

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

THE MODEL HOME MISSION AND THE MODEL
HOME MISSIONARY.

A Sermon

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C. H. SPURGEON,

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“Who went about doing good.”—Acts x. 38.

OUR Lord's public ministry on earth was a home mission. He himself said to his disciples, “I am not sent save to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” He went to the very borders of the Holy Land; but there he stayed, and north and south, east and west, in all directions, in towns and in villages, he itinerated preaching to his own countrymen. Afterwards there sprang out of his home work what may be called the foreign mission, when they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the gospel; and thus the blessing of Israel became a blessing to all nations. It was always the Lord's intention that the gospel should be preached to every creature under heaven, but, so far as his own work was concerned, he began at home; and herein we see his wisdom, for it will be of little avail to attempt much abroad unless there be a solid basis at home, in an earnest sanctified church, affording a fulcrum for our lever. We want to see England converted to Christ, and then shall she become the great herald of Christ's gospel to other lands. As things now are our soldiers and sailors are, too often, witnesses against the gospel, and our travellers of all grades in foreign countries too frequently give an impression very unfavourable to the cross of Christ. We want to have this nation saturated through and through with the Spirit of Jesus Christ, all its darkness chased away, and the true light made to shine, and then missionary operations will receive a wonderful impetus. God will make his truth to be known in all nations when he has first caused his face to shine upon his chosen.

We shall now speak about home mission work under two heads. First, we have before us a *Model Home Mission*; and secondly a *model Home Missionary*. When we have talked about these two things, we shall press a third point, namely, *the duty of imitating the works of the great Master*.

I. First, then, we have before us A MODEL HOME MISSION. We see sketched in the text the great Home Mission which was conducted by the Lord Jesus Christ, "who went about doing good." I am sure we shall learn much if we consider the way in which he conducted that enterprise.

In commencing his work he selected as his great instrument *the preaching of the gospel*. The Lord had anointed him to preach the gospel. He performed thousands of gracious actions; he officiated in many ways for the good of his fellow men, and for the glory of God; but his throne on earth, if I might so speak, was the pulpit. It was when he began to declare the gospel of the kingdom, that his true glory was seen, "Never man spake like this man." Brethren, he would have his followers depend upon the same agency. The scattering of religious books and the institution of schools and other godly efforts, are not to be neglected; but first and foremost it pleases God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. The cardinal duty of the Christian church is thus laid down, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Notwithstanding all that may be said about the advance of the times, and the non-adaptation of the pulpit to this present age, we shall be very foolish if we imagine that we have found a better instrumentality than that which Jesus selected and which his Father so highly blessed. Let us stand to our preaching like soldiers to their guns. The pulpit is the Thermopylæ of Christendom where our foes shall receive a check; the field of Waterloo on which they shall sustain a defeat. Let us preach, and preach evermore. Let us continue sounding, even if it be but the rams' horns, for by-and-by the walls of Jericho shall fall flat to the ground. Preach, preach, preach. The Master's life clearly tells us that if we would save souls and glorify God we must constantly proclaim the gospel of the kingdom.

In connection with his own personal preaching, we find the Master *forming a seminary for the training of ministers*. Those who have, at any time, thought properly conducted collegiate institutions to be unscriptural, can hardly understand the action of our Lord in retaining under his own eye a band of scholars, who afterwards became teachers. After he had called Peter and John, and some few others, he at first admitted them, as it were, into his evening classes; for they pursued their ordinary business, and came to him at fitting seasons for instruction. But after awhile they separated themselves from all the pursuits of business, and were continually with their great Teacher. They learned how to preach as they marked how *he* preached. He even taught them to pray, as John also taught his disciples. Many dark subjects which he did not explain to the people, we are told he opened up to the disciples. He took them apart and gave them to know the mysteries of the kingdom, while to the rest of the people the truth was only spoken in parables. Now, this has been too much forgotten in the church, and needs to be brought to our remembrance. Among the Vaudois and the Waldenses, every pastor of the church was always intensely earnest to find out others who would become pastors; hence each one had a younger brother under his care. In the journeys of the shepherds of the Vaudois church, as they passed from crag to crag, each one of the venerable men was usually accompanied by some strong young mountaineer, who,

in return for the physical help which he gave to the venerable father, received instruction from him in the doctrines of the gospel, in church government, and in other things which appertained to the ministry. In this way the Israel of the Alps was enabled to perpetuate its testimony, and the office of the preacher of the gospel never fell into disuse. When in the days of the blessed Reformation, Calvin and Luther exerted an influence over Europe, it was not only through their own preaching, mighty as that was; nor through their writings, though these were scattered broadcast like the leaves of autumn; but it was also through the innumerable young men who swarmed at Wirtemberg and came together at Geneva to listen to the great Reformers' teaching, and then afterwards went forth themselves into other lands to tell abroad what they had learned. Our Master sets before us the fact that no fitter instrument for spreading the gospel can be devised than a man raised up by God to speak the gospel, who is able to attract to his feet others who shall catch his spirit, profit by his example, receive his doctrines, and go forth to preach the selfsame word.

It would be correct to add, that the Master also connected with his preaching and his college the invaluable agency of *Bible classes*, indeed, I believe that the whole machinery of a zealous Christian church can be found in *embryo* in the doings of Christ; and if his blessed life of holy labour were more thoroughly studied, new organisations for enlightening the world and for building up the church would soon be thought of, and the best results would follow. Our Lord talked to his disciples, occasionally one by one, sometimes when he found them in pairs, and at other seasons he addressed the apostles as a whole, "expounding unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." The apostles were evidently well acquainted with the Scriptures, and yet I do not suppose that all the population of Palestine were so well trained; they must, therefore, have learned of Jesus. Peter's first sermon shows his acquaintance with the Old Testament, and the speech of Stephen manifests remarkable familiarity with Scripture history. Such knowledge was not, I think, general, but was the result of constant intercourse with a Teacher whose references to the inspired volume were so constant. His readings of the holy Book, his interpretations, his quotations, his illustrations, all tended to make his disciples men well instructed in the law and the prophets; while the inmost meaning of the Word was laid bare to them in the person of their Lord himself. If any home mission would see its work established, so as to endure the test of years, next to the ordinance of preaching, its ministry must be careful to exercise diligence in training up the converts in the knowledge of the written Word. The Bible must be read intelligently, and its meaning clearly set forth; the memory must become familiar with its very words, and the heart with its inner spirit. We must look out gracious men and women who will labour in this needful ministry. No minister can afford to neglect the constant scriptural tuition of his people, and if he be negligent of it he need not wonder if grievous wolves enter into the church and devour the flock. That our young men and women may not be carried about with every wind of doctrine, but may be steadfast, unmovable, it is our bounden duty to instruct them in the divine Word with laborious care and constancy.

Notice, moreover, that *our Lord's mission work did not overlook the children.* Our noble system of Sunday-school work is not only justified, but even enforced by the example and precept of our Lord when he said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven;" and also by his saying to Peter, "Feed my lambs." The injunctions which bid us look after our adult converts who come under the denomination of "sheep," are no more valid than the command which bids us look after the young and the tender, who are intended by the term "lambs." True mission-work, therefore, if any of you will undertake it, must carefully regard children. Moses would not leave even the little ones in Egypt. Even the youthful Israelites ate of the paschal lamb. Our work is sadly faulty if it has no bearing upon the young men and maidens, the boys and the girls. I am afraid that much of our public preaching is blame-worthy in this respect. I feel myself that I do not say as much in my general sermons as I ought to do to the children of my congregation. I do insert stories and parables here and there, but if I shall ever reach my own ideal of preaching, I shall far more frequently let fall handfuls on purpose for the young. Sermons should be like a Mosaic, and the sparkling pieces which catch the infant eye should abound. Our discourses should be as Isaiah says, "wine and milk"—wine for men and milk for babes. Out of our pulpits we must be the friends of the children, for then we trust they will grow up to be friends to us and to our Master. Our model mission bends its strength to the cultivation of juvenile piety, and makes this department of effort second to none.

We now proceed a step farther. Of late years there has been frequently used by earnest evangelists in the more populous parts of London, *the plan of free teas, free breakfasts, and free dinners*, at which the poorest persons are brought together and fed, and are then affectionately exhorted to seek salvation. It is remarkable that this method has been so long disused, because it is, with a small difference, a plan adopted by our Lord. On two occasions at least, he spread a free repast for thousands of the famishing, disdaining not to provide food for the bodies of those whose souls he had blessed with the word of life. On those two occasions the generous Master of the feast gave his crowd of guests a good substantial meal of bread and fish. I have often wondered why those two viands were in each case selected, perhaps it was that both land and sea should be declared to be the storehouse of Providence. He gave not bread alone, his fare was not niggardly; he would not merely stay their hunger, but he would afford them a relish to their bread, and therefore he gave them bread and fish. Agreeable, sufficient, healthful and satisfying refreshment the Lord dispensed at his table in the wilderness. Though many, no doubt, followed him because they did eat of those loaves and fishes, yet I do not doubt that some who were first attracted by the earthly food remained to eat of the bread of heaven, and embraced those precious truths which at first were foolishness unto them. Yes, my friends, if we want to get at our starving people, if we would reach the most degraded and the poorest of the poor, we must use such means as these, *for Jesus did.*

A mission would also find great strength in imitating Jesus by combining *medical aid* with religious teaching. Our Lord was a medical missionary: he not only preached the gospel, but he opened the eyes of the blind, cured those who were afflicted with fevers, made the lame to leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb to sing. You may say that all this was miracle. I grant it, but the mode of performing the cure is not the point in hand, I am speaking of the thing itself. True enough is it that we cannot work miracles, but we may do what is within human reach in the way of healing, and so we may follow our Lord, not with equal footsteps, but in the same track. I rejoice to see in Edinburgh and in Glasgow, and also in London, the establishment of Medical Missions. I believe that in some parts of London nothing would be so likely to do good to the people as to make the vestry a dispensary, and the godly surgeon a deacon of the church, if not an evangelist. It may one day be thought possible to have deaconesses whose self-denying nursing of the sick poor shall introduce the gospel into the meanest hovels. At any rate, there should be associated with the City Missionary, with the Bible-woman, and with home missions everywhere, to as great a degree as may be possible, the earnest aid of beloved physicians and men learned in the healing art, who should seek to do good to men's eyes, and ears, and legs, and feet, while others of us look to their spiritual infirmities. Many a young man who goes forth as a minister of Christ would do much more good if he understood a little anatomy and medicine. He might be a double blessing to a remote hamlet or to a district crowded with the poor. I pray for a closer connection between the surgeon and the Saviour. I would invoke the aid of truly believing members of the faculty. May there be many who like Luke are both physicians and evangelists. Perhaps some Christian young man walking the hospitals, and fearing God, may find in these hints a guide as to his future career.

In addition to this, let me say that our Lord Jesus Christ also associated with his mission-work *the distribution of alms*. He was very poor. Foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had nests, but he, the Son of Man, had not where to lay his head. Out of the gifts of the faithful who ministered to his necessities there was but little to spare. These gifts were put into a bag and entrusted to Judas, and we discover incidentally that the Master was wont to distribute from this slender store to the poor around him. Brethren, it is to be feared that some churches fall behind in this matter of almsgiving, a matter which at the judgment day will occupy a very conspicuous place, "I was hungry, and ye gave me meat." The Romish church has abounded in the practice of almsgiving, and if her mode of distributing were as wise as her manner of contributing is generous, she would deserve much commendation in this respect. Brethren, because we feel that we are justified by faith and not by works, are we to cease from good works and suffer the giving of alms to drift into the background? Such is now the rage for centralisation, and so eager are some for the suppression of all personal charity, that it may one day become an indictable offence to give away a sixpence to a starving woman until you have consulted the police, the poor law board, or some association for giving away paper tickets instead of wheaten bread. Public opinion demands

the publication of all our gifts, and ignores the old-fashioned command, "Let not thy right hand know what thy left hand doeth." We are all to be made wheels in the engine of a society, to give our alms by clock-work, and relieve the poor by machinery. For one, I shall always recommend Christian people to be a little eccentric in their benevolence. Without decrying societies, I shall urge godly men to judge for themselves as to the poverty of each case, and to give for themselves, apart from those various associations which cut and dry benevolence till it becomes a mere skeleton. I am a firm believer in the gospel of the barley loaves and fishes; I believe in the gospel of feeding the hungry and clothing the naked. I like the story that I heard the other day of a poor man who was found in the street one Sunday morning, as he was about to commit suicide. Two of our brethren met him, and led him to this Tabernacle, but they knew better than to bring him to hear a sermon while he was hungry. On the road they took him to a coffee-shop, and gave him a cup of hot coffee and some bread and butter, and then they brought him to hear the discourse. I had a far more likely hearer in the man whose hunger was relieved than I could have had in the poor famishing sinner. Then, after the sermon was over, they took care to find him a good dinner, and so detained him till they brought him here again in the evening, and God was pleased to bless the Word to him. Rest assured that the Master's opening blind eyes, the Master's feeding the multitude, and the Master's relief of the poor, were all indications to the Christian church that clothing societies, and soup kitchens, and benevolent associations, are legitimate aids to the spread of the gospel.

Our Master's mission had one point in it which we ought never to forget, namely, *that it was carried on very largely through open-air preaching.* I remember well the time when it really seemed an outrageous novelty for a man to preach in the streets. I recollect proposing, twenty years ago, to my good deacons in the country that I should preach on the Sunday evening by the river side, and the remark was made by one of them, "Ah! I do not like it, it is imitating the Methodists." To him as a sound Calvinist it was a dreadful thing to do anything which Methodists were guilty of; to me, however, that was rather a recommendation than otherwise, and I was happy to run the risk of being Methodistical. All over England, in our cities, towns, villages, and hamlets, there are tens of thousands who never will hear the gospel while open-air preaching is neglected. I believe that God *allows* us to preach in churches and chapels, but I do not believe that we have any apostolical precedent for it, certainly none for confining our ministry to such places. I believe that we are allowed, if it promote order and edification, to set apart buildings for our worship; but there is no warrant for calling these places sanctuaries and houses of God, for all places are alike holy where holy men assemble. It is altogether a mischievous thing that we should confine our preaching within walls. Our Lord, it is true, preached in the synagogues, but he often spake on the mountain's side, or from a boat, or in the court of a house, or in the public thoroughfares. To him an audience was the only necessity. He was a fisher of souls of the true sort, and not of the modern order, who sit in their houses and expect the fish to come to them to be

caught. Did our Lord intend a minister to go on preaching from his pulpit to empty pews, when by standing on a chair or a table outside the meeting-house he might be heard by hundreds? Of course, if the crowd fill the house, and it is as large as the human voice can fill, there is the less need for us to go out into the streets, but, alas! there are places of worship in London by scores, not one-fourth or even one-tenth filled, and yet the preacher goes on contentedly! A minister is living in positive sin, who constantly preaches to a mere handful within walls, while outside there are crowded courts and lanes, and alleys, where men are perishing for lack of knowledge. The minister who does his duty, goes out into the highways and hedges; he goes into all the world; he preaches whether men will hear or whether they will forbear, and delights to make hills and woods ring with the message of peace.

Our Lord also set an example to home missionaries, in the fact that *he had pity on the villages*. Small villages are often thought to be too insignificant for the founding of churches in them. But the villages help to make the large towns, and the character of the citizens of this great London of ours depends very much upon the character of the village homes, from which so many of our fellow citizens are drawn. We must never neglect the smallest hamlet, but seek as far as we can, to reach even the little knots of cottages that stand by twos and threes on lone heaths and desolate moors.

At the same time, the Master also *gave much attention to the towns*. Capernaum and Bethsaida were not forgotten. Jerusalem frequently echoed with his voice. Where the crowds assembled at the solemn festivals, which were something like the gatherings at our markets and fairs, Christ was heard lifting up his voice, and crying, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." The home missionary must avail himself of all gatherings of his fellow men, for whatever objects they may have come together; and in every place he must proclaim the gospel, seeking by any means to save some.

This and much more may be gathered from the life of Jesus of Nazareth, "a prophet mighty in deed and word."

II. I shall now pass on to notice, in the second place, THE MODEL HOME MISSIONARY.

My brethren, after all, the success of a work depends very little upon the system which is adopted in carrying it out; almost everything rests, under God, upon the man. There have been men who, with systems unwise and imperfect, have nevertheless accomplished noble results, while others with admirable organisations have done nothing, because they were not the right men. Who then is the fittest man to be a missionary for Christ? Who is the woman that can best serve her God? Behold the Model Missionary in the person of the Lord Jesus. The man who is to serve God as a leading missionary *must be a man of teaching power and of personal influence*. It is of no use to send out as a missionary a man who cannot speak; and yet there are many places where the people are without a minister, if speaking power be an essential qualification for that office. Why, you may frequently hear the preacher mumble so dreadfully that you can hardly follow his words, or he is a mere reader, or else a prosy reciter of very heavy matter. In the Established Church, the very last thing that is looked into

when a young man enters holy orders, as they call them, is whether he has gifts of utterance, or in other words, whether he is qualified by nature and by grace to be a preacher. That some very admirable and excellent persons enter the church is cheerfully granted, but none the less we believe such a system to be essentially bad. If you want a man to spread the gospel among his fellow men, he must be one who can preach. He must be apt to teach. He must have a way of making plain what he means, and of winning attention, so that men may be willing to listen to him. Our Lord had this grand capacity in the highest degree. He could bring the sublimest truths down to the level of his hearers' comprehension. He knew how, with a divine simplicity, to tell a story that would win even a child's attention; and though the truth he spake was such that archangels might well marvel at it, yet he put it into such a form that the little children gathered around him, and the common people heard him gladly. Aptness to teach—this is what we want. Pray ye, my brethren, the Lord of the harvest to send us many who have this choice gift. The pulpit, the Sunday-school, and every form of Christian service need earnest workers who have the power of translating their thoughts into the language of those with whom they come in contact, so that they may be interested and impressed.

But there were higher qualifications than these. *Our Lord as a Missionary was a man who fraternised with the people.* I do not think he ever passed a person on the road concerning whom he said to himself, "I am so much above that man that I will not speak to him." I could hardly dare to imagine him saying such words. It would so lower the Saviour to imagine such a thing; and yet, and yet, and yet, some of his ministers have thought so! How many of us if we had seen a poor harlot coming to the well would have remained sitting by it purposely to converse with her? If we had seen her coming, knowing her character, we should probably have moved off, and have eased our conscience with the notion that hers was a case more suitable for some one else to deal with, in fact, a matter to be left to an agent of the Rescue Society. Our Lord made no affectation of condescending or of patronising the poor Samaritan sinner, but as naturally as possible, with every appearance of ease, he at once began to talk with her. If she had been the noblest lady in the land he could not have fraternised more thoroughly with her, and yet he in no way connived at her sin. Our Lord received sinners and ate with them. They must have seen how different he was from themselves, but he affected no distance, he pretended to no caste, he drew no lines of social demarcation. He was not a Pharisee who stood apart in his pious eminence: pride and assumed dignity had no attractions for him. He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, in the highest and best of senses, but in other respects he was the friend of publicans and sinners. If we are to have London blessed, it will never be by ministers who are too great to speak to the poorest of the people; nor will your benevolent societies work much good if your lordships and ladyships cannot mingle with the humbler classes. We must be one with those whom we would bless; we must not be ashamed to call them brethren; we must without being conscious of stooping, reach out a fraternal hand

to the fallen and the degraded, that we may lift them up for Christ's sake. O for men and women of the true brotherly and sisterly spirit; bone of the people's bone and flesh of their flesh!

Our Lord, again, was *a man who could toil*. He was by no means a gentleman at large, amusing his leisure with lecturing. He never preached a sermon without weaving his soul into it. He was by no means the kind of evangelist who finds his task a light one. He could not as some do, preach by the year without disturbing the placid current of his own emotions. Nay, my brethren, never preacher worked more intensely than Jesus did—by day preaching, by night praying, oftentimes faint through weariness, and yet not finding time so much as to eat bread. Whoever did not labour, Christ did. He is the Master worker of all the sons of men. If we all must needs eat bread in the sweat of our faces, much greater was his toil when he brought the bread of life to us by the bloody sweat of Gethsemane, and by the life-sweat of every day of his three years' ministry. His life was a scene of unrivalled labour. We can hardly conceive how thoroughly our Redeemer laid himself out for us. Now, if the church would see souls saved, the work will never be achieved by agents who are half asleep; Christ's kingdom will never be extended by persons who are afraid of labour. God will bless his church by the power of the Holy Spirit, for all the power lies there, but he will have his church travail, or the blessing will not come.

For a home missionary we want *a man who can pray as the Master prayed*. What a proficient in the art of prayer was Jesus! He was as great with God in prayer as he was with man in preaching. I heard a brother speak the other day of our Lord's coming from the mountain-side with the wild flowers on his garments, and the smell of the heather on his vesture, for he came fresh from the lone spot where he had spent the night in prayer. Ah! my brethren, here is the centre of power. Prayer breaks hearts. These granite rocks will never yield to our hammers till we go down on our knees to smite. If we prevail with God for men, we shall prevail with men for God. The main work of the minister must be done alone. Let him do as he pleases when the multitude are listening, he shall not bring them to Christ unless he has pleaded for them when none heard him but his God. Our home mission wants men who can pray.

And, brethren, if we are to secure useful men and women *we must choose those who can weep*. That is a fine faculty, that emotional power of the heart which makes the passions boil, and rise within like steaming vapours, till at last like the waters of dropping wells, they are condensed and fall in showers from our eyes! I do not covet that moistness of the eye, which some exhibit as the result of optical weakness or effeminacy of constitution, but manly weeping is a mighty thing. Our Lord Jesus was thoroughly a man; far too masculine to fall into sentimentalism and affectation, but when he beheld the city, and knew all the sufferings that would come upon it from the siege as a punishment for its sin, he could not restrain the waterfloods, his great soul ran over at his eyes. If he had not been a man who could weep himself, he could not, humanly speaking, have made others weep. You must feel yourselves if you would make other men feel. You cannot reach

my heart till first of all your heart comes to meet mine. Lord, send into thy field men of strong emotional natures whose eyes can be fountains of tears.

To crown all, *our blessed Lord was one who knew how to die!* Oh, when shall we have men and women sent among us who are prepared to die, in order to accomplish their life-work? I have shuddered, and all the more so because I might do no better myself, when I have heard excuses for avoiding risks of life, and reasons for escaping hardships in foreign lands. It has been even questioned in some quarters, whether a man would be right in exposing himself to danger of life in order to preach the gospel. I could say much, but would be sparing of censure. Only this I must say, until grace shall restore to us the ancient apostolic self-sacrifice, we may not expect to see the gospel conquering to any high degree. Zeal for God's house must eat us up; love of life must yield to love of souls; trials must be counted as nothing for Christ's sake, and death must be defied, or we shall never capture the world for Jesus. They who wear soft raiment will never win Ireland, or Africa, or India, for Christ. The man who considers himself, and makes provision for the flesh, will do little or nothing. Christ revealed the great secret when it was said of him, "He saved others, himself he cannot save." In proportion as a man saves himself he cannot save others, and only in proportion as he is carried away with self-sacrifice, willing to renounce luxuries, comforts, necessities, and even life itself, only in that proportion will he succeed. I trust that no missionary's life may be lost, but I trust that if the church can only bring the world to Christ by the deaths of her ministers, all our lives may be sacrificed: for what are we, my brethren, what is any one of us, compared with the accomplishment of our Redeemer's work? Our sires went to the stake with songs upon their lips. Our ancestors were confessors who dared the barbarous cruelties of Northern hordes, and the refined persecutions of Southern superstition; men who could die, but could not refrain from witnessing for the Lord. We must quit ourselves like men for Christ, and though we may not all be called to make the extreme sacrifice, we must be ready for it, and if we shrink from it we are not the men for such a time as this.

We want men who can toil, men who can pray, men who can weep, men who can die. In fact, we need for Christ's work men all ablaze with consecrated fervour, men under a divine impulse, like arrows shot from the bow of the Almighty flashing straight to the target; men like thunderbolts launched by the Eternal to go crashing through every difficulty with irresistible energy of aim. We want a divine enthusiasm to fire us, an almighty impetus to urge us on. Only men thus filled with the Holy Ghost shall accomplish largely the work of God.

III. My last point was to be, if Christ lived thus, and worked thus, LET US HEAR HIS CALL AND IMITATE HIM.

I shall say but a few sentences, but let them be remembered. Believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, it is your privilege to be a worker together with God, therefore *keep close to the footsteps of the great Master worker*. Remember that *before he went to work he was himself personally obedient to that gospel which he had to preach*. He did not bid others believe and be baptised, and neglect to be baptised himself. "Thus

it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness," said he, and in the waves of Jordan the Baptist immersed him. How little will you be fitted for service if you leave any command of Christ unobeyed! How can you exhort others to do your Lord's will if you yourself are disobedient to it? The first thing, therefore, before you go to that form of service which now invites you, is to see to it that you have obeyed the Master's will, for "to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."

This being done, let me say to you, *Is there not some department of mission work at home that you could undertake?* Most probably you could not do all those things which I have mentioned as having been done by Christ, but you know that young artists will often be instructed by their masters to sketch, not the whole of a great statue by Phidias, but one single limb, an arm, a hand, or a foot. Have you not often seen in the artist's studio the foot of some great master-piece used as a model? Just so it shall be enough to teach you service if, being unable to attempt the whole of the great scheme which I have brought before you now, you will undertake zealously to labour in one department of it. But, whatever you do, *do it thoroughly*, do it heartily. If it be worth doing at all, it is worth doing well; for such a Master there must be no second-rate work, and with such a gracious reward before you there must be no offering of that which costs you nothing. You must throw yourselves into whatever you undertake for Jesus.

Will you now take one word which is often used by Mark as a motto for yourselves? The idiom of the gospel of Mark is *eutheos*, "straightway." He is always saying of Christ, that straightway he did this, and straightway he did that. Now, if you have work for Christ before your eye, straightway hasten to do it. The most of Christians miss the honour they might have in service by waiting till a more convenient season. Do something to-night before you go to bed, if it be only the giving away of a tract. Do something as each moment flies. If hitherto you have not been a worker, begin *now*, or if you have been a worker up till now, do not pause, but end the evening with another good word to sister, or child, or friend. Evermore breathe out consecration to Christ.

And let me bid you, dear friends, if you love my Lord and Master, to have comfort in trying to serve him, because *there is an allsufficient power which you may obtain for this service*. Our Lord is declared in this very verse to be one who was anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power. That same Holy Ghost is given to the church, and that same power lingers in the assemblies of the faithful. Ask for this anointing, and pray that as in this verse we are told that God was with Jesus, so God may be with you. Remember last Sunday evening's text, "Fear thou not; for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."* Being now a pardoned sinner, ask to be an anointed saint. As one who is reconciled to God, ask that you may be strengthened by God, so that from this day forward you may serve your Master mightily.

* Sermon on this text to be published next week, No. 930.

I do not know that I ever felt happier in my life than I did last Tuesday night when I was listening to my dear friend Mr. Orsman, the pastor of the poor but gracious church in Golden Lane, in the City. He is a good brother, who, some years ago, was converted to God under our ministry, and he was there and then converted all over. Some of you when you believe in Christ appear to have only a sprinkling conversion, but I love those men and women who get an immersion conversion, go down into the deeps of the love of Christ, and give themselves altogether up to their Lord. Why, that dear man, though working all day long in the Post Office, yet finds in the evening opportunity to preach Christ; and if you were to go to Golden Lane, you would find there all the forms of organisation, which I have described at the commencement of this sermon, in active exercise. Among the poorest, lowest and most degraded of the people, grace has found out precious jewels. Some seven or eight who are now ministers of the gospel, first began to preach to his poor people there. He has now spiritual children scattered all over the world by emigration, and the good man having consecrated himself fully to his work, is most happy in it. I believe from the bottom of my soul that these single-handed men, who give themselves up to a special district and work it well, are the very greatest blessings that London can have, and if there is a young man here endowed with abilities, and perhaps with a little money and time, what better could I propose to him, as a lover of Christ, than to begin some such work for his Master? The same applies to Christian women. Oh, what good Christian women can do! There are those in this place whose names, if I were to mention them, would be had in honour by us all for what they have accomplished. Without obtruding themselves as preachers into public assemblies, they are working away for Christ privately, and bringing many into the church of God. O Christian men and women, time is flying, men are dying, hell is filling, Christ is waiting to see of the travail of his soul. I beseech you by the bowels of God's mercy, by the heart of Christ, by his love for souls, bestir yourselves and proclaim salvation. May the Lord's blessing be with you. Amen.

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Matthew ix. 27—38;
and x. 1—15.
