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A SERMON
DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JULY 31, 1870,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*"I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day:
the night comes, when no man can work."
John 9:4.*

IF this ninth chapter of John is intended to be a continuation of the history contained in the eighth, as we think it is, it brings before us a very extraordinary fact. You will observe in the eighth chapter that our Lord was about to be stoned by the Jews, He therefore withdrew Himself from the circle of His infuriated foes, and passed through the crowd, not I think in a hurried manner, but in a calm and dignified way, as one not at all disconcerted, but wholly self-possessed. His disciples, who had seen His danger, gathered round Him while He quietly retreated. The group wended their way with firm footsteps till they reached the outside of the temple. At the gate there sat a man well known to have been blind from his birth, our Savior was so little flurried by the danger which had threatened Him that He paused and fixed His eyes upon the poor beggar, attentively surveying him. He stopped His onward progress to work the miracle of this man's healing.

If it be so that the two chapters make up but one narrative and I think it is, though we are not absolutely sure, then we have before us a most memorable instance of the marvelous calmness of our Savior while under danger.

When the Jews took up stones to stone Him, He did not needlessly expose His life, but after He had withdrawn a very little space from the immediate danger, He was arrested by the sight of human misery, and stood still awhile in all calmness of heart to do a deed of mercy. Oh, the divine majesty of benevolence! How brave it makes a man! How it leads him to forget himself, and despise danger, and become so calm that he can coolly perform the work which is given him to do! I think I see our Savior thus considerate for others, and unmindful of Himself.

May I add that there is a lesson here to us not only for imitation but for consolation! If He while flying from His enemies still stops to bless the blind, how much more will He bless us who seek His face now that He is exalted on High, and is clothed with divine power and glory at the right hand of the Father! There is nothing to hurry Him now, He is exposed to no danger now, send up your prayer, breathe out your desires, and He will reply, "According to your faith, so be it unto you."

Reading this cure of the blind man, one is struck again with the difference between the disciples and the Master. The disciples looked at this man, blind from his birth, as a great enigma, a strange phenomenon, and they began, like philosophers, to suggest theories as to how it was consistent with divine justice that a man should be born blind. They saw that there must be a connection between sin and suffering, but they could not trace the connection here, so they were all speculating upon the wonderful problem before them, which they knew not how to solve. Suggestively reminding us of theorists upon another difficulty which never has been explained yet, namely, the origin of evil. They wanted to sail upon the boundless deep, and were anxious that their Master should pilot them, He had other and better work to do.

Our Lord gave them an answer, but it was a short and curt one. He Himself was not looking at the blind man from their point of view, He was not considering how the man came to be blind, but how his eyes could be opened. He was not so much meditating upon the various metaphysical and moral difficulties which might arise out of the case, but upon what would be the best method to remove from

the man his suffering, and deliver him from his piteous plight, a lesson for us, that instead of inquiring how sin came into the world, we should ask how we may get it out of the world, and instead of worrying our minds about how this providence is consistent with justice, and how that event can tally with benevolence, we should see how both can be turned to practical account.

The Judge of all the earth can take care of Himself, He is not in any such difficulties that He needs any advice of ours, only presumptuous unbelief ever dares suppose the Lord to be perplexed. It will be much better for us to do the work of Him that sent us, than to be judging divine providence, or our fellow men. It is ours, not to speculate, but to perform acts of mercy and love, according to the tenor of the Gospel. Let us then be less inquisitive and more practical, less for cracking doctrinal nuts, and more for bringing forth the bread of life to the starving multitudes.

Once again, as a prefatory remark, our Lord tells us the right way of looking at sorrow and at sin. It was a dreadful thing to see a man shut out from the light of the sun from his very birth, but our Savior took a very encouraging view of it, His view of it was nothing at all desponding, nothing that could suggest complaining, it was most encouraging and stimulating. He explained the man's blindness thus, "Neither has this man sinned, nor his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." The man's calamity was God's opportunity. His distress was an occasion for displaying divine goodness, wisdom, and power.

I see sin everywhere—in myself, in others, in this great city, in the nations of the earth, and very conspicuously sin and suffering in this thrice accursed war, but what shall I say of it? Sit down and wring my hands in utter despair? If so, I shall be incapable of service. Nay, if I would do good, as Jesus did, I must take His bravely hopeful view of things, and so keep my heart whole and my loins girt ready for work. The Master's view of it is that all this mischief furnishes, through the infinite benevolence of God, a platform for the display of divine love.

I remember in the life of Dr. Lyman Beecher, he tells us of a young convert who, after finding peace with God, was heard by him to say, "I rejoice that I was a lost sinner." Strange matter to be glad about, you will say, for of all things it is most to be deplored, but here was her reason, "Because God's infinite grace, and mercy, and wisdom, and all His attributes, are glorified in me as they never could have been had I not been a sinner and had I not been lost." Is not that the best light in which to see the saddest things? Sin, somehow or other, desperately evil as it is, will be overruled to display God's goodness. Just as the goldsmith sets a foil around a sparkling brilliant, even so the Lord has allowed moral and physical evil to come into this world to cause His infinite wisdom, grace, power, and all His other attributes, to be the better seen by the whole intelligent universe. Let us look at it in this light, and the next time we see suffering we shall say, "Here is our opportunity of showing what the love of God can do for these sufferers." The next time we witness abounding sin let us say, "Here is an opportunity for a great achievement of mercy."

I suppose great engineers have been very glad of Niagara, that they might span it, very glad of the Mont Cenis that they might bore it, very glad of the Suez Isthmus that they might cut a canal through it, glad that there were difficulties that there might be room for engineering skill. Were there no sin there had been no Savior, if no death, no resurrection, if no fall, no new covenant, if no rebellious race, no incarnation, no Calvary, no ascension, no second advent. That is a grand way of looking at evil, and marvelously stimulating. Though we do not know, and perhaps shall never know the deepest reason why an infinitely gracious God permitted sin and suffering to enter the universe, yet we may at least encourage this practical thought—God will be glorified in the overcoming of evil and its consequences, and therefore let us gird up our loins in God's name for our part of the conflict.

Thus much by way of preface. Now I shall invite you, this morning, and may God assist you while I invite, to consider first of all, *the Master Worker*, and, secondly, *ourselves as workers under Him*.

I. The text is a portrait of THE GREAT MASTER WORKER. We will read it again, "I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day: the night comes, when no man can work."

And first observe, this Master Worker *takes His own share in the work*—“*I must work*”—*I*, Jesus, the Son of Man, for two or three years working here on earth in public ministry, *I, I must work*. There is a sense in which all Gospel work is Christ’s. As the atoning sacrifice, He treads the winepress alone, as the great Head of the church, all that is done is to be ascribed to Him, but in the sense in which He used these words, speaking of His human nature, speaking of Himself as tabernacling among the sons of men, there was a portion of the work of relieving this world’s woe, and scattering Gospel truth among men, that He must do, and nobody else could do. “*I must work.*” “*I must preach, and pray, and heal, even I, the Christ of God.*”

In salvation, Jesus stands alone, in life-giving He has no human co-worker, but in light-giving, which He refers to in the fifth verse, “*As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world*”—in light-giving He has many companions. Though anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows in this respect, yet is it true that all His saints are the light of the world, even as Jesus Christ while in the world was the world’s light. There were some to be cured by Him who could not be cured by Peter, or James, or John, some to have the good news brought to them who must not receive it from any lip but His own. Our Lord when He became the servant of servants took His share in the common labors of the elect brotherhood. How this ought to encourage us!

It is enough for the general if he stands in the place of observation and directs the battle, we do not usually expect that the commander shall take a personal share in the work of the conflict, but with Jesus it is not so, He fought in the ranks as a common soldier. While as God-Man, Mediator, He rules and governs all the economy of grace, yet as partaker of our flesh and blood He once bore the burden and heat of the day. As the great Architect and Master Builder He supervises all, yet there is a portion of His spiritual temple which He condescended to build with His own hands. Jesus Christ has seen actual service, and actually resisted unto blood, amid the dust and turmoil of the strife. This made Alexander’s soldiers valiant, it is said, because if they were wearied by long marches Alexander did not ride, but marched side by side with them, and if a river had to be crossed in the teeth of opposition, foremost amidst all the risk was Alexander himself.

Let this be our encouragement—Jesus Christ has taken a personal share in the evangelization of the world, has taken not only His own part as Head, and Prophet, and High Priest, and Apostle, in which He stands alone, but He has taken His part among the common builders in the erection of the New Jerusalem. “*I must work the work of Him that sent me.*”

Note, next, that *our Lord laid great stress upon the gracious work which was laid upon Him*. “*I must work the work of Him that sent Me, whatever else is not done I must do that. The work allotted me of God, I must as His servant faithfully do. The Jews may be close at My heels, their stones may be ready to fall upon Me, but I must fulfill My lifework, I must open blind eyes, and spread the light around Me. I can forget to eat bread, I can forget to find for Myself a shelter from the dews that fall so heavily at night, but this work I must do.*” Beyond all things the Redeemer felt a constraint upon Him to do His Father’s Will. “*Wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?*” “*The zeal of your house has eaten me up.*” Everything in life yielded in the Savior’s case to His master passion.

There were some works our Savior would not do. When one asked Him to speak to his brother to divide the inheritance, though that might have been a useful thing, yet Christ did not feel a call to it, and He said, “*Who made me a judge and a divider over you?*” But when it came to the work of giving light, that He must do. This was the *specialty* of His life, to this He bent all His strength. He was like an arrow shot from a bow, speeding not towards two targets, but with undivided force hurrying towards one single end. The unity of His purpose was never for a moment broken, no second objective ever eclipsed the first. Certain works of grace, works of benevolence, works of light-giving, works of healing, works of saving, these He must do, *He* must do them, His own part of them He must perform.

He rightly describes this work as the “work of God.” Note that. If ever there lived a man who as man might have taken a part of the honor of the work to himself, it was the Lord Jesus, and yet over and over again He says, “*The Father that dwells in me, he does the works.*” As man He is particularly careful

to set us the example of acknowledging constantly that if any work be done by us it is the work of God through us, and so though He says, "I must work," notice the next words, "the works of him that sent me." They are still my Father's works when most they are mine. Though I must work them, yet shall they still be ascribed to Him, and He shall derive honor from them.

My brethren, if I do not say much about this in respect to Christ, it is because it seems so much more easy to apply this to us than to Him, and if so easily applied, let it be humbly and practically remembered by us today. My brother, if you shall win a soul by your work, it is God's work; if you shall instruct the ignorant, you do it, but it is God that does it by you if it is rightly done. Learn to acknowledge the hand of God, and yet do not draw back your own. Learn to put out your own hand, and yet to feel that it is powerless unless God make bare His arm. Combine in your thoughts the need of the all-working God and the duty of your own exertion. Do not make the work of God an excuse for your idleness, neither let your earnest activity ever tempt you to forget that power belongs unto Him.

The Savior is a model to us in putting this just in the right form. It is God's work to open the blind eye, if the eye has been sealed in darkness from birth no man can open it, God must do it, but yet the clay and the spittle must be used, and Siloam's pool must be resorted to, or the light will never enter the sightless eye.

So in grace, it is God's to illuminate the understanding by His Spirit, it is His to move the affections, His to influence the will, His to convert the entire nature, His to sanctify, and His to save, yet you, O believer, are to work the miracle, the truth you shall spread will illuminate the intellect, the arguments you shall use will influence the affections, the reasons you shall give will move the will, the precious Gospel you shall teach will purify the heart, but it is God who does it, God indwelling in the Gospel. See you to this, for only as you see these two truths will you go to your work aright. *I must work personally*, and this holy work must be my special business, but I must do it in a right spirit, humbly feeling all the while that it is God's work in and through me.

Our Lord, in this portrait of Himself, as the Master-worker, is clearly seen as *owning His true position*. He says, "I must work the work of *him that sent me*." He had not come forth from the Father on His own account. He was not here as a principal, but as a subordinate, as an ambassador sent by His King. His own witness was, "I can of my own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not my own will, but the will of the Father which has sent me." He often reminded His hearers in His preaching that He was speaking in His Father's name, and not in His own name, as for instance, when He said, "The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself." He took upon Himself the form of a servant. "The Spirit of the Lord," says He, "is upon me; for he has anointed me."

God gave Him a commission, and gave Him the grace to carry out that commission, and He was not ashamed to confess His condition of service to the Father. Though in His divine nature God over all, blessed forever, whose praises ten thousand times ten thousand harpers are rejoiced to sound upon that glassy sea, yet as the Mediator He stooped to be sent—sent, a commissioned agent from God, a servant to do JEHOVAH'S bidding. Because He was such, it behooved Him, as a servant, to be faithful to Him that sent Him, and Jesus felt this as a part of the divine constraint, which impelled Him to say, "I must work," "I am a sent man, I have to give an account to Him that sent Me."

O brethren and sisters, I wish we all felt this, for as the Father sent Christ, even so has Christ sent us, and we are acting under divine authority as divine representatives, and must, if we would give our account with joy, be faithful to the communion with which God has honored us by putting us in trust with the Gospel of Christ. No man shall serve God aright if he thinks he stands upon an independent footing. It is recognizing your true position that will help to drive you onward in incessant diligence in the cause of your God.

But, dwelling very briefly on each of these points, I must remind you that our Lord did not regard Himself merely as an official, but *He threw a hearty earnestness into the work He undertook*. I see indomitable zeal glowing like a subdued flame in the very center of the live coal of the text. "I *must* work the work of him that sent me." Not, "I will," "I intend," "I ought," but "I *must*." Though sent, yet

the commission was so congenial to His nature that He worked with all the alacrity of a volunteer. He was commissioned, but His own will was His main compulsion. Not of constraint, but willingly the Lord Jesus became a Savior. He could not help it; it was within His very nature a sacred necessity that He must be doing good. Was He not God, and is not God the fountain of benevolence? Does not Deity, perpetually like the sun, send forth beams to gladden His creatures? Jesus Christ, the God Incarnate, by irresistible instinct must be found bestowing good.

Besides, He was so tender, so compassionate, that He must necessarily be blessing those who sorrowed. He felt for that blind man. If the blind man lamented his darkness, yet not more than the Savior lamented it for the poor sufferer's sake. The eyes which Christ fixed on that man were eyes brimming with tears of pity. He felt the miseries of humanity. He was not flinty hearted, but tender, and full of compassion towards all suffering sons of men. Our Savior therefore was self-impelled to His gracious labors. His love constrained Him, He must do the work that He was sent to work.

It is a right thing when a man's business and inclinations run together. You put your son apprentice to a trade which is not congenial to his tastes, and he will never make much of it, but when his duty and his own desires run in the same channel, then surely he is likely to prosper. So with Jesus, sent of God, but not an unwilling ambassador, coming as cheerfully and joyously as if there had been no constraint, but His own voluntary wish, He cries in gracious enthusiasm, "I must, I *must*."

No man does a really good and great work till he feels he must. No man preaches well but he who *must* preach. The man sent of God must come under irresistible pressure, even like the apostle of old, who said, "Though I preach the Gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me, yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel." Or like the eloquent Eliphaz in the book of Job, who spoke last but not best, and only spoke at all because he felt like a vessel wanting vent. Our Savior became so grand a worker because within His Spirit desire kindled and burned, and flamed, till His nature was all aglow, He was like a volcano in full action which must pour forth its fiery flood, though in His case the lava was not that which destroys, but that which blesses and makes rich.

Once again, another point in the Savior as a worker, *He clearly saw that there was a fitting time to work, and that this time would have its end*. In a certain sense Christ always works. For Zion's sake He does not rest, and for Jerusalem's sake He does not hold His peace in His intercessions before the eternal throne. But, my brethren, as a man, preaching, and healing, and relieving the sick on earth, Jesus had His day, as every other man, and that day ended at the set time. He used a common Eastern proverb, which says that men can only work by day, and when the day is over it is too late to work, and He meant that He Himself had an earthly lifetime in which to labor, and when that was over He would no more perform the kind of labor He was then doing. He called His lifetime a day, to show us that He was impressed with the shortness of it.

We too often reckon life as a matter of years, and we even think of the years as though they were of extreme length, though every year seems to spin round more swiftly than before, and men who are growing grey will tell you that life seems to them to travel at a much faster rate than in their younger days. To a child a year appears a lengthened period, to a man even ten years is but a short space of time, to God the Eternal a thousand years are but as one day. Our Lord here sets us an example of estimating our time at a high rate, on account of its brevity. It is but a day you have at the longest. That day, how short!

Young man, is it your morning? Are you just converted? Is the dew of penitence still trembling upon the green blade? Have you just seen the first radiance which streams from the eyelids of the morning? Have you heard the joyous singing of birds? Up with you, man, and serve your God with the love of your espousals! Serve Him with all your heart! Or have you known your Lord now so long that it is noon with you, and the burden and heat of the day are on you? Use all diligence, make good speed, for your sun will soon decline. And have you long been a Christian? Then the shadows lengthen, and your sun is almost down. Quick with you, man, let both your hands be used. Strain every nerve, put every

sinew to the stretch. Do all at all times, and in all places, what your ingenuity can devise, or your zeal can suggest to you, for the night comes wherein no man can work.

I love to think of the Master with these furious Jews behind Him, yet stopping because He must do the work of healing, because His day was still un-ended. He cannot die, He feels, till His day is over, His time is not yet come, and if it were He would close His life by doing one more act of mercy, and so He stops to bless the wretched, and afterwards passes on His way. Be you swift to do good at all times. "Be you steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." Knowing that the time is short, redeem the time, because the days are evil, press much into little by continuous diligence. Glorify your God greatly while the short taper of your life burns on and God accept you as He accepted His Son.

Thus much upon Christ, the Master Worker.

II. Now I shall want your earnestness while I try to speak of OURSELVES AS WORKERS UNDER HIM.

Here I must go over much the same ground, for first I must call to your remembrance that *on us there rests personal obligation*. Singular, distinct, personal obligation. "I must work." "I." "I must work the works of Him that sent me." We are in danger nowadays of losing ourselves in societies and associations. We had need labor to maintain the personality of our consecration to Christ Jesus. The old histories are very rich in records of deeds of personal daring, we cannot expect modern warfare to exhibit much of the same, because the fighting is done so much by masses and so much by machinery, even thus, nowadays, I am afraid our mode of doing Christian work is getting to be so mechanical, so much *en masse*, that there is barely room in ordinary cases for personal deeds of daring and singular acts of valor.

Yet, mark you, the success of the church will lie in this last, it is in each man's feeling, "I have something to do for Christ, which an angel could not do for me, that the strength of a church must lie under God. God has committed to me a certain work which, if it be not done by me, will never be done. A certain number of souls will enter heaven through my agency, they will never enter there in any other way! God has given His Son power over all flesh to give eternal life to as many as He has given Him, and Christ has given me power over some part of the flesh, and by my instrumentality they will get eternal life, and by no other agency. I have a work to do, and I must do it."

Dear brethren and sisters, our church will be grandly equipped for service when you all have this impression, when there is no casting the work on the minister, nor on the more gifted brethren, nor leaving all to be done by distinguished sisters, but when each one feels, "I have my work, and to my work I will bend my whole strength, to do it in my Master's name."

Now observe, secondly, the personal obligation in the text compels us to *just such work as Christ did*. I explained to you what it was. We are not called meritoriously to save souls, for He is the alone Savior, but we are called to enlighten the sons of men. That is to say, sin is not known to be sin by many. Our teaching and example must make sin to appear sin to them. The way of salvation by the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ is quite unknown to a large part of mankind, it is ours simply and incessantly to be telling out that soul-saving story. This work must be done whatever we leave undone. Some men are spending their time in making money, which is the main objective of their lives, they would be as usefully employed probably if they spent all their lives in collecting pins or cherrystones.

Whether a man lives to accumulate gold coins or brass nails, his life will be equally groveling, and end in the same disappointment. Money-making, fame-making, and power-getting are mere pieces of play, mere sports and games for children, the work of Him that sent us is a far nobler thing. It is permanent gain if I gain a soul, it is lasting treasure if I win the Lord's approval, I am forever richer if I give a man one better thought of God, if I bring to a darkened soul the light from heaven, or lead one erring heart to peace. If one spirit hastening downward to hell is by my means directed to a blissful heaven, I have done some work worth doing. And such work, brethren, we *must* do, whatever else we leave undone.

Let us make all else in this world subservient to this which is our life work. We have our callings, we ought to have them, the man who will not work, neither let him eat, but our earthly calling is not our life-work. We have a high calling of God in Christ Jesus, and this must have the pre-eminence, poor or rich, healthy or sick, honored or disgraced, we must glorify God. This is necessity, all else may be, this *must* be. We resolve, sternly resolve, and desperately determine that we will not throw away our lives on trifling objects, but by us God's work must and shall be done, each man will do his own share, God helping him. May the ever blessed Holy Spirit give us power and grace to turn our resolves into acts.

Let us not forget the truth which I declared to you before, namely, that *it is God's work which we are called upon to do*. Let us look to the text again. "I must work the work of him that sent me." I can discover no greater motive for earnestness in all the world than this, that the work I have to do is God's work.

There is Samson—the strength which lies in Samson is not his own, it is God's strength. Is that therefore a cause why Samson should lie still and be idle? Nay, but it is a mighty sound of a trumpet to stir the blood of the hero to fight for the people of God. If the strength of Samson is not the mere force of sinew and muscle, but force given him by the Almighty One, then up with you, Samson, and smite the Philistines! Slay again your thousands! What! Dare you sleep with God's Spirit upon you? Up, man! To sleep if you were but a common Israelite were treason to your country, but when God is in you and with you, how can you be idle? Nay, put forth your strength and rout your foes!

When Paul was in Corinth, and God wrought special miracles by his hands, so that handkerchiefs which were taken from his body healed the sick, was that a reason why Paul should withdraw himself to some quiet retreat and do nothing? To my mind there appears to be no more potent argument why Paul should go from house to house and lay his hands on all around, and heal the sick. So with you—you have the power to work miracles, my brother. The telling out of the Gospel, accompanied by the Spirit of God, works moral and spiritual miracles. Because you can work these miracles, should you say, "God will do His own work"? Nay, man, but right and left, at all times and in all places, go you and tell out the soul-saving story and God speed you! Because God works by you, therefore work you.

A small vessel, lying idle in dock, without freight, is a loss to its owner, but a great steamship, of many hundred horsepower, cannot be suffered to remain unemployed. The greater the power at command, the more urgently are we bound to use it. The indwelling power of God is put forth in reply to faith and prayer, shall we not labor to obtain it? The fact that the church's work is God's work rather than hers, is no cause why she should indulge in sloth. If she had only her own strength, she might waste it with less of crime, but having God's strength about her, she dares not loiter. God's message to her this morning is, "Awake, awake; put on your strength, O Zion; put on your beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city." Would God that this message might come to every heart, so that all of us would arise. Because God is in our midst.

Brethren, notice in the text *our obligation resulting from our position*. We are all sent as Jesus was, if we are believers in Christ. Let us feel our obligation pressing upon us. What would you think of an angel who was sent from the throne of God to bear a message, and who lingered on the way or refused to go? It was midnight, and the message came to Gabriel and his fellow songsters, "Go and sing o'er the plains of Bethlehem, where shepherds keep their flocks. Here is your sonnet, Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will towards men." Could you conceive that they halted, that they wished to decline the task? Impossible with such music, and with such a commission given from such a Lord! They sped joyously on their way. Your mission is not less honorable than that of the angels. You are sent to speak of good things, which bring peace and good will to men, and glory to God. Will you loiter? Can you any longer be dumb? Nay, as the Lord Jesus sends you, go forth, I pray you, go at once, and with joy tell out the story of His love.

I could conceive an angel being almost tempted to linger, if sent to execute vengeance, and to deluge fields with blood for the iniquity of nations. I dare not think that he would hesitate even then, for these holy spirits do the Lord's bidding most unquestioningly, but if the mission be of mercy, the loving spirit

of an angel would leap for joy, and be quickened by the sweetness of the errand as well as by the commission of his Lord. We, too, sent of God, if sent on hard service, are bound to go, but if sent on so sweet a service as the proclaiming of the Gospel, how can we tarry? What, to tell the poor criminal shut up in the dungeon of despair that there is liberty, to tell the condemned that there is pardon, to tell the dying that there is life in a look at the crucified One—do you find this hard? Do you call this toil? Should it not be the sweetest feature of your life that you have such blessed work as this to do?

If tonight when the day is over, when you are in your chamber alone, you should suddenly behold a vision of angels who should speak to you in celestial accents and nominate you to holy service in the church, you would surely feel impressed by such a visit. But Jesus Christ Himself has come to you, has bought you with His blood, and has set you apart by His redemption. You have confessed His coming to you, for you have been baptized into His death, and declared yourself to be His, and are you less impressed by Christ's coming than you would have been by an angel's visit? Rouse you, my brother, the hand of the Crucified has touched you, and He has said, "Go in this your might."

The eyes that wept over Jerusalem have looked into your eyes, and they have said with all their ancient tenderness, "My servant, go and snatch dying sinners like brands from the burning, by publishing My Gospel." Will you be disobedient to the heavenly vision, and despise Him that speaks to you from His cross on earth and from His throne in heaven? Blood-washed as you are, blood-bought as you are, give yourself up more fully than ever you have done to the delightful service which your Redeemer allots you. Bestir yourself and say, "I, even I, must work the work of Him that sent me while it is day."

You little know what good you may do, my brethren, if you always feel the burden of the Lord as you ought to do. I was led to think of that fact from a letter which I have here, which did my heart good as I read it. I daresay the dear friend who wrote it is present—he will not mind my reading an extract. He had fallen into very great sin, and though often attending at this Tabernacle, and being frequently stirred in heart, his conversion was not brought about till one day riding by railway to a certain town. He says, "I entered into a compartment in which were three of the students of the Tabernacle College. Although I did not know them at first, the subject of temperance was introduced by myself. I found two of them were total abstainers, and one was not. We had a nice friendly chat, and one of the abstainers asked me if I enjoyed the pardon of my sins and peace with God. I told him I regularly attended the Tabernacle, but I could not give up all my sins. He then told me how, in his own case, he had found it very desirable to be much in prayer and communion with God, and how he was thus kept from many besetting sins. I concluded my business in the town, and was returning homeward.

I was rather dull, as I had no money with me to pay for my ride home, and consequently had to walk all the way. I heard some singing at a little chapel, I entered, and was invited to a seat, it was H_____ Baptist Chapel. It turned out that these three students with whom I had come in the train some few hours before were there, and it was an occasion of deep concern to many, as one of the students, who was their pastor, was taking his farewell of his flock that evening, and many were in tears, himself also. I asked one of the students to pray for me, he did so, and I tried to lift up my whole heart to God, and, as it were, leave all my sins outside, but I found them a ponderous weight. At last I believed in Jesus, and exercised a simple faith such as I never knew before. I became quite contrite and humiliated, I found the Lord there, He is sweet to my soul, God has for Christ's sake forgiven me all my sins. I am happy now. I shall always pray for the students at the Pastors' College, and never, I hope, begrudge my mite for the support of the same. God be praised for the students!"

See you thus that a casual word about Christ and the soul will have its reward. I heard once of a clergyman who used to go hunting, and when he was reproved by his bishop, he replied that he never went hunting when he was on duty. But he was asked, "When is a clergyman off-duty?" And so with the Christian, when is he off duty? He ought to be always about his Father's business, ready for anything and everything that may glorify God. He feels that he is not sent on Sunday only, but sent always, not called now and then to do good, but sent throughout his whole life to work for Christ.

But I must finish. The greatest obligations seem to me to lie upon each one of us to be serving Christ, because of *the desperate case of our ungodly neighbors*. Many of them are dying without Christ, and we know what their end must be, an end that has no end, a misery that has no bounds. Oh, the woe which sin causes on earth! But what is that to the never-ending misery of the world to come!

Our time in which to serve the Lord on earth is very short. If we would glorify God as dwellers on earth, we must do it now. We shall soon be committed to the grave, or they whom we would fain bless may go there before us. Let us then bestir ourselves! I felt much weight on my mind yesterday, from the consideration that we, as a nation, are enjoying peace, an unspeakable blessing—the value of which none of us can rightly estimate. Now, if we do not make, as a Christian church, the most earnest endeavors to spread abroad the Gospel in these times of peace, before long this nation also may be plunged in war. War is the most unmitigated of curses, and among its other mischiefs, it turns the mind of the people away from all religious thoughts.

Now while we have peace, and God spares this land the horrors of war, ought not the church of God to be intensely eager to use her opportunities? The night comes, I know not how dark that night may be. The political atmosphere seems heavily charged with evil elements. The result of the present conflict between France and Prussia may not be what some would hope, for it may again crush Europe beneath a despot's heel. Now, while we have liberty—a liberty which our sires bought at the stake, and sealed with their blood, let us use it, while it is day let us work the works of Him that sent us, and let each man take for his motto the succeeding verse to my text, “As long as I am in the world I am the light of the world.” Take heed that your light be not darkness. Take heed you conceal it not. If it be light, take heed that you despise it not, for if it be never so little a light, it is what God has given you, and as much as you will be able to give God a joyful account of. If you have any light, though it be but a spark, it is for the world you have it, for the sons of men it is lent you. Use it, use it now, and God help you.

O that our light as a church, would shine upon this congregation! How I desire to see all my congregation saved! Let believers be more in prayer, more in service, more in holiness, and God will send us His abundant blessing, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—NEHEMIAH 3, JOHN 8:51-59, 9:1-7.

Taken from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software. 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.