

GOSPEL MISSIONS**NO. 76****A SERMON****DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, APRIL 27, 1856****BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON****AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK****ON BEHALF OF THE BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY**

“And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region.”
Acts 13:49

I SHALL not confine myself to the text. It being an old custom to take texts when we preach, I have taken one, but I shall address you, at large, upon a subject which I am sure will occupy your attention, and has done for many days and years past—the subject of Gospel missions. We feel persuaded that all of you are of one mind in this matter, that it is the absolute duty as well as the eminent privilege of the church to proclaim the Gospel to the world. We do not conceive that God will do His own work without instruments, but that, as He has always employed means in the work of the regeneration of this world, He will still continue to do the same, and that it becomes the church to do its utmost to spread the truth wherever it can reach the ear of man.

We have not two opinions on that point. Some churches may have, but we have not. Our doctrines, although they are supposed to lead to apathy and sloth, have always proved themselves to be eminently practical. The fathers of the missions were all zealous lovers of the doctrines of the grace of God, and we believe, the great supporters of missionary enterprise, if it is to be successful, must always come from those who hold God’s truth firmly and boldly, and yet have fire and zeal with it, and desire to spread it everywhere.

But there is a point on which we have great division of opinion and that is as to the reason why we have had so little success in our missionary labors. There may be some who say the success has been proportionate to the agency and that we could not have been more successful. I am far from being of their opinion and I do not think they themselves would express it on their knees before Almighty God.

We have not been successful to the extent we might have expected, certainly not to an apostolic extent, certainly with nothing like the success of Paul or Peter, or even of those eminent men who have preceded us in modern times, and who were able to evangelize whole countries, turning thousands to God.

Now, what is the reason for this? Perhaps we may turn our eyes on high and think we find that reason in the sovereignty of God, which has withholden His Spirit and has not poured out His grace as aforetime. I shall be prepared to grant all men may say on that point, for I believe in the ordination of everything by Almighty God. I believe in a present God in our defeats as well as in our successes—a God as well in the motionless air as in the careering tempest, a God of ebbs as well as a God of floods. But still we must look at home for the cause.

When Zion travails, she brings forth children. When Zion is in earnest, God is in earnest about His work. When Zion is prayerful, God blesses her. We must not, therefore, arbitrarily look for the cause of our failure in the will of God, but we must also see what is the difference between ourselves and the men of apostolic times, and what it is that renders our success so trifling in comparison with the tremendous results of apostolic preaching. I think I shall be able to show one or two reasons why our holy faith is not so prosperous as it was then.

In the first place, *we have not apostolic men*. In the second place, *they do not set about their work in an apostolic style*. In the third place, *we have not apostolic churches to back them up*. And in the fourth

place, *we have not the apostolic influence of the Holy Ghost* in the measure which they had it in ancient times.

I. First, WE HAVE FEW APOSTOLIC MEN IN THESE TIMES.

I will not say we have none. Here and there we may have one or two, but unhappily their names are never heard. They do not start out before the world and are not noted as preachers of God's truth. We had a Williams once, a true apostle, who went from island to island, not counting his life dear unto him. But Williams is called to his reward.

We had a Knibb, who, toiled for his Master with seraphic earnestness and was not ashamed to call an oppressed slave his brother. But Knibb, too, has entered into his rest. We have one or two still remaining, precious and treasured names. We love them fervently and our prayers shall always rise to heaven on their behalf. We always say, in our prayers, "God bless such men as Moffat! God bless those who are earnestly toiling and successfully laboring."

But cast your eyes around and where can we find many such men? They are all good men. We find no fault with them. They are better than we. We ourselves shrink into nothingness compared with them. But we must still say of them that they are less than their fathers. They differ from the mighty apostles in many respects, which we think even they would not be slow to own.

I am not speaking of missionaries only, but of ministers too, for I take it we have as much to mourn over in regard to the spread of the Gospel in England as in foreign lands, and much to regret the lack of men filled with the Holy Ghost and with fire.

In the first place, we have not men with *apostolic zeal*. Converted in a most singular way, by a direct interposition from heaven, Paul, from that time forward, became an earnest man. He had always been earnest, in his sin and in his persecutions. But after he heard that voice from heaven, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" and had received the mighty office of an apostle, and had been sent forth a chosen vessel to the Gentiles, you can scarcely conceive the deep, the awful earnestness which he manifested.

Whether he ate, or drank, or whatsoever he did, he did all for the glory of his God. He never wasted an hour. He was employing his time either in ministering with his own hands unto his necessities, or else lifting those hands in the synagogue, on Mars-Hill, or anywhere where he could command the attention of the multitude.

His zeal was so earnest and so burning that he could not (as we unfortunately do) restrain himself within a little sphere, but he preached the Word everywhere. It was not enough for him to have it handed down that he was the apostle of Pisidia, but he must go also to Pamphylia. It was not enough that he should be the great preacher of Pamphylia and Pisidia, but he must also go to Attalia. And when he had preached throughout all Asia, he must needs take a ship to Greece and preach there also.

I believe not once only did Paul hear in his dream the men of Macedonia saying, "Come over and help us," but every day and hour he heard the cry in his ears from multitudes of souls, "Paul, Paul, come over and help us." He could not restrain himself from preaching. "Woe is unto me" he said, "if I preach not the Gospel. God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of Christ."

Oh! if you could have seen Paul preach, you would not have gone away as you do from some of us, with half a conviction that we do not mean what we say. His eyes preached a sermon without his lips, and his lips preached it, not in a cold and frigid manner, but every word fell with an overwhelming power upon the hearts of his hearers.

He preached with power, because he was in downright earnest. You had a conviction, when you saw him, that he was a man who felt he had a work to do and must do it, and could not contain himself unless he did do it. He was the kind of preacher whom you would expect to see walk down the pulpit stairs straight into his coffin, and then stand before his God, ready for his last account.

Where are the men like that man? I confess I cannot claim that privilege and I seldom hear a solitary sermon which comes up to the mark in earnest, deep, passionate longing for the souls of men.

We have no eyes now like the eyes of the Savior, which could weep over Jerusalem. We have few voices like that earnest impassioned voice which seemed perpetually to cry, "Come unto me, and I will

give you rest.” “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thee as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but you would not.”

If ministers of the Gospel were more hearty in their work of preaching, if, instead of giving lectures and devoting a large part of their time to literary and political pursuits, they would preach the Word of God, and preach it as if they were pleading for their own lives, ah! then, my brethren, we might expect great success. But we cannot expect it while we go about our work in a half-hearted way, and have not that zeal, that earnestness, that deep purpose which characterized those men of old.

Then again, I take it we have not men in our days who can preach like Paul—as to *their faith*. What did Paul do? He went to Philippi—did he know a soul there? Not one. He had his Master’s truth and he believed in the power of it. He was unattended and devoid of pomp, or show, or parade. He did not go to a pulpit with a soft cushion in it to address a respectable congregation, but he walked through the streets and began to preach to the people. He went to Corinth, to Athens, alone, single-handed, to tell the people the Gospel of the blessed God. Why? Because he had faith in the Gospel and believed it would save souls and hurl down idols from their thrones. He had no doubt about the power of the Gospel.

But nowadays, my brethren, we have not faith in the Gospel we preach. How many there are who preach a Gospel, which they are afraid will not save souls, and therefore, they add little bits of their own to it in order, as they think, to win men to Christ! We have known men who believed Calvinistic doctrines, but who preached Calvinism in the morning and Arminianism in the evening, because they were afraid God’s Gospel would not convert sinners, so they would manufacture one of their own.

I hold that a man who does not believe God’s Gospel is able to save men’s souls, does not believe it at all. If God’s truth will not save men’s souls, man’s lies cannot. If God’s truth will not turn men to repentance, I am sure there is nothing in this world that can.

When we believe the Gospel to be powerful, then we shall see it is powerful. If I walk into this pulpit and say, “I know what I preach is true,” the world says I am an egotist. “The young man is dogmatical.” Ay, and the young man means to be. He glories in it, he keeps it to himself as one of his peculiar titles, for he does most firmly believe what he preaches.

God forbid that I should ever come tottering up the pulpit stairs to teach anything I was not quite sure of, something which I hoped might save sinners, but of which I was not exactly certain. When I have faith in my doctrines, those doctrines will prevail, for confidence is the winner of the palm. He who has courage enough to grasp the standard, and hold it up, will be sure enough to find followers.

He who says, “I know,” and asserts it boldly in his Master’s name, without disputing, will not be long before he will find men who will listen to what he says and who will say, “This man speaks with authority, and not as the Scribes and Pharisees.” That is one reason why we do not succeed—we have not faith in the Gospel.

We send educated men to India in order to confound the learned Brahmins. Nonsense! Let the Brahmins say what they like, have we any business to dispute with them? “Oh, but they are so intellectual and so clever.” What have we to do with that? We are not to seek to be clever in order to meet them.

Leave the men of the world to combat their metaphysical errors. We have merely to say, “This is truth, he that believes it shall be saved and he that denies it shall be damned.” We have no right to come down from the high ground of divine authoritative testimony, and until we maintain that ground, and come out as we ought to do, girded with the belt of divinity—preaching not what *may* be true, but asserting that which God has most certainly revealed—we shall not see success.

We want a deeper faith in our Gospel. We need to be quite sure of what we preach. Brethren, I take it we have not the faith of our fathers. I feel myself a poor driveling thing in point of faith. Why, methought sometimes I could believe anything. But now a little difficulty comes before me, I am timid and I fear. It is when I preach with unbelief in my heart that I preach unsuccessfully.

But when I preach with faith and can say, "I know my God has said, that in the selfsame hour He will give me what I shall preach, and careless of man's esteem, I preach what I believe to be true," then it is that God rewards faith and crowns it with His own crown.

Again, we have not enough *self*-denial, and that is one reason why we do not prosper. Far be it from me to say aught against the self-denial of those worthy brothers who have left their country to cross the stormy deep and preach the Word. We hold them to be men who are to be had in honor. But still I ask, where is the self-denial of the apostles nowadays?

I think one of the greatest disgraces that ever was cast upon the church in these days was that last mission to Ireland. Men went over to Ireland, but like men who have valor's better part, brave bold men, they came back again, which is about all we can say of the matter. Why do they not go there again?

Why, they say the Irish "hooted" them. Now, don't you think you see Paul taking a microscope out of his pocket and looking at the little man who should say to him, "I shall not go there to preach because the Irish hooted me"? "What!" he says, "is this a preacher?—what a small edition of a minister he must be, to be sure!" "Oh! but they threw stones at us, you have no idea how badly they treated us!" Just tell that to the apostle Paul. I am sure you would be ashamed to do so.

"Oh! but in some places the police interfered and said that we should only create a riot." What would Paul have said to that? *The police interfering!* I did not know that we had any right to care about governments. Our business is to preach the Word, and if we must be put in the stocks, there let us lie. There would come no hurt of it at last.

"Oh! but they might have killed some of us." That is just it. Where is that zeal which counted not its life dear so that it might win Christ? I believe that the killing of a few of our ministers would have prospered Christianity. However we might mourn over it, and none more than myself, I say the murder of a dozen of them would have been no greater ground for grief than the slaughter of our men by hundreds in a successful fight for hearths and homes. I would count my own blood most profitably shed in so holy a struggle.

How did the Gospel prosper aforetime? Were there not some who laid down their lives for it, and did not others walk to victory over their slain bodies, and must it not be so now? If we are to start back because we are afraid of being killed, heaven knows when the Gospel is to spread over the world—we do not.

What have other missionaries done? Have they not braved death in its direst forms and preached the Word amid countless dangers? My brethren, we say again, we find no fault, for we, ourselves, might err in the same manner. But we are sure we are therein not like Paul. He went to a place where they stoned him with stones and dragged him out as dead. Did he say, "Now for the future I will not go where they will ill-treat me?" No, for he says, "Of the Jews, five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, thrice I suffered shipwreck." I am sure we have not the self-denial of the apostles. We are mere carpet-knights and Hyde-Park warriors.

When I go to my own house and think how comfortable and happy I am, I say to myself, "How little I do for my Master! I am ashamed that I cannot deny myself for His truth and go everywhere preaching His Word." I look with pity upon people who say, "Do not preach so often. You will kill yourself." O my God! What would Paul have said to such a thing as that? "Take care of your constitution, you are rash, you are enthusiastic."

When I compare myself with one of those men of old, I say, "Oh that men should be found calling themselves Christians, who seek to stop our work of faith and labor of love, for the sake of a little consideration about the 'constitution,' which gets all the stronger for preaching God's Word."

But I hear someone whispering, "You ought to make a little allowance." My dear friend, I make all allowance. I am not finding fault with those brethren, they are a good sort of people. We are "all honorable men." But I will only say that in comparison with Paul, we are less than nothing and vanity, little insignificant Lilliputian creatures, who can hardly be seen in comparison with those gigantic men of old.

One of my hearers may perhaps hint that this is not the sole cause, and he observes, "I think you ought to make excuse, for ministers now cannot work miracles." Well, I have considered that too, and certainly it is a drawback, but I take it not a very great one. For if it had been, God would not have allowed it to exist. He gave that gift to the church in its infancy, but now it needs it no longer.

We make a mistake in attributing too much to miracles. What was one of them? Wherever the apostles went, they could speak the language of the people. Well, in the time it would have taken Paul to walk from here to Hindustan, we could learn Hindustani, and we go over in a very little time by the means of travelling that are now provided, so that is no great gain there.

Then again, in order to make the Gospel known amongst the people, it was necessary that miracles should be worked, so that everyone might talk about it. But now there is a printing press to aid us. What I say today, within six months will be read across the Alleghenies. And so with other ministers, what they say and what they do can soon be printed off and distributed everywhere. So they have facilities for making ourselves known which are not much behind the power of miracles. Again, we have a great advantage over the apostles.

Wherever they went, they were persecuted and sometimes put to death. But now, although occasionally we hear of the massacre of a missionary, the occurrence is rare enough. The slaughter of an Englishman anywhere would provoke a fleet of men-of-war to visit the offense with chastisement. The world respects an Englishman wherever he goes. He has the stamp of the great Caesar upon him. He is the true cosmopolite—the citizen of the world.

That could not be said of the poor despised Jews. There might be some respect paid to Paul, for he was a Roman citizen, but there would be none paid to the rest. We cannot be put to death now without a noise being made. The murder of two or three ministers in Ireland would provoke a tumult through the country. The government would have to interpose, the orderly of the land would be up in arms, and then we might preach with an armed constabulary around us, and so go through the land, provoking the priests, startling anti-christ, and driving superstition to its dens forever.

II. In the second place, WE DO NOT GO ABOUT OUR WORK IN AN APOSTOLIC STYLE.

How is that? Why, in the first place, there is a general complaint that there is *not enough* preaching by ministers and missionaries. They sit down interpreting, establishing schools, and doing this, that, and the other. We have nothing to find fault with in this, but that is not the labor to which they should devote themselves. Their office is preaching and if they preached more, they might hope for more success.

The missionary Chamberlain preached once at a certain place and years afterwards disciples were found there from that one sermon. Williams preached wherever he went and God blessed him. Moffat preached wherever he went and his labors were owned.

Now we have our churches, our printing presses, about which a great deal of money is spent. This is doing good, but it is not doing *the good*. We are not using the means which God has ordained and we cannot therefore expect to prosper. Some say there is too much preaching nowadays in England. Well, it is the tendency of the times to decry preaching, but it is "the foolishness of preaching" which is to change the world.

It is not for men to say, "If you preached less, you might study more." Study is required well enough, if you have a settled church, but the apostles needed no study. I apprehend, but they stood up and delivered out the simple cardinal truths of religion, not taking one text, but going through the whole catalog of truth. So I think, in itinerant evangelical labors, we are not bound to dwell on one subject, for then we need to study, but we shall find it profitable to deal out the whole truth wherever we go. Thus we should always find words to hand and truths ever ready to teach the people.

In the next place, I conceive that a great mistake has been made in not *affirming the divinity of our mission*, and standing fast by the truth, as being a revelation not to be proved by men, but to be believed. Always holding out this, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned."

I am often grieved when I read of our missionaries holding disputes with the Brahmins, and it is sometimes said that the missionary has beaten the Brahmin because he kept his temper, and so the Gospel had gained great honor by the dispute. I take it that the Gospel was lowered by the controversy.

I think the missionary should say, "I am come to tell you something which the One God of heaven and earth has said, and I tell you before I announce it, that if you believe it you shall be saved and if not, you shall be damned. I am come to tell you that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, became flesh, to die for poor unworthy man, that through His mediation, and death, and suffering, the people of God might be delivered. Now, if you will listen to me, you shall hear the Word of God. If you do not, I shake the dust off my feet against you and go somewhere else."

Look at the history of every imposture. It shows us that the claim of authority insures a degree of progress. How did Mohammed come to have so strong a religion in his time? He was all alone and he went into the marketplace and said, "I have received a revelation from heaven." It was a lie, but he persuaded men to believe it. He said, "I have a revelation from heaven." People looked at his face, they saw that he looked upon them earnestly, as believing what he said, and some five or six of them joined him.

Did he prove what he said? Not he. "You must," he said, "believe what I say, or there is no paradise for you." There is a power in that kind of thing, and wherever he went his statement was believed, not on the ground of reasoning, but on his authority, which he declared to be from Allah. And in a century after he first proclaimed his imposture, a thousand sabres had flashed from a thousand sheaths, and his word had been proclaimed through Africa, Turkey, Asia, and even in Spain. The man claimed authority—he claimed divinity, therefore he had power.

Take again the increase of Mormonism. What has been its strength? Simply this—the assertion of power from heaven. That claim is made and the people believe it, and now they have missionaries in almost every country of the habitable globe, and the book of Mormon is translated into many languages. Though there never could be a delusion more transparent, or a counterfeit less skillful, and more lying upon the very surface, yet this simple pretension to power has been the means of carrying power with it.

Now, my brethren, *we have power*. *We are* God's ministers. We preach *God's* truth. The great Judge of heaven and earth has told us the truth and what have we to do to dispute with worms of the dust? Why should we tremble and fear them? Let us stand out and say, "We are the servants of the living God. We tell you what God has told us, and we warn you, if you reject our testimony, it shall be better for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you." If the people cast that away, we have done our work. We have nothing to do with making men believe. Ours is to testify of Christ everywhere, to preach and to proclaim the Gospel to all men.

But there is one passage in the Bible which seems to militate against what I have said, if the common translation be true—the passage which says that Paul "disputed in the school of one Tyrannus." But this is better rendered in English, he "dialoged in the school of one Tyrannus." Albert Barnes says that "disputed is not a happy translation," for there is no such idea conveyed by the word.

Jesus, when He preached, "dialoged." When the man came and said to Him, "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" He "dialoged" with him. When another said unto Him, "Speak, Lord, unto my brother, that he divide with me the inheritance," Christ did not dispute with him, but He "dialoged." His usual style was to address the people, and but rarely to dispute with men.

We might give up all the books that have been written in defense of Christianity if we would but preach Christ, if instead of defending the outposts, we were to say, "God will take care of them," and were at once to make a sortie on the enemy, then by God's Holy Spirit we should carry everything before us.

O, church of God! believe yourself invincible and you are invincible. But stay to tremble and fear, and you are undone. Lift up your head and say, "I am God's daughter, I am Christ's bride." Do not stop to prove it, but affirm it. March through the land, and kings and princes shall bow down before you, because you have taken your ancient prowess and assumed your ancient glory.

I have one more remark to make here with regard to the style in which we go to work. I fear that we have not enough of the divine method of *itinerancy*. Paul was a great itinerant, he preached in one place and there were twelve converted there. He made a church at once. He did not stop till he had five hundred. But when he had twelve, he went off to another place.

A holy woman takes him in, she has a son and daughter. They are saved and baptized—there is another church. Then he goes on. Wherever he goes, the people believe and are baptized. Wherever he meets a family who believe, he or his companion baptizes all the house, and goes about his way still forming churches and appointing elders over them.

We, nowadays, go and settle in a place, make a station of it, and work around it by little and little, and think that is the way to succeed. No, no! Ravage a continent. Attempt great things and great things shall be done. But they say if you just pass over a place it will be forgotten like the summer shower, which moistens all, but satisfies none.

Yes, but you do not know how many of God's elect may be there. You have no business to stop in one place, go straight on. God's elect are everywhere. I protest if I could not itinerate this country of England. I could not bear to preach. If I preached *here* always, many of you would become Gospel hardened.

I love to go ranging here, there, and everywhere. *My* highest ambition is this, that I may be found going through the entire land, as well as holding my headquarters in one position. I do hold that itinerancy is God's great plan. There should be fixed ministers and pastors, but those who are like apostles should itinerate far more than they do.

III. But I have a third thing to say which will strike home to some of us, that is, that WE HAVE NOT APOSTOLIC CHURCHES.

Oh! had you seen an apostolic church, what a different thing it would appear to one of our churches! As different, I had almost said, as light from darkness, as different as the shallow bed of the brook that is dried by summer is from the mighty rolling river, ever full, ever deep and clear, and ever rushing into the sea.

Now, where is our *prayerfulness* compared with theirs? I trust that we know something of the power of prayer here, but I do not think we pray like they did. "They broke bread from house to house and did eat their meat with singleness of heart, giving glory to God." There was not a member of the church, as a rule, who was half-hearted. They gave their souls wholly to God. And when Ananias and Sapphira divided the price, they were struck with death for their sin.

Oh! if we prayed as deeply and as earnestly as they did, we should have as much success. Any measure of success we may have had here has been entirely owing under God to your prayers. And wherever I have gone, I have boasted that I have a praying people. Let other ministers have as prayerful a people. Let missionaries have as many prayers from the church, and all things being equal, God will bless them and there will be greater prosperity than ever.

We have not the apostolic mode of *liberality*. In the apostles' days, they gave all their substance. It was not *demand*ed of them then and it is not now. No one thinks of asking such a thing, still we have run to the other extreme and many give nothing at all. Men who have thousands and tens of thousands are so eternally considerate of their families, albeit they *are* provided for, that they give nothing more than the servant girl who sits next to them.

It is a common saying, that members of Christian churches do not give in proportion to their wealth. We give because it is genteel and respectable. A great many of us give, I hope, because we love the cause of God. But many of us say, "There is a poor bricklayer, working hard all the week and only earning just enough to keep his wife and family, he will give a shilling.

Now I have so many pounds a week—I am a rich man—what shall I give? why I will give half-a-crown." Another says, "I will give ten shillings this morning." Now, if they measured their wealth in comparison with his, they would see that he gives all he has left above his maintenance, while they give comparatively nothing.

My brethren, we are not half-Christians, that is the reason why we have not half success. We are Christianized, but I question whether we are thoroughly so. The Spirit of God has not entered into us to give us that life, and fire, and soul, which they had in these ancient times.

IV. But lastly, as the result of the other things which have gone before, and perhaps partly as the cause of them too, WE HAVE NOT THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THAT MEASURE WHICH ATTENDED THE APOSTLES.

I see no reason whatever, why, this morning, if God willed it, I should not stand up and preach a sermon which should be the means of converting every soul in the place. I see no reason why I should not, tomorrow, preach a sermon which should be the means of the salvation of all who heard it, if God the Spirit were poured out. The Word is able to convert, just as extensively as God the Spirit pleases to apply it.

And I can see no reason why, if converts come in by ones and twos now, there should not be a time when hundreds and thousands shall come to God. The same sermon which God blesses to ten if He pleased He could bless to a hundred. I know not but that in the latter days, when Christ shall come and shall begin to take the kingdom to Himself, every minister of God shall be as successful as Peter on the day of Pentecost.

I am sure the Holy Spirit is able to make the Word successful, and the reason why we do not prosper is that we have not the Holy Spirit attending us with might and energy as they had then. My brethren, if we had the Holy Spirit upon our ministry, it would signify very little about our talent. Men might be poor and uneducated, their words might be broken and ungrammatical, there might be no polished periods of Hall, or glorious thunders of Chalmers, but if there were the might of the Spirit attending them, the humblest evangelists would be more successful than the most pompous of divines, or the most eloquent of preachers.

It is extraordinary *grace*, not talent, that wins the day, extraordinary spiritual power, not extraordinary mental power. Mental power may fill a chapel, but spiritual power fills the church. Mental power may gather a congregation, spiritual power will save souls. We want spiritual power.

Oh! we know some before whom we shrink into nothing as to talent, but who have no spiritual power, and when they speak they have not the Holy Spirit with them. But we know others, simple-hearted worthy men who speak their country dialect, and who stand up to preach in their country place, and the Spirit of God clothes every word with power. Hearts are broken, souls are saved, and sinners are born again. Spirit of the living God! we want *You*. You are the life, the soul. You are the source of Your people's success. Without You they can do nothing. With You they can do everything.

Thus I have tried to show you what I conceive to be the causes of our partial non-success. And now permit me, with all earnestness, to plead with you on behalf of Christ and Christ's Holy Gospel, that you would stir yourselves up to renewed efforts for the spread of His truth, and to more earnest prayers that His kingdom may come and His will be done on earth even as it is in heaven.

Ah! my friends, could I show you the tens of thousands of spirits who are now walking in outer darkness. Could I take you to the gloomy chamber of hell and show you myriads upon myriads of heathen souls in unutterable torture, not having heard the Word, but being justly condemned for their sins, methinks you could ask yourselves, "Did I do anything to save these unhappy myriads? They have been damned and can I say I am clear of their blood?" Oh! God of mercy, if these skirts are clear of my fellow creatures' blood, I shall have eternal reason to bless You in heaven.

Oh! church of Christ! You have great reason to ask yourself whether you are quite clean in this matter. You say too often, you sons of God, "Am I my brother's keeper?" You are too much like Cain. You do not ask yourselves whether God will require your fellow creatures' blood at your hands. Oh! there is a truth which says, "If the watchman warns them not, they shall perish, but their blood will he require at the watchman's hands."

Ah! there ought to be more of us who are preaching to the heathen and yet, perhaps, we are indolent and doing little or nothing. There are many of you, yea all of you, who ought to be doing far more than

you are for evangelical purposes and the spread of Christ's Gospel. Oh! put this question to your hearts, "Shall I be able to say to the damned spirit if he meets me in hell, 'Sinner, I did all I could for you'?" I am afraid some will have to say, "No, I did not. It is true I might have done more. I might have labored more, even though I might have been unsuccessful, but I did not do it."

Ah! my dear friends, I believe there is great reason for some of us to suspect whether we believe our religion at all. An infidel once met a Christian and said, "I know you do not believe your religion." "Why?" asked the Christian. "Because," said the other, "for years you have passed me on my way to my house of business. You believe, do you not, there is a hell into which men's spirits are cast?" "Yes, I do," said the Christian. "And you believe that unless I believe in Christ, I must be sent there?" "Yes." "You do not, I am sure, because if you did you would be a most inhuman wretch to pass me, day by day, and never tell me about it or warn me of it." I do hold that there are some Christians who are verily guilty in this matter. God will forgive them, the blood of Christ can even wash that out, but they are guilty.

Did you ever think of the tremendous value of a single soul? My hearers, if there were but one man in Siberia unsaved, and all the world were saved besides, if God should move our minds, it would be worthwhile for all the people in England to go after that one soul. Did you ever think of the value of a soul?

Ah! you have not heard the howls and yells of hell. You have not heard the mighty songs and hosannas of the glorified. You have no notion of what eternity is or else you would know the value of a soul. You who have been broken by conviction, humbled by the Spirit and led to cry for mercy through the covenant Jesus, you know something of what a soul's value is, but many of my hearers do not. Could we preach carelessly, could we pray coldly, if we knew what a precious thing it is about which we are concerned? No, surely we should be doubly in earnest that God would please to save sinners.

I am sure the present state of affairs cannot go on long, we are doing next to nothing. Christianity is at a low ebb. People think it will never be much better, that it is clear impossible to do wonders in these days. Are we in a worse condition than the Roman Catholic nations were when one man, a Luther, preached? Then God can find a Luther now. We are not in a much worse state than when Whitefield began to preach and yet God can find His Whitefields now.

It is a delusion to suppose that we cannot succeed as they did. God helping us we will. God helping us by His Spirit, we will see greater things than this, at any rate, we will never let God's church rest if we do not see it prosper, but we will enter our earnest hearty protest against the coldness and the lethargy of the times, and as long as this our tongue shall move in our mouth, we will protest against the laxity and false doctrine so rampant throughout the churches, and then that happy double reformation—a reformation in doctrine and Spirit, will be brought about together.

Then God knows but what we shall say, "Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows," and ere long the shout of Christ shall be heard. He, Himself, shall descend from heaven. And we shall hear it said and sung, "Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth."

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.