

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

LABOURING AND NOT FAINTING.

A Sermon

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“For my name's sake thou hast laboured and hast not fainted.”—Rev. ii. 3.

THE Lord Jesus Christ never removes his eyes from his Church. He notes everything that concerns her, observing not merely the life of her members but their soul's health, and not merely their health, but the way in which they spend their spiritual strength. He knows their works, he observes their charity, their patience, their zeal, for his name's sake. Seven times in his words to the churches, he says, “I know thy works.” This should make us live with great care, for albeit the whole world is under the eye of God, yet of his Church it is true, “upon one stone there shall be seven eyes.” The full perfection of omniscience exerts itself upon the Lord's chosen people. The husbandman has an eye to all his estate, but his chief care is his own family; and, even so, while the Great Husbandman of all creation observes all his works, he chiefly looks upon his own household. “The eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy.”

Our Lord Jesus, it appears from the text and its connection, notices what it is that his church cannot bear, and he is very glad when she cannot endure false doctrine, or unholy living; he would have her never to endure these, but to purge herself from them with all strictness. But he notes also with joy what she can bear,—toilsome labour, abundant self-denial, reproach for his sake, and persecution, and suffering, even unto blood. In this he sees her love made manifest, and his delight is in her. It appears that our Lord especially fixes his eye upon the labours of the church. What is the church allowed to be on earth for, but that she should labour for her Lord? If there were nothing to be done in this world, there would be no reason for her lingering here below. She would be transported to the better land, if there were not great ends to be accomplished by her tarrying here. She is put here because the world wants her, and because God's glory

is to be revealed through her. She is to be salt to a society which else were putrid, light to a people who else would sit in darkness. Consequently a church which does not labour misses the chief end of its being; it is a plant that beareth no flower, a vine branch that yieldeth no cluster.

Christ observes the labour of his church, and he has especial delight in it when it is continuous, so that he can give to her the double commendation of our text, "Thou hast laboured and hast not fainted." Oh! that we might receive this commendation from our Master's lips at the last. May he, whose blood and righteousness are our only hope of salvation, see in us abounding evidences of the grateful love which he so well deserves at our hands. We shall this morning make persevering service our theme.

I. First I would call your attention to the text itself, noticing THE POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE GOOD here combined. "Thou hast laboured"—there is something positive. "Thou hast not fainted"—there is a negative which helps to make the positive more positively excellent.

"Thou hast laboured." We will not consider the original, but we will take the word of our version. "Thou hast *laboured*." Now, to labour signifies working with the putting forth of much strength: it is work with an emphasis. It means hard work, intense exertion, vigorous action. Men may work, but yet not labour, and I fear there are many who claim to be working men who do not often trouble themselves with anything approaching to "labour." There are also working Christians who do not approach to labouring; yet a lifetime of such work as theirs would not exhaust a butterfly. Now, when a man works for Christ he should work with all his might. Surely we should not offer less love under the gospel, than was required under the law, and you know the law speaketh on this wise,—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." Surely Jesus Christ deserves all that, and when we labour for him it should not be with the careless indifference of slaves, but with the ardour of lovers, the devotion of enthusiasts. If any master is to be served badly, let it not be our Master who is in heaven: we owe him too much to wish to be eyeservants towards him. If anywhere a dilatory servant may be excused, certainly it cannot be in the service of him who redeemed us with his most precious blood. A church ought, therefore, not merely to be a working church, but a great deal more; it should be a church working to its highest pitch, a labouring church. If I may use the figure, we ought to employ every particle of our steam power; we should drive the engine at high pressure; we have no force that can be allowed to escape in waste. We should be not simply walking to heaven, but running the heavenly race, and running it with diligence and eagerness.

When a man truly labours it takes a good deal out of him, labouring therefore implies self-denial. In labour the man's strength is brought forth and expended. See how the hot sweat stands upon his brow, how it pours from him as he continues to exert himself. He has to deny himself, for he would like to be at rest. He sees his comrade, perhaps, lounging against yonder pillar, or stretching himself at ease upon the greensward; he cannot do that and labour,—

he knows he cannot; he lays aside his ease and comfort for the sake of what he has to do. So would the church if she were what she should be, she would deny herself and take up the cross of high-pressure service. She would toil without cessation, and give without stint. An energy far beyond anything usual in Christendom would be common in the church if she were in a right state of heart. Alas! I fear the bulk of professors are not earnest enough to preserve their professions from ridicule. I noticed, the other day, a remark which struck me. Speaking of a certain congregation, the writer said he believed there were a hundred persons in it who were worth not less than five thousand pounds a-year each, and then he mentioned the sum that was given for the maintenance of the work of God, and he added, "If any ordinary person who was not a Christian, went in there and heard them sing—

" And if I might make some reserve,
And duty did not call,
I love my God with zeal so great,
That I would give him all,"—

he would say to himself, "I was at the theatre on Saturday night, and saw a farce, but if I want a screaming one I must come here on a Sunday." Indeed, I thought the remark to be sadly true. When I see how much there is of available strength both in worldly substance, in mental vigour, and in other forms in the church, which is never used, I dare hardly say that any church now upon earth really labours for Christ. A little of your spare strength is given to Jesus, and then ye think ye have done well. He is put off with odds and ends, the cheese parings and the potatoe peelings of the church. I ask you, does he get much more? What are the gifts of most? Do they give as much as would keep the lowest menial in their kitchens? It was not so in early times. Then men were Christians all over and altogether, and served Christ first, Christ last, Christ midst, and Christ without end; but now it is enough if we gloss over life with a little varnish of holy talk and pious profession. Would God these eyes might live to see a church that really laboured, putting forth all its strength with all its might, using all the force in its possession for the propagation of the gospel of the Lord and the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom.

But labour implies not merely the strong effort I have tried to depict, but a continuance of it, for a man might take up a workman's tool and for a few minutes make a mighty show of effort, and yet be no labourer, unless he kept on working till his task was done. If a few minutes sufficed him, and he said "I have had practical experience of what labour is, and I rather think it does not agree with me;" and if, therefore, he should lay down his tool and go back to his gentlemanly ease, he would be no labourer. He merely plays at labour, that is all. So have we known too many whose service for God has been occasional; fits and starts of effort they have, but they are soon over; their spasmodic zeal is to-day so hot as to be well nigh fanatical, and to-morrow it will be succeeded by an indifference far more astounding. If the church is said to labour, it means that she puts forth all her strength as a regular thing. Like the sun and moon she continues in her orbit of duty. She does not flash and foam for a brief interval like a torrent,

but she flows on steadily and continually like a river. She keeps at her life-work; with all her might she continues in well-doing, and is not weary. There is the positive good.

The negative, as I have said, crowns the positive,—“And hast not fainted.” Now, there are different degrees of fainting. Some may be said to faint comparatively when they flag in exertion. They drop from running to walking, from diligence to indolence. They did run well; what did hinder them? They flag. Many continue to do as much as ever they did outwardly, yet their heart is not in it, and so they faint. Their service is the same to the eye of man, but not the same to the eye of God. They act as mere officials; their work is done mechanically; they go through the routine, but they put forth no energy, no life power; there is no anointing of the Holy Ghost in them. There is fruit, but it resembles the berries of a sunless summer; it is tasteless, insipid, and all but worthless.

Some flag by growing weak in all they do. They do put forth such force as they have, but they are essentially feeble. They preach their best, but their best is wine mixed with water. They teach in the school, and what they teach is the truth, and they deliver it with some degree of earnestness; but they have lost the power with which to influence the heart; ears they can weary, but consciences they cannot stir. They are vigorously feeble, vehemently weak. They have got away from God, the source of all spiritual strength, and therefore their locks are shorn, and though like Samson they shake themselves, they shake themselves in vain. The power of God has departed from them, and, though they may not know it, Ichabod is written upon their works.

Too many go further than this; they renounce all or a large part of the Christian work they were accustomed to do. Content with the efforts of other days they surrender to the sluggard's vice. They faint, that is, they give up the work altogether; the soldier grounds his arms, the workman puts by his tools; they count their day's work to be done before the day is done, and cry for their wages before the pay day has arrived. It is sad that there should be so many in the church of this kind.

And some go even further than that, for after retiring from labour themselves, they cease to have any care about the Lord's work. They grow indifferent; they even become critical and censorious towards those who are zealously occupied; and whether Christ's kingdom grows or declines appears to be little or nothing to them. They wear the Christian name still, but they have fainted. They are like persons in a swoon who have become unconscious of all around. They want assistance from others, and can give no help in return. They are a draft upon the church's resources, instead of an addition to her strength. For all usefulness they might as well be dead; only as a tax upon the energy of the church can they be said to be alive.

Happy are they who are preserved from fainting in any one of these degrees. God grant especially that we may never come to that last, lest it should be said of us that we had a name to live, and were dead. But, brothers and sisters, members of Christ's church, may this be said of us through a long course of years: “They laboured and fainted not.” When our hair is white with the snows of many

winters, may it be said truly by the dear lips of him who intercedes for us in heaven, "Thou hast laboured and hast not fainted." When we lie in our last narrow bed, may this be the encomium which our spirit shall hear before the throne of God, "Thou hast laboured and hast not fainted." May this be such a sentence as an honest affection may dare to write upon our tombs. Have we begun to faint already? If we are yet in our youth let us care not to faint so soon. If we are yet in the prime of our days, let us call shame upon ourselves for fainting ere yet the sun shines. Or, are we beginning to faint now that we are growing grey? Wherefore should we faint now when the day is almost over, and the shadows are drawn out? Brother, call shame upon thyself, if thou wouldst faint in thy last evening hours when glory is at thy door and the crown of immortality is all but upon thy brow. Let us be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, so that this text may be our own at the last: "Thou hast laboured for my name's sake, and hast not fainted."

II. Now we pass on to a second part of our discourse, and that is, to dwell upon EXCUSES FOR FAINTING. Fainting has become so common in the Church of God that various apologies have been made for it, and they are constantly being repeated; for when a sin is frequent, excuses for it are multiplied until men cease to blush, and think that they have done no ill whatever.

There are some who faint in the work of God because the work itself has proved very tedious to them. When they first undertook it and the novelty was upon it they did not tire, but now the freshness is gone, and they have come into the real wear and tear of it, they do not enjoy it quite so much as they thought they should. They hoped for an office in which the chief labour should be to gather lilies, or lie upon beds of roses. The service of the Crucified is far less romantic, and far more laborious. Dear friends, if any of you think that the road of Christian service is all macadamised and rolled with a steam roller, you have made a very great mistake. There is no royal road to eminence in anything, it is always uphill work and rough climbing; and certainly there is no such road in the service of God. Never was there a truer sentence than that we sung just now.

"True, 'tis a straight and thorny road,
And mortal spirits tire and faint."

Friends were debating the other day concerning the work of the ministry, the ease or the labour of it, and I reminded one of them of that saying of Baxter, "God have mercy upon the man who finds the ministry of the gospel to be easy work, for he will have need of all God's mercy indeed when he renders up his account at the last great day." I cannot conceive of a more atrocious offender against humanity and against God than the man who, having souls committed to his trust, finds it an easy thing to take care of them and watch for their salvation. Sirs, the ministry is a matter which wears the brain and strains the heart, and drains out the life of a man if he attends to it as he should. If God were served by any of us as he should be, I question whether we should not grow old before our time through labour and anguish, even as did that great lover of souls, Jesus, the great

Shepherd of the sheep. Soul-winning is a work that might fill an angel's heart,—did fill a Saviour's hands. Any service for God, if it be done at all, should be hard work. If you want to be feather-bed soldiers go and enlist somewhere else, but Christ's soldiers must fight, and they will find the battle rough and stern. We, of the church militant, are engaged in no mimic manœuvres and grand parades; our life is real and earnest; our battle, though not with flesh and blood, is with spiritual wickedness in high places, and it involves hard blows and keen anguish. You must look for real fighting if you become a soldier of Christ, and oh, sir, if the excuse for fainting be that the work is toilsome, that it is too much a drag upon you, why did you begin it? You ought to have known this at the first. You should have counted the cost. But, ah, let me add, the work was not toilsome when your heart was loving, neither would it now be so hard if your soul were right with God. This is but an unworthy excuse. Ardent spirits love difficulties; fervent love delights in making sacrifices; they would not wish to swim for ever in smooth seas of pleasure; they know that manhood's truest glory lies in contending with and overcoming that which is hard. Give to the child the easy task, but let the man have something worth the doing to perform. Instead of shrinking because the work is tedious, we ought to gird up our loins and push on the enterprise with all the greater force.

Another apology is pretty frequently heard. "But I have been so long at it now. I have been a tract distributor, I have been a city missionary, I have been an evangelist, or I have been a Bible woman, or I have been a Sunday-school teacher now twenty or thirty years, and I think it is time to retire." Say you so, my comrades? The sun has been shining now a great many thousand years, but I have not heard that he intends retiring from the business yet. God has given to us fruitful seasons, and I have not heard that he intends to cease to bless our husbandry; every day we drink from the river of his mercy, and we have had no intimation yet that that river has ceased to flow, and that God intends to cut off the supplies. Why, then, should any one of us dream of staying his hand? What is a lifetime at its utmost length for the service of God? Suppose a man could spend seventy clear years in unflagging exertion in the service of his Master, what would it be after all? But now half our time must go in sleep, and in the necessary refreshment of the body; next, a very large proportion must be taken off for the business of the world, and then what is left? Why we can only give our Master a few hours in the week, the most of us, and yet you talk about having served him so long. Dear Master, put thy hand upon our lips next time we would use such words, and never permit us to insult the sovereignty of thy dear love by making such an excuse for our sluggishness.

Other excuses, however, will be sure to come, and amongst them this, that we have been disappointed up till now in the success of what we have attempted. We have sown, but the most of the seed has fallen upon the wayside, or upon the rocks; and where it did spring up, we have not gained anything like a hundred-fold increase. We thought that in our class we should have had all the girls or all the boys converted almost immediately; and when we went into the village to preach, we

concluded everybody would come to hear us, and that hearing us, they would be converted, and a church would be formed speedily. We dreamed that when we visited a district in the crowded city, we should be able, very soon, so to reform the people, that the public houses would grow fewer, and the Sabbath would be better kept, and I do not know what beside: very little of this fair vision has been realised; we have not succeeded as we desired. And what is very perplexing to us is the fact that we know of somebody who has succeeded where we have failed; a person who does not appear to have all the gifts we have, and all the capacities we have, whose sphere was evidently quite as difficult as ours, and yet he has prospered and we have not, and therefore we conclude that we would do well to cease our working. If we were in our right minds, and did not want an excuse for being sluggards, we should not reason thus, but should argue to a conclusion of a diametrically opposite nature. He who has succeeded so well might, perhaps, have an excuse for going home and saying, "Master, my work is done," but he who has done so very little should continue at his work till he can show some sort of result for his efforts. He should say, "I will stick to this till I do succeed, or till I can say, 'If I have not succeeded it was no fault of mine: I did what my Master bade me, I called upon him for help in it, and I went to work in his way with faith in him, and if I have not prospered, I have done what I could.'" I remember hearing a certain young preacher exclaim after he had heard an older divine, who had preached with some power, "There now, I shall never be able to preach again after this, I shall feel quite ashamed to go into the pulpit with my poor sermons!" I could not help remarking that the effect ought to be the other way. If this man had done so well, it only shows what God can enable me to do, and I will go to God and ask him to help me; if this brother is so useful in the church, I will bless God that he is a better man than I am, and if God pleases to give me a gleam of success occasionally, I will thank him even if I am not able to bear so much success as my fellow-servant. We must not give up the war because we have not conquered yet, but fight on till we can seize the victory. Let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not.

Another set of excuses I must mention. They are little, pettish, pitiful, proud excuses, but they are very common. Here is one. "I shall leave the work for I am sure I am not appreciated as I ought to be." You do not exactly use these words, but that is your feeling. I am only photographing your thoughts. You began to serve God very enthusiastically, and you thought the minister ought to have said, "I am thankful that God has sent such a very zealous young man into our church": but he has not made any such remark. You have gone on for some time working among the poor, but the good people around you have not been heard to say, "Have you heard of so and so? she is such a remarkably useful woman, quite a godsend among us, an example to us all." You feel hurt that you are not admired, vexed that you are not highly esteemed. Now, I will not waste words in exposing this feeling, but I will at once ask you to look at it, and say if you don't think it is the meanest and most miserable thing you have ever set your eyes upon. Do you mean to give way to such pettishness and silliness?

If so, I have done with you, for you will never do any good in this world. The slave of such a mean feeling is incapable of being free.

“Ah,” cries another, “my complaint is more reasonable, for I am discouraged because no one aids me in my work. I should not mind their not appreciating me, but they have not assisted me, though I have needed much help. I have kept on under great pressure, and where I thought I should surely find sympathisers and helpers, I have met with the cold shoulder and unkind remarks.” Oh, my brother, my brother, does your life after all depend upon the breath of other men’s nostrils? Has it come to this, that you cannot live upon the approbation of your Master unless you gain also the smile of your fellow-servants? Does it mean this, that you will not do your duty because other people are negligent of theirs? It seems to me if others will not aid me I must put my shoulder to the wheel and do the work myself by the help of God. If the toil be unshared the honour will be undivided. To tread the winepress alone makes us more like our Lord. Therefore, let us labour on in the name of the Lord, whose support is far better than the help of kings or princes.

Another says, “I have no patience with these frivolous excuses, but mine is a solid one. I must leave my work, for I am so much opposed in it.” Granted that you are opposed, why should you run away? Overcome the opposition, dear brother; the more of it to be overcome, the more grace you want, and the more honour you may gain. Suppose a troop should come against you, is it not said of Gad, “A troop shall overcome him, but he shall overcome at the last”? Would you be crowned without a conflict, and made a victor without fighting? Of one of old it is said, that he broke through a troop and leaped over a wall through his God. Why should not you do the same? “But my wall is so high,” say you, “I cannot leap over it.” Is it an iron wall or a granite wall? Then, if God tells you to leap, leap right at it. He will either bear you over it, or else its solid substance will dissolve into impalpable vapour and vanish quite away. You only want courage. Go in this thy might, for thou shalt thresh the mountains, and the wind shall winnow them and carry them away.

“But I am so incompetent and feel so weak,” says one, “in fact, the further I go the weaker I get!” You are progressing admirably, dear brother, and when you become still weaker you will succeed. Gideon could not win the battle because he had too many soldiers; the faint-hearted had to be sent away, but still there were too many troops remaining, and when the whole army was reduced to three hundred, and they had no weapons but earthen vessels and trumpets, then it was that the Midianites were smitten. When we are weak then are we strong. Oh, brother, renounce this excuse and labour on, fainting not. God keep thee from fainting.

III. Now, for a moment or two, I am going to mention the REAL CAUSES OF FAINTING. The first is an actual decline in spiritual strength. When a working believer suddenly becomes a loitering professor, you may gather from it that his spiritual constitution has grey hairs upon it here and there, though he knows it not. It is not, dear brother, merely that you *do* not do so much, it is that you *are* not so much; you have not the amount of life in you which you once had.

And is not this a sad thing? Ought not this to be an indicator to you of spiritual sickness, and drive you at once to the Good Physician to seek for healing at his hands. There is, if you would look a little into your spirit, I am quite sure of it, a falling off in your love to Jesus. Holy work is no harder, but you do not love Christ so well. You have, in truth, no more enemies than you had, but you have forgotten your best friend. Oh, if you had been in the banqueting house with him, and his banner of love had waved over you, and you had been made to drink of the spiced wine of his pomegranate in sweet communion with his blessed person, you would not have fainted, for he who is on fire with love will burn his way through difficulties. I am afraid too there is coming over your spirit a great deal of deadness to spiritual and eternal things. You are now more moved and actuated by the things that are seen, and less by the things that are unseen. It is a very easy thing for us to get to enjoy the world, and to give our hearts up to its troubles and cares, but it needs the Spirit of God to make us sensitive to the divine touch, so that we feel eternity, so that we know the value of other men's souls, so that we put before us the great day in which actions shall be revealed, so that we estimate life aright as it will weigh in the balances of infinite justice. Oh, to be dead to these spiritual realities in any degree is a dreadful death, and to be callous to holy things is a terrible hardness. May God keep us from spiritual insensibility, and may we be tender and sensitive to the faintest motion of the Holy Spirit.

It is to be feared, also, that those who faint have lost their reliance upon divine power, at least in a degree. The man who labours for God aright never works in his own strength. He who works aright acts because he believes that God works through him; and can a man faint when he feels that? When we fight for God's truth it is not *our* arm but the arm of the Eternal which deals the blow. When we bear testimony to his word it is not we that speak, but God's Spirit speaks through us. Let the man of God go forth to any enterprise and hear the sound of his Master's feet behind him, and he will march to the tune of Miriam's timbrel; but let him go alone and he will moan, and murmur, and pine, and fail, and die. Confidence in God makes us strong, but by turning away from our great unseen helper, we straightway begin to faint.

Moreover, I am afraid that we forget that the Lord requires of us an unselfish dedication to his service, and that we do not serve him at all unless his glory is our chief object. When I hear of a fainting Sunday-school teacher, who gives as a reason for fainting that he does not think the other Sunday-school teachers are as kind to him as they ought to be, I ask him whether his main object was that he should be loved of men, for if he loved his God what would it be to him how his fellow-men regarded him? When I hear a man saying, "I shall give up that post, or that service"—(of course I am not mentioning those who have justifiable reasons, and there are such cases), but when I hear of a man's retiring because he is faint-hearted, I would say to him, "You meet with difficulties;—did you not know you would meet with difficulties? You have gained no honour;—did you not serve for another motive, namely, God's glory? If you looked for ease, and content, and

pleasure, and have not gained them, what wonder? You ought not to have looked for them. Oh, brother, you have made a mistake. You must get into a better state of heart before God can use you. You must feel that you would have the Lord use you just as in his infinite wisdom he sees fit to do. You should be a piece of iron on the Almighty's anvil: to be welded into a sceptre, if he chooses with you to break the potter's vessels; to be beaten into a ploughshare and plunged into the earth, if by you he means to turn up the furrows of the fallow ground; or fashioned into a spear-point, if by you he intends to smite his enemies." Whatever he wishes to make us, that we should desire to be. We know not what it is to serve God fully, until we come to perfect submission to his will.

IV. I have a little medical business to do in closing this sermon. Four sorts of persons are very common among us. There are, first, those who neither labour nor faint; next, those who faint but never labour; then, those who did labour once, but have fainted; and, fourthly, those who labour still, but are ready to faint. To each of these four I desire to administer a little medicine. Let the first come hither. There are some who neither labour nor faint. I do not mean outsiders now; those God shall judge. I mean members of the church. Labour? No. The greatest labour they ever do is to walk from home to the meeting-house to hear a sermon, and some of them are hardly able to keep awake during the time of hearing the discourse. They are slumbering hearers like Eutychus, and it is a great mercy God does not make an example of them as he did of that sleepy brother. We have church members who never labour, and, therefore, never faint. What should they faint about? They have never done enough to come anywhere near an approach to that state of exhaustion. They never draw the gospel coach, but they are delighted to ride on the top of it; they especially prize the box seat if they can get it. They never go into the Lord's vineyard to trim the vines, but they are very fond of eating the clusters, though, indeed, even these they will at times call sour and destitute of the flavour of the older vintages. They do nothing, nothing whatever, and, therefore, they find fault with those who do. I am very thankful that very few of this class are among us, yet there are too many. Now, I would prescribe for them a taste of the gall of bitterness. It might be beneficial to them if they had the flavour of it in their mouths, for I am very much afraid that unless they repent it will be their eternal portion. A church member who brings forth no fruit, what did the Lord say about him? He said, "Every tree that bringeth not forth fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire." How would you like that, you idle church members? Every branch in the true vine that beareth not fruit he taketh away. What say you to this? How like you the look of that threat, you fruitless members? Not you that are sick and whose fruit is patience: God bless you; you are good fruit-bearing branches. Not you who are feeble in health, poor, obscure, and with little gift, who nevertheless do what you can; the Lord accepts and blesses you; he counts your mite a greater gift than the rich man's larger portion; he calls your little word that you are able to speak for Jesus truer service than many an eloquent discourse. But I mean you who could and do not, who should and do

not, who eat the fat and drink the sweet in Zion, and yet let men die and be damned while you take no care of their souls, and do not even give them a tract, or write them a letter to tell them the way to heaven, or give them a warning. Believing that you are saved yourselves, you button yourselves up and are perfectly contented to sneak into heaven alone. A pretty heaven it would be if it were full of selfish spirits like yourselves. Oh, that we may be stirred up to escape from such an unholy spirit. I loathe the very thought of living here merely to get into heaven myself; going to Christ to be washed from my own sins, and for daily mercy, and then never doing a hand's turn towards the building of his temple, but just sitting down and caring for none besides. You idlers need to have a taste of salutary bitterness. May it be kept in your mouths till it is rinsed out with a glass of repentance, and may it lead you to Jesus to ask him to save you from all indolence and selfishness.

The next sort of persons to be dealt with are those who faint but do not labour. "Who are they?" say you. I remember one in the days of Solomon who had to go down a street upon an errand, but did not go. Dear man, he would not venture out, for there was a lion in the way. Now, truth to say, there was no lion that any man could see, but his imagination had invented the bloodthirsty animal. We know persons of the same family who would say, "Oh, do not attempt to do anything that has not been done before, it would be hazardous. Our forefathers were content to have sermons preached down back streets, where nobody could find the meeting-houses; let us keep to our obscurity." Yet men of bolder heart have pushed to the front, and mean to keep there. But hear how these cowards talk. "Do not go down that court; there are Catholics there. Do not think of going to that lodging-house; they are sure to mock at you. Do not introduce religion to such a man, it will be of no use; he will only turn again and rend you; do not cast pearls before such swine." These are excellent wet blankets, and the stock is large. We have some of them in all congregations. What advice shall I give to them but this:—My dear brethren, just stand aside please, get out of the way, and let others come forward and serve God if you do not mean to do it yourselves. If you do not like to be so ignominiously put on one side, I would suggest to you the following medicine. Take every morning a few drops of the essential oil of "try," and you do not know what an effect it would have upon you: powers now dormant would be awakened, and things impossible would be achieved. Add to this a strong draught of the wine of "*must*"; necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is me unless I serve my Master; and I think you might be brought back into a tolerably healthy condition, and yet after all labour and not faint.

Our third patient is one who did labour once, but has fainted. If he has fainted because he thinks he has done enough let me prescribe for him a strong potion of the salts of fear. They may be useful to him. He that putteth his hand to the plough and looketh back is not worthy of the kingdom. "Remember Lot's wife." Shall I repeat that prescription, for it is a very useful one to those who leave off working for Christ? "Remember Lot's wife." If her fate be recollected perhaps your heart will be stirred up to renewed diligence.

But there are some who labour and are ready to faint. To them I would prescribe the "wines on the lees well refined," the rich promises of God's word, the sweet prospect of an eternal reward. I would recommend them to take the spirit of confidence in large quantities, yea, to be filled with it. Confide in God: he will not suffer you to labour in vain, or spend your strength for nought.

To you, my fellow-soldiers in this Church, I have these words to say: These are not times for fainting, these are not times for idling. All the world is active; the wheels of commerce are revolving at a greater rate than ever; everywhere events march with a giant stride; we have seen what our fathers dreamed not of. Now, if ever, the Church of God ought to be awake. The demands of souls require our utmost diligence. The enemy is active in deceiving; we must be active in instructing and saving. Now, by the precious blood of Christ who bought you, oh, ye believers in Christ, bestir yourselves. If indeed ye be legitimately born from above, if the blood imperial be in your veins, and if ye be soldiers of that great Captain who unto death strove against sin; and if ye expect to wear the white robe and wave the palm of victory, in the name of the eternal and ever-living One, seek ye his Spirit and the divine energy, that ye may labour yet more abundantly and faint not. I am longing to have this church all in working order for the campaign on which we are about to enter. The long evenings are our time of hope. Oh, brethren and sisters, help us that, by the power of the Holy Spirit, between now and next spring, we may have many conversions and a large increase to our numbers. If the whole church should be awakened throughout we might expect far greater blessings than we have ever received before. Oh, Spirit of the living God come upon us, upon pastors, and officers, and members, and upon the whole congregation, and all the glory shall be unto thy name for ever and for ever. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Revelations ii.