greatness of our King*, “for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth.”

I. At the outset, observe carefully THE PERPETUAL REIGN OF CHRIST. He lives, He reigns, He is King over His people.

Notice first that His reign is *shepherd-like in its nature*. The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, but our Master washed His disciples' feet. Earthly monarchs are often tyrants, their yoke is heavy and their language domineering. But it is not so with our King. His yoke is easy and His burden is light, for He is meek and lowly of heart.

He is a Shepherd-King. He has supremacy, but it is the superiority of a wise and tender shepherd over his needy and loving flock. He commands and receives obedience, but it is the willing obedience of the well-cared-for sheep, rendered joyfully to their beloved Shepherd, whose voice they know so well. He rules by the force of love and the energy of goodness. His power lies not in imperious threatenings, but in imperial lovingkindness. Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King, for "men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed."

Never people had such a king before. His service is perfect freedom. To be His subject is to be a king, to serve Him is to reign. Blessed are the people who are the sheep of His pasture. If they follow in His footsteps, their road is safe. If they sleep at His feet, no lion can disturb their peace. If they are fed from His hand they shall lie down in green pastures, and know no lack. If they abide close to His person they shall drink rivers of delight. Righteousness and peace are the stability of His throne, joy and gladness are the ornaments of His reign.

Oh! how happy are we who belong to such a Prince. You King in Jeshurun, we pay You homage with loyal hearts. We come into Your presence with thanksgiving, and into Your courts with praise, for You are our God, and we are the people of Your pasture, and the sheep of Your hand.

Notice that the reign of Jesus is *practical in its character*. It is said, "He shall stand *and feed*." The great Head of the church is actively engaged in providing for His people. He does not sit down upon the throne in empty state, or hold a scepter without wielding it in government. No, He stands and feeds.

The expression "feed," in the original is like an analogous one in the Greek, which means to shepherdize, to do everything expected of a shepherd, to guide, to watch, to preserve, to tend as well as to feed. Our Lord Jesus Christ, the great Head of the church, is always actively engaged for the church's good. Through Him the Spirit of God constantly descends upon the members of the church. By Him ministers are given in due season, and all church officers in their proper place.

When He ascended up on high He received gifts for men, "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." Our Lord does not close His eyes to the state of His church.

Beloved, He is not a listless spectator of our wants. He is this day standing and feeding His people. They are scattered, I know, wide as the poles asunder, but our mighty Shepherd can see every sheep and lamb of His flock, and He gives them all their portion of meat in due season. He it is that like a mighty Breaker, goes forth at the head of His flock, and they follow where He clears the way, "He shall stand and feed."

Oh! blessed carefulness and divine activity of our gracious King! always fighting against our enemies, and at the same shedding His benignant influences upon His friends.

Consider again, for it is in our text, that this active reign is *continual in its duration*. It is said, "*He shall stand and feed*," not "He shall feed now and then, and then leave His position." Not, "He shall one day grant a revival, and then the next day leave His church to barrenness." Beloved, there is no such pastor as Christ. "I know my sheep," He can say, in a very high and peculiar sense. He knows them through and through. He feels with them, in all their afflictions He is afflicted. He is one with them eternally.

There is no such wakeful watchman as the Lord Jesus. Is it not written, "I the LORD do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day." Those eyes never slumber, and those hands never rest. That heart never ceases to beat with love, and those shoulders are never weary of carrying His people's burdens. The church may go through her dark ages, but Christ is with her in the midnight. She may pass through her fiery furnace, but Christ is in the midst of the flames with her. Her

whole history through, wherever you find the church, there shall you find the church's Lord. The head is never severed from the body, nor is the watchful care of this gracious husband towards His spouse suspended for an instant.

I beseech you labor to realize the noble picture. Here are His sheep in these pastures this morning, and here is our great Shepherd with the crown upon His head, standing and feeding us all. Nay, not *us* all alone, but dispensing His tender mercies to all the multitudes of His elect throughout the whole world. He is at this moment King in Zion, ruling and overruling, present everywhere, and everywhere showing Himself strong in the defense of His saints.

I would that our churches could be more influenced by a belief in the abiding power, presence, and pre-eminence of their living and reigning Lord. He is no dead King whose memory we are bidden to embalm, but a living Leader and Commander whose behests we must obey, whose honor we must defend.

Do not fail to discern that the empire of Christ in His church is *effectually powerful in its action*, "He shall feed in the strength of JEHOVAH." Wherever Christ is, there is God, and whatever Christ does is the act of the Most High. Oh! it is a joyful truth to consider that He who redeemed us was none other than God Himself, He who led our captivity captive was JEHOVAH-Jesus. He who stands today representing the interests of His people is very God of very God, He who has sworn that every one of His people whom He has redeemed by blood shall be brought safe to His Father's right hand, is Himself essential Deity.

O my brethren, we rest upon a sure foundation when we build upon the Incarnate God. And O ye saints of God, the interests of each one of you, and of the one great church, must be safe because our champion is God. JEHOVAH is our judge, JEHOVAH is our lawgiver, Jehovah is our King, He will save us. How can He fail or be discouraged? When He makes bare His arm, who shall stand against Him?

Let us rehearse the mighty deeds of the Lord and tell of His wonders of old. Remember how He got Him victory upon Pharaoh and the pride of Egypt! Pharaoh said, "Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go?" Ten plagues of terrible majesty taught the boaster that the Lord was not to be despised, and the humbled tyrant bade the people go their way. With a high hand and an outstretched arm did the Lord bring forth His people from the house of bondage. When the proud high stomach of Egypt's king again rose against the Most High, the Lord knew how to lay His adversary lower than the dust.

I think I see the hosts of Mizraim with their horses and their chariots, hurrying after the Lord's fugitives. Their mouths are foaming with rage. "The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them." See how they ride in all their pompous glory, swallowing the earth in their fury.

O Israel, where shall be thy defense? How shall you escape from your tyrannical master? Be still, O seed of Jacob, ye Sons of Abraham, rest ye patiently, for these Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see no more forever. With their horses and their chariots the fierce foemen descended into the depths of the sea, but the Lord looked upon them, and troubled them. "Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters." The depths have covered them. They sank into the bottom like a stone. "Let us sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea."

Surely it shall be so at the last with Jesus our King, and all His saints. We also shall sing "the song of Moses, the servant of God, and of the Lamb," in that day when the arch-enemy shall be overthrown, and the hosts of evil shall be consumed, and they who hate the Lord shall become as the fat of rams, into smoke shall they consume, yea, into smoke shall they consume away.

One other word remains, our Lord's kingdom is *most majestic in its aspect*. You will observe it is written by the prophet—"He shall feed in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God." Jesus Christ is greatly to be revered. The familiarity with which we approach Him is always to be tempered with the

deepest and most reverent adoration. He is our brother, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, but still He counteth it not robbery to be equal with God.

I know He made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and He calls Himself today our Husband, and makes us to be members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. But yet we must never forget that it is written, “Let all the angels of God worship him,” and “At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Yes, Christ is majestic in His church. I would, beloved, we always thought of this. There is a glory and a majesty about all the laws of Christ and all His commands, so that whether we baptize at His command, or break bread in remembrance of Him, or lift up His cross in ministry—in whatever we do in His name, which is in fact, what He does through us, there is an attendant majesty which should make our minds feel perpetually reverent before Him.

O that the world could see the glory of Christ in the church! O that the world did but know who it is that is in the midst of the few, the feeble, the weak, the foolish as they call them. O Philistia! if you did but know who is our champion, your Goliath of Gath would soon hide his diminished head. O Assyria, if you did but know that the ancient might of Him who smote Sennacherib still abides with us, your hosts would turn their backs and yield us an easy victory.

There is a true and mysterious presence of Christ with His people, according to the promise, “Lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” It is because the world ignores this that she despises and sneers at the church of God. There is our comfort and our glory. We have a majesty about us if we be the people of God, which is not to be gainsaid. Angels see it and wonder—a majesty of indwelling Godhead, for the Lord is in the midst of us for a glory and around us for a defense.

II. We will now occupy one or two minutes with THE CONSEQUENT PERPETUITY OF THE CHURCH.

Because of the unseen but most certain presence of Christ as King in the midst of His people, His church ABIDES—so says the text. Here reflect first that a church *exists*. What a wonder this! It is perhaps, the greatest miracle of all ages that God has a church in the world.

You who are conversant with human history will hear me out when I say that the whole history of the church is a series of miracles, a long stream of wonders! A little spark kindled in the midst of oceans, and yet all her boisterous waves cannot quench it!

Here is the great wonder which John saw in vision, and which history reveals in solemn, sober fact. A woman, “being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon....stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, to devour her child as soon as it was born.” The man-child who is to rule all nations with a rod of iron was brought forth and caught up to God and to His throne.

As for the woman, the church, she fled as on eagles’ wings to her wilderness shelter prepared of God, until, in great wrath, the dragon pursued and persecuted her. Apt enough is that metaphor, “The serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood....And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”

Yet, my brethren, as surely as that glorious man-child, the Lord Jesus, lives and sits upon the throne, so surely shall the woman, the poor afflicted church, live on until the dragon’s time is over, and the King shall reign upon the earth.

To what trials, my brethren, has not the church of God been subjected? What new invention can Satan bring forth? The fire, the rack, imprisonment, banishment, confiscation, slander, all these have been tried, and in them all the church has been more than conqueror through Him who loved her. False doctrine outside, heresy and schism within, hypocrisy, formalism, fanaticism, pretences of high spirituality, worldliness, these have all done their worst.

I marvel at the wondrous ingenuity of the great enemy of the church, but I think his devices must nearly have come to an end. Can he invent anything further? We have been astounded in these ages by the prodigy of an infidel bishop. We have been struck dumb with sorrow and amazement at a decree which declares that a church professing to be a church of Christ must permit men to be her ministers who deny the inspiration of Holy Scripture. This is a new thing under the sun.

Popery and infidelity are to be both legalized and fostered in a church professing to be Christian and Protestant. What next? and what next? But what of all this? *The* church, I mean the company of the Lord's called and faithful and chosen still exists. The Lord has His elect people who still hold forth the Word of truth, and in the most reprobate church still He may say, "I have a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy."

Observe, the text says, "she abides," which means, not that she exists now and then by starts and spasms, but *she exists always*. This is wonderful! Always a church! When the full force of the pagan emperors came like a thundering avalanche upon her, she shook off the stupendous load as a man shakes the flakes of snow from his garment, and she lived on uninjured.

When papal Rome vented its malice yet more furiously and ingeniously, when cruel murderers hunted the saints among the Alps, or worried them in the low country; when Albigenses and Waldenses poured out their blood in rivers and dyed the snow with crimson, she lived still and never was in a healthier state than when she was immersed in her own gore. When after a partial reformation in this country, the pretenders to religion determined that the truly spiritual should be harried out of the land, God's church did not sleep or suspend her career of life or service.

Let the covenant signed in blood witness to the vigor of the persecuted saints. Harken to her psalm amidst the brown heath-clad hills of Scotland, and her prayer in the secret conventicles of England. Hear the voices of Cargill and Cameron thundering among the mountains against a false king and an apostate people. Hear you the testimony of Bunyan and his compeers who would sooner rot in dungeons than bow the knee to Baal. Ask me "Where is the church?" and I can find her at any and every period from the day when first in the upper room the Holy Ghost came down even until now.

In one unbroken line our apostolic succession runs. Not through the church of Rome, not from the superstitious hands of priest-made popes, or king-created bishops (what a varnished lie is the apostolic succession of those who boast so proudly of it!), but through the blood of good men and true, who never forsook the testimony of Jesus.

Through the loins of true pastors, laborious evangelists, faithful martyrs, and honorable men of God, we trace our pedigree up to the fishermen of Galilee and glory that we perpetuate by God's grace that true and faithful church of the living God, in whom Christ did abide and will abide until the world's crash.

Observe dear friends, that in the use of the term "*Abide*," we have not only existence and continued existence, but the idea of *quiet, calm, uninjured duration*. It does not say she lingers, hunted, tempted, worried, but she abides.

Oh! the calmness of the church of God under the attacks of her most malicious foes. You cruel adversary, the virgin daughter of Zion has shaken her head at you and laughed you to scorn! She abides in peace when the world rages against her. It is most noteworthy how in most instances the church of God still keeps her foothold where she has been most savagely persecuted. In modern times we find in Madagascar, after years of exterminating persecution, the church of God rises from her ashes like the phoenix from the flames.

The chief wonder is that she abides perfect. Not one of God's elect has gone back. Not one of the blood-bought has denied the faith. Not one single soul which ever was effectually called can be made to deny Christ, even though his flesh should be pulled from his bones by hot pincers, or his tormented body flung to the jaws of wild beasts. All that the enemy has done has been of no avail against the church. The old rock has been washed, and washed, and washed again by stormy waves and submerged a thousand times in the floods of tempest, but even her angles and corners abide unaltered and unalterable.

We may say of the Lord's tabernacle, not one of the stakes thereof has been removed, nor one of her cords been broken. The house of the Lord from foundation to pinnacle is perfect still, "The rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house and it fell not." Nay, nor a single stone of it "for it was founded upon a rock."

But why all this, dear friends, why is it that we have seen the church endure to this day? How is it that we are confident that even should worse times arrive, the church would weather the storm and abide till moons shall cease to wax and wane? Why this security? Only because Christ is in the midst of her.

You do not believe, I hope, in the preservation of orthodoxy by legal instruments and trust deeds. This is what too many Dissenters have relied upon. We certainly cannot depend upon creeds. They are good enough in their way, as trust deeds are too, but they are as broken reeds if we rely upon them. We cannot depend upon parliament, nor kings, nor queens. We may draw up the most express and distinct form of doctrine, but we shall find that the next generation will depart from the truth unless God shall be pleased to give it renewed grace from on high.

You cannot, by Presbytery, or Independency, or Episcopacy, secure the life of the church—I find the church of God has existed under an episcopacy—a form of government not without its virtues and its faults. I find the church of God flourish under a Presbytery, and decay under it too. I know it can be successful under an Independent form of church government and can decline into Arianism quite as easily.

The fact is that forms of government have very little to do with the vital principle of the church. The reason why the church of God exists is not her ecclesiastical regulations, her organization, her formularies, her ministers, or her creeds, but the presence of the Lord in the midst of her. And while Christ lives, and Christ reigns, and stands and feeds His church, she is safe. But if He were once gone, it would be with her as it is with you and with me when the Spirit of God has departed from us, we are weak as other men, and she would be quite as powerless.

III. But now, thirdly, flowing from both these, from the perpetual presence of Christ and from the continued existence of His church, is THE GREATNESS OF OUR KING.

"*Now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth.*" Christ is great in His church. Oh! how great in our hearts where He reigns supreme! My heart, it does leap at the sound of His name—

*"Jesus, the very thought of Thee,
With rapture fills my breast."*

O for crowns! For golden crowns! Let us crown Him King in Zion! O for a well-tuned harp, and for David's feet to dance before the ark at the very mention of Jesus' name! Now shall He be great indeed in our hearts! But He is to be great to the ends of the earth. That is a promise of which we will say *it is accomplished in a measure even now.*

Christ is made great in the conversion of every sinner. When the suppliant penitent cries, "God be merciful to me a sinner," and the peace-speaking blood comes dropping upon the troubled conscience, and the soul bows meekly to accept the finished righteousness, then is Christ great.

And He is great in the consecration of every one of His blood-bought saints. When they live for Him, when in their prayers they make mention of Him, when they give Him their heart's music, their life's light, and their lips' testimony; when they feel that tribulation is joyous if endured for Him, and the sternest toil a dear delight when undertaken for His sake—then Christ is great.

Think, my brethren, this morning, how many ships are now furrowing the blue sea in which there are hearts which love the name of Jesus. Hark! across the waves of the Atlantic and the Pacific I hear the sound of prayer and praise from many a vessel bearing the British flag. From many an islet of the sea the song is borne upon the breeze. And there across the waters in the land of our American brethren, now so sadly chastened with war, multitudes of hearts beat as high as ours at the mention of the Savior's name.

Here across yon narrow Channel, in Holland, in Sweden, in Germany, in Switzerland, and even in France and Italy, how many own His name and praise Him this day! We speak of our Queen's dominions and say that the sun never sets upon them. We may in truth say this of our Lord Jesus, men of all colors trust in His blood.

They who look upward to the Southern Cross and they who follow the Polar star, alike worship His dear name, and when England ceases her strain of joy in the hush of night, Australia takes up the song, and so from land to land, and from shore to shore, a sacrifice of a pure offering is brought to His shrine. It is accomplished, in some degree, but oh! how small the degree when we think of the thick darkness which covers the multitude of the people.

Again, it is a promise which is *guaranteed as to its fulfillment in the fullest sense*. Courage! Brethren, courage! The night is not forever, the morning cometh! Watchman, what sayest thou? Are there not streaks reddening the east? Has not the God of day, the Lord Jesus, begun to shoot His divine arrows of light upwards into the thick darkness? It is even so.

As I think of the signs of the times, I would fondly hope that we shall live to see brighter and better days. "Now," says the text, "shall he be great unto the ends of the earth." Prophet, I would that your "now" were true this day. Now, even now, let Him reign! Why does He tarry? Why are His chariots so long in coming? Will it be, my brethren, that Christ will come before the world is converted? If so, welcome Jesus. Or will the world be converted first?

If so, thrice welcome the mercy. But whether or no, this we do know, He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river even unto the ends of the earth. They who dwell in the wilderness shall bow before Him, and His enemies shall lick the dust. The day shall come when the fifth great monarchy shall be co-extensive with the world's bounds, and everywhere the Great Shepherd shall reign.

But remember, dear friends, that while this promise is thus guaranteed as to its fulfillment, it is to be *prayed for as to its accomplishment*. "I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them." The mountain of the Lord shall rise in the latter days, but mark you, though there is no sound of trowel or a hammer, there will be heard the sound of prayer and praise, as upward the mountain of God's house shall ascend.

You know the picture. The prophet had seen the Lord's house standing, as it were, in a valley, and as he looked upon it, presently it became a little hill. The ground began to heave, by and by it had swollen from a little hill into a lofty mountain, and up it rose and grew more great before his eyes, till Alps were dwarfed and Himalayas were stunted.

And up it still went, not the house only, but the mountain too, till infinitely higher than the projected tower of Babel which man meant to be the world's center, this house stood out clear and sharp above the clouds, having pinnacles high up in God's heaven, and yet deep foundations in man's earth, and all nations began to flow to it as to the great center.

What a dream! What a vision! Yet such shall it be. The church is as it were, in a plain just now, she begins to rise. Oh! stupendous movement! She begins to rise, her mountains swell and grow. She attracts observers, she cannot be held down. Who can attempt to restrain the swelling mass? Who shall prevent the gigantic birth?

Up rises the mountain, as though swollen by some inward fire, and up it swells, and swells, and swells, till earth touches heaven, and God communes with men. Then shall be heard the great hallelujah, "The tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them."

But then, and this is the conclusion, and I hope God may help me to press it on your hearts. *All this is to be labored for* as well as prayed after. My soul pants and pines to see Christ glorious in the eyes of men. Lives there a Christian here with soul so dead that he does not desire the extension of his Master's kingdom?

Sirs, is there one among you who counts it little to see Jesus Christ lifted up in men's hearts? I know I speak to a people—and the Lord knows it—to many of whom Christ is the dearest of all which is beloved, the fairest among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely.

Now, if Christ is to be glorified, He must be glorified by you. If His kingdom is to come, it must come through you. God works, but God works by means. He works in you “to will and to do of his own good pleasure.” Souls are to be saved, but they are not saved without instruments. The feast is to be furnished with guests, but you are to go into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in.

I know my Master is to have many crowns, but they are to be crowns for which you have fought, which you have won through His grace, and which you place at His feet, that He may honor you by wearing them upon His brow.

Now we, as a people, have been greatly blessed and helped of God, and I believe the Master has a very high claim upon us. We, above all the churches in the world are indebted to the grace and mercy of God, and we ought to be doing something for the extension of the Savior’s kingdom.

We cannot boast of wealth, we cannot profess to build all over London a multitude of churches as the Bishop hopes to do. Any scheme of raising three millions of money by us, must be looked upon as being entirely a dream. We cannot attempt such a thing. If London is to be converted by money we must give up the task. We have no mitred bishops, no queens to subscribe, and no nobles and dukes, and the like to add their thousands and their tens of thousands of pounds.

We are a feeble folk. What then can we do for God? Why, do as much as the strong! What can we do for God? Do as much as the mighty! Nay, my brethren, our very weakness and want of power shall be our adaptation to God’s work. And He who often putteth by the sword of Saul, and the armor of the son of Kish, will use David, and his sling and his stone, and strike Goliath’s brow therewith.

I have been musing all this week upon that celebrated scene in ancient history, which seems to me to be so much like the state of our church just now—the story of Gideon, the son of Joash, threshing wheat in the winepress because he was afraid to be seen, the Midianites having spoiled the land.

Now we, as Baptists, have generally been too much afraid to be seen, we have threshed our corn somewhere away in the winepress—up a back court—down a narrow street, any dirty hole would do to build a chapel in, so long as people could not find it the site was thought advantageous. And if nobody could ever see it, that was the place for our fathers and for some who still linger among us. It was threshing wheat in the winepress, to hide it from the enemy.

Well now, I think the time has come that we should not be afraid of these Midianites any longer. Long has the church of God been oppressed and kept back. She has been content to let the world devour her increase. There have been few additions to the churches, they remain very much what they were twenty or thirty years ago.

But my brethren, some of us think that we have seen our fleece wet with dew, while all around was dry, and we believe the Lord has said to us, “The LORD is with thee, thou mighty men of valor.” We think we have had the Lord’s commission, “Go in this thy strength.” We do not expect all of you to go with us, for the people are too many.

We expect that there are many of the trembling and faint-hearted who will step back from the battle, men who are looking for their families and must provide for them, men who are saving up money and grudge their sovereigns, and so on—these of course will stand back, and let them. Such men encumber our march. We fear that you are not all men who lap, but we have a few who care very little for the ease and repose of life, and who snatch a hasty draught as they run, and with heat and zeal, and passionate earnestness run to meet the adversary. Now, these we expect to go with us to the fray.

In the name of the Lord, I proclaim a new crusade against the sin and vice of this huge city. What are we to do? The hosts of Midian are to be counted by millions. Here in this great city we have three millions of people, and what if I were to say, two-and-half millions of them do not know their right hand from their left in matters of religion, I believe I would speak too charitably. For if I could believe there were half a million true believers in London, I should have vastly greater hopes of it than I have now.

But alas, that is not the case. Millions, millions are gathered in the valley of indecision who are not upon the Lord’s side. What can you and I do? We can do nothing of ourselves, but we can do everything by the help of our God. Where Christ is there is might and where God is there is strength. Let us

therefore in God's name determine to plant new churches wherever openings occur. Like Gideon's men let us rally under our church officers, and follow where a warm heart leads the way. Gideon took his men and bade them do two things, covering up a torch in an earthen pitcher, he bade them, at an appointed signal, break the pitcher and let the light shine, and then sound with their trumpets, crying, "The sword of the LORD and of Gideon! the sword of the LORD and of Gideon!" This is just what all Christians must do.

First, *you must shine*. Break the pitcher which conceals you, throw aside the bushel which has been hiding your candle, and shine. Let your light shine before men, let your good works be such that when men look upon you, they shall know that you have been with Jesus. There is much good done by the shining.

Then *there must be the sound*, the blowing of the trumpet. O dear friends, the great mass of London will never hear the gospel unless you go and blow the trumpet in their ears. Many who are members of this church never heard a gospel sermon until they heard some of you preaching in the street.

"Why," said one, "I never went to a place of worship, but I went down a street, and there stood a young man at the corner. I listened to him, and God was pleased to send the arrow to my conscience, and I came into the house of God afterwards." Take the gospel to them. Carry it to their door. Put it in their way. Do not suffer them to escape it. Blow the trumpet right against their ears. In the name of God, I pray you do this.

Remember that the true war cry of the church is Gideon's war cry, "*The sword of the LORD!*" God must do it, it is God's work. But we are not to be idle, instrumentality is to be used—"The sword of the LORD, *and of Gideon!*" Mark you, if we only cry, "The sword of the LORD!" we shall be guilty of an idle presumption, and shall be tempting God to depart from His fixed rule of procedure. This is the cry of every lazy lie-in-bed. What good ever comes of saying, "The Lord will do His own work, let us sit still"?

Nor must it be "The sword of Gideon" alone, for that were idolatrous reliance on an arm of flesh. We can do nothing of ourselves. Not "The sword of the LORD" only, that were idleness, but the two together, "The sword of the LORD and of Gideon."

O my brethren, God help you to learn this lesson well, and then you will go forth shining and sounding, living and teaching, testifying and living out the truth! You shall most assuredly make the kingdom of Christ to come, and His name shall be honored if you will do this.

It seems to me that now is a glorious opportunity. There is a spirit of hearing upon the people. Almost anyone may get a hearing who is willing to preach Christ. Now or never! Sons of Jacob! You are to be like a lion among the flock of sheep, and will you lie down and slumber? Up and every man to the prey! Sons of Jacob! you are to be as dew upon the grass, and will you tarry for men and wait for the sons of men? No. In God's name, go forward, and let something be done for God, and for His Christ, for a perishing age, for a dark world, for heaven's glory, and for hell's defeat. Up! you who know the Lord, you swordsmen of our Israel, up and at them, and God give you a great victory and deliverance!

I want you to make some practical point of these things today. God has been pleased to put a sword into my hand, and to give me my lamp and my pitcher. My college of young men has now become in the Lord's hands a marvelous power for good. A blessing greater than I could have expected rests on this work. We are continually sending them out, and God owns them in the conversion of souls. I have never seen any agency more blessed to the conversion of souls than the agency of our college. Without saying anything to depreciate other efforts, I do believe God has conferred on our institution a crowning and special blessing, and will continue to do so yet more and more.

I want you all, both hearers and readers of my sermons, to feel that this is your work, and to help me in it while I continue to cry, "The sword of the LORD and of Gideon!" God works, and therefore we work. God is with us, and therefore we are with God, and stand on His side. Inasmuch as many of these men raise churches, we want you to help to build the places where the new congregations can be accommodated afterwards. And to that end we have striven to raise a fund of five thousand pounds to be

lent out to these new churches on loan to be repaid by installments without interest. It is but a small sum, but it is as much as I think we can do, and frugal care will turn it to good account.

Some three thousand pounds have been promised by our seven shepherds and principal men, but there are many who have not promised anything yet, and we shall be glad if they will come forward, for otherwise this useful fund cannot be raised. When this is done with, once for all, we will go on and do something else for Jesus. Do break this pitcher, get this done, and let the light of this thing shine. We must be doing something for God.

I speak to you now upon the practical point, and come to it at once. If *you* are content to live without serving God, *I* am not. And if you are willing to let these hours roll by without doing something to extend the kingdom of Jesus, let me be gone from you. Let me be gone from you to those of warmer spirits and of holier aspirations, for I must fight for God! there must be victories won for Him! We must extend the range of the gospel. We must find places where souls can be brought to hear the Word.

Hell shall not forever laugh at our inactivity, and heaven shall not eternally weep at our sloth! Let us be up and doing, and let this thing be done by the many, the few have already done their parts. Promises reaching over five years are asked of you, you can all do something.

And then, every one of you, when you have done your share in this, go out personally and serve with your flaming torch of holy example, and with your trumpet tones of earnest declaration and testimony serve your Lord, and God shall be with you, and Midian shall be put to confusion, and the Lord of hosts shall reign forever and ever! “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” Hear ye that note, O dead souls, and live.

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.