

# THE GREAT ITINERANT

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A SERMON  
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*“Who went about doing good.”*  
*Acts 10:38*

YOU will observe, if you read the chapter before us, that Peter’s sermon was short and much to the point. He preached Jesus Christ to Cornelius immediately and unmistakably. He gave a very admirable sketch of the life of Jesus of which he affirmed himself to have been an eye-witness, and he brought forward in his closing sentence just that simple gospel which it is our joy to preach.

“To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.” This should be an instructive example to all professed ministers of the Gospel. We might say less about other matters without loss, if we would say more about the Lord Jesus. If we should omit some other teaching, if there were more of a savor of the name and of the person of Jesus Christ in our ministry, the omissions might be tolerated.

It is a strange thing that men should profess to be sent of God, and yet talk about everything except the great message which they are sent to deliver. My errand as a minister is to preach Christ, and it will avail me little to have been clear and earnest upon other points, if I have neglected to set forth Christ crucified.

To put my own views of doctrine or moral practice in the place of Jesus, is to put out the sun, and supply its place with a farthing rush light—to take away the children’s bread, and offer them a stone. We commend Peter as an example to all who preach or teach, either in the street, the sick chamber, or the house of prayer. Do as Peter did. Come at once to the soul of your ministry, and set forth Christ crucified in plain and simple language.

If any should plead that the subject should be adapted to the audience, we see from the narrative that there is sure to be something in the history of Christ applicable to the case before us. Peter purposely gave prominence to certain points in the history of the Master which would be most likely to enlist the sympathy of Cornelius.

He says of Him, “He is Lord of all,” as much as to say, “He is not Lord of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles, and therefore, O Cornelius, His dominion reaches to you. He is to be worshipped and adored, and He is to become a blessing and a propitiatory sacrifice, not only to Israel’s hosts, but even to the Italian band. And therefore you, O centurion, may take heart.”

Perhaps the words of our text were uttered by Peter concerning Christ because they also would be sure to attract the notice of a man who was “A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.” He did as much as say, “You go about doing good, Cornelius. It is the very soul of your life to help the needy, to feed the hungry, and to clothe the naked—Jesus also went about doing good in a higher sense, and I hold Him up to you as one to be beloved by every devout and generous heart.”

Other points are to be noticed in Peter’s address, which were evidently adapted to the case before him, but we have said enough to prove that there is something in the story of Jesus suitable to win the attention, and to gain the heart of any congregation, large or small. Only let the Holy Spirit help us to dilate upon the Gospel of the Lord Jesus, and we have no need to wander abroad for foreign themes.

We can sit at the foot of the cross and find a perpetually profitable subject there. No need to gather the sheaves of science, or the sweet flowers of poesy—Christ Jesus is both our science and our poetry,

and as ministers, we are complete in Him.

When we come forth to preach Him, and to lift Him up, we are armed from head to foot, and rich with weapons for our spiritual warfare. Though learning and art have had no hand in fashioning our panoply, we need not fear that we shall meet a single foe who can withstand the terror of those celestial arms. God grant us grace in all our teachings to keep close to Jesus Christ—for His love is a theme most fit for all cases, and most sweet at all times.

The few words which we have taken for our text are an exquisite miniature of the Lord Jesus Christ. “He went about doing good.” There are not many touches, but they are the strokes of a master’s pencil. The portrait cannot be mistaken for anyone else. The mightiest conquerors may gaze upon its beauties, but they cannot claim that it is intended to portray their lives.

Alexander, Caesar, Napoleon—these went about conquering, burning, destroying, murdering. They went about not doing good. Prophets too, who professed to have been sent of God, have compassed sea and land to make proselytes, but the good which they accomplished none could see. Mohammed’s career was fraught with incalculable evil.

The few good men and true, who, like Howard, have perambulated about the world seeking to minister to the necessities of mankind, have wept over the heavenly portrait, and sighed that they are not more like it. This is what they sought to be, and so far as they copied this portrait, this is what they were.

But they fall short of the original and are not slow to confess their shortcomings. What Peter here draws in words, God’s divine grace drew, in some measure, in lines of real life in the case of Howard and some other followers of Jesus of Nazareth. Still, in the highest and fullest sense, these words are applicable to none but the Master, for His followers could not do such good as He achieved.

His is the model, and theirs the humble copy. His the classic type, and theirs the modest imitation. He did good, and good only—but the best of men, being men at the best—sow mingled seed. And if they scatter handfuls of wheat, there is here and there a grain of darnel. However carefully they may select the grains, yet the cockle and the hemlock will fall from their hands as well as the good seed-corn of the kingdom. Of the Master, and only of the Master, it is true in the fullest, and the broadest, and most unguarded sense, “He went about doing good.”

Two things this morning—first I shall want you, dear brethren, to *consider Him*. And then, in the second place, to *consider yourselves*.

**I.** The first occupation will be pleasing, as well as profitable. Let us CONSIDER HIM.

**1.** Consider first, *His object*. He went about, but His travel was no listless motion, no purposeless wandering hither and thither—“He went about *doing good*.” O man of God, have a purpose, and devote your whole life to it! Be not an arrow shot at random, as in child’s play, but choose your target, and swift as the bullet whizzes to the mark, so fly onwards towards the great aim and object of your life.

Christ’s object is described in these words, “doing good.” Of this we may say that this was His *eternal purpose*. Long before He took upon Himself the nature of man, or even before man was formed of the dust of the earth, the heart of Jesus Christ was set upon doing good. In the eternal council in which the sacred Three entered into stipulations of the everlasting covenant, Christ Jesus became the Surety of that covenant in order that He might do good—good in the highest sense—good in snatching His people from the misery which sin would bring upon them, and good in manifesting the glorious attributes of God in a splendor which could not otherwise have surrounded them.

His delights of old were with the sons of men, because they afforded Him an opportunity, such as He could find nowhere else, of doing good. He did good, it is true, among the angels, for the heavenly harps owe all their music to His presence. Among the devils, there was no room for positive good. They were given over to evil, but even there restraining goodness found work for itself in binding them down in iron bands, lest their mischief should grow too rampant.

On earth, however, was the widest scope and amplest room for goodness in its largest sense. Not merely the goodness which restrains evil, and the goodness which rewards virtue, but that greater goodness which descends to ruined sin-stricken mortals, and lifts them up from the dunghill of their

miserable degradation to set them upon the throne of glory. It was the eternal purpose of the Lord Jesus Christ, before the lamps of heaven were kindled, or stars began to glitter in the vault of night, that He would do good.

This was His *practical object*, when He made His ever-memorable descent from the throne of His splendor to the manger of His poverty. Angels might well sing at Bethlehem, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men,” for Jesus Christ came not condemning the world, but doing good.

His presence in the manger did good, as it cheered both rich magi and poor shepherd, both learned and illiterate, both Simeon and Anna, with the knowledge that God had come down to men. His childhood afterwards did good, for though it was so unobtrusive and obscure that a few words suffice to set it forth, yet He has become the very mirror of childhood’s dutiful obedience to this day.

You know how his after life was one practical carrying out of the solitary object which brought Him from the throne of glory to the abodes of sinful men. He “went about doing good.” Nor was this His purpose merely and the object of His errand, but His *official prerogative*.

He received the name of Jesus at His birth, “For he shall save his people from their sins.” He was named “Christ,” because the Spirit of the Lord was upon Him, and He was anointed to preach good tidings to the meek, and to open the prisons to them who were bound. Jesus Christ is the title which bespeaks one whose office it is to do good. Mention any name you please which belongs to the Savior, and you will see that it is incumbent upon Him, *ex officio*, to go about doing good.

Is He a Shepherd? He must do good to His sheep. Is He a Husband? He must love His church, and give Himself for her, that He may cleanse and perfect her. Is He a friend? He “sticketh closer than a brother,” and does good. Is He “the Lion of the tribe of Judah”? It is not to do damage or mischief to innocence and weakness, but that, strong as a lion when he tears his prey, He may rend in pieces the foe of truth and goodness.

Is he a Lamb? Herein His goodness shows itself most completely, for He lays down His life that His Israel may go free when the destroying angel smites Egypt. Everywhere it was His peculiar prerogative and His special business to go about doing good.

But more, it was not only His intention and the object of His errand and His prerogative, but His *actual performance*. He did good in all senses. Jesus Christ wrought physical benefit among the sons of men. How many blind eyes first saw the light through the touch of His finger! How many silent ears heard the charming voice of affection after He had said, “Be open”!

Even the gates of death were no barrier to the errands of His goodness. The widow at the gate of Nain felt her heart leap within her for joy when her son was restored. And Mary and Martha were glad when Lazarus came forth from his grave.

He did good physically. We have thought that our Lord did this not merely to show His power and universality of His benevolence, and to teach spiritual truth by acted parables, but also to say to us in these days, “Followers of Jesus, do good in all sorts of ways. You may think it is your special calling to feed souls, but remember that your Master broke loaves and fishes to hungry bodies. You may deem it your chief object to instruct the ignorant, but remember that He healed the sick. You may make it your chief joy to pray for the healing of sick spirits, but remember that He rescued many bodies from incurable disease.”

As much as lies in us, let us do good unto all men, and good of all sorts too, though it be specially to the household of faith, and specially in a spiritual sense. Let no act of mercy seem beneath him who is a follower of the man who went about doing good.

There is a spirit springing up among us which is very dangerous, though it wears the garb of excessive spirituality. It is unpractical and unchristlike—a spirit which talks in this fashion—“The sons of men tried to improve the world and make it better, but as for Enoch, the man of God, he knew that the world was so bad that it was of no use to attempt to better it, and therefore he left it alone and walked with God.”

It may be well, they say, for such carnal-minded Christians as some of us to try and improve society, and to give a better tone to morals, but these dear spiritual brethren are so taken up with divine things, and so assured that the mission is of a super-celestial character, that they will have nothing to do with blessing mankind, being quite sufficiently occupied with blessing themselves and one another.

I pray God that we may never fall into the unpractical speculations and separations of certain brethren whose superior sanctity they must allow us to suspect. The large-heartedness of the Lord Jesus Christ is one of the most glorious traits in His character. He scattered good of all sorts on all sides. Let us, if we profess to be His followers, never be straitened even by pretended spirituality. Do good “as *much* as lieth in you,” to the utmost extent of your power, and let that be of every sort.

It strikes me that the Lord Jesus also did much *moral good*. Where He did not save spiritually, yet He elevated. I am not sure that that poor adulteress was ever truly converted, and yet I know that He said, “Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.” And I can well believe that in this respect, at least, she would sin no more.

I do not know that the Pharisees ever became followers of the man of Nazareth, and yet I cannot conceive that they could have listened to His stern rebukes against their hypocrisy without being in some measure humbled, if not enlightened. Or if *they* were not better, at any rate, their professions would not be so readily allowed. Society would receive, as it were, a tonic from those sharp and bitter words of the Master, and become too strong and masculine to receive any longer the lofty boastings of those mere pretenders.

Jesus Christ, when He sat down on the mount, did not deliver a spiritual sermon of the style commonly classed under that head. That Sermon on the Mount is for the most part morality—good high, heavenly morality—higher than any teacher ever reached before. But there is very little in it about justification by faith, or concerning atonement, very little about the doctrine of election, the work of the Holy Spirit, or final perseverance.

The fact is the Master was doing moral as well as spiritual good. and coming among a degraded people who had set darkness for light and light for darkness, bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter. He thought it a part of His vocation to preach to them truth on that subject as well as upon the higher themes concerning His advent and His salvation.

Dear friends, this admonishes us to seek the moral good of the people among whom we dwell. The Christian minister must not lay aside his ministry to become the mere moralist lecturer, but he may and should lecture upon morals—and he can say some things in lectures which he could not say in sermons. Let him by all means occasionally leave the pulpit for the platform, if he can do service to society. Let him do good in every possible shape and way.

I think that it is the Christian minister’s place not simply to preach the high and glorious doctrine of the cross, but also to deal with the current sins of mankind as did the prophets of old—and to inculcate those virtues most needed in the state, as did men God sent in the ages which are past. Jesus Christ went about doing good, we say, of a moral kind as well as of a spiritual order, but still the Savior’s great good was *spiritual*.

This was the great end that He was driving at—the bringing out of a people prepared to receive Himself and His salvation. He came preaching grace and peace. His great object was the spiritual emancipation of the bonded souls of men. Beloved, how He sought after this! What tears and cries went up to God from the mountain’s bleak summit! With what earnest intercession did He plead with men when He addressed them concerning repentance and faith!

“Woe unto thee, Bethsaida! woe unto thee, Chorazin!” were not words spoken by one who had a tearless eye. “Woe unto thee, Capernaum!” was not the desolating curse of one who had a hard unsympathetic heart. The Savior, when He wept over Jerusalem, was only doing once before men what He did all His life before God.

He wept over sinners. He longed for their salvation. “Never man spake like that man,” for having the highest truth, He spake it after the highest fashion. Never the ostentation of eloquence, never the

affectation of oratory, but ever the earnest, still, small pleading voice which “doth not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax.” He went about in His daily preaching instructing the people because He found them as sheep without a shepherd, and therefore, “He taught them many things.”

Physical, moral, spiritual good, good of all sorts the Savior did—and while I close this point as to His object of life, let me say that He did something more than all this—He wrought *enduring good* which abides with us now. The good that holy men do is imperishable. The Scripture says, “Their works do follow them,” but not to the grave—their works ascend upward.

If our works followed our bodies, they would rot in the tomb. But they follow our souls, and therefore mount up to immortality. Look upon the world now and see whether Jesus Christ is not still in Spirit going about doing good. He has gone up to glory, but the Spirit of His life and of His teaching is still among us.

And what is His religion doing? Ask you of our sires, and they will tell you how this land was translated from a region of savages into the abode of peace and joy. Look you yourselves in your own day to the far off islands of the south, and see how they have been transformed from dens of the wild blood-loving cannibals into abodes of civilized men.

Jesus Christ’s Gospel flies like an angel through the midst of heaven, proclaiming good news to men. And wherever its foot rests but for an hour, it transforms the desert into an Eden, and makes the wilderness blossom as the rose. May the Savior help us to live, so that when we die we may have sown some seeds which shall blossom over our tomb.

Thus we have given an outline of the Savior’s doing good. May we add this sentence as a comfort to any here who are seeking Jesus. If it were His eternal purpose and His life’s mission to do good, and He went about to find out the objects of it, why should He not do good to you? If He healed the blind, if He gave spiritual sight, why should He not give it *to you*?

O may the desire be breathed by you, poor seeking soul, breathed solemnly, but hopefully to Him, “O You, who in the days of Your flesh did take pity upon misery and wretchedness in every shape, take pity upon me! Save me with Your great salvation!” Rest assured, beloved hearer, that prayer will not go up to heaven in vain. His ear is still open to hear the plaint of woe, and His hand is ready still to give the healing touch, and the voice to say, “I will, be thou clean.” May He do good in *you* this morning.

**2.** A short time may be profitably spent in considering *the mode* in which this object was compassed. We are told that He “*went about doing good,*” which seems to suggest several points. First of all, He did the good *personally*. He “went about doing good.” He might, if He had chosen, have selected His place, and having seated Himself, He might have sent out His apostles as ambassadors to do good in His stead.

But you will recollect that when He sent them out, it was not that they might be proxies, but that they might be heralds. He sent them two and two unto every place whither He Himself would come. They were to be to Him what John the Baptist had been at His first coming.

Jesus Christ entered the field of labor in person. It is remarkable how the evangelists constantly tell us that He touched the leper with His own finger, that He visited the bedside of those sick with fever, and in cases where He was asked to speak the word only at a distance, He did not usually comply with such a request, but went Himself to the sick bed, and there personally wrought the cure.

A lesson to us if we would do good well, to do it ourselves. There are some things which we cannot do ourselves. We cannot remain among our families in England for instance and preach the gospel in Hindustan. We cannot be engaged this morning in listening to the Word, and at the same time visiting the lodging-house or den of iniquity in some back street.

There are some works of mercy which are best performed by others, but we can make these more personal by looking after the worker, and taking a deeper interest in him, and by attending him with our prayers. I wish that much more benevolence were performed by men themselves. I do not care to speak against societies, but it is such an odd thing that if I have twenty-one shillings to give away, I cannot give them to a deserving family myself.

But I must make it into about fifteen shillings before it goes at all, by paying it into a royal

something or other society. And then it proceeds by a roundabout method, and at last is delivered to the poor by a mere hand without a soul, and it is received by the poor, not as a gift of charity, but rather as a contribution from an unknown something with a secretary, which needs a place in which to drop its funds.

Why should you not go and give away the twenty-one shillings yourself, lovingly and tenderly? It will be better than letting somebody else pare it down to fifteen and give it away coldly and officially. So much depends upon the way of doing good. The look, the word, the prayer, the tear, will often be more valuable to the widow than that half-crown which you have given her.

I heard a poor person once say, "Sir, I went to so and so for help, and he refused me. but I would sooner be refused by him than I would have money given to me by so and so," mentioning another who gave it with a sort of, "Well, you know I do not approve of giving anything to such as you are, but here it is—you must have it I suppose, so be off with you."

Give your alms away yourselves, and you will learn by so doing, it will enable you to exercise Christian virtues. You will win a joy which it were not worthwhile to lose, and you will confer, in addition to the benevolence that you bestow, a blessing which cannot be conferred by the person who is your substitute.

He went about doing good. He did it Himself. Oh! some of you, preach yourselves, I pray you! Talk to the Sunday school children yourselves! Give away tracts—that is well enough if you cannot speak—but do try and talk yourselves. The influence of that hand laid upon your friend's shoulder, that eye of yours looking into his eye as you say, "Friend, I wish you were converted, my soul longs for your salvation"—there is more in that influence than in a whole library of tracts.

Seek souls yourselves. Fish with your own hooks. You cannot help being successful if you imitate your Master, and *yourselves* do good in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Savior not only "went about doing good" personally, but *His very presence did good*. The presence of the Savior is in itself a good, apart from the blessings which He bestowed. At the sight of Him, courage revived, drooping faith grew strong, hope brushed a tear from her eye and smiled. The sight of Jesus Christ, as once it calmed the waves and hushed the winds, did so a thousand times in men souls.

Even devils, when they saw Him, cried out and trembled. Sinners wept at the sight of His pitying goodness. The woman who broke the alabaster box of precious ointment felt that the only fit place to break it was near to Him. His presence made her sacred action yet more sweet. What cannot men do when Christ is there?

And O beloved, if we be anything like our Master, our presence will be of some value. There are some of my brethren, when I see them I feel strong. You go into a little prayer meeting, and numbers are not there. But such a saint is there, and you feel, "Well, if he be here, here is a prayer meeting at once."

You have work to do. It is very hard and toilsome, and you cannot prosper in it. But a brother drops into your little Sunday school, or into your class, and looks at it, and you feel, "Well, if I have that man's sympathy, I can go on again." Therefore, be careful to give your presence as much as you can to every good work, and do not isolate yourself from those actually engaged in labors of love.

Does not our Lord's going about doing good set forth His *incessant activity*? He did not only the good which was round about Him, which came close to hand—He did not only the good which was brought to Him, as when men were brought on their beds and laid at His feet—but He "went about." He could not be satisfied to be still.

Throughout the whole land of Judea, from Dan to Beersheba, He trod its weary acres. There was scarcely a village or a hamlet which had not been gladdened by the sight of Him. Even Jericho, accursed of old, had been blessed by His presence, and a great sinner had been made a great saint. Everywhere He went casting salt into the bitter waters and sowing with sunshine the abodes of sadness. He was always active in God's service.

Oh, the creeping, crawling manner in which some people serve the Lord. The very way in which

some people mumble through religious exercises is enough to make one sick at heart, to think that the solemn offices of religion should be entrusted to such inanimate beings. If God of old said of Laodicea that He would spew that church out of His mouth, what will He do with those professors in modern times, who are the very pink of propriety, but who were never touched with fire from heaven, and know not what *the* word “zeal” means?

Our Master was here and there, and everywhere. Let us gird up the loins of our mind and be not weary in well doing, but be “steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.”

Does not the text also imply that Jesus Christ *went out of His way to do good*? “He went *about* doing good.” There were short cuts which He would not take, because there were persons dwelling in the round-about way who must be met with. “He must needs go through Samaria.” It is said that that city lay in the straightest way to Jerusalem.

So it was, but it was not the right way, because the Samaritans so hated those whose faces were towards Jerusalem, that they maltreated them whenever they could. Yet the Master did not care for perils of way-laying enemies. He did not select the smoothest or the safest road, but He selected that in which there was a woman to whom He could do good.

He sits down on the well. I know it was not merely weariness that made Him sit there. And when He said, “I thirst: give me to drink,” it was not merely that He was thirsty. He had another weariness—He was patient over that woman’s sin, and longed to reveal Himself to her. He had another thirst—He did not mean merely, “Give me water out of that well.” When He said, “Give me to drink,” He meant, “Give Me your heart’s love, My soul pants for it. I want to see you—a poor adulterous sinner—saved from sin.”

How else do we understand the words which He said to His disciples, when they wondered that He spoke with the woman? He said, “I have meat to eat that ye know not of, for it is my meat and my drink to do the will of Him that sent me.” He had received meat and drink in seeing that woman leave her water-pot and go away to tell her fellow sinners, “Come see a man who told me all things that ever I did. Is not this the Christ?”

He went round about after the objects of His gracious desires. So must the Christian. You must not be content to do good in the regular circle of your movements—that is so far so well, but go beyond your old line. Break through the bounds of propriety every now and then, and do an odd thing.

I do believe that sometimes these odd expedients achieve more than regular methods. That was a quaint expedient of those who broke up the roof to let down a palsied man that Jesus might heal him. There has been a good deal said about that roof. According to some people, it was not a roof at all, but a sort of awning.

But this morning we will stick to our old version which tells us, “They brake up the tiling.” This must have made it a very bad look-out of those down below, but I dare say those up top argued, “Well, the Savior is there, and if anybody shall be hurt by a tile or two He can easily heal them. Anyhow we will get this man before Him, for this is the case in which we feel most concerned.”

Ah! dear friends, many people are so particular about making a little dust or breaking up a few tiles, but our mind is, never care about that, there will be time to clean the repair after souls are saved, and for so great an end as salvation we may neglect some few niceties and punctilios, and be most of all vehemently desirous that we may do good.

We have not quite done with the text yet. It means too that *Jesus Christ went far in doing good*. The district of Palestine was not very large, but you will observe that He went to the limit of it. He was as it were the bishop of the Holy Land and He never went out of the diocese, for He said He was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

But He went to the verge of it. He went to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. If He might not go over the mark, yet He will go up to the edge. So if there should happen to be any limit to your doing good in any particular place, at least go to the end of the limit. However, I rather like Rowland Hill’s thought—when he was blamed for preaching out of his parish he claimed that he never did so, for the whole world was

his parish.

Make the world the sphere of your occupation, according to the parable, “the field is the world.” I admire the Lord’s going about not simply for the miles He traveled, but for the space of character over which He passed. He “went about.” It is nothing wonderful that He went as far as Tyre and Sidon, but it is much that He went as far as publicans and sinners.

I do not wonder that He went from Dan to Beersheba, but I have wondered often that He went so far as to save harlots by His grace. We may in this sense go about doing good without traveling across the sea.

A minister once announced to his congregation one Sunday morning, “I am going on a mission to the heathen.” Now he had not told his deacons about it, and they looked at one another. The good people in the congregation, some of them began to take out their pocket handkerchiefs. They thought their minister was going to leave them—he was so useful and necessary to them that they felt sad at the bare idea of losing him. “But” he added, “I shall not be out of town.” So you may go on a mission to the heathen without going out of this huge town of ours.

You might almost preach to every sort of literal heathen within the bounds of London—to Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers of Mesopotamia. There are men of every color, speaking every language under heaven, now living in London. And if you want to convert Muslims, Turks, Chinese, men from Bengal, Java, or Borneo, you may find them all here. There are always representatives of every nation close at our door.

If you want men who have gone far in sin, great foreigners in that respect, you need not certainly leave London for that. You shall find men and women rotten with sin and reeking in the nostrils of God with their abominations. You may go about doing good and your railway ticket need not cost you one farthing.

No doubt Christ’s *perseverance* is intended in our text, for when rejected in one place, He goes to another. If one will not hear, another will. The *unity* of His purpose is also hinted at. He does not go about with two aims, but this one absorbs all His heart—“doing good.” And the *success*, too, of His purpose is here intended. He went about, and not only tried to do good, but He did it—He left the world better than He found it when He ascended to His Father God.

**3.** One moment concerning the  *motive*  of Christ’s doing good. It is not far to seek.  *He did good partly because He could not help it.* It was His nature to do good. He was all goodness, and as the clouds which are full of rain empty themselves upon the earth, even so must He.

You will have observed that all the good things which God has made are diffusive. There is light—you cannot confine light within narrow limits. Suppose we were to grow so bigoted and conceited as to conceive that we had all the light in the world inside this Tabernacle. We might have iron shutters made to keep the light in—yet it is very probable that the light would not agree with our bigotry, but would not come in at all, but leave us in the dark for wanting to confine it.

With splendid mirrors, Turkish carpets, jewelry, fine pictures, rare statuary, you may court the light to come into palatial halls. It comes, it is true, but as it enters it whispers, “And I passed through the iron grating of a prison, just now. I shone upon the poor cottager beneath the rude thatched roof, I streamed through the window out of which half the glass was gone, and gleamed as cheerily and willingly upon the rags of poverty as in these marble halls.”

You cannot clip the wings of the morning or monopolize the golden rays of the sun. What a space the light has traversed doing good. Millions of miles it has come streaming from the sun and yet further from yonder fixed star. O light! why could you not be contented with your own sphere, why journey so far from home?

Missionary rays come to us from so vast a distance that they must have been hundreds of years in reaching us, and yet their mission is not over, for they flash on to yet remoter worlds. So with the air—as far as the world is concerned, the air will throw itself down the shaft of the deepest coal pit, climb the loftiest Alp, and although men madly strive to shut it out—it will thrust itself into the fever lair and cool



the brow of cholera.

So with water. Here it comes dropping from every inch of the cloudy sky, flooding the streets, flushing the foul sewers, and soaking into the dry soil. Everywhere it will come, for water claims to have its influence everywhere felt.

Fire, too, who can bind its giant hands? The King cannot claim it as a royal perquisite. Among those few sticks which the widow woman with the red cloak has been gathering in the woods, it burns as readily as in Her Majesty's palace.

It is the nature of Jesus to diffuse Himself—it is His life to do good. His grand motive no doubt is *the display of the glorious attributes of God*. He went about doing good in order that JEHOVAH might be revealed in His splendor to the eyes of adoring men. He is the manifestation of Godhead. He is the express image of His Father's person. "In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily."

And though heaven, and earth, and sky, and sun, and stars, all show forth something of the goodness of God, yet the life of Jesus is the fullest and clearest manifestation of the beneficence of deity that ever will be accorded to the sons of men. This is an object worthy of God, to manifest Himself, and such an object Christ set before Him when He came to do good among the sons of men.

I have not said enough about the Savior, but still as much as time allows us, and I will close this point with this one thing—if Jesus Christ went about doing good, and if His motive was simply God's glory—poor troubled sinner—cannot He glorify God *in you*? You need pardon—you will be an illustrious instance of God's grace if He should ever save you.

Have hope. If Jesus Christ goes about, you are not too far off. If He looks upon the most forlorn, you are not in too desperate a plight. Cry to Him when your spirit is overwhelmed, yet look to the rock that is higher than you. "From the ends of the earth have I cried unto thee, O God, and thou heardest me." May it be your joy today to find Him your friend, who "went about doing good."

**II.** We were in the second place to CONSIDER OURSELVES. This is the application of the subject.

*Consider ourselves then as to the past*, with sorrow and shamefacedness. Have we gone about doing good? I fear me there are some here who never did any spiritual good. The tree is corrupt and it cannot bring forth good fruit. The fountain is bitter and it cannot yield sweet water.

You must be born again before you can go about doing good. While your nature is as father Adam left it, good cannot come from you. "There is none that doeth good, no not one." How clearly this is true in some persons, as proved by their very profession. The profession of some men is one in which they cannot hope to do good.

There are some in all callings who either do positive harm, or at any rate, cannot imagine that they are doing any good. Let them repent themselves. "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire." God grant that neither our character nor our vocation may stand in the way of our doing good.

But you who have new hearts and rights spirits, and are saved by faith in the precious blood of Jesus, have you done all the good you could? *I dare not say yes—I wish I dare*. No, Master, there must have been many times when I might have served You when I have not done it. I have been an unprofitable servant. I have not done what was my duty to have done.

Ah! some of you have missed a world of joy in having done so little good. You have not given, therefore, you are not increased. You never gave to others much, and so they have not given back to you full measure, pressed down, and running over. You have not borne the burdens of others, and so your own burden has become heavy and intolerable.

Christians, in looking back upon the past, must you not drop tears of regret, and do you not bless that preserving love which still follows you—yea, which will never let you go. But despite your barrenness and unfruitfulness, will not cease to work upon you till it has made you meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light—who day without night serve God in His Temple.

As to the *future*. The old question comes up, if any man says today, "I am resolved to go about doing good"—is he able to do it? And again, the reply comes—we must first be good or else we cannot do

good. The only way to be good is to seek to the good One, the good Master. If you have a new heart and a right spirit, then go your way and serve Him, but if not, pause awhile.

Unto the wicked, God says, “What hast thou to do to declare my statutes?” He will have clean-handed men to do His work. Wash first in the brazen laver if you would be a priest. God will not have men for His servants who would defile the sacred place. “Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the LORD.”

God give us to rest implicitly upon the Lord Jesus Christ by a living faith, and so to be cleansed in His precious blood, and then we may resolve to go forth and live for Him. Have we any work to do now that we can set about at once? If we have, whatsoever our hands find to do, let us do it. Let us not be asking for greater abilities than we have. If we can get them, let us do so—but meanwhile let us use what we have.

Go, you housewife, to your house, and from the lowest chamber to the top, go about doing good—here is range enough for you. Go, you teacher, to your little school, and among those boys or girls, let your example tell, and there is range enough for you. Go, you worker, to your shop, and amongst your fellow-workmen, let fall here and there a word for Christ.

Above all, let your example shine, and there is work for you. You domestic servants, the kitchen is sphere enough for you. You shall go about doing good from the dresser to the fireplace, and you shall have width enough and verge enough to make it a kingdom consecrated to God.

Without leaving your position, any one of you—without giving up the plough, or the cobbler’s lap stone, or the needle, or the plane, or the saw, without leaving business—without any of you good sisters wanting to be nuns, or any of us putting on the serge and becoming monks—in our own calling, let us go about doing good.

The best preparation for it will be to renew our dedication to Christ, be much in earnest prayer, seek the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, and then go forth in our Master’s strength with this as our resolve—that as portraits of Jesus Christ it shall be said of us, “He went about doing good.”

May God add His blessing for the Savior’s sake. Amen.

### **PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—ACTS 10**

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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).