

A CALL TO WORSHIP

NO. 1107

A SERMON
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 AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of Hosts: I will go also.”
Zechariah 8:21.

THIS prophecy may relate to the Jews, literally, and it is referred to by their learned doctors as to the days of the Messiah. We also believe that it refers to the days of the Messiah, and we look for times when again the Holy Land shall be fully inhabited, and the people shall rejoice to meet together to worship the Lord their God. We do not see, however, that this prophecy has yet been accomplished, and we look for it to be fulfilled in the latter days. Spiritually it teaches just this, that when God returns to bless His church, there are certain signs and marks of His return. Just as the coming back of the sun when he advances north of the Equator, and again cheers us with his warmth, is marked by the springing up of flowers, and the singing of birds, so the return of God's Holy Spirit to bless His church is marked by certain signs and tokens. The text tells us what those signs and tokens are, but before I mention them, let me suggest that every believer should pray that these cheering indications may be manifest in our midst, that in these, our days, the Lord may return unto His Jerusalem, and be jealous for her with a great jealousy; that we may see glad seasons such as our fathers have told us of, which happened in their days, and in the olden times before them. As far as shall lie in the ability of any one of us, may we help towards such revivals by our prayers, by our efforts, and by our consistent obedience to the gospel. And may the Lord visit us according to the desire of our hearts.

I. One of the first signs of God's presence among a people is that **THEY TAKE GREAT INTEREST IN DIVINE WORSHIP**. “The inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts.” It is clear from this, that they no longer despise assemblies for worship, and no longer count divine service to be weariness. On the contrary, they begin to value the means of grace, and desire to make good use of them.

The first solemn assembly mentioned here is *the prayer meeting*, and certainly one of the surest tokens of a visitation of God's Spirit to a community is their delighting to meet for prayer. The first cry of the people mentioned in our text was, “Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord.” It is no statement of mine, suggested by unreasonable zeal, but it is the result of long-continued observation when I assert that the condition of a church may be very accurately gauged by its prayer meetings. If the spirit of prayer is not with the people, the minister may preach like an angel, but he cannot expect success. If there is not the spirit of prayer in a church, there may be wealth, there may be talent, there may be a measure of effort, there may be extensive machinery, but the Lord is not there. It is a sure evidence of the presence of God that men pray, as the rising of the thermometer is an evidence of the increase of the temperature. As the Nilometer measures the rising of the water in the Nile, and so foretells the amount of harvest in Egypt, so is the prayer meeting a “graceometer,” and from it we may judge of the amount of divine working among a people. If God is near a church, it must pray, and if He is not there, one of the first tokens of His absence will be slothfulness in prayer.

God's people, by their saying one to another, “Let us go speedily to pray,” manifest that they have a sense of their needs. They feel that they need much, much that nature cannot yield them. They feel their need of grace, their need of quickening, and their need of God's help if sinners are to be converted. They feel their need of His help if even those who are saved are to be steadfast, their need of the Holy Spirit

that they may grow in grace and glorify God. He who never prays surely does not know his own needs, and how can he be taught of the Lord at all? God's people are a people sensible of their needs, and therefore the absence of a sense of poverty is a sad token.

Moreover, the love which God's people have for prayer shows their desire after heavenly things. Those who frequently meet together for persistent, wrestling prayer, practically show that they desire to see the Lord's Kingdom come. They are not so taken up with their own business that they cannot afford time to think of God's business. They are not so occupied with the world's pleasures, that they take no pleasure in the things of God. Believers in a right state of heart value the prosperity of the church, and seeing that it can only be promoted by God's own hand, they cry mightily unto the Lord of hosts to stretch out His hand of mercy, and to be favorable to His church and cause. Church members who never pray for the good of the church have no love for it. If they do not plead for sinners, they have no love for the Savior, and how can they be truly converted persons? Such as habitually forsake the assembling of themselves together for prayer may well suspect the genuine character of their piety. I am not, of course, alluding to those who are debarred by circumstances, but I allude to those who, from frivolous excuses, absent themselves from the praying assemblies. How dwells the love of God in them? Are they not dead branches of the vine? May they not expect to be taken away before long?

Earnest meetings for prayer not only prove our sense of need, and our desire for spiritual blessings, but they manifest most practically our faith in the living God, and our belief that He hears prayer. For, men will not continue in supplication if they do not believe that God hears them. Sensible men would soon cease their prayers if they were not convinced that there is an ear which hears their petitions. Who would persevere in a vain exercise? Our united prayers prove that we know that God is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. We know that the Lord is able to work according to our desires, and that He is willing to be entreated of us. I have never known a thirsty man by a well who would not use the bucket which was there ready to hand, unless he was of the opinion that the well was dry. I have never known a man who wanted wealth, and had a good trade, who would not exercise his trade. And so I have never known a man who believed prayer to be really effectual, and felt his great needs, who did not engage in prayer. It is an ill token to any community of Christians when prayer is at a low ebb, for it is clear evidence that they do not know their own needs, they are not anxious about spiritual things, and neither do they believe that God will enrich them in answer to their petitions. Beloved, may we never, as a church, deserve censure for neglecting prayer. Our meetings for prayer have excited general astonishment by their number, but they are not all they might be. I shall put it to the conscience of each one to say whether you are as prayerful as you should be. Did you ever hear of a church member who had not attended a prayer meeting for a month? Do you know of church members who never assemble with the brethren so much as once in a quarter of a year? Do you know of any who have not been to a prayer meeting in this place for the last six months? Do you know such? I will not say I know any such. I will do no more than hint that such people may exist. But if you know them, will you give them my Christian love, and say that nothing depresses the pastor's spirit like the absence of church members from the public assemblies of prayer. And that, if anything could make him strong in the Lord and give him courage to go forward in the Lord's work, it would be if all of you were to make the prayer meeting your special delight. I shall be satisfied when I see our prayer meetings as crowded as the services for preaching. And it strikes me if ever we are fully baptized into God's Spirit, we shall arrive at that point. A vastly larger amount of prayer ought to be among us than at present, and if the Lord visits us graciously, He will set us praying without ceasing.

But next, these people also took an interest in meetings for instruction. I find that the Chaldee translates the second sentence, "Let us seek the doctrine of Jehovah of Hosts." The Lord's coming near to any people will be sure to excite in them a longing to hear the Word. God sends impulses of inquiry over men's minds, and suddenly places of worship become crowded which were half empty before. Preachers also, who were cold and dead, become quickened, and speak with earnestness and life. No doubt waves of religious movement pass over nations and peoples, and when God comes to a people, the crest of that

wave will be seen in this form: the kingdom of heaven becomes an object of interest, and men press unto it. During the revival under John the Baptist, the people went in crowds into the wilderness to hear the strange preacher who bade them repent. The revival under the apostles was marked by their everywhere preaching the Word, and the people listening. This was the great token of the Reformation; meetings were held under Gospel Oaks, out upon the commons, and away in lone houses, and in glens and woods men thronged to listen to the Word of God. The professionals of popery were forsaken for the simple preaching of the truth. This also marked the last grand revival of religion in our own country under Whitefield and Wesley. The Word of the Lord was precious in those days, and whether the gospel was preached among the colliers of Kingswood, or the rabble of Kennington Common, tens of thousands were awakened and rejoiced in the joyful notes of free grace. Men loved to hear the word: they said to one another, "Let us seek the Lord." It is said that Moorfields would be full of light on a dark winter's morning at five o'clock when Mr. Whitefield was to preach, because so many people would be finding their way to the rendezvous, each one carrying a lantern. And so also over there in Zoar Street, in Southwark, when Mr. John Bunyan was out of prison, and was going to preach, a couple of thousand would be assembled at five o'clock in the morning to enjoy his honest testimony. It is a token for good when people press to hear the Word. I think we have in a measure the first token—a love for prayer, but we need far more of it. As for the second token, namely, an earnest love for listening to the word of God, we have that in abundance. See you not how the crowds rush in like a mighty torrent as soon as the doors are open?

Putting the two together, it seems that both these forms of meeting were loved by the people because they sought salvation therein, or as the margin has it, they "entreated the face of the Lord." They came to pray with a view to be saved. They came to hear preaching with a view to divine favor. They wanted reconciliation with God; they had wandered from Him, but now they sought Him. They wanted fellowship with God. They had said to God, "Depart from us; we desire not the knowledge of Your ways." But now they said, "Reveal Yourself unto us, O God, as You do not unto the world." They longed to promote God's glory, even as before they dishonored Him. Yes, when prayer meetings and preaching meetings shall be attended with this end and objective—that we may get near to God, and that we may glorify God, there shall be happy days for us. Master Fox in his, "Acts and Monuments," speaking of the time when the Reformation was breaking out, uses language something to this effect: "It was lovely to see their travels, earnest seeking, burning zeal, Bible reading, watching, sweet assemblies, resort of one neighbor to another for conference and mutual confirmation." And, he adds, "All which may make us now to blush for shame in these, our days, of free profession." We may take the good man's hint and feel shame for neglected opportunities, cold devotions, and disregard of the word of God. Our fathers loved to meet for prayer, and to hear the preaching of the truth. And when they came together, it was with an intensely earnest desire to obtain the divine blessing. To get this they risked life and liberty, meeting, even, when fine and imprisonment, or perhaps the gallows might be their reward. O to see the same earnestness among ourselves as to the means of grace! May the Lord Jesus send it to us by the working of His Holy Spirit.

II. Another sign of God's visiting a people in mercy is that **THEY STIR EACH OTHER UP TO ATTEND THE MEANS OF GRACE**, for "The inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord." That is to say, they did not merely ask one another to go if they casually met; they did not bring in the subject accidentally if they could do so readily in common conversation—but the inhabitants of one city went to another on purpose to exhort them. They made a journey about it. As men go to market, from town to town, so, did these people try to open a market for Christ, and not only one messenger, but many of the inhabitants of one city went on purpose all the way to another city, with set design, to induce them to join in worship, saying, "Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord." They put themselves out of the way to do it. They had such a desire that great numbers might come together to worship the Most High, that they took much trouble to invite their neighbors.

God will be with us, indeed, if each one of us shall be anxious to bring others to Jesus, and to that end shall try to bring them to listen to the word of God.

Why were these men so earnest? The reply will be, they persuaded others to come to the meetings for worship out of love to God's house, to God's cause, and to God Himself. God's house is honored and beautified when great numbers come together. The ways of Zion do mourn and languish when but few assemble for prayer. Christ has promised to be where two or three are met together in His name, but still, it is not helpful to comfortable fellowship for a mere handful to meet in a large house. We feel like sparrows alone on the housetop when such is the case. A great space and only a sprinkling of people to occupy it, is like a big barn with only one bundle of straw in it, the winds howl in and out of it very miserably. I am sure if any of you attend a place of worship where there are very few beside yourselves, you must feel unhappy, and if you do not, why surely your hearts cannot be in the right place. Warm hearts are not easily kept alive among empty pews. A coal must be very lively to burn alone, but many glowing coals laid together help to keep each other alight. No one can doubt, moreover, that full houses give opportunity to the preacher to glorify God. It is hopeful work to throw the net where there are great shoals of fish. Where men are hearing, we may hope that God will be blessing, and therefore earnest Christians love to see the aisles and seats crowded. Besides, God is glorified when great numbers come together with earnest minds to celebrate His worship. In early days, in the Jewish Church, the men of Israel did not come by twos and threes and meet together in scant numbers, but from all parts of Judea's land, north, south, east, and west, they came together in companies, singing through the glades of the forest, singing through the dells, and singing over the hills. And when they reached the city of Jerusalem in their hundreds of thousands, their praise was a great shout, like the voice of thunder, and the smoke of their sacrifices rose up in clouds to heaven. Those were grand days. Does not David seem to relish the service of the Lord his God all the more because of the multitude that kept holy day? Therefore the saints love to see many come to pray and to listen to the Word, because the multitude honors the house, and God thus honors God Himself. O brethren, we think the cause is sadly declining when hearers are like the gleanings of the vintage, when service time comes and sees vacant seats by the score because professors shrink at the weather, or hunt up an excuse for staying at home, being too idle, too indifferent to cross the threshold of their houses unless some eloquent preacher or fresh comer shall attract them. But we reckon that God's cause prospers when the people come joyfully in their bands to listen to the truth, and God's Spirit applies it to their hearts with power, leading them to prayer and praise.

Moreover, believers love to bring others to the House of God because they wish to do good for them. Did you ever notice how the little birds, when they find a heap of corn, begin to chatter and twitter as if they would call all the other birds to come and feast? Grace is generous, and is never akin to churlish Nabal. Misers would gladly keep all their wealth to themselves, but a man who is rich in faith feels his happiness increased when others have faith too. As soon as we drink of the water of life, a sacred instinct within us bids us cry, "Come." "Ho, everyone who thirsts, come you to the waters." He knows not the grace of God who has no desire that others should know it also. You will assuredly long for the souls of others if God has saved your soul. Natural humanity, let alone our alliance to the divine nature, leads us to bid others come to Christ.

Besides, the love of company in the Christian makes him invite his neighbors to gospel worship. Believers are like sheep in this among other things, namely, that they are gregarious. A man who loves to keep his religion to himself must surely be a stranger to the religion of Christ. Communion is one of the sweetest joys of the spirit. Fellowship with saints above will be one jewel of our everlasting crown, and fellowship with saints below is one of the sweetest cordials of our mortal cares. "I went to the House of God in company," says David, as if it made the house so much the sweeter to go in company with others who went there. "I had gone with the multitude; I went with them to the House of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holy day." For the sake of communion we long to see many going upon the heavenly pilgrimage.

Observe in our text there does not appear to have been any minister or missionary employed to go from one city to another, and to say, "Let us go and pray," but the inhabitants, themselves, undertook the duty of invitation and persuasion, and said, "Let us go and pray unto the Lord." The people, themselves, attended to mutual provocation to love and to good works. How I wish they did so now! They did not wait for the exhortations of one specially set apart to be a prompter and an organizer, but their own hearts were so warm that they did it spontaneously among themselves. My brethren may you thus be pastors to one another. There are far too many of you for me to look after personally, therefore I pray you stir one another up to every good word and work. I believe that when a man stirs others up it is good for him, for a man cannot, in common decency, be very cold, who bids others be warm. He cannot, surely, unless he is an arrant hypocrite, be negligent of those duties which he bids others attend to. Beloved, I commit this charge to you, and then I have done with this point. This morning I ask you to visit one another and to say, "Come, let us not as a church lose the presence of God after nearly 20 years' enjoyment of it; let not our minister's hands grow weak by our neglect of prayer. Let not the work of the church, flag through our indifference, but let us make a brotherly covenant that we will go speedily to pray before the Lord and seek the Lord of Hosts, that we may retain His presence, and have yet more of it, to the praise of the glory of His grace."

III. I must pass on to notice that it appears from our text that it is a sure mark of God's visiting a people, when **THEY ARE URGENT TO ATTEND UPON THESE HOLY EXERCISES AT ONCE.** The text says, "Let us go *speedily* to pray," by which is meant, I suppose, that when the time came to pray, they were punctual; they were not laggards; they did not come into the assembly late; they did not drop in, one by one, long after the service had begun, but they said, "Let us go *speedily*." They looked up to their clocks and said, "How long will it take us to walk so as to be there at the commencement? Let us start five minutes before that time, lest we should not be able to keep up the pace, and should, by any means, reach the door after the first prayer." I wish late comers would remember David's choice. You remember what part he wished to take in the House of God? He was willing to be a doorkeeper, and that not because the doorkeeper has the most comfortable berth, for that is the hardest post a man can choose, but he knew that doorkeepers are the first in, and the last out, and so David wished to be first at the service, and the last at the going away. How few would be of David's mind! It has been said that Dissenters in years gone by placed the clock outside the meeting house so that they might never enter late. But the modern Dissenters place the clock inside, so that their preachers may not keep them too long. There is some truth in the remark, but it is not to our honor. This was, however, a fault with our forefathers, for quaint old Herbert said—

*"O be drest,
Stay not for th' other pin:
Why You have lost
A joy for it worth worlds."*

Let us mend our ways and say, one to another, in the language of the text, "Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord." Let us go with quick feet. If we go slowly to market, let us go quickly to prayer meeting. If we are slow on week days, let us go quickly on the Sabbath. Let us never keep Jesus Christ waiting, but we shall do so if we are not on time, for He is sure to be punctual, even if only two or three are met together in His name.

The expression, however, means more than this. "Let us go speedily," means, let us go heartily: do not let us crawl to prayer, but let us go to it as men who have something before them which attracts them. When the angels serve God, they never do it as though they were half asleep. They are all alive and burning like flames of fire. They have six wings, and I guarantee you, they use them all. When the Lord says, "Gabriel, go upon My bidding," he outstrips the lightning. O, to exhibit some such ardor and zest in the service of God. If we pray, let us pray as if we mean it. If we worship, let us worship with our hearts. "Let us go speedily," and may the Lord make our hearts to be like the chariots of Amminadib for swiftness and rapidity; glowing wheels and burning axles may God give to our spirits, that we may never let the world think we are indifferent to the love of Jesus. "Let us go speedily."

The words, “Let us go speedily,” mean, let us go at once, or instantly. If any good thing has been neglected, and we resolve to attend to it better, let us do it at once. Revivals of religion—when is the best time for them? Directly! When is the best time to repent of sin? Today! When is the best time for a cold heart to grow warm? Today! When is the season for a sluggish Christian to be industrious? Today! When is the period for a backslider to return? Today! When is the time for one who has crawled along the road to heaven to mend his pace? Today! Is it not always today? And, indeed, when should it be? “Tomorrow,” you say. Ah, but you may never have it. And when it comes, it will still be today. Tomorrow is only in the fool’s almanac—it exists nowhere else. Today! Today, let us go speedily. I beseech the Church of God here to be yet more alive, and at once to wake up. Time is flying—we cannot afford to lose it. The devil is wide awake, why should we be asleep? Error is stalking through the land; evil influences are abroad everywhere; men are dying; hell is filling; the grave is gorged and yet is insatiable, and the man of destruction is not yet satisfied. Shall we lie down in wicked satisfaction, yielding to base laziness? Awake, arise, you Christians! Now, even now, lest it be said of you, “Curse you Meroz, says the Lord, curse you bitterly the inhabitants thereof, because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.” I know we are all apt to think that we live in the most important era of history; and I admit that under certain aspects every day is a crisis, but I claim liberty to say that there never was a period in the world’s history when Christian activity, and prayerfulness, and genuine revival were more needed than just now. Where is our nation? Is it not on the very verge of becoming, once again, a province of the Pope’s dominion? Are not the modern Pharisees compassing sea and land to make proselytes? Does it not seem as if the people were gone mad about their idols, and were altogether fascinated by the charms of the whore of Babylon, and drunken with her cup? Do you not see everywhere the old orthodox faith forsaken, and men occupying Christian pulpits that do not believe, but even denounce the doctrines which they have sworn to defend? Might I not say of Christendom in England, that “Her whole head is sick and her whole heart faint”? The daughter of Zion staggers in the street for weakness. There is none to help her among all her sons. All her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they have become her enemies. Her adversaries are the chief, her enemies prosper. Her Nazarites were purer than snow, and their separation from the world was known of all men; but now they are defiled with worldliness until they are blacker than coal. From the daughter of Zion her beauty is departed. O you that love her, let your hearts sound as a harp for her! O you that love her, weep day and night for her hypocrisy, for unless the Lord returns unto her, the time of her sore distress draws near. Thus says the Lord, “Arise, cry out in the night season, pour out your hearts like water before the Lord, and then the Lord will return and be gracious to His inheritance.”

IV. For a moment I shall call your attention to another point. When God visits a people, they will not only attend to prayer and preaching, and stir each other up to do so at once, but **THEY WILL HAVE A SPECIAL EYE TO GOD IN THESE DUTIES.** Observe, they shall say, “Let us go speedily to pray *before the Lord*, and to *seek the Lord of hosts*.” Alas, many go to religious meetings to be seen of men. I am afraid there is a great deal too much exhibition of dress in some quarters, and there certainly cannot be a greater abomination than to make the house of God a show room for our finery. Jesus might say, “Take these things away. It is written My house shall be called a house of prayer, but you have made it an exhibition wherein to display yourselves.” Some go to worship because it is the custom, and it would not be respectable to stay away. “We must have a pew in church, you know, or we should be remarked upon in society.” I am glad that people attend divine worship for any reason, but mere custom is a poor motive, and is no sign of grace. The people in the text did not say, “We will go that we may see our neighbors, and that our neighbors may see us.” No: they went to “pray before the Lord.” They did not assemble to seek a man. They did not go to hear Mr. So-and-So preach. Of course they would sooner hear one who preached the entire gospel, and preached it plainly, than another who preached half the gospel, and fired over their heads. But, still, they looked through the man, to the man’s Master, and they did not think that the Master was tied up to any one man. May we cultivate in our midst the desire to worship for God’s sake, not for the preacher’s sake, whoever he may be. I believe it is not wrong for a

Christian to feel that he is better fed by one minister than by another, and therefore to be most glad when God's servant is in the pulpit. But if that feeling grows so that if he cannot hear his favorite preacher he will stay at home, it is most mischievous. I thank God that my Master has other preachers besides Paul. There is Apollos, there is Cephas, and beyond these I see a great company of them that publish the good news. I will hear what God will speak through them.

I would have you note, beloved, how different is my text from that formal worship into which it is so easy to fall. "I have been to the prayer meeting. I have done my duty, and I can go home satisfied. I have taken a seat at the tabernacle, and listened to two sermons on Sunday—I feel I have done my duty." Oh, dear hearer! That is a poor way of living. I need a great deal more than all that, or I shall be wretched. At the prayer meeting I must see God. I must pour out my soul before Him. I must feel that the spirit of prayer has been there, and that I have participated in it, otherwise what was the good of my being there? I must, when in the assembly on the Sabbath day, find some blessing to my own soul. I must get another glimpse of the Savior. I must come to be somewhat more like He. I must feel my sin rebuked, or my flagging graces revived. I must feel that God has been blessing poor sinners, and bringing them to Christ. I must feel, indeed, that I have come into contact with God, or else what is my Sunday worth, and what is my having been in the assembly worth? If God shall bless you, indeed, you will worship spiritually, and you will count nothing to be true worship which is not of the spirit, and of the heart and soul. May God quicken us all up to that point, and He shall have the praise.

V. The last thing is this: it is a blessed sign of God's visiting a people when EACH ONE OF THEM IS PERSONALLY RESOLVED THAT HE WILL, IN A SPIRITUAL MANNER, WAIT UPON GOD. Notice the last four words. "*I will go also.*" "Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of Hosts: *I will go also.*" That is the point—"I will go also." The Christian should neither be content, when he goes to worship, to leave others behind, nor should he be content to drive others before him, and stay behind himself. It is said of Julius Caesar that he owed his victories to the fact that he never said to his soldiers, "Go," but always said, "Let us go." That is the way to win. Example is mightier than precept. We read of the Pharisees of old that they laid burdens on other men's shoulders, but they did not touch them with one of their fingers: true Christians are not so. They say, "I will go also." Was not that bravely spoken of poor old Latimer, when he was to be burnt with Ridley. Ridley was a younger and stronger man, and as he walked to the stake, old Latimer, with his quaintness about him to the last, cried to his brother, Ridley, "Have after, as fast as my poor old legs can carry me." The dear old saint was marching to his burning as fast as he could; not at all loath to lay his aged body upon the altar for his Lord. That is the kind of man who makes others into men; the man who habitually says, "I will go also, even if I am called to be burned for Christ. Whatever is to be done or suffered, I will go also." I would be ashamed to stand here and say to you, "Brethren, pray! Brethren, preach! Brethren, work," and then be an idler myself. And you, also, would be ashamed to say to others, "Let us pray. Let us be earnest," while you are not praying, and not earnest yourselves. Example is the backbone of instruction. Be what you would have others be, and do what you would have others do.

"I will go also," because I need to pray as much as anybody else. I will go to hear the Word, for I need to hear it as well as others. I will go and wait upon God, for I need to see His face. I will cry to Him for a blessing, for I need a blessing. I will confess my sin before Him, for I am full of sin. I will ask mercy through the precious blood of Jesus, for I must have it or perish. "I will go also." If nobody else will go, I will go; and if all the rest go, I will go also. I do not want to pledge any of you this morning. I shall not, therefore, ask you to hold up your hands, but I should like to put it very personally to all the members of this church. We have enjoyed the presence and blessing of God for many years in a very remarkable manner, and it is not taken from us. But I am jealous; I believe it is a godly jealousy, and not unbelief—lest there should be among us slackness in prayer, and a lack of zeal for the glory of God, and a neglecting of the souls of our neighbors, and ceasing to believe to the full in our mission, and in the call of God to be each one of us, in this world as Christ was saviors of others. My brethren, knit together as we are in church fellowship, and bound by common cords to one blessed Master, let each one say

within himself, “I will go also. The church shall be the subject of my prayer. The minister shall share in my petitions. The Sunday school shall not be forgotten. The College shall be remembered in supplication. The Orphanage shall have my heart’s petitions. I will plead with God for the evangelists. I will consider the congregation at the Tabernacle, and pray that it may gently melt into the church; I will pray for the strangers who fill the aisles and crowd the pews that God will bless them. Yes, I will say unto God this day, ‘My God, You have saved me, given me a part and lot among Your people, and put me in Your garden where Your people grow and flourish. I will not be a barren tree, but abound in fruit, especially in prayer. If I cannot do anything else, I can pray. If this is my one mite, I will put that into the treasury. I will put You in remembrance, and plead with You, and give You no rest until You establish Your cause, and make it praise in the earth.’” I am not asking more of you than Jesus would ask, nor do I exact anything at your hands: you will cheerfully render that which is a tribute due to the infinite love of your Lord. Now, do not say, dear brother, “I hope the church will wake up.” Leave it alone, and mind that you wake up yourself. Do not say, “I hope they will be stirred up this morning.” Never mind others! Stir up yourself. Begin to inquire, “Which prayer meeting shall I go to, for I mean to join the people of God, and let them hear my voice, or at least have my presence. And if I cannot go to the Tabernacle, I will drop in near my own house. And if there is no meeting there, I will open my own house—the largest room of my cottage shall be used for a prayer meeting, or my parlor if I have one. I will have a share in the glorious work of attracting a blessing from the skies. I will send up my electric rod of prayer into the clouds of blessing to bring down the divine force.” Do it! Do it! Let each one say, “I will go also.” May God bless this word to His people, and I am sure it will result in benediction to sinners. For remember, you ungodly ones, that all this noise is about you. What we need the blessing of God for is that you may be saved. We cannot bear that you should remain as you are, unconverted. And I am asking God’s people to pray especially with an eye to your salvation. Shall *we* think about your souls, and will you not think about them yourselves? Are we inclined to move heaven and earth that you might be saved, and will you sit still and perish? May the Lord awaken you to say, “If others are going to pray unto the Lord, and seek His face, I will go also,” and the Lord bless you, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—ZECHARIAH 8.

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