

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

A REVIVAL PROMISE.

A Sermon

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring: and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses. One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel.”—Isaiah xlv. 3–5.

IN the Christian church at this moment there is a very general desire for a revival of religion. You may go where you may among Christian people, and you will find that they are mourning over the present state of things, and saying the one to the other, “When will a greater blessing come? How can we obtain it? When shall we make some impression upon the masses of the ungodly? When shall our houses of prayer be filled with attentive hearers? When will the Lord's kingdom come, and his right arm be made bare in the eyes of all the people?” I am delighted to hear the inquiry; my soul magnifies the Lord as I discern tokens of growing anxiety about the cause and kingdom of Jesus and the perishing sons of men. This is an omen of better times. “As soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.” Searchings of heart, anguish, groanings which cannot be uttered, and abounding intercession, are the heralds of blessing; they are that sound in the tops of the mulberry trees which calls upon believers to bestir themselves in hope of victory. May the movement among the saints continue and deepen, till it brings forth a movement among sinners far and wide.

At this time, also, there are manifest the most pleasing signs that God is about to work among his people. A very notable ingathering of converts has taken place in the town of Newcastle, and the two brethren whom God honoured to be the means of it have now removed to the city of Edinburgh. There the ministers of all denominations are united in helping them, and in earnestly imploring the divine blessing; the gracious visitation which has already come upon Edinburgh is such as was probably never known before

within the memory of man. The whole place seems to be moved from end to end. When we hear of many thousands coming together on week-days, to quite ordinary meetings, and crying, "What must we do to be saved?" there is, we are persuaded, the hand of God in the matter. Now, there is among earnest Christians a general feeling that what has been done for Edinburgh is greatly needed for London, and must be done for London, if prayer and earnest effort can obtain it. Our prayers must go up incessantly that God will be pleased to send forth his saving health among the people of this great city of four million souls, and turn many to righteousness, to the praise of the glory of his grace. Our growing anxiety for Christ's glory, and our faith in the energy of his Spirit will be two hopeful signs of a coming blessing.

As a church we have always felt a delight in any work which has to be done for God of this kind, and we have enjoyed for many years a continuous visitation of grace. That which would be a revival anywhere else has been our ordinary condition, for which we are thankful. By the space of these twenty years, almost without rise or fall, God has continued to increase our numbers with souls saved by the preaching of his truth. Unto him be all the praise! But now we are anxious to take a part in a yet further advance; we want a greater blessing. What we have had has not decreased, but rather stimulated our appetite. Oh, for more conversions! more hearts for Jesus! Would God that the dews of heaven would fall in sevenfold abundance upon us, and our fellow Christians, and the past be put to the blush by the fixture! That this desire may be fanned to a flame in all our hearts is my earnest prayer. I have taken this text as one which is full of encouragement, that we may be all moved with hope and excited with expectation.

I shall handle it in this way. First, we have before us *the great covenant blessing of the church*; secondly, we have *the glorious result of that blessing described*; and when we have spoken thus, we shall spend the rest of our time in speaking of *the conduct which is consistent with the desire that this blessing, and its results, may come to us*.

I. In our text we have THE GREAT COVENANT BLESSING OF THE CHURCH. It is the gift of the Holy Ghost. Whatever metaphor is used, this is the meaning of it. He is the refreshing, life-giving, fertilising water, the living water of which Jesus spake. The first promise of the text, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground," is explained by the second, "I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring."

While speaking upon this, it is well for us to remember, first, that *this blessing has been already given*. We must never underrate the importance of the ascension of our Lord, and the gift of the Spirit which followed

thereupon. God forbid that we should think lightly of Pentecost: the Holy Ghost then descended, and we have no record that the Spirit has since ascended and departed from the church. He is the church's perpetual heritage, and abideth with us for ever. I like to sing—

“The Holy Ghost is here,
Where saints in prayer agree,
As Jesu's parting gift he's near
Each pleading company.

“Not far away is he,
To be by prayer brought nigh,
But here in present majesty,
As in his courts on high.”

He is permanently resident in the midst of the church. But when we have received that truth, we may still go on to use the language which is very frequent among us, and pray for the outpouring of the Spirit. If the language be not exactly accurate, the meaning is most excellent. So far as any one assembly or person is concerned, we may request the Holy Spirit to be poured forth upon us in his gracious operations; we desire to see the Spirit of God working more mightily in the church; we long each one of us to be more completely subject to his influences, and more filled with his power, so that we may be full of faith and of the Holy Ghost. We want to see the Holy Spirit poured upon those who have it not; upon the dead in sin that they may be quickened, upon the desponding that they may be consoled, upon the ignorant that they may be illuminated, and upon seekers that they may find him who alone is our peace. We, being evil, give good gifts unto our children, and therefore we are persuaded that our heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him. We do but enlarge upon the prayer of the apostolic benediction when we cry for the blessing peculiar to the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit that quickeneth; neither the letter of the word nor the energy of our manner can give life; therefore we feel that when we have prophesied to the dry bones we must also prophesy to the wind; for unless the breath divine shall come, the dry bones will never live.

Notice, beloved, that this great covenant blessing of the Spirit is in our text *the subject of a promise*. “I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.” We may always be confident of receiving those blessings which are promised by the Lord. The general promise, “No good thing will I withhold from them that walk uprightly,” is very comforting, and under its broad cover we are encouraged to plead for many favours for which we have no special note of promise; but when we can put our finger upon a plain and specific word, by which a certain good thing is

guaranteed to us, our faith rises to full assurance, and we feel confident of receiving an answer to our prayer. "Thou hast said, 'I will pour my spirit upon thy seed,' therefore, O Lord, fulfil this word unto thy servant, in which thou hast caused him to hope." You have God's word for it; place your finger upon it, and on your knees beseech the Lord to do as he has said. He cannot lie, he never will revoke his word. Has he said, and shall he not do it?

"As well might he his being quit,
As break his promise or forget."

He has spontaneously made the promise, and he will divinely make it good. Upon every promise the blood of Jesus Christ has set its seal, making it "yea and amen" for ever. Prove him, then, herewith, and you shall find him faithfulness itself. A promise of God is the essence of truth, the soul of certainty, the voice of faithfulness, and the substance of blessing.

What a right royal promise it is! How lofty and full of assurance is the language! "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty." It is for God to say, "I will" and "I will." We may venture as far as declaring, "I will if I can;" but there are no limits to his power. Our wisdom is to say, "I hope I shall be able to do as I desire;" but there are no impossibilities with the Almighty. His Spirit falls upon men as a dew from the Lord, waiting not for man, neither tarrying for the sons of men. When the time has come for a shower, God asks not the potentates of earth to give their consent, but down come the blessed drops. When the season for spring has arrived, the Lord does not ask man to help him to remove the ice from the streams, or the snow from the hills, or the damps from the air. He asks no human aid in quickening the seeds, and arousing the plants, so that the sleeping powers may open their lovely eyes and smile on all around. He does it all. His mystic influences, as omnipotent as they are secret, come forth, and the work is done. And so, glory be to God, we have a promise here which is the word of omnipotence, and when we plead it we need not be at all dismayed by the question, "Can such a thing be?" We know that dry bones can live when the Spirit breathes upon them, and we are equally well persuaded that the life-giving Spirit can so breathe, for we have a divine promise that, he shall be given to the people. We hear the double "I will, I will," and we are certain that the Lord can and will "pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground."

It becomes us also, brethren, to notice that this gift, which is the subject of a promise, is *a most needful blessing*. I have sometimes heard it sneeringly remarked that we know very well we want the Holy Spirit, and there is no need to be everlastingly talking about it. But, brethren, we need to

make frequent acknowledgment of this truth; it is due to the Holy Spirit himself that we should do so. If we do not honour the Holy Spirit, we cannot expect him to work with us; he will be grieved, and leave us to find out our helplessness. Moreover, I fear that, however generally the doctrine of the necessity of the Spirit's work may be believed as a matter of theory, it is not acted upon; and what is not believed in practice is in fact not believed at all. I am very suspicious of a man who tires of a truth so vitally important, and dares to call it a platitude. We shall not hesitate to repeat the doctrine again and again, and we feel persuaded that God's people will not tire of it. Without the Spirit of God we can do nothing; we are as ships without wind, or chariots without steeds; like branches without sap, we are withered; like coals without fire, we are useless; as an offering without the sacrificial flame, we are unaccepted. I desire both to feel and to confess this fact whenever I attempt to preach. I do not wish to get away from it, or to conceal it, nor can I, for I am often made to feel it to the deep humbling of my spirit. I pray that you who teach in the Sunday-school, you who visit the poor, you who work in any way for God, may own your impotence for good, and look for power from on high. To our hand the Holy Ghost is the force, to our eye he is the light. We are but the stones and he the sling, we are the arrows and he the bow. Confess your weakness, and you will be fit to be strengthened; own your emptiness, and it will be a preparation for receiving the divine fulness. For, observe, the promise of the living water is to "him that is thirsty," or, as it may be better rendered, and the figure would be more clear, "I will pour water upon it (the land) that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground." The blessing is to come where it is needed, upon the desert, the parched places which are as the valley of death till the rain comes, if you think yourself to be as the well-watered plain of Sodom, God will pour no floods upon you; it is upon the thirsty land, upon the heart which laments its barrenness, and confesses its own unworthiness, that the Spirit of God shall come. I do pray that as a church we may never imbibe the idea that we have an entail of God's blessing, or a monopoly of his benediction; so that he is sure to append his approval to any one particular ministry, or any form of church government. The Lord might leave us, and will unless we lie low before him and own our nothingness. Remember his word, which he spake to his erring people when they boasted of their pedigree and called themselves his temple: "Go ye now unto my place which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel." He may leave his garden to be overgrown with briars, and his vineyard to be marred with stones. God is not tied to any one place or people, he can remove the candlestick and set it up in another chamber; let the seven churches of Asia Minor serve as a warning to us in this thing. Thou blessed Spirit of the living God, we do confess

the barrenness of our soil, and the drought of our land, and we beseech thee never to withdraw thy dew, or cause thy rain to depart from us! What greater curse couldst thou inflict than to let us alone? Oh, come upon us, we beseech thee, and let the divine promise be fulfilled!

It should be very comfortable to us to reflect that, while we need the Spirit of God, *his working is most effectual* to supply all our needs when he does come upon us. In the east, you can generally tell where there is a stream or a river by the line of emerald which marks it. If you stood on a hill, you could see certain lines of green, made up of grass, reeds, rushes, and occasional trees, which have sprung up along the water-courses. Nothing is required to make the land fertile but to water it. We are told by travellers that they have seen plains looking completely barren, apparently covered with dry dust and powder; yet a heavy, shower has fallen, and in a space of time which seems incredible in our colder climate, the most lovely flowers and the most refreshing verdure have clothed the plains, till the wilderness and the solitary places have been glad, and the desert has rejoiced and blossomed as the rose; yea, it has blossomed exceedingly, and an excellency as of Carmel and Sharon has been upon it. Even thus let the Spirit of God come upon any church, and it is all that it needs to make it living and fruitful. Church machinery, apart from the Spirit of God, lacks the motive power; the motive power coming, your machinery will do its work. Of course, if it is an imperfect machinery, the Holy Ghost will not make it do all the work which a better organisation would have done; still, even the most imperfect shall accomplish so much as to astonish all who behold it. What a blessing it is when the church does really receive the Spirit of God abundantly! Her ministry may be slow in utterance; like Moses, the leader of the people may be a man of stammering speech; or, like Paul, his personal appearance may be mean, and his speech contemptible; but this matters nothing when the Spirit of God is upon the man and in the people. The church may be very small, and the members may be very poor, and many of them illiterate, too; but as the barley cake of the soldier's dream smote the royal pavilion of Midian, so that it lay along, so the Lord, by the hand of the feeblest, shall do his greatest deeds, and get to himself renown. Where the Spirit of God is, there is the majesty of omnipotence.

I here call your attention to the fact that the promise in our text is *liberal and unstinted*. "I will pour water upon the thirsty land, and *floods* upon the dry ground." The Lord does not need to stint his gifts. When he gives a blessing he gives it like a king. His treasury will not be exhausted by giving, or replenished by withholding. I have seen in Italy the fields watered by the processes of irrigation: there are trenches made to run along the garden, and smaller gutters to carry the lesser streams to each bed, so that each plant gets its share of water; but the husbandman has to be very careful, for

he has but little water in his tank, and only an allotted share of the public reservoir. No plant must have too much; no plot of ground must be drenched. How different is this from the methods of the Lord! He pours the water; he deluges the land. "The parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water; in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes." Oh that he would pull up the sluices now, and let a torrent of grace rush through this Tabernacle. Oh that at this moment he would open the windows of heaven, and send us a flood of grace, like the deluge of vengeance in Noah's day, till the tops of our loftiest expectations should be covered. He is able to do exceeding abundantly above what we ask, or even think. He giveth liberally, and upbraideth not. Our abounding sin and death need abounding life and power. In such a city as this the largest blessing will be none too great. Let us open our mouths wide, that he may fill them. The Lord is illimitable in his wealth of grace, and boundless in his goodness and power. Let us take the promise as it stands, and plead it at the throne, "Hast thou not said, 'I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground'?" Lord, do it, to the praise of the glory of thy grace.

One other remark, and I leave this point. This covenant blessing is, in our text, *peculiarly promised to a certain class of persons who are especially dear to us*. "I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring." Parents, lay hold greedily upon these points of the promise. I am afraid we do not think enough of the promise which the Lord has made to our children. Grace does not run in the blood; we have never fallen into the gross error of birthright membership, or the supposition that the child of godly parents has a right to Christian ordinances. We know that religion is a personal matter, and is not of blood nor of birth; we know also that all children are heirs of wrath till the grace of God regenerates them; that still there is some meaning in that gracious saying, "The promise is unto you and your children, even to as many as the Lord your God shall call." Paul was assuredly not wrong, but sweetly right, when he said to the jailer, in answer to his question, "What must I do to be saved?" "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." Lay hold of those words, Christian parents, and do not be content to get half the promise. Pray to God to fulfil it all. Go to him this very day, you mothers and fathers, and implore him to have pity upon your offspring. Cry unto him, and say, "Thou hast said, 'I will pour my spirit on thy seed, and my blessing on thine offspring:' do it, Lord, for Jesus Christ's sake."

II. We are now to consider THE GLORIOUS RESULT OF THIS COVENANT BLESSING. The certain result of the outpouring of the Spirit is the uprising of spiritual life. Wherever the water comes in Palestine, as I said before, the grass will be sure to follow it, and vegetation becomes lively at once.

Wherever the Spirit of God comes, there will be life in the church and life in the ministry, life in prayer, life in effort, life in holiness, life in brotherly love.

The next effect will be seen in the calling out of numerous converts by the Holy Spirit “They shall spring up as among the grass, and as willows by the water courses.” Who can count the blades of grass? They are a fine symbol of the greatness of number, and might as justly be used for that purpose as the sands of the seashore. Where the Spirit of the Lord comes, converts are not few as the cedars of Lebanon, but they flourish like the grass of the earth. They fly as a cloud, and as doves to their dovecots. Can we be satisfied with having in a year a dozen or so added to the church? Yet do I meet with some of my brethren—and far be it from me to judge them—who say they have had a happy year, and are very comfortable though they have had only three or four persons added to the church. Surely, however small the congregation, that must be a very unsatisfactory reward for a twelvemonth’s ministry. My brethren, where at this day do we see results attending the gospel which should satisfy us? Hundreds may be added to the church in a year, as has been our common blessing, but what are hundreds? If four hundred were brought into our fellowship last year, what is that out of four millions? What are these saved ones among so many? The headway made by the church is next to nothing; it hardly keeps pace with the growth of the population. We want more of the Spirit of God, and if we had it, I have no doubt whatever the converts would at once be counted by thousands and tens of thousands; and there is no reason whatever why the church of God, which is now in a pitiful minority, should not become in many a district a triumphant majority, and the influences of the grace of God be felt far and near.

Observe that the text tells us that the converts called out by the Spirit of God are vigorous and lively. “They shall spring as the grass.” Now the grass in the east springs up without any sowing, cultivating, or any other attention: it comes up of itself from the fruitful soil. There is the water, and there is the grass. So where the Spirit of God is with a church there are sure to be conversions, it cannot be otherwise. True, we are bound to use all agencies that are fit and right for the promotion of the good end; but where the Spirit of God is we shall often be astonished to find that far beyond the usual result of agencies the life has extended. The willows also are mentioned, to indicate great vitality. How rapidly the willow grows! There is a proverb in Cambridgeshire that a willow will buy a horse, where an oak won’t buy a saddle; because the willow grows so quickly and yields such frequent boughs to the cutter. You may cut it this year, and in a short time you may remove its pliant boughs again, for they will come anew. So truly saved ones will bear discouragement and trial, and still spring up. If you cut

every bough from the willow tree it will be green again next spring, and if you even fell it down to the root it does not signify, at the scent of water it will bud. Do you not remember when you were children taking little twigs of willow to make hoops around your little garden? You thought them dead, and therefore used them as a little fence; but in a short time, to your astonishment, they were all sprouting out with green. The willow is full of life. Now, where the Spirit of God is, the newly converted are full of life. You may check them, but they will not be repressed. You orthodox people, who happen to have surly tempers, may go round with your pocket-knives and snip at their boughs cruelly, and say, "We do not want these young people; we do not want revivals," but they will grow in spite of you. Blessed be God, you elder brethren cannot turn the penitent prodigals out of doors. Should you even be so unkind to the newly grown willows as to cut them right down, they will spring up again, for if they are plants of the Lord's own right hand planting, and of the Spirit's watering, they will outlive the worst of usage; they will grow as the grass and as willows by the water courses. We may expect then, if the Spirit of God shall work among us, that there will be an abundance of converts, and those of the most vigorous kind.

These conversions will come from all quarters. The text says, one shall say, and another shall call, and another shall subscribe. Here is one who is the son of a deacon—we expected him to give his heart to Jesus. There is another, he is not the child of a religious professor, but comes right out from an ungodly family. Ah, here is another, he had grown up and come to ripe years, having followed after folly, and confirmed himself in sin, yet he comes forward, for the grace of God has called him. One comes from the wealthy, another comes from the poor, a third comes from nobody knows where; but they will and must come, for God knows his own, and will call them. They shall come from all trades and occupations, from all churches and denominations; from these little boys below me, I hope, and from you grey-headed people over yonder—one here, another there. We shall be wonder-struck as we hear from all corners, and parts, and places, "I am the Lord's;" and again, "I am called by the name of Jacob;" and again, "I am surnamed this day by the name of Israel." The work of divine grace does not run in a groove, but breaks out where it seems least likely to do so. At one time it creates a revival at Samaria, at another time it saves a widow at Joppa, or the eunuch on the road to Gaza. Lord call whomsoever thou wilt, but do call many, for Jesus' sake.

One memorable thing about the conversions wrought by the Holy Ghost is this, that these converted people shall be led to avow their faith. They shall not, like Nicodemus, come to Jesus by night; they shall not hope to go to heaven creeping all the way behind the hedge; but they shall avow their

allegiance. “One shall say, I am the Lord’s; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob, and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel.” The God of Israel shall be their God, and the people of Israel shall be their people. I love to see both these things in young converts. Some appear to dedicate themselves to God, but they feel themselves such superior beings that they do not join with any church, but hold themselves in the isolation which practically means, “Stand by, I am holier than thou,” They do not think any church good enough for them, but my private opinion is that they are not good enough for any church. On the other hand, some will join a church, but do not seem to have had enough respect to the inward, vital part of religion in giving themselves up to the Lord, and therefore no church will find them to be any great gain. There must be the two together, a surrender to God and then a union with the people of God. Consider the first of these points:— One shall say, “I am the Lord’s.” He shall confess that from head to foot, body, soul and spirit, he is not his own but Christ’s. He will feel, “I have been washed in his blood; I have been pardoned all my sins, and been renewed in heart; and now I am the Lord’s, and I desire to live to his praise. Tell me what I can do, and how I can serve the Lord, for I am his, and mean to be his for ever.” This is delightful. Oh, to hear hundreds of you saying this. I would give my life to see it.

Another convert is said to subscribe with his hand to the God of Jacob. He gives himself over to God, and he does it deliberately; as deliberately as a person who signs a deed by which he makes over an estate. He writes his name, and places his finger on the seal, and calmly says, “This is my act and deed.” We do not recommend persons to write out covenants with God and sign they are apt to gender unto bondage; but we do recommend them to make such a covenant in their hearts before the Most High, saying,

“’Tis done, the great transaction's done;
I am my Lord's and he is mine:
He drew me, and I followed on.
Charmed to obey the voice divine.”

The text may have another rendering, for, if you notice, the word “*with*” in the text is in italics, to show that it was inserted by the translators. It might run thus: “Another shall subscribe his hand unto the Lord.” This alludes to the custom which still exists, but which was more common in those days, of a servant being marked or tattooed in the hand with his master’s name. So was it with soldiers; frequently when they were enthusiastic for a leader they would print his name on some part of their body, and very often upon the palms of their hands. There are constant allusions to this in the classics. We know that devout worshippers dedicated themselves to the god they

worshipped, and were stamped with a secret mark. Paul alludes to this when he says, "Henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus;" as much as to say "I am Christ's: I have had his name branded upon me." When he suffered from being scourged and beaten with rods, he called it bearing the marks of the Lord Jesus, and did as good as say, "Flog away, you will only engrave his name into my flesh, for I am Christ's." Now it would be a very superstitious and foolish thing for any man to be tattooed with the name of the Lord, or with a cross; but all that such an act meant in those who did it of old we ought to mean, namely, that we are for ever, and beyond recall, the property of Jesus. Our ear is bored. We are servants as long as we live to our dear Master. They may sooner kill us than lead us away from him whose we are, and whom we serve. Who shall separate us from the love of God?

"High heaven that heard the solemn vow,
That vow renewed shall daily hear,
Till in life's latest hour I bow,
And bless in death a bond so dear."

There was dedication to God of the fullest kind, but side by side with it went unity with the church, for the declaration, "I am the Lord's," was parallel with "calling himself by the name of Jacob." Now the name of Jacob was the first, the lower, the common name of God's people, they were the seed of Jacob. "Ah," says the man who is converted, "I do not care what they call Christian people, they may vail *me* by the same title if they will, and I will not complain. They may call us Puritans, Methodists, Ranters, Quakers, or whatever they like. I am one of them." I have read of a certain nobleman who was also a saint, that when he heard religious persons scoffed at as Puritans, he was accustomed at once to declare, "I am a Puritan too. I glory in being one of them." They felt that it was of little use to mock at him, he was too stout a soldier and too bold a speaker. It is a grand thing when a man can say in company, "It does not matter what you think of religion, I belong to such and such Christian people, and I am not ashamed of it. I know their name is a mockery, and their minister is despised. but it does not matter, I am one of them." It is mentioned, also, that one surnamed himself by the name of Israel. That was the grand mime of the church in those days—Israel, the prevailing prince. We ought to feel that to be a Christian is to possess a patent of nobility second to none. Duke, earl, knight, esquire—we covet none of these; call us by the name of Christ and we have honour enough. The name of Cæsar is a poor thing compared with the name of Christ. Better be owned as a disciple of Jesus than as an emperor of emperors. Oh, may the Spirit of God be poured out upon this place, that many of you may be savingly converted, and then say,

“I will give myself to the Lord, and will also cast in my lot with his people; where they dwell I will dwell; where they die there would I die; their people would be my people, since their God has become my God.” Pray, dear brethren, that the promise before us may be fulfilled in this church, and in all the churches of our Lord Jesus Christ.

III. Now, lastly, I have to speak upon THE CONDUCT SUITABLE IF WE OBTAIN THIS BLESSING. First, O my brethren in Christ, if we would obtain these floods of blessing we must confess how dry, how thirsty, how wilderness-like we are. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the hand of God, and he will exalt you in due time. “He hath filled the hungry with good things, but the rich he hath sent empty away.” Oh, for the spirit of humiliation throughout the church!

Next to that let us cultivate prayer. “For this will I be enquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them.” If you have a man’s cheque for a thousand pounds, it would be very wicked of you to say, “I cannot get my money, this paper is not paid,” if you have never taken it to the bank; and so, if you have God’s promise, and have never pleaded it, it is your own fault if you have not obtained the blessing. The very least thing God can ask of us is that we shall ask of him. “Ask and it shall be given you: seek and ye shall find: knock and it shall be opened unto you.” Plead more earnestly in private, make your prayer-meetings more energetic, attend them more numerously, throw your hearts more fully into them, and God’s Spirit will be surely given.

Next to that, if we want the blessing we must put forth our own personal effort. It would be a most absurd thing for a man to pray for a harvest, and neither plough nor sow. I cannot conceive anything more insulting to the majesty of God than for us to pray, and meanwhile fold our arms. It is not thus that we prove our sincerity. I desire to preach to you as if the conversion of these sinners around us depended wholly upon me, and then I delight to fall back upon the truth that it wholly depends upon the Lord God. Sunday-school teachers, use the means for the conversion of your children! Try and speak personally to every one of them; if you can find opportunity, pray with them one by one alone. You will win young hearts for Jesus in that way. Try, dear friends, to get hold of individuals. You who come here continually, look out for individuals in the congregation, and endeavour to tell them what you have experienced of the love of Christ. If you cannot speak to them, write letters to them; an earnest letter is as good as a sermon. Do anything, do everything, to bring souls to Jesus. While we are working we shall find God working with us, for he is never slower than his people. If we are building, he will be the Master Builder, and will build through us. For a man to pray that he may have a safe journey, and then to go to bed, and not start from home, would be wickedness; and to pray to

God to convert sinners, and then not to preach or teach them the gospel, would be a piece of impudent mockery of God. Beloved, see to this. I cannot pause to stir you up about it, for our time is going; but I pray the Holy Ghost to stir you, that everyone here may become a soul winner.

Once more, I have a word to say to those who are not the people of God. O beloved ones, who are not saved, all our concern is about your salvation. We are always preaching and praying about you. How can you obtain saving faith? I would urge you to labour after a clear idea of your real position. O unconverted people, try to know where you are and what you are. It might perhaps arouse you from your present indifference. If you would really and distinctly understand that you are out of Christ, condemned already, an enemy to God by wicked works, with the wrath of God abiding on you, and in danger of eternal perdition, it might startle you and lead you to desire salvation. I should think hopefully of you if I knew that you were taking stock, and estimating your condition before God. May I ask you when you get home to sit down and write, every one of you, on a piece of paper, "Saved," if you are saved, and "Condemned," if you are not a believer, for that is your condition? I want you to realise whose you are, and where you are going. When you have done so, I pray that a sense of your condition and prospects may be deepened upon your mind. Sinners, do you think enough? Do you consider enough? You are busy about a thousand things, but do you really think about your souls, death and judgment, and eternal perdition? Do you think enough about the Saviour's love? Do you ponder your sin, and the blessed fact that it may be pardoned? Oh, that you would reflect, consider, and turn your whole mind to God!

But I am beating the bush. I have a much more important precept to which to exhort you. Remember, the gospel command is, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Every minute that you remain an unbeliever you are adding to your sin, you are increasing your iniquity and confirming yourself in condemnation. Oh, that you would believe the divine testimony concerning Jesus, for that is the object of faith! What you are asked to believe is true. He whom you are commanded to trust in is able to save you; and the promise that you shall be saved if you trust is a sure and certain one. Do not, therefore, fling away your souls, and despise the mercy of God. May it please the Eternal Spirit to lead you at this very moment to put your trust in Jesus Christ, and to be saved; then you will be one of those who spring as the grass, and as the willows by the watercourses. May God bless you, every one of you, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Isaiah xlv.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—98, 95 (Song II), 67.