

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

JOSHUA'S VISION.

A Sermon

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 16TH, 1868, BY

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? and he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant? and the captain of the Lord's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so.”—Joshua, v. 13–15.

THE Lord divided the Jordan that his people might pass through dry-shod. This miracle greatly dispirited the Canaanites, and so prepared the way for an easy triumph for the invading Israelites. You would have naturally expected that the Lord would have bidden his people avail themselves immediately of this terror to strike a heavy blow at once, and press on with might and main before the enemy could take breath, and so sweep the land clear of the adversaries in a single campaign. But it was not so. Instead of immediate activity, the children of Israel pitched their tents at Gilgal, and there tarried for a considerable season. For God is in no hurry. His purposes can be accomplished without haste, and though he would have us redeem the time because our days are evil, yet in his eternity he can afford to wait, and by his wisdom he so orders his delays, that they prove to be far better than our hurries. Wherefore, were the people to delay? That they might be obedient to commands which had been forgotten. In the desert, for divers reasons, circumcision and the passover had been neglected. They were not visited with any chastisement on account of this neglect, for the Lord considered their position and condition, and winked at their error, but before he would use them he would have them fully obedient to his will. It cannot be expected that God should tolerate disobedient servants, and therefore they must stay awhile, till they had been attentive to the two great precepts of the Mosaic covenant. Dear friends, let us pause and ask ourselves, as be-

lievers, whether we have been in all respects conscientiously attentive to our Master's commands? If not, we may not expect him to send a blessing to the church or to the world through us, until first of all we have yielded our willing obedience to that which he has prescribed for us. Are any of you living in the neglect of a known part of the divine will? or are you undesirous of knowing some portions of God's will, and therefore wilfully blind to them? My dear brother, you are cutting the tendon Achilles of your strength. You can never overthrow your enemies like Samson while your locks are thus shorn. You cannot expect that God should send you forth to conquer and to bring to him renown, when you have not as yet conquered your own personal indolence and disobedience. He that is unfaithful in that which is least will be unfaithful in that which is greater; and if you have not kept the Master's sayings in the little vineyard of your personal history, how much less shall you be able to do it if he should entrust you with a greater field of service! Here then is the reason for Israel's delay, and it is a reason why at the commencement of our special services we should make diligent search for neglected duties, and promptly fulfil them.

The two precepts which had been overlooked were very suggestive. The one was *circumcision*. Every man throughout the whole camp of Israel must be circumcised before God would begin to speak about Jericho. Not a word about the walls falling flat to the ground; not a syllable concerning compassing the accursed city seven days, until, first of all, the reproach of Egypt had been put away, and his people had received the token of the covenant. Now, we are told in the New Testament that Christians must partake in a circumcision without hands, not of the flesh, but of the spirit. "He is not a Jew which is one outwardly . . . but he is a Jew which is one inwardly." In the Colossians the apostle tells us that the true circumcision is the putting away of the body of death by the circumcision of Christ, by which I understand that the Christian must purge himself, in the power of the Spirit and in the name of Christ, of every fleshly defilement, of every sinful thought, of every wrong ambition, of every carnal desire: if he is to be used by his Master it is imperative that this be done, and be done at once, in the name of the Most High. "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord." God will not fight his battles by the uncircumcised. He will have his people clean from the sin that doth so easily beset them, or else he will not use them. Stop, then, my brethren, and let me beseech you to search your own hearts, and see what there may be within that might render you unfit to be blessed. If I, as God's minister, have no conversions, I dare not attribute the fact to divine sovereignty. It may be so, but I am always afraid to make divine sovereignty the scapegoat for my iniquities. I rather think that if God withholds the blessing, there is a cause; and may not the cause be in myself, that I do not live as near to God as I should, or am indulging in something

which his holy eyes cannot look upon? I speak to you who are church members, if in the Sabbath-school, if in your tract distribution, or if in any other work you are doing, you do not win souls to God, cry unto him, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Sin blocks up the channel of mercy; the stream is strong enough, but you restrain its flow; your sins separate between you and your God; and, therefore, I conjure each one of you, if you be the Lord's, now shake yourselves from the dust, sanctify a fast unto the Most High, and come before him with supplication. Sit before him in sackcloth and ashes, in the silent dejection of your abashed spirits, and confess before him all your sins. Arise, pour out your hearts like water before the Lord, acknowledge your sins and offences, and then, being purged from these by the water and the blood which flowed from the riven side of Jesus, you may arise to service and expect to be made a blessing.

But circumcision was not enough, they must also keep *the passover*. This it appears they had only celebrated twice, once in Egypt, and once at the foot of Sinai; but they were now to begin a passover which was to be kept every year without cessation. Brethren, ye know the meaning the passover has to us; it represents feeding upon Christ. He is the Paschal Lamb; we must put away the old leaven of sin, and we must come with pure hearts to feed upon our Lord. You will never be able to fight the Canaanites till you have fed on Christ. A spiritual man who tries to live without feeding upon Jesus, soon becomes weak; he who has but slight communion with Christ, he who day after day has no sight of the King in his beauty, who is never taken to the banqueting house, and sees not the love banner waving over his head, is not likely to be a hero. If you do not eat the bread of heaven, how can you do the work of heaven? The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits; and if we would labour for God with success, we must first of all feed upon the Christ of God, and gather strength from him. "Son of man," said the voice from heaven to the prophet, "eat this roll:" he must first eat it, and then speak concerning what he has handled and tasted. We must enjoy true religion in our own souls before we can be fit exponents of it to others. How shall ye be heralds of a message which has never been spoken into your inward ear by the voice of the Lord? How can you expect to bring others to life when your own soul is all but dead? How shall you scatter the live coals of eternal grace when the flame upon the hearth of your heart has almost expired? Brethren, let us keep the feast, let us draw nigh unto our Lord Jesus with pure hearts, let us renew our first faith and early love, taking the great Son of God to be once more the ground of our hope, the source of our joy, the object of our de-

sires. Let us come near, yea, nearer and nearer still to him, pressing to his embrace; so shall we be prepared to brave the conflict, and earn the victory.

After the ordinances had been kept, you will suppose that at once the trumpet sounded for an assault, and the valiant men of Israel with their scaling ladders, and their battering rams, gathered round the devoted city to attack and carry it by storm. Patience! patience! you are always in a hurry, but God is not. Joshua himself, that bold, brave spirit, is in some haste, and therefore, he goes forth by night, meditating and patrolling; and as he is meditating upon God, and gazing every now and then at that huge city, and wondering where would be the best point of attack, and how it would be captured, he is astonished by the appearance of a stately personage who bears a sword in his hand. Brave Joshua, unconscious of anything like fear, advances at once to the apparent interloper and demands of him, "Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?" He little guessed in what august presence he was standing until a majestic voice said, "Nay, but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come." Then Joshua discerning the divinity of the celestial warrior bowed and worshipped, and humbly enquired what he should do; and then after he had been instructed, he rose and went according to the Lord's directions to the capture of the city of palm-trees.

The children of Israel may be likened to yonder gallant vessel, prepared for a long voyage. All the cargo is on board that is needed, all the stores are there, and every man in his place. In all respects, the good ship is fully equipped, but why does she linger? Why do not the sailors weigh the anchor? If you ask the man at the helm, he will tell you, "We are waiting for the captain." A good and sufficient reason indeed, for till the captain has come on board, it is idle for the vessel to put out to sea. So here Israel had been circumcised, and the blessed feast of the paschal lamb had been celebrated, but still they must not go to the conflict until the captain himself had arrived; and here, to Joshua's joy, the angel of the presence of the Most High appeared to claim the presidency of the war, and lead forth the hosts of God to certain victory. Brethren, this is precisely the condition of this church at the present moment; we have endeavoured, I think, to draw near unto God and to abide in his love; we have sought to purge ourselves from sin, and to be holy even as he is holy; but still this will not suffice, we want the divine presence, and we are now bidden to pause awhile and to seek it, prayerfully, that in its matchless power, we may go forward successfully.

I. I shall ask your earnest attention, this morning, to two or three brief rules for our present solemn engagements. *First*, REALISE THE FACT OF THE DIVINE PRESENCE.

Jesus himself comes to this holy war. Joshua saw *a man* clad in armour, equipped for war. Cannot the eyes of your faith see the same? There he stands, Jesus, God over all, blessed for ever, yet a man. Most surely God,

but with equal certainty bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. He is in the midst of his church; he walketh amongst the golden candlesticks. His promise is, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." I do not wish to talk, but I desire rather that you should exercise your own minds, your faith, your spiritual powers, and vividly believe that Jesus is here; so believe it, that your inner eye beholds what you believe. The Son of Man is here, as surely here as he was with the disciples at the lake, when they saw coals of fire, and fish laid thereon, and bread; he is here to talk with us by his Spirit, as he did to Peter and to the rest of the disciples on that memorable day. Not carnally, but still in real truth, Jesus is where his people meet together. Joshua saw him *with his sword in his hand*. O that Christ might come in our midst with the sword of the Spirit in his hand; come to effect deeds of love but yet deeds of power; come with his two-edged sword to smite our sins, to cut to the heart his adversaries, to slay their unbelief, to lay their iniquities dead before him. The sword is drawn, not scabbarded, as alas! it has been so long in many churches, but made bare for present active use. It is *in his hand*, not in the minister's hand, not even in an angel's hand, but the sword drawn is in *his* hand. Oh, what power there is in the gospel when Jesus holds the hilt, and what gashes it makes into hearts that were hard as adamant, when Jesus cuts right and left at the hearts and consciences of men! Brethren, seek this presence, and seeking it, believe it; and when you hear the gospel preached, or when you meet together for prayer, think you see in the centre of the assembly the Champion of Israel, with uplifted sword, prepared to do great exploits, as in days of old.

The glorious man whom Joshua saw, was *on his side*. The day shall come when the ungodly shall see this man with his sword drawn; but in answer to their question, "Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?" they shall find him to be the fiercest of their foes. In the midst of his church, Christ carries a sword only for the purposes of love to them. Oh, how blessed it will be if you can know that out of his mouth there goeth a two-edged sword, like unto a flame of fire; and if you dare to bring your heart near to that sword, that it may cut and kill in you everything obnoxious to the divine will, and then can bring your children and kinsfolk, and those that sit in these pews side by side with you, and say, "O Master, let thy sword of fire go through them according to thy word, 'I kill and I make alive, I wound and I heal,' O kill, that they may live; O wound, that they may be healed.

"Thine arrows sharply pierce the heart
Of foemen of the King;
And under thy dominion's rule

The people down do bring.

O thou that art the mighty One,
Thy sword gird on thy thigh,
Ev'n with thy glory excellent,
And with thy majesty."

The divine presence then is what we desire, and if we have it, brethren, *faith at once is encouraged*. It was enough for the army of Cromwell to know that he was there, the ever victorious, the irresistible, to lead on his Ironsides to the fray. Many a time the presence of an old Roman general was equal to another legion; as soon as the cohorts perceived that he was come whose eagle eye watched every motion of the enemy, and whose practised hand led his battalions upon the most salient points of attack, each man's blood leaped within him, and he grasped his sword and rushed forward secure of success. My brethren, our King is in the midst of us, and our faith should be in active exercise. "The shout of a King is in the midst of us," it is said, for where the King is there the people shout for joy, and because of confidence of victory. The preacher may preach, but what is that? but if the King be there, then it is preaching in very deed. The congregations may have met, and they may have gone again. "The panoramic view which has dissolved," you say. Ah, so it may seem to you, but if the Spirit of God was there, all that has been done will abide, and remain even to that day of judgment, when the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. "Nothing but a simple girl sitting down to talk to a few little children about their souls." Just so, but if the Lord be there, what awe gathers round that spot! If the King himself sit in that class, what deeds are done that shall make the angels of heaven sing anew for joy! "Nothing but a humble man, unlettered, earnest, but not eloquent, standing in the corner of a street, addressing a few hundred people. His talk will soon be forgotten." Precisely so, but if the King be there it shall never be forgotten. The foot prints of every true servant of the Lord shall not be in the sand, but in the enduring brass, the record of which shall outlast the wreck of matter. When the King is with us, faith is confident, because God girds faith as with a golden girdle, and from head to foot clothes her with a panoply of armour, and puts a sword into her hand which is all-destroying, and with which she cuts through coats of mail, "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

When the King is with his people, then *hope is greatly encouraged*, for saith she, "Who can stand against the Lord of Hosts?" There must be conversions; it is no longer a question of trust and expectation, but of absolute certainty when Jesus is at the preaching. My brethren, if by earnest prayer we shall really bring the King into our midst today, as I am persuaded we shall, and if we keep him here, holding him by our entreaties, and by our

tears, which are the golden chains that bind Christ to his people, then we need not think that there shall be good done, nor hope so, but it *must* be so, it *shall* be so, for where Christ is, there is the manifestation of the omnipotence of deity, and the hardest of hearts feel the influence thereof.

Where Jesus is, *love becomes inflamed*, for oh! of all the things in the world that can set the heart burning, there is nothing like the presence of Jesus. A glimpse of him will overcome us, so that we shall be almost ready to say, "Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me." Oh, but a smell of the aloes, and the myrrh, and the cassia which drop from his perfumed garments, but a smell of these I say, and the sick and the faint among us shall grow strong. Oh, but a moment's leaning of the head upon that gracious bosom, and a reception of his divine love into our poor cold hearts, and we shall be cold no longer, but shall glow like seraphs, being made equal to every labour, and capable of every suffering. Then shall the spirit of the Lord be upon us, and our old men shall see visions, and our young men shall dream dreams, and upon the servants and the handmaidens will God pour out his Spirit. If we do but know that Jesus is here, every power will be developed, and every grace will be strengthened, and we shall cast ourselves into the Lord's battle with heart, and soul, and strength. There is not a single part of our inner man which will not be bettered by the presence of Christ; therefore is this to be desired above all things.

Brethren, suppose that Christ is here, this morning, *his presence will be most clearly ascertained by those who are most like him*. Joshua was favoured with this sight because he alone had eyes that could bear it. I do not read that even Caleb saw this man with his sword drawn; only Joshua saw him, because Joshua was the most spiritual and the most active. If you desire to see Christ you must grow to be like him, and labour to serve him with heart, and soul, and strength. Christ comes not in the visions of the night to those who toss upon the bed of indolence, but he reveals himself in the night watches to those who learn to watch and war. Bring yourselves, by the power of the Spirit, into union with Christ's desires, and motives, and plans of action, and you are likely to see him. I would that all of you were Joshuas; but if not, if but some shall perceive him, we shall still receive a blessing.

I am sure this presence of Christ *will be needed by us all*. All of you who love Jesus intend to do him service during this next month, and, indeed, I hope as long as you live. Now, there is nothing good which you can do without Christ. "Without me ye can do nothing," is a great and undoubted fact. If you meet to pray, you shall not pray acceptably unless he be with you. If you teach, or preach, or whatever you do, however small the labour, you shall accomplish nothing unless it be through his power, and through his manifested presence with you. Go not to warfare at your own charges,

but wait upon your Master, tarrying at Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high.

But, brethren, *Jesus Christ's presence may be had*. Do not despond and say that in the olden times the Master revealed himself, but he will not do so now. He will, he will, he will. His promise is as good as ever. He delights to be with us even as with our fathers. If he doth not come it is because we hinder him—we are not straitened in him, but straitened in our own bowels. Let me persuade you that all the great things which were done at Pentecost can be done again in this Tabernacle. Let me persuade you that all the wondrous conversions which were wrought in any of the ages of the church may be repeated at this hour.

Do not say that Luther, or Calvin, or Whitfield, or Wesley were great men, and therefore around them great things gathered; my brethren, the weakest of men may be more honoured than the greatest, if God so wills it. Our weakness, want of learning, want of eloquence, and what not—I look upon these as advantages rather than not, for if we were eminent, we might perhaps claim some of the glory, but if we be “less than nothing and vanity,” then is there a clear stage for the divine operations. And why should we not so see in this place such a revival as shall shake all England, and stir the dry bones in the valley of vision at this day as they never were stirred since apostolic times. We have but to expect it, to believe it, to pray for it, to work for it, and we shall have it. God's clouds still pour down the water floods as plenteously as when Elisha went up to the top of Carmel. The Lord thundereth mightily against his enemies at this day, as when he went forth with his people in the days of yore. Think not that the Almighty has ceased to do marvels—the Lord of Hosts is still the king eternal, immortal, and invisible, with an arm which doeth wonders. You have still only to plead the power of the precious blood and the meritorious death of Christ, to see wonders in this year of grace which shall even eclipse any that your fathers saw, or heard of in the old time before them. May God grant to each believer among us the vision of the godlike man with the sword drawn in his hand, and then may we go forth in the strength which he alone confers.

II. In the second place, UNDERSTAND THE LORD'S POSITION IN THE MIDST OF HIS PEOPLE. “As captain of the host of the Lord am I now come.”

What a relief this must have been for Joshua. Perhaps he thought himself the captain; but now the responsibility was taken from him; he was to be the lieutenant, but the King himself would marshal his hosts. I feel it no small relief to my own mind to feel that though I have been at your head these fourteen years, leading you on in God's name to Christian service, yet I am not your captain, but there is a greater one, the presence angel of the Most High, the Lord Jesus—he is in our midst as Commander-in-chief. Though my responsibilities are heavy, yet the leadership is not with me. He

is a leader and commander for the people. Brethren, wherever Christ is, we must recollect that *he is Commander-in-chief to us all*. We must never tolerate in the church any great man to domineer over us; we must have no one to be Lord and Master save Jesus. Christ is the Field-marshal, the Captain of our salvation; and if you are a member of the church of God, you must own this, not as a general fact only, but as a fact particularly in your case. Christ is *your* Master. You are not to say, "I prefer this or that doctrine." What have you to do with likes or dislikes? Believe what he tells you. You are not to say, "I prefer a certain form of worship." What have you to do with preferences? Worship as the Master bids you. Alas! for the day when whims and tastes and fancies come into the Christian church to lead the people. All this Puseyism which we hear so much outcry about, is simply the putting up of taste into the place of simple obedience to Christ. If we would but just keep close to Christ's word, we should be right enough. I pray each believer here to recollect that he is in no respect his own master in the things of God, but that Christ is Commander-in-chief. "Is it of any use to send missionaries to India?" said some one to the Duke of Wellington. "What are your marching orders?" said the Duke. "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Those are our marching orders. We have nothing to do with whether they are prudent orders or not; they are sure to be good if they come from *him!* Our duty is to do as our Commander bids us to do. Every word of Christ, if we would see him do wonders in our midst, must be obeyed. Not the great precepts only, but the little ones too. It behoves Christians to have done with that cant about non-essentials. My brethren, every command of Christ is essential to us as servants. Not essential to our salvation—we *are* saved; that is not the question for us to raise; but being saved, and being servants of Christ, every command which comes from the great Captain it is essential for every soldier to keep. It matters not though it be simply a ceremonial, yet still we have no right to alter it. What would the court-martial say to any of the private soldiers, who, having received an order from a captain, should say, "Well, I did not consider it to be exceedingly important"? "Drum him out of the regiment, sir, there is an end to all discipline in the army when soldiers criticise their orders." So is it with Christ's law. We have no right to say, for instance about believers' baptism, "Well, it is a non-essential." Who told you so? If Jesus commands it, obey it, and if it be the Lord's law, make haste and delay not to keep the Master's statute. I single out that one precept, but there are many others which are perhaps of greater importance, if we are allowed to say greater or less about anything which Christ has bidden us do. My brethren, do let us seek now to put our minds into the hands of the Holy Spirit to be taught what the great Captain's will is, and when we know it, let our souls bend under it, as the osier bends in the

breath of the wind, and as the boat upon the sea is driven to and fro in the gale. Down with thee, self, down with thee! Carnal judgment and foolish reason, lie still! Let the word of God be paramount within the soul, all opposition being hushed.

Brethren, if we do not act with the Captain, *disappointment will be sure to follow*. The Lord had issued orders that none of the tribes should take of the accursed spoil of Jericho. Achan did so. I have often wondered that only Achan did it, but that one Achan brought defeat upon Israel at the gates of Ai. I wonder how many Achans there are here this morning. I should feel myself very much at ease if I thought there were only one, but I am afraid that there are many who have the accursed thing hidden within them, the love of money, or wrong ways of doing business, or unforgiving tempers, or an envious spirit towards their fellow Christians. Now, if the possession of these bad things by one will stop the blessing, we are in a very evil plight, but he is in a worse plight by far who is the occasion of the evil. Where are you, Achan? God will find you out even if we do not. He will bring us all by our tribes, by our families, by our households, and then man by man, and woe unto the son of Carmi if he be taken. Brethren, the violation of the law of the captain may bring defeat upon the whole company.

And where the law is not obstinately and wilfully violated, yet its neglect will cause much trouble. They were commanded to make no covenant with the Canaanites, but in a thoughtless hour, the Gibeonites came like persons from a far country, they believed their deceitful story, and made a covenant with them; and this became a trouble to Israel long afterwards. If as a church we forget the law of Christ, even though we do not contemptuously break it, if we ignorantly forget it, we may expect no small amount of evil to flow from it. Do not tolerate the idea that God punishes his people for sin in the sense of punitive justice, but always hold it for certain, that the Lord chastises his people for sin as a father chastises his children, and that the great Head of the church will not suffer his laws to be broken with impunity by his own people. I wish I could speak to you with the earnestness which I feel boiling up within my soul. I would, my brethren, that we should keep our Master's commands in every jot and tittle, depending upon his presence, feeling it to be here, not daring in his presence to offend, but yielding up to him the reins of government in all respects, that we might then have his blessing. I want that we should all keep to the word of God, minding each precept as far as we understand it. I want, moreover, that we should be attentive to that mind of Christ which is often expressed by the Holy Spirit in divine monitions in our minds, that the law of the book may be with us, and the law of the Spirit within us. If we are obedient to both these, we shall be prepared like Joshua to advance to the war.

III. Thirdly, and very briefly. Our third rule is WORSHIP HIM WHO IS PRESENT WITH US.

Joshua, it is said, fell on his face to the earth. Worship is the highest elevation of the spirit, and yet the lowliest prostration of the soul. If Christ be here, brethren, when you reach your homes get a little time of quiet and worship, and when you come up again, this evening, in your songs and prayers truly worship the ever present God, bow down in the lowliest reverence of your subdued spirit as though you actually were in heaven. If you have no wings with which to veil your face, still cover it with shame; if you have no crown to cast, yet such talent as you have, lay it all down reverentially before him. Worship the Son of God! Then, when you have so done, *give up yourself to his command*: say to him, "What saith my Lord unto his servant?" I wish you could spend this afternoon, those of you who are not actively engaged, in trying to get an answer to this question: "What saith my Lord unto his servant? What is there for me to learn, for me to feel, for me to do? and as I would help my brethren during this month, Lord, what part of the work am I to take?" When you have done this, dear friends, I want you to imitate Joshua in the third thing, namely, *put off your shoes from off your feet*. Joshua, perhaps, had not felt what a solemn thing it was to fight for God, to fight as God's executioner against condemned men. He must put his shoes off, therefore. We never can expect a blessing if we go about God's work flippantly. I shudder when I see any sitting at the Lord's table who can indulge in light remarks or in wandering thoughts, on so solemn an occasion. What hast thou to do here, not having on a wedding garment? There are some of us whose besetting sin is levity of spirit. Cheerfulness we are to cultivate, but we must beware lest levity become a cankerworm to our graces. Brethren, this next month must be a holy month unto us. I ask our young and our old friends alike to seek a quiet and sober spirit. To seek to save souls from going down to the pit is no pastime: to talk of Jesus is no trifle. We do not meet to pray in sport; we do not gather together in supplication as a mere matter of form. Angels are in our midst observing us, the King himself is here. How would you behave if you actually saw Jesus with your eyes? If I were to vacate this pulpit and the crucified One stood here, stretching out his pierced hands and looking down upon you with the mild radiance of his sovereign love, how would you feel? Ask to feel just so, for he is here. Faith can perceive him. Ask to feel just so at this present moment, and so to go out to your work this afternoon and all the remaining days of your life, as a servant of God who is standing in the presence of his Lord upon holy ground, and cannot therefore afford to trifle, since he has solemn work to do, and means to do it in his Master's name.

IV. To conclude, let us now even before we separate, ADVANCE TO ACTION, according to the Master's command.

Unconverted men and women, you are our Jericho, we wish to conquer you for Christ. Our desire is to win you to Jesus for your own good and for his glory. Now, what are we to do with you? Joshua was bidden to go round the city seven times. We would preach to you the gospel of Christ, not seven times, but seventy times seven. They were to blow the rams'-horns. The rams'-horn was most mean as to matter, most dull as to sound, and the least showy as to appearance. So, not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in simplicity do we warn you with the rough sound of our ram's horn, that unless you repent, you must perish. Sin must be punished. Sin is upon you, and God must punish you. Heaven and earth may pass away, but not one jot or tittle of his law can fail; and this is one part of his law, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." You have sinned, you are always sinning, and die you must. Some of you are going from bad to worse. If you do not live in outward sin, yet the sins of thought and heart will condemn you. You will die ere long, and when you die the Lord will cast you into the place which he has prepared for the devil and his angels. Be not deceived, there may be but a step between you and death; or if your life be prolonged for a little season, yet how soon will it *be over*. Eternity! eternity! how dread to you if you plunge into it unprepared, to face an angry Judge, no righteousness of Christ to plead, and no blood in which to wash your guilty soul. You are standing, some of you, between the jaws of perdition. The gospel has been preached to you and you have neglected it. You have been brought up by godly parents, and you have despised their admonitions. Therefore wrath will come upon you to the uttermost. As sure as you live you shall be driven from Jehovah's presence into the place where hope cannot follow you, and where mercy will never seek you. We must sound this ram's-horn; we only pray that God may bless our warning voice to you.

After the rams'-horns came the ark, which the priests carried round and round the city. That ark was the type of Christ. We beg to bring Christ before you, ye unconverted ones. Jesus Christ came into this world to seek and to save that which was lost. God smote him instead of us. He took the sins of his people, and God punished him for our sins instead of punishing us. Christ is the great Substitute for sin. If you trust him you shall live. If you will take him this day to be your Saviour, and to be your Master and your Lord, you shall never perish, for God has pledged his word for it, that if you believe in him you shall be saved. O that you would look to Christ, and live! Your good works are nothing, your tears and prayers all go for nothing as to merit, but if you look to Jesus hanging from yonder cross, you shall live. If you will trust yourself with him who is now at the right hand of the eternal Father, crowned with many crowns, sooner shall heaven's

high throne be shaken than your soul be suffered to perish. Only believe in Jesus, and thou shalt live; for this is the gospel, “He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be damned.” We seek not to mince matters with you—damned you will be unless you trust Christ, damned you never shall be if you will come and cast yourself before him. “Kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish by the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little.” Suppose that in the visions of the night, this night when you are on your bed you should suddenly see in your chamber the man with a sword drawn in his hand! You would not need to ask the question, “Art thou for us or for our adversaries?” for your own conscience would soon tell you. Suppose you should hear a solemn voice declare, “The harvest is past, and the summer is ended, and you are not saved.” “Because I have called and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded . . . I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh.” Suppose you saw that sword uplifted, and about to smite you, would you not start in your dream, and your face be covered with a clammy sweat, feeling horrors indescribable? Yet such is your case today; except you repent, such will be your case eternally. I bless God that now our Lord Jesus has no sword drawn in his hand, but he comes to you with open hands, and saith, “Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” With tears he invites you to come to him, persuades you to come. O wherefore do ye tarry, wherefore do you turn your backs upon your own mercy, and seal your own death warrant? God grant that you may come to Jesus, and ere he grasps that sharp destroying sword.

Lastly, brethren, we are not only to sound the ram’s-horn of warning, and to bear round and round the sinner’s conscience the ark of Christ’s grace, but *all the host must engage in the work*. Did you notice that the whole of the people were to compass the city! it would not fall else; and they were to shout, too, at the last. I want you, my fellow members, to unite in our earnest efforts to win souls for Christ. I have a right to claim it, and I now entreat you to fulfil the claim. You profess to have been bought with the Lord’s blood, and to be his disciples. I ask you all, if you be sincere in your professions, come with us round about this Jericho, every one of you. If ye cannot all come up to the public prayer-meetings, yet send us your hearts, pray for sinners, plead for the unconverted, give the eternal Leader no rest till he be pleased to use his great power for their conversion. I am almost inclined to fall on my knees to ask you church members to rally round us at this hour. If you owe your conversion to me under God, as many of you do, I charge you by every filial tie you feel, desert me not just now. If you have ever been comforted, as I know some of you have, if I have ever been God’s voice to your souls, I beseech you return to me this kindness by drawing very near to God in prayer for the souls of others. For

your own children's souls be very earnest; for the souls of your servants, and kinsfolk, and neighbours, wrestle with God even unto tears; and if you will not do it, I had almost said I had sooner you were not with us. If you will not pray, if you will not join in the common supplication, wherefore do ye cumber us? O Meroz, take care lest thou be accused if thou come not up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty! But you will come, God will be with us, and show us his bare right hand resplendent in our midst, and unto Him shall be the praise for ever and ever.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Joshua vi. 10 to end.