

A HOME MISSION SERMON NO. 259

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JUNE 26, 1859,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

*“Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might. For there is no work, nor device,
nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, where you are going.”*
Ecclesiastes 9:10.

IF God had willed it we might, each one of us, have entered Heaven at the moment of our conversion. It was not absolutely necessary for our preparation for immortality that we should tarry here. It is possible for a man to be taken to Heaven and to be found meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light, though he has but believed in Christ a solitary moment! The thief upon the Cross had no long time for the process of sanctification. For thus spoke the Savior, “Verily I say unto you this day shall you be with Me in Paradise.” It is true that in our case sanctification is a long and continued process and we shall not be perfected—the being of sin shall not be cast out—till we lay aside our bodies and enter within the veil. But nevertheless, it is quite certain that if God had so willed it, He might have sanctified us in a moment. He might have changed us from imperfection to perfection; He might have cut out the very roots of sin and have destroyed the very being of corruption and have taken us to Heaven *instantly*, if so He had willed it. Notwithstanding that, we are here. And why are we here? Would God keep His children out of Paradise a single moment longer than was necessary? Does God delight to tantalize His people by keeping them in a wilderness when they might be in Canaan? Will he shut them up in prison when He might give them instant liberty, unless there are some overwhelming reasons for His delay in giving them the fullness of their life and bliss? Why are they here? Why is the army of the living God still on the battlefield? One charge might give them the victory! Why are God’s ships still at sea? One breath of His wind might waft them to the haven! Why are His children still wandering here and there through a maze, when a solitary word from His lips would bring them into the center of their hopes in Heaven? The answer is, they are here that they may glorify God and that they may bring others to know His love. We are not here in vain, dear Brothers and Sisters. We are here on earth like sowers scattering good seed; like farmers plowing up the fallow ground. We are here as heralds, telling to sinners around—

“What a dear Savior we have found,”

and heralding the coming of our Master! We are here as the salt to preserve a world which otherwise would become putrid and destroyed. We are here as the very pillars of this world’s happiness—for when God shall take away His saints, the universal moral fabric shall tumble to its fall—and great shall be the crash when the righteous shall be removed and the foundations shall be shaken!

Taking it, therefore, for granted that the people of God are here to do something to bless their fellow men, our text comes in very pertinently as the rule of our life. May God help us to practice it by giving us much of His powerful Spirit. “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might.” This is why you are here. You are here for a certain purpose. That purpose will soon be ended and whether it is accomplished or unaccomplished, there shall never be a second opportunity for attempting it, “for there is no work, nor device nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, where you are going.” So far as this world is concerned, the grave is the end of our doing. So far as this time and state are concerned, the grave shall be the burial of our wisdom, our knowledge and our devices!

Now, I shall, this morning, first, endeavor *to explain the preacher’s exhortation*. And then endeavor *to enforce it by evangelical arguments*.

I. First, I shall explain THE PREACHER’S EXHORTATION. I shall do so by dividing it into three parts. What shall I do?—“Whatever your hand finds.” How shall I do it?—“Do it with your might.”—And then, why shall I do it?—“For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, where you are going.”

1. First, then, are there not some here who are saying, I hope I love Christ—I desire to serve Him, for I have been saved by His work upon the Cross—what, then, *can I do?*” The answer is—“whatever your hand finds to do.” Here we

will observe, first, that this refers us to the works that are near at hand. You are not called upon today, the most of you, to do works which your eye sees far away in India or China. The most of you are called especially to do the work which is near at hand. People are always desiring to be doing something miles off. If they could but be somewhere else, what wonders they would accomplish! Many a young man thinks if he could stand up under a banyan tree and preach to the black faces in India, how eloquent he might be! My dear Fellow, why don't you try the streets of London, first, and see whether you are eloquent *here*? Many a lady imagines that if she could move in a high circle she would, no doubt, become another Lady Huntingdon and do wonders. But why cannot you do wonders in the circle in which God has placed you? He does not call you to do that which is leagues away and which is beyond your power. It is that which your hand finds to do! I am persuaded that our *home* duties—the duties which come near to us in our own streets, in our own lanes and alleys—are the duties in which we ought to do, most of us, mainly to glorify Christ. Why will you be stretching out your hands to that which you cannot reach? Do that which is near—which is at your hand!

People sometimes come to their minister and say, "What shall I do for Christ?" In nine cases out of ten it is evidence of a lazy, idle spirit, when men ask what they shall do! For if they were really in earnest—wanting to do something—they would find themselves placed in the midst of such a press of work that the question would not be, "What *can* I do?" but, "Which out of all these shall I do *first*?" For here is enough to fill an angel's hands and occupy more than all a mortal's time." Very often I find men ambitious to serve God in an orbit in which they will never move. Many say, "I wish I could become a preacher." Yes, but it may be you are not *called* to be a preacher! Serve God in that which your hand finds present. Serve Him in your immediate situation, where you now are. Can you not distribute tracts? "Oh yes," you say, "but I was thinking of doing something else." Yes, but God put you here to do that! Could you not teach an infant class in the Sunday school? "I was thinking of being the *superintendent* of the Sunday school." Were you, indeed? But your hand has not found out how to get there. Do what your hand has *found*—it has found an infant class to teach. Could you not endeavor to instruct your family and teach your servants in the way of God—God helping? "Oh yes," says one, "but I was thinking about organizing a Dorcas Society, or a Ladies' Visiting, or Tract-Distributing Society." Yes, but your hand has not found that out yet. Just do that first which is nearest to you! Begin at home. When Jerusalem was built, every man built before his own house. Do you the same. There is a wise provision by our rulers, that every man should cleanse the street in front of his own house. Why will you, who live here in Southwark, walk all the way to Islington to cleanse the street in front of somebody else's door? Stop and attend to your own work; and if everybody will do that which comes immediately under his own eyes and is found out by his own hand—then how much may be accomplished! Depend upon it, there is more wisdom in that than some of us dream. "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it." Do not be prowling about for work, but do it where it is when your hand finds it.

Again—"whatever your hand finds to do," refers to works that are possible. There are many things which our *heart* finds to do that we never shall do. It is well it is in our heart, God accepts the will for the deed; but if we would be eminently useful, we must not be content with forming schemes in our heart and talking of them with our lips. We must get plans that are tangible, schemes that we can really manage, ideas that we can really carry out. And so we shall fulfill the exhortation of Solomon, "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it." I will give you an illustration. Not many months ago in a certain magazine, which I will not mention, there was a supplement given upon China. In the supplement the Churches represented by that magazine were exhorted to raise enough money to send a *hundred* missionaries to China. There was a very earnest appeal made to the Churches—a glorious blast of trumpets as if something very great was coming! The mountain was in labor and labor it did. Now, I have been told that the secretary of the Chinese mission called upon the editor of the aforesaid magazine and said, "I see you have a proposal to send a hundred missionaries to China. Will you strike the two zeroes off and find money enough to send one?" It is said that they who aim at the moon will shoot higher than those who shoot at a bush. It may be correct—they may shoot higher—but I do not think they are so likely to hit their mark! Shooting high is not the thing—it is hitting what you shoot at *now*. If they had said, "We will do our utmost to send *one* missionary to China," they might have effected it; but they were talking about a hundred and they have not succeeded, nor are they likely to do so.

The exhortation of our preacher would come home to such people. They have got it in their hearts to do it; they say when they grow big enough they mean to accomplish great things. "Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain." Now, instead of meddling with that great mountain, suppose you try your faith upon a fig tree first? And, then, if you moved that first, you might have confidence to move a mountain. John Bunyan was a very

wise man when he thought once he would try to work miracles. Instead of ordering the sun and moon to go back several degrees, as he rode along he thought he would tell the puddles in the road to become dry! It was a miracle that would not interfere with anybody and therefore a very proper one to begin with! But in the beginning the thought came into his mind, "Pray first." And when he prayed, he could not find any promise that he could dry up the puddles and so he determined to leave them alone. I hope those men who come with some splendid vision in their heads would only try to do what they can, and no more. When they become giants, let them do a giant's work; but as long as they are dwarfs, let them do a dwarf's work! Remember, the exhortation of the great man is to do not great things, but to do the things that your hand finds to do—present things, possible things! Do not be scheming and speculating about what you would do if your old aunt were to leave you 20,000 pounds, or what you would do if you were to become Prime Minister and so forth. Do what you can, in your workshop or shed, or with a needle in your hand. And if you ever have a scepter—which is not likely—but you use your needle well, you would be the most likely person to use your scepter well, also!

There is another word of exhortation which seems to strike me as being very necessary when addressing God's people, it is this—"Whatever your hand finds to do." Suppose, now, the duty which lies against our door to be a very disagreeable one. A sad thing that any duty should be disagreeable to the man who has been saved by Christ, but so it is. There are some duties which, while we are nothing but poor flesh and blood, will always be less agreeable than certain others. Yet, mark you, though the duties seem to you to be degrading and disagreeable, contrary to your taste, yet the exhortation has it, "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might." Whether it is the visitation of the poorest of the poor or the teaching of the most ignorant; whether the hewing of wood or the drawing of water—the very lowest work in the Lord's House—if your hand finds it, do it! You will remark in many Christians and possibly if you are wise, you will remark in yourself, how we all have a preference to do those duties which we regard as being honorable, as coming strictly within the range of our own office—those which probably will be rewarded with the *praise of men*. If there is any duty that shall ever be heard of till the Day of Judgment; if there is any work that never shall be seen until the blaze of the Last Day shall manifest it to a blind world—then we generally avoid such a duty and seek another! Oh, if we did but understand the true majesty of *humility* and how great a thing it is for a Christian to do *little* things—to bow himself and to stoop—we would rather envy the meanest of the flock than the greatest—and each of us try to wash the saint's feet and perform the most menial service for the Master!

Often, I think, when you and I are standing back from some humbling duty, if Christ Jesus should come by that way and do it, how we would blush. Let me give you Christ's own picture. There was a poor wounded Samaritan who was left half dead. There was a priest coming to Jerusalem. He was busy with his sermon; looking over his notes and thinking of what he should have to say to the people when he addressed them. Well, there was a poor fellow on the other side of the road, wounded. It was no business of his—he was a *preacher*! If he went to interfere with that poor man's wounds, he was quite sure it would be such a ghastly sight that he would not be able to preach half as well, so he passed by. Well, then there came a Levite, a good respectable deacon in the sanctuary. "Well," he said, "I must make haste and catch the minister, or else I shall not be in time to read the hymns." It was no business of his to go and see after the poor man who was wounded. At last the Master, Himself, came that way and He, the Head of the Church, the Prince of Preachers, the Great Deacon, the Great Servant of servants—He did not disdain to bind up the broken heart and to heal the poor man's wounds! There is a story told in the old American war, that once upon a time George Washington, the commander-in-chief, was going around among his soldiers. They were hard at work, lifting a heavy piece of timber at some fortification. There stood the corporal of the regiment calling out to his men, "Heave there, heave ahoy!" and giving them all kinds of directions. As large as possible, the good corporal was. So Washington, alighting from his horse, said to him, "What is the good of your calling out to those men—why don't you help them yourself and do part of the work." The corporal drew himself up and said, "Perhaps you are not aware to whom you are speaking, Sir. I am a corporal." "I beg your pardon," said Washington, "you are a corporal, are you? I am sorry I have insulted you." So he took off his own coat and waistcoat and set to work to help the men build the fortification! When he had done, he said, "Mr. Corporal, I am sorry I insulted you, but when you have any more fortifications to get up and your men won't help you, send for George Washington, the commander-in-chief, and I will come and help them." The corporal slunk away perfectly ashamed of himself!

And so Christ Jesus might say to us, "Oh, you don't like teaching the poor; it is beneath your dignity. Then let your Commander-in-Chief do it. He can teach the poor; He can wash the feet of the saints; He can visit the sick and afflicted—

He came from Heaven to do this and He will set the example for you.” Surely we should each be ashamed of ourselves and declare from this time forward, whatever it is, be it great or little, if it comes to our hand and if God will but give us help and give us Grace, we will do it with all our might! I have thus explained what we are to do.

2. And, now, *How are we to do it!* “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might.” First, “do it.” That is, do it promptly. Do not fritter away your lives in setting down what you intend to do tomorrow as being a recompense for the idleness of today! No man ever served God by doing things tomorrow. If we have honored Christ and are blessed, it is by the things which we do *today*. For after all, the ticking of the clock said today! Today! Today! We have no other time in which to live! The past is gone. The future has not come. We have, we never shall have, anything but the present. This is our all. Let us do what our hand finds to do. Young Christian, are you just converted? Do not wait until your experience has ripened into maturity before you attempt to serve God! Determine *now* to bring forth fruit. This very day, if it is the first day of your conversion, bring forth fruits meet for repentance—even now! And you who are now in middle age, say not, “I will begin to serve Christ when my hair shall be frosty with age.” No. Now do it—do it—“do it with your might.” Oh that God would keep us to this—that we would always do our day’s work in our day and serve Him now. I have heard of a certain Divine who was a preacher at Newgate. He preached a sermon divided into two parts—the first was to the saint; the second was to the sinner. When he had finished the first part, to the saint, in the morning, he said he would preach to the sinner the next Sunday morning and then finish his sermon. There was a poor man who was hanged on the Monday and who, therefore, never heard that part of the discourse which was best adapted to his case. How often may we be found in the same light. We may be saying, “I will do him good, by-and-by.” But he may be dead, then, and our opportunity will be gone, or, what is just as likely, *we* may be dead! And then all our opportunities will be passed and it will be totally out of our power to do anything. Do it! Do it! Do it! This is what the Church of Christ needs to have proclaimed as with the sound of a trumpet in all her ranks, “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it.” Put it not off one hour. Do it! Procrastinate not a day. “Procrastination is the thief of time.” Let him not steal your time. Do it at once! Serve your God *now*; for *now* is all the time you can reckon on.

Then, the next words, “Do it with your might.” Whatever you do for Christ, throw your whole soul into it. Christ wants none to serve Him with their fingers—He must have their hands, their arms, their hearts! We must not give Christ a little slurred labor, which is done as a matter of course now and then. But when we serve Him, we must do it with all our hearts and soul and strength and might! Among the old Roman pagans, they were accustomed to slay the beasts and cut them open in order to discover future events. If ever they cut open a bullock and could not find the heart, it was always considered by the people to be an evil omen. And depend upon it, if you cut your works open and cannot find your hearts in them, it is an bad omen for your works—they are good-for-nothing—and their objective shall never be accomplished! The worst part of the Christian Church at this time is that it seems as if many of our ministers and their Churches have lost their hearts. Step into your Churches and Chapels—everything is orderly and precise—but where is the life, where is the power? I confess that I would rather address a congregation of ignorant men who are alive and enthusiastic, than a congregation of the most learned and orderly who are dead and blank—upon whose ears all the preaching in the world falls as but a dull monotony! About three weeks ago I was addressing a Methodist congregation. They leaped on their feet, now and then, and cried, “Hallelujah, Glory be to God!” My whole soul was stirred within me and I felt that I could preach, and preach again and never grow weary while these people drank in the Word with real life! I am persuaded that real good was done and that they did not forget what was said. But, then, our people take things so orderly. They come and take their seats so quietly, until it often seems that one might preach to a set of statues or wooden blocks with just as much hope of effect as to preach to them! We need *life*, we need *heart*—heart in the ministry, heart in the deacons, heart in all the offices of the Church—and until we have this, we cannot expect the Master’s blessing!

You are going to teach in the Sunday school this afternoon, are you? How are you going to teach? “I am going to do as I have often done.” Stand back! If you are going to serve Christ, stand back till you have got your heart with you and take with you all your strength and all your might and say as David did, “Bless the Lord and serve the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is within me.” Serve the Master and spend yourself in your strength! I would rather have no sermon than a dull sermon—no teaching than sleepy teaching—no prayers than lifeless prayers. A cold religion is tasteless. Let us have a hot religion that will burn its way into the heart! This is the religion that will make its way in the world and make itself respected, even though some pretend to despise it—

“Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might.”

But where is the might of a Christian? Let us not forget that. The might of a Christian is not in himself, for he is perfect *weakness*. His might lies in the Lord of Hosts! It will be well for us if all we attempt to do is done in God's strength, or else it will not be done with might—it will be feebly and badly done. Whenever we attempt to serve a loaf in the winning of souls, let us first begin with *prayer*. Let us seek His help. Let us go on with prayer mixed with faith. And when we have concluded the work, let us commend it again to God with *renewed* faith and *fresh* prayer. What we do thus will be well done and will not fail in its effect. But what we do merely with *creature strength*, with the mere influence of carnal zeal, will come to nothing at all! "Whatever your hand finds to do," do it with that real might which God has promised them who ask for it; with that real wisdom which He gives generously—which He bestows on all who seek it meekly and reverently at His feet! God help us, then, to carry out this exhortation, "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might."

3. And, now, the third part of the exhortation was, *Why?* We are to do it with all our might because death is near; and when death comes there will be an end to all our serving God on earth; an end to our preaching; an end to our praying—an end to our doing anything for God's Glory among the perishing souls of men. If we all lived in the light of our funerals, how well should we live! Some of the old Romish monks always read their Bibles with a candle stuck in a skull. The light from a skull may be an awful one, but it is a very profitable one. There is no way of living like that. There is an old monkish legend told of a great painter who had begun a painting, but did not finish it. And as the legend went, he prayed that he might come back on earth that he might finish that painting. There is a picture, now extant, representing him after he had come back to finish his picture. There is a solemnity about that man's look as he paints away with all his might, for he had but little time allowed him and a ghastliness, as if he knew that he must soon go back, and wanted his labor to be finished. If you were quite sure of the time of your death; if you knew you had but a week or two to live, with what haste would you go round and bid farewell to all your friends! With what haste would you begin to set all matters right on earth, supposing matters are all right for eternity. But, Christians, like others, forget that they are mortal and even we who profess to see into the future and declaring that we are looking for a city that has foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God—even we seem to think that we shall live here forever! It is well that God puts a thorn into our nest, or else often His own birds of Paradise would build their nests here and never mount higher. Let us pause a moment and think that in a short time we must die. The hour is not to be put off. When yon winged arrow shall have ended its hasty journey and found its target in this heart, then all is over. I may preach to you today and exhort you to flee from the wrath to come; but when this tongue is sealed in silence, I can no more warn you. If I have been unfaithful and have not discharged my Master's message and faithfully told it, I cannot come back and tell it over again.

Mother, you can pray for your children, now, but when death shall have sealed your eyes in darkness, there can be no more prayers lifted up forever. You can teach them, now, in God's Word and labor that they may be brought to know their mother's God, but it shall be all over then. You may now, O Sunday school teacher, instruct those children and, God blessing you, you may be their spiritual father and bring them to Christ. But it shall one day be whispered in your class, "Teacher is dead." And there is the end of your labor. Your children may come to your grave and sit down there and weep, but from the clay-cold sod no voice of warning can come up—there, your warning and your love is lost—alike unknowing and unknown. And you, the servant of Christ, with great stores of wealth, you have this day money with which God's cause might be greatly helped. You have talent, too, which might fit you well to stand in the midst of the Church and serve it. You are going the way of all flesh! Gray hairs are scattered here and there. You know that your end is approaching. When once death shall have come, you cannot devise generous things. Your brain cannot form new devices for the spread of your Master's Kingdom; neither can your heart, then, bend and weep over sinners perishing, or your tongue address them with earnest exhortation! Think, dear Friends, that all we can do for our fellows we must do *now*. For the cerement shall soon enwrap us; the hands must soon hang down and the eyes be shut and the tongue be still. While we live let us live! There are not two lives accorded us on earth. If we build not *now*, the fabric can never be built. If now we spin not, the garment will never be woven. Work while you live and live while you work—and God grant to each of us that we may discharge in this life all the desires of our hearts in magnifying God and bringing sinners to the Cross!

II. Now, having thus explained and opened the exhortation, I shall pray that God's Holy Spirit may be solemnly with me while very briefly and very vehemently I endeavor to STIR UP ALL PROFESSORS OF RELIGION HERE PRESENT TO DO WHATEVER THEIR HANDS FIND TO DO—TO DO IT NOW AND WITH ALL THEIR

MIGHT. If Christ Jesus should leave the upper world and come into the midst of this hall this morning, what answer could you give if after showing you His wounded hands and feet and His side, He should put this question, "I have done all this for you. What have you done for Me?" Let me put that question for Him and on His behalf. You have known His love, some of you, 40 years; some of you thirty, twenty, ten, three, one. He has done all this for you—has bled away His precious life—has died in agonies most exquisite upon the Cross. What have you done for Him? Turn over your diary now. Can you remember the contributions you have given out of your wealth and what they amount to? Add them up! Think of what you have done for Him; how much of your time you have spent in His service. Add that up. Turn over another leaf and then observe how much time you have spent in praying for the progress of His Kingdom. What have you done there? Add that up! I will do so for myself and I can say without a boast I have labored to serve God and have been in labors more abundant; but when I come to add all up and set what I have done side by side with what I owe to Christ, it is less than nothing and vanity! I pour contempt upon it all; it is but dust of vanity! And though from this day forward I should preach every hour in the day; though I could spend myself and be spent; though night should know no rest and day should never cease from toil—and year should succeed to year till this hair was white and this frame exhausted—when I come to render up my account, He might say, "Well done," but I should not feel it was so, but should rather say, "I am still an unprofitable servant. I have not done that which it was even my bare *duty* to do—much less have I done all to show the love I owe." Now think what you have done, dear Brothers and Sisters, and surely your account must fall short equally with mine.

But as for some of you, you have done positively nothing! You have joined the Church and have been baptized and that is about all. You have sometimes doled out a little from your abundance to the cause of Christ, but oh, how little when you think He gave His all for you! Others there are of you who out of your little have given much; out of your weakness have been strong; in your poverty you have never been poor towards Christ's cause. You shall not lack your reward at last, but even you will come with the rest of us and say, "Lord help us to love the poor and by Your amazing love to us compel us to devote ourselves wholly, unreservedly to You."

Another argument let me give you why you should serve Christ with all your might *now*. You believe, my dear Hearers, that if men die unconverted, their doom is fearful beyond all expression. You and I are compelled to believe from the testimony of the Spirit, that the punishment of those who die impenitent is beyond all that words can describe. They sink into the pit of Hell that is bottomless, into a fire that can never be quenched, where they are eaten by a worm that dies not. You know, and sometimes your hair has almost stood on end with the thought that the wrath to come is more than the soul can conceive. And is it possible; can it be possible with this belief in your mind that many of your fellow creatures are going post-haste to this awful, this fearful Hell—and that you are idle and doing nothing? May God forgive you if such is your unfeeling state of heart—that you can contemplate a fellow creature perishing in the fires of Hell and yet permit your hand to hang down in listless idleness!

O children of the living God, I beseech you by the fires of Hell, by the agony that knows of no abatement, by the thirst that is not to be mitigated by a drop of water, by the eternity which knows no end. I beseech you by the wrath to come, earnestly strive to be the means in God's hand of awakening poor souls and bringing them to the mercy of Christ! Be earnest. If you do not believe this Bible, I care not what you are—earnest or dull. But if you do believe it, act as you believe. If you think men are perishing—if the Lord's right hand is dashing in pieces His enemy—then I beseech you be strengthened by the same right hand to endeavor to bring those enemies to Christ that they may be reconciled by the blood of the Cross.

And now, last of all, let me appeal to you in this way. Possibly, in my explanation, I have led you to form in your heart some great scheme of what you would do. Let me knock that all to pieces, because that is not my text. It is not a great *scheme*, but it is, "whatever your hand finds to do," that I want you to do. My dear Friends, many of you are parents of children. It is quite certain, whatever else may be your duty, that your duty as parents is first. As their parents you owe them a duty. You have responsibilities towards them and it is your duty to bring them up in the fear and nurture of God. May I earnestly beg and beseech you not to neglect this. For remember, you will soon be gone and will not this be a thorn in your dying pillow, if, when your children stand around your bed to bid farewell to their dying father, or their dying mother, they shall have to say to you, "You are going from us, but we shall not miss you. We shall miss you as far as temporal things are concerned, but when you are dead we shall be as well off in spiritual things as we were before, for you neglected us." They will not say so but do you suppose they will not *think* so, if such is the truth? Children are al-

ways quick, and if they say it not, they would feel it. Will it not be far better, if God so blesses you, that when you lay sick and dying, there shall be a daughter wiping the hot sweat from your brow and saying, “Fear not, Mother, though you walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, God is with you and you need fear no evil”? Will it not be a satisfaction to you, Father, when you die, if glancing at the foot of the bed, you can say to your son, “Farewell, my son. I bless God that I leave you in this world to carry on the work which I have begun, for you are walking in your father’s steps.” I know of no greater joy than for some aged patriarch, and I know of one—God bless him, he is preaching the Word, I doubt not, this morning—to be able to look to sons and daughters converted to Christ and then to look to another generation and see grandchildren converted to Christ! It must be a noble thing to die and leave behind three generations and many of these already able to call the Redeemer blessed! O neglect not your present work, I beseech you, or otherwise you shall lose the present blessing! And by neglecting this present duty which concerns your own household, you shall incur a household curse and make your deathbed uneasy, so that you shall toss there with those eyes looking on you and silently charging you with having neglected their souls.

Sunday school teachers, I give you the same exhortation. I pray God that when you die it may not be said in your schools, “Well, we do not miss so-and-so at all. She was not a teacher we could desire, she filled up a gap and that is all we can say.” I hope it may be said of you, my Brothers and Sisters, in the holy work of Sunday school teaching, “They are gone to their grave and there is a vacancy made which will not soon be filled.” But still, your children shall gather round your coffin and say, “God be blessed that we ever had such a teacher!” And though they are not converted, yet shall their little eyes weep when they think, “Teacher will never weep over us again. Teacher will never pray for us anymore; Teacher will never tell us of Christ again.” And that very thought may be more powerful in their minds than all you ever said to them and may, perhaps, effect the work which was not accomplished when your soul left your body.

And now I charge myself most solemnly in this conclusion, to be more earnest than ever in preaching the Word to you—to preach it in season and out of season—to preach it with all my might, for I shall soon be gone. Life lasts not long, and when we have all departed, may others not think that we went before our work was fully accomplished. Once when George Whitfield was very sick and ill, he was laid down by his friends by the fireside and he lay there as if he were dying. Presently he opened his eyes and a poor old Negro woman who had watched over him when others had given him up, spoke to him and said, “Massa George Whitfield are you still alive?” He looked and said, “Yes, I am. But I was in hopes I should have been in Heaven.” Then the old woman made this pretty speech. “Ah, Massa George,” she said, “you went to the very gates of Heaven and Christ said, ‘Go back, Massa George. There are many poor Negroes down on the earth that I mean to have saved. Go back and tell them I love them and mind you, do not come back any more till you bring them all with you.’” So Whitfield recovered strength and even found, as the old woman said, a desire not to go Home till he could take these poor Negroes with him.

So may it be with us. May we live till we shall bring many souls home with us to Glory and then may it be said—

*“Servant of Christ, well done,
Rest from your loved employ.
The battle’s fought, the victory’s won,
Enter your rest with joy.”*

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved, for he who believes and is baptized shall be saved and he who believes not shall be damned.”

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