

THE CHURCH—THE WORLD'S HOPE

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“Lo, God has given you all them that sail with you.”
Acts 27:24.

THE Apostle Paul had given some very good advice to the mariners of this ship. They had thought fit to reject it. What then? Now some of us are of such short temper that if our advice should be rejected, we would be in a huff and never offer any more—and we should feel some sort of pleasure in seeing those persons get into mischief who were so foolish as not to take our sage counsel! Not so the Apostle Paul. After he had prudently abstained for some time from saying anything—for there is a time to be silent—he at length gave proof of his unabated affection in them by the good advice which he offered. Let us take a lesson from him and let us forgive our brethren even to 70 times seven and, if, after having done our very best, we still find our advice rejected, let us persevere in our work of love.

One other remark. Note the comfort that was given to the Apostle. He had been long out at sea and, with the rest, had suffered much. The comfort given him was, “Fear not, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar.” No very great comfort, you will say. It seems no more comfort than if the angel had said, “You can’t be drowned, for you are to be devoured by a lion.” Some such comfort Bishop Ridley took to himself when, being rowed up the river to the burning, a little storm coming on and the watermen being much afraid, he said, “Fear not, boatmen, the bishop that is doomed to be burned cannot be drowned.” Yet there was real comfort in the words of the angel, for it was the Apostle’s intense desire to preach Christ before Nero. He wished to proclaim the Gospel at Rome—he had had great trouble of heart for those who had not seen his face in the flesh and, therefore, whether Nero was a lion or not, he was but too glad to face him for Christ’s sake!

And when a man has no self remaining, but has given himself up as a living sacrifice for Christ, that which would be a terror to another man becomes a comfort to him. “I am now ready to be offered,” said the Apostle. And it was given to him even as a comfort that he must be offered up by some cruel death and not escape by the milder method of a passage to Heaven by sea—and he found comfort in the fact that those with him would be preserved. It had been the subject of his prayer, so that he was cheered not only with the prospect of himself prophesying at Rome, but with the hope of seeing all his comrades safe on shore.

I have two or three things to talk of, so let me proceed with them at once.

I. The first practical observation founded upon my text is this—A GODLY MAN MAY OFTEN BE THROWN INTO AN ILL POSITION FOR THE GOOD OF OTHERS.

Paul was put into a ship—into a ship among thieves and other criminals. He was put into a ship among sailors and soldiers, who were none of the best in those days, but he was put there *for their good*. This, then, I would lay down as a general theory—there are multitudes of Christians who are in places very uncomfortable and, perhaps, very unsuitable for them, but who are put there for the good of others.

If they were not so placed, they would not be like their Lord. Why was Christ on earth at all but for the good of sinners? Why does He sit there at a publican’s table? Why eats He bread with a harlot? Why does He permit an unclean woman to come and wash His feet? As for Himself, ‘tis pain to Him, pain to His holy Nature to come into contact with evil. But our Lord was the Great Physician and where should a physician be but among the sick? Now, as you and I are to be made like our Lord, we must not marvel if sometimes we are thrown, as He was, into company which we would not choose for its own sake, but into which Providence puts us that we may do good.

Moreover, *is not this the reason why the saints of God are on earth at all?* Why does He not send an express chariot to take them at once to Heaven? There is no necessity for saints being on earth that I know of, except for the good of their fellow men. Sanctification might be completed in a moment. As for all the rest, it is already done. God “has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” Why do we stay here, then, at all, but that we may be salt in the midst of putrefaction—light in the midst of darkness—life in the midst of death? The Church is the world's hope! As Christ is the hope of the Church, so the Church is the hope of the world! The saints become, under Christ, the world's saviors. Then we must not marvel, being here for this very purpose, if Christ does throw us like a handful of salt, just where the putrefaction is the worst! Or if He should cast us, as He has often done with His saints before, where our influence is most needed.

And remember, dear Friends, that *there have been special cases in Scripture where the putting of a person into an unpleasant condition has been a great gift to his fellow men.* There is Joseph in the dungeon. Why is he there? Why, with his haggard look and shaggy beard, is he sitting down in the round dungeon tower of the chief of the jailers? He is put there that he may relieve his fellow prisoners in their distress. And yet, more fully, that he may provide food for his ungrateful brothers who had sold him for a slave! The salvation of Israel's offspring depended upon Joseph being put into prison. Look at a more majestic case. There, upon the ruins of a once glorious temple, sits a grand old man, weeping as though he had been a masculine Niobe. Tears flow down both his cheeks, and these are the words he utters, “Oh that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!” It is old Jeremy. Why is he there? Why is he not in Babylon? Why is he not in some place where he could be comfortably cared for? Because Israel needs him. The women that flock around him like stricken deer need his comfort. And the sinners in Zion that hide their faces from his weeping eyes need him to pour out those burning syllables which make their consciences start, seared though they are!

If you should say that these are two instances which are above your head, let me ask you why was that little maid taken prisoner by the Syrians and carried away from her own country? It was not a pleasant thing for a child to be torn away from her family and become a slave, even in the house of the kind Naaman. Why was she there? Naaman the leper must be healed—the Syrian king must know that the Lord of Israel can work wonders—and, therefore, that little maid must be carried away and she must be where otherwise she would not wish to be placed!

I need not give any more proofs that such has been often the case. Instead of that, let me give instances. There is a young man here—he is hardly a man yet—whose father, in binding him an apprentice, made a mistake. Parents should be very careful whom they choose to be instructors of their sons. They should not wantonly put a youth who has been trained under pious influences, under subjection to an ungodly man, however business-like he may be. Well, evidently your parents made a mistake and now you are in a family where religion is lightly spoken of. You get out on the Sabbath. You don't get out at other times, but if you mention religion, you are either met with a sneer or, perhaps, with something worse! Well, young Believer, this is a hard trial for you. We do not generally send our lads to battle, but our Master knows how to sometimes do the greatest feats by the feeblest instrumentality! What if God should intend to bless your master's family through you? What if He has ordained to send you to that house that in the garb of an apprentice, you may be a missionary of the Cross? It may be so. Opportunities will occur to you—there will be fitting occasions for the use of them—and you will see God's wisdom even in your father's mistake!

Another of you happens to be one of a family, not by mistake, but in the common course of Providence. Electing love has fixed on you and left an ungodly parent behind—and brothers and sisters run the downward road. Do not be too sad over this. I do not know whether this may not be a cause for joy to you. God has this day lighted a lamp in your father's house which will never go out! Inasmuch as you are converted, salvation has come to your house. Oh, watch for your brother's soul! Pray for your sister's conversion! Take your parents in the arms of faith before God and who can tell but that it shall prove to be the best thing in your life, that you were thus placed in a family where Christ was not feared? Or you are a workman—I know a great many such instances—and you have come up from the country for the sake of better work. It may be that in the country you worked in some little shop where there was a godly man with you and now you have come into one of our large shops in London and got work. There is a deal of swearing on both sides of you and if you are known to go to a House of Prayer, the other men mark you out and call you some odd name or other. I know you say, “I wish I could get into another place. I will quit this work and go somewhere else.” Don't do it! It is very likely that

God has sent you there just as He sent Paul into that ship! Instead of leaving, gird up your loins like a man and cry to God to give you all them that sail with you, that they may yet be saved! Your advent into that workshop may be as if an angel had come straight from Heaven and gone down to the vilest place to make it ring with the songs of joy!

Possibly, dear Friends, to multiply instances, some of you may happen to live in a very low locality. In such a crowded place as London and especially now that the railways make the houses of artisans so scarce, you may have to live where you do not like to live. On both sides of you, you know, the houses are not what you would wish them to be. And down in the court on Sunday what a scene there is! You went home this morning and you saw people in their shirt-sleeves lolling about and waiting at the corner till the bars opened that they might go in and drink. And you will go home tonight and see what you do not like to see. Now, I do not know that you should be in a hurry to get out of that place. It is just possible that you are put there for some end or design! Who can tell the benefit your good example may be? And if you are bold enough to speak a word for Christ, there may be a neighbor in that court, or in that alley who, though he never did go up to the House of God before, will go with you. It may have been written in the book of God's Predestination that you must pass through that Samaria, so that you might find that fallen woman and that she might be brought to Christ—who knows?

And there are some of you going to emigrate. Some dear friends who have been among us for years find it best to cross the seas. I would not weep, my Brothers and Sisters—I would not sorrow at your departure, for who knows, unpleasant though it is to tear oneself from one's connections and to leave one's native land, you may go forth to carry Seed that shall be wafted over a continent and bring forth fruit in years to come! Let a Christian be where he may, however unpleasant to himself, he cannot be out of place if Providence puts him there. Yes, and if what some of you dread so much should come to pass—if, in your old age, the workhouse should be the only place that is to receive you—ah, it is not pleasant to look forward to that! But I can conceive of a Christian pauper doing more good for God in the house of poverty than many a peer has been able to do in Parliament! I can imagine you shedding a light and luster along the walls which shall rebuke the harshness of those that are masters, and kindle light, and love, and hope in some bosoms that had grown strangers to all those Heavenly things! Good Master, if You shall cast us into a ship, we will ask You to give us all that sail with us! And if you put us anywhere, by Your Grace we will look about us to see what we can do there to honor You!

I must not leave this point, even though time flies, until I have made one or two more remarks rapidly.

Do not get into these places of your own choice. “Put your finger in the fire,” said one to a martyr, “and see whether you can burn.” “No,” he said, “I don't see the use of that. If I put my own finger into the fire, I have no promise from God about it. But if He calls me to burn for His sake, I have no doubt He will give me strength to do it.” You have no business to pick bad places to live in—you have no right to expose yourself to danger. That is a foolish thing. *But if God shall do it*—take this for my next remark—*do not be in a hurry to undo it.* You may leap out of the frying pan into the fire. You may go from bad to worse. It is just possible that if the present place has one set of temptations, the next may have another set. For my part, I do not like changing temptations. I know my old temptations—not as well as I would like to know them, but still, if the devil could change the whole set of my temptations, I do not know what would become of me! I think it is better keep the old ones. You have been tried in one point—you have got used to it and are growing stronger in that point.

You have no need to run after a fresh ordeal, but if God has placed you there, be like Paul—*be very prudent.* Do not talk very much. There is wisdom in holding your tongue. Paul gave his advice, but he abstained a long time before he gave it again. He timed himself and there is nothing like watching opportunities. You young persons, especially, if you live in families and want to do them good, take care that you are willing to do good in temporal things. Lend a hand when they need your help. Paul and Luke helped to throw the tackling into the sea—so the chapter tells us—yes, and the sailors liked them all the better for it. They said, “There is Luke, a passenger, and here is Paul, a prisoner—they are, neither of them, bound to work, but they have buckled to and helped us! We will listen to them, for they are very handy fellows.” Young man, try and make the best use of yourself. If you are placed in a family that is irreligious, make them value you—show them that you will do anything you can to serve them. They will not believe in the reality of your spiritual affection unless you show a temporal affection, too. And when the time comes, do not hesitate to speak, but let your speaking be mainly by your actions!

The best sermon Paul preached was when he took bread and gave thanks. He did not do that for show. It was just in the daily course of his habitual godliness that the man of God came forth boldly before their eyes. Do not conceal your godliness from those around you! Though at first they may laugh at you and despise you, who can tell but that, like Paul, you may gain influence till they will do anything you tell them? And like Paul, by means of that influence, you may save all that are in the house and so the text may come true of you, “God has given you all them that sail with you.”

II. A second lesson suggested to us is this. WHEREVER WE ARE CAST, WE SHOULD ANXIOUSLY ASK OF GOD ALL THE SOULS THAT SAIL WITH US.

God says He gave to Paul all that sailed with him and, therefore, I conclude that Paul had asked Him to do so. How many were they? Some 270 and yet He gave them all to Paul! Father, some seven or eight make up your family, or, if it is of larger dimensions, at least you have not, in all your kinsfolk, I should think, so many as the two hundred and seventy! Do not, in your prayers, therefore, leave out one child, or one connection, or one friend. Pray to God for them all!

They will be of all sorts. Let me describe those that sailed with Paul. There was one good one—that was Luke. Well, Luke was saved. You have one pious son, or one converted daughter. Continue in your prayer till you see that child safely landed with you in Heaven. Perhaps you have one courteous passenger with you in the ship, like Julius, the centurion, of whom we read in the third verse of the chapter, that he courteously entreated Paul. Be very earnest in prayer for those who are willing to hear the Word! O how good it is if we have in our families brothers and sisters, or servants, or masters, who treat the Word of God with deference and respect! Let not these be omitted from your supplications—anxiously pray for them.

Perhaps you have among your connections some knowing ones. Paul had. There was the master of the ship—he knew better than Paul, or, at least, he preferred his own conceit to Paul's counsel. Do not give up the self-conceited, the suspicious, the quibbling, the skeptical—pray for them till you have all in the ship! Possibly, no, *certainly*, you have some worldly friends. You have a son, perhaps, who is exceedingly careful about this world, but careless about the next—do not give him up. There was the owner of the ship on board. All he cared about was getting his corn to Rome in time to catch the next market. He did not care what became of the sailors, or what became of Paul. So, pray for your worldly relatives—do not leave any of them out.

And then it may be that you have on board, or in connection with you, some who are very careless and some who even add to this carelessness, cruelty and a lack of gratitude—such were the soldiers. They counseled to kill the prisoners, including Paul—Paul who had preserved them, but, nevertheless, Paul prayed for the soldiers. Do not, I pray you, leave out the most unkind, the most flinty-hearted of your friends and neighbors! Or it may be that you have a cunning and selfish friend. Do not forget him. Such were the sailors. Under pretense of casting anchors out of the ship, they were attempting to get into a boat and escape—and leave the ship and its hundreds of passengers to perish in the storm! Paul prayed for the sailors. Do the same. There were many on board who could not swim, but he prayed that those who could not swim might be saved. And there were some who could swim, and he prayed for them quite as much as for those who could not. So you have some that are converted and some that are not—you have some that are moral and some that are not—yet plead with the Lord for all them that sail with you!

I want you to notice, especially you who are parents—something that the Apostle did *not* pray for. I do not read that he ever prayed, “Lord, save the ship.” Now, the ship is like your family name, like your family dignity. Do not pray about that, but cry, “Lord, give me my children's souls and let my name be blotted out, if You will, as long as their souls are saved.” And I do not find that the Apostle ever prayed about the cargo. He let them fling the wheat out and never troubled about that. So, you need not pray about your wealth. Put that into God's hands and say, “Lord, do as You will with my sons and daughters, only save their souls. I don't ask fortunes for them, I ask Grace. I would, if it were Your will, that they might always have food and never need bread, but still, Lord, I would rather see their souls saved and see them in poverty than see them rich and their souls lost.”

Moreover, I do not find that Paul made any conditions in his prayer. He did not tell the Lord *when* he wanted these people saved. And so you are not to expect that God will save your children just when you please. You may never live to see it—it may be when you are dead and gone—but still plead earnestly that God will give you all of them. And Paul did not make a stipulation as to *how* it should be done. I remember my mother saying to me, “I prayed that you might be a Christian, but I never prayed that you might be a Baptist.” But, nevertheless, I became a Baptist, for, as I reminded her,

the Lord was able to do for her exceedingly above what she asked or thought—and He did it! She expected, of course, that I should be an Independent. Well, as long as your children are saved, you need not put any conditions as to the mode. Sooner see your son and daughter go to the Established Church, saved, than see them go to your own place of worship and be lost. We like to see them go with us to our place of worship. I think it is right that they should. And it is a great joy to a Christian's heart to see all his children walking with him to the same sanctuary. But that is a mere trifle compared with the solemn matter of seeing them saved!

And, once more, though Paul did get them all saved, yet he did not ask God to save them without means. Nor did it please God to do so, either, for though the means were contemptible, yet, they were means—"Some on boards and some on broken pieces of the ship. And so it came to pass that they all escaped safely to land." We must try to put the "boards and broken pieces of the ship" in the way of those we wish to see saved. We must try to give them a plank to float on to share on in our earnest instructions and our indefatigable exertions to bring them to know the Lord.

Now, dear Friends, having pointed the arrow, I will try to shoot it. Surely you who love the Lord will take up this matter from this time forth and ask the Lord to give you all them that sail with you!

III. As we should ask for all, so WE SHOULD LABOR FOR THE CONVERSION OF ALL THAT SAIL WITH US.

There were two Athenians who were to be employed by the republic in some great work. The first one had great gifts of speech. He stood up before the Athenian populace and addressed them, describing the style in which the work should be done and depicting his own qualifications and the congratulations with which they would receive him when they saw how beautifully he had finished all their designs. The next workman had no power of speech, so, standing up before the Athenian assembly, he said, "I cannot speak, but all that So-and-So has said, I will do." They chose him—wisely chose him—believing he would be a man of deeds, while the other would probably be a man of words. Now, if you are men of deeds, you will be the best men! He that only prays for a thing, but does not work for it, is like the workman that could talk well. He that works as well as prays is the best workman to be employed in the Master's service!

It may be that you will say, "But what am I to do? How can I be the means of saving all them that sail with me?" Well, the first thing you can do is to *begin early with good advice*. Paul gave his advice before the storm came. As soon as ever your children can understand anything, let them know about Christ! Begin early. A certain minister called, some time ago, to see a mother, having heard that a child about 12 years old was dead. The mother was in very deep distress and the pastor was not at all surprised at that. He talked to her about the Lord's giving and the Lord's taking away, when she suddenly stopped him and said, 'Yes, Sir, I know the consolations which may be offered to a mother who has lost her child, and I appreciate them all. But I have a sting in my conscience that you cannot remove. There is a venom in my grief that you cannot cure.' He asked her what that was, and she said, "I have had it on my conscience to speak to my boy solemnly and privately about his soul for this last year past, but my deceitful heart has always said, 'Do it tomorrow.' And I thought"—(here she burst into tears and the pastor had to wait awhile till she could resume her story), "I thought that as his mind was opening and he was 12 years of age, I would now do it. Yesterday morning I meant to do it—the very morning he took ill I thought I would do it! And when I heard him say that he had a headache, I was glad of it, thinking that while I was soothing him, he would be more ready to hear a mother's words. But, oh, Sir, before I had an opportunity of speaking to him, he was much worse and I had to take him to bed. And when he was in bed, he fell asleep. I sent for the physician, but my child had soon fallen into unconsciousness and he was shortly after removed from me—he has gone before God and I never solemnly and privately talked to him about his soul. That is a grief you cannot remove." O mothers and fathers, never have that sting! Your children may die—begin with them now—that they may not die before you have had an opportunity of telling them the way of salvation!

But after having given this early advice, *you must not think the work is done*. Your boy may forget it. He may turn out a wild youth and run away from you, but continue in prayer. And let me say to you, continue in *family prayer*. I think if we were to look into those cases where the sons and daughters of Christian people turn out badly, it would be found to be usually the parents own fault. I think you would find that they neglected to pray with their children. O dear Friends, there can be no ordinance more likely to be blest than that Heavenly institution of family prayer, when you can go there together and, in the presence of the child, pray for his soul and mother and father can unite their hearts in the desire that their offspring may live before God! Paul continued to pray. Follow Paul's example and you may hope to see God give you all them that sail with you.

And then remember, dear Friends, *if you would have your children saved, there is something you must not do.* If Paul had prayed for these people and then had gone down below into the hold with an auger and had begun boring holes in the ship, you would have said, “Oh, it is no use that scoundrel praying, for look, he is scuttling the ship! He is praying to God to save them and then going straight down and doing the mischief.” You parents who are inconsistent—you mothers who do not keep your promises—you fathers who talk as you ought not to talk—you careless, prayerless parents, I do not ask you to pray for your children! Pray for yourselves, first. It would be an awful mockery for you to talk about wishing your children to go to Heaven. You are dragging them to Hell! You may think that your son will not swear. Why should he not swear if his father does? Do you think the young cubs will not roar if the old lion sets the example? Of course they will! You will see your children multiplied images of your own iniquity! Let our conduct be consistent. Let our everyday life be pure and holy and so shall we hope to see our children and our connections saved.

And I do think, dear Friends, as the Apostle Paul was very anxious to point out to them the way in which they might be saved, telling them that the sailors must stay in the ship and they must do this and that, so *we should be very careful to explain to our children, neighbors and connections, the way of salvation.* And I think we ought to do this, as much as possible, in private ways. I will tell you an anecdote—A good bishop of the Methodist Church, Bishop Arsbury, in travelling on horseback through South Carolina about a 100 years ago, saw a Negro sitting quite close to the edge of a forest, fishing with a line. This Negro was an old man called, Punch, well known for his dissolute conduct and filthy speech. The bishop, as soon as he saw him, proceeded deliberately to dismount, tied his horse to a tree and went and sat down by the bank, letting his feet hang over the edge, like Punch's. Finding that the Negro was willing to talk, and pleased with his affability, he began to talk to him about his soul's concern. He told him about the ruin of the Fall, about the result of sin, about the Redeemer, about faith and about the sweet invitations of Christ to the sinner to come to him and live.

Punch had never heard anything like it. And when the bishop had done, he said, “Now I will sing you a song.” Punch was mighty fond of songs and the bishop sang to him that hymn beginning—

*“Plunged in a gulf of dark despair,
We wretched sinners lay,
Without one cheerful beam of hope,
Or spark of glimmering day.
With pitying eyes, the Prince of Grace
Beheld our helpless grief,
He saw—and, oh, amazing love!—
He ran to our relief.
Down from the shining seats above,
With joyful haste He fled,
Entered the grave in mortal flesh,
And dwelt among the dead.
He spoiled the powers of darkness thus,
And broke our iron chains—
Jesus has freed our captive souls
From everlasting pains.”*

When he had sung through the hymn, he mounted his horse and resumed his journey as a bishop should do when he has done his work. The Negro went home and masticated and digested what he had heard—and if you had been on the plantation, some months later, you would have seen the old hut where the Negro lived crowded with the poor neglected sons of Africa—and who was preaching? Why, the Negro who was fishing by the rivers' bank had now become a fisher of souls! Months went on—the holy flame had begun to spread, the overseer was alarmed and went down to Punch's cabin to put a stop to it. Punch was preaching. He stopped outside to listen to what was said—conviction pierced his heart. He went in, fell on his knees and joined in prayer—and throughout that province the Gospel mightily spread and prevailed!

Oh, what you might do, dear Friends, if you would talk like this! You men and women do not need to be preachers in order to do good! I don't know—but I can guess why the devil ever invented pulpit gowns and bibs and all that sort of distinction between clergymen and laymen. I am no clergyman—there is no such distinction in the New Testament. We are all Christians if we are converted—and there is no other distinction. We are either Brothers and Sisters in Christ, or

else, “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel.” It is sometimes asked, “Ought laymen to preach? “Nonsense! Any man may preach if he has the ability. I do not believe, in my soul, that there is authority for saying, “*These* men are to preach and these people are to talk of Christ—and all the rest of you are to hold your tongues and listen.” No, no, no! Let every man of you preach! Let every woman among you, in her own sphere, talk and tell of what the Lord has done for her soul. I do believe it is the invention of Satan to lift up some few men above the rest and say, “Only some of you are to fight the Lord’s battles.” “Up guards and at them!”—not your colonels only, but every man in the ranks—not here and there, a lieutenant, but EVERY man! “England expects every man”—not merely the captains, but every man—“to do his duty.” And Christ expects every man—not here and there one that is paid for doing it—the minister—but every man to tell what God has done for his soul. Do this and who can tell what good may come of it?

Still—and here I shall conclude—*never be satisfied without clinching the whole work with prayer*. Paul, You see, did not get those that were in the ship by his works—God gave them to Him. Everything is of Grace. Paul may pray and Paul may preach, but Paul does not purchase! That is Christ’s work. God gives—gives freely—and if you see friends and connections saved, it must be the gift of God’s Grace to you. Just as much as your own salvation was God’s gift to you, so the salvation of friends and dependents must be a gift from God to you. What then? Be much in prayer for them! I wish some of you mothers would meet together, sometimes, and pray for your children. I think it would be a noble thing for a dozen of you, perhaps, to come together only for prayer if any of you have unconverted children. And you fathers, sometimes, when you meet, if you have children who have not yielded to Divine Grace, could not you say, “Come, friend So-and-So, you and I have the same burden, let us bear it together at the Throne of Grace”? Just at the back of that hoarding there, while this place was being built, there was a prayer breathed one night by two souls, that God would bless this place. There were only two and nobody knew that that supplication went up to Heaven and I, for one, have felt strengthened by their prayer ever since. It was but a “chance” meeting, as we say. It was night and they both looked in at the same time and met each other. “Ah, friend So-and-So,” said one, “let us go up yonder, in a quiet nook, and pray, ‘God bless the Tabernacle.’” And God has blessed it and will bless it still! Now, you may all of you do something like that.

I was walking down the Old Kent Road one day and I was met by an excellent clergyman, not now in this neighborhood. He said to me, “Our places are close to one another, but we do not often meet. Come in and pray.” We entered his house, walked across the hall into the library and there the two ministers knelt down. One prayed and then the other prayed. We then rose, shook hands and parted. It took us but ten minutes, but it was worth I know not how much to us both! We went to our work refreshed, for we had been with God! When we meet for this purpose, God will be with us, and He will give us all that are in the ship if we will but ask Him—for it is by prayer, prayer, prayer that we shall prevail! Let us wrestle and agonize until He gives us our desire.

There may be some of you who are praying for yourselves, but have not got the answer yet. There was a mother who went to hear George Whitefield preach—that mighty man of God. After the sermon was over, the mother was convicted of sin. In deep anguish of spirit, she went home. Her husband was dead and she had only a little girl and, having no one else to talk to, she told the child about her convictions. The little girl—you will think it strange, perhaps—under the recital was made to feel the same. Mother and child wept together under the same sense of sin. Upstairs they went and prayed. They neither of them found peace for some months, but, it pleased God, at last, to give mother and child, who had prayed together, peace at the same time. While the mother was rejoicing, the child, just like a babe in Grace, said, “Mother, oh, what a joyful thing it is to be pardoned! What a blessed thing it is to be saved! I would like to run and tell our neighbors.” “No,” said the mother, “that would not be wise, child, they don’t care about these things. They would not understand—they would laugh at you—and we must not cast pearls before swine. We will do it by-and-by.” “But, Mother,” said the child, “I can’t leave it. I do feel so happy, Mother, I must tell somebody, so I will just run across the street to the shoemaker and tell him.” The shoemaker was at work with his lap stone and the little one began by saying, “Do you know that you are a sinner? I am a sinner, but I am a pardoned sinner. I have been seeking Christ and I have found Him.” She then set forth the tale, with tears in her eyes, till the shoemaker laid down his hammer to listen and stopped his work awhile. He became converted and the story was told abroad—and through the conversion of that man the work spread, a meeting was established and the means of Grace were soon set up—and there arose a flourishing church in that town, where not a believer in Christ had been known to live before!

Ah, you young converts, you may tell the tale! And even you who are under conviction of sin may tell it to your children. Do not hesitate to let the Light of God shine! I pray you—any of you, but I do bid you, by the blood and by the wounds of Him who was crucified for our sins—by Him that lived and cried for us, never cease praying till God gives you all them that sail with you! O my dear Friends, pray for the congregations that come to the Tabernacle! Make this to be the burden of your never-ceasing cry, “Give us all them that sail with us!” The Lord hear our prayers and add His blessing on our labors, for Christ's sake! Amen.

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307

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