

G. B. Cheever

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THE  
CHRISTIAN'S DUTY,

IN A TIME OF REVIVAL:

BEING A

S E R M O N .

PREACHED BY

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IN THE CHURCH OF THE PURITANS, UNION SQUARE,

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“CURSE ye Meroz, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.”—JUDGES 5 : 23.

THESE words are a part of the Song of Deborah and Barak, on occasion of a great victory gained over the Canaanites. They describe the indignation of God against the inhabitants of a Hebrew village, because, while their brethren jeoparded their lives in the high places of the battle, they refused to take part in the conflict, and came not to the help of the Lord against his enemies. The instruction to be gained from this passage may be opened thus: Indifference and laziness in God's service at a time when great effort is required, is beyond measure odious in his sight, and must draw down his anger. Especially is this the case when the service to be entered on is peculiarly spiritual in its nature, and essential to the prosperity of Zion. If the angel of

God pronounced so heavy a curse upon the people of Meroz, because they withheld their assistance, when the object in view was only a temporal victory, how much more criminal must it be for God's children to remain inactive, when the object to be gained is the eternal salvation of souls, and the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom! Or, to bring our text to bear more immediately upon present duty, if the physical cowardice and negligence which we read of in these ancient Israelites, excited God's indignation so strongly, when he called them to aid in the nation's deliverance from mere temporal enemies, with what increased displeasure must he behold, in a revival of religion, the soldiers of Christ sleeping on their posts, and negligent of spiritual duty, when he is calling them to the work of saving souls in the battle against sin and Satan!

Here, then, we are to consider—first, our character as Christian soldiers, and our responsibilities as a church and as individuals, in sustaining the work of God's grace, which is always a conflict with sin and Satan. Second, we are to inquire how, in the midst of such a work, and for its continuance, we are to come to the help of the Lord against his enemies. And third, we shall glance at some of the reasons why we should do this.

First, then, our character as Christian soldiers, and our responsibilities for God's work. We have enlisted under the banners of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Captain of salvation. When a soldier puts his name on the company's roll, especially in a time of open war, he looks for nothing but battles and

sieges, long marches and dangerous attacks, and expects to hold himself in readiness for active service whenever his commander requires. Now, it is always open war with us; we never can have any truce with Satan. Ours must be a *life* of warfare, and we are not to look for any thing else. This is not the place of our rest, and indeed, the rest of heaven itself is not idleness, but consists in blessed activity. While we are in this world we are in an enemy's country, and must never lay aside our armor, nor relax our vigilance.

But there are times of peculiar danger, interest, and importance, seasons of divine visitation, and critical conjunctures of life or death to souls, when our responsibilities are increased. And it becomes us to inquire anxiously, and with very great solemnity of heart, what addition it is that any thing like a season of religious revival makes in the array of our dangers and duties. We are to feel that at such a moment every thing we do, or think, or say, takes hold upon eternity with very great directness and power, and involves consequences of infinite importance. And at such a time especially comes in that great sentence of God to an army on duty: "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." We must remember that, as a church, it becomes us to put on our beautiful garments, to be prepared to entertain our Heavenly King, and to receive a long and delightful visit of refreshment and sanctification from his presence. It becomes us to take a heavenly position, to be united, affectionate, and warm-hearted, and to have our

social meetings animated with holy fervor, and full of Christian sympathy and love to souls. It becomes us to walk closely and humbly with God, to be fearful of doing any thing which may grieve away his Spirit, to feel as if we hardly dared breathe, while the operations of divine grace are becoming so visible, while such solemn movements are taking place around us, while every thing borrows a hue from eternity, and while the angels of God are round about us and in the midst of us, busy, here and there, on their errands of mercy.

It becomes us to be mindful that the Church of Christ is the medium through which God communicates the blessings of his grace to perishing sinners, and that, if that medium be not holy, if the water of life and salvation be discolored and mingled with earthly impurities, the needy will be repelled from the fountain of life rather than attracted to it. However favorable all circumstances may be for a revival of religion, if we are not prayerful and watchful, we shall but harden the hearts of sinners, and make them more unholy, and quench the Spirit of God, and shut out his influences, and shut up the kingdom of heaven against men, not suffering them that are entering to go in. We shall render all the efforts of Heaven's mercy vain. The cross of Christ will have no power, the love of Christ will not be felt, and dying sinners will not come to be washed in the fountain of his precious blood. We shall be a voluntary savor of death unto death, and together with the god of this world, shall coöperate in blinding the minds of them that believe not, lest the

light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine within them. Jehovah will not dwell in the midst of an unsanctified, Laodicean, lukewarm church. When his people become unmindful of the Rock of their salvation one of their enemies can chase a thousand of them, and two put ten thousand to flight. When the host goeth forth against thine enemies, then keep thee from every wicked thing. For the Lord thy God is in the midst of thy camp, to deliver thee, and to give up thine enemies before thee; therefore shall thy camp be holy, that he see no unclean thing in thee, to turn away from thee.

Now our duties and responsibilities as a church are made up of individual duties and responsibilities; we are, therefore, to look to ourselves, not to our neighbors. Each individual soldier is to go forward at his captain's word of command, and not to look around and see how many are waiting, or not marching. If each man's heart were right, then would the whole heart of the Church beat with a strong, equable, simultaneous, heavenly impulse. But we are to remember that at a critical time a single prayerless individual may disturb and greatly thwart the whole movement. As long as there was a single Achan in the camp of Israel at such a time, the children of God were miserably defeated; the hearts of the people melted and became as water; the anger of the Lord was kindled against them; they turned their backs against their enemies; they could not go forward to victory. For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, There is an accursed thing in

the midst of thee, O Israel, thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from you. Now there is no shifting this responsibility from our own shoulders; we must each one of us see to it, as our own personal concern, that we are not a dead weight upon the Church, that we are not the accursed thing which will grieve away the Holy Spirit.

How then, in the second place, are we to come to the help of the Lord in a crisis of spiritual conflict, and for the support of the work of his grace?

I remark, first, that Christians are bound to possess and to cultivate a deep sense of dependence on the Spirit of God, an all-prevailing sense of the impossibility of accomplishing any thing but by his Spirit, through the instrumentality of his truth. This dependence on divine truth, and on the Spirit of God to give it efficacy, is at the foundation; and if this foundation be laid deep, the work built upon it will be strong and lasting. It is a great grace, a powerful grace, an effectual grace—this overmastering and constraining sense of dependence on the Divine Spirit. No man ever possesses it, but with a clear view and vivid sense of divine truth, and of the glory of God, and of the guilt and ruin of men in their sins; no man possesses it, but with love to Christ and love to souls yearning and active within him. But this grace, wherever it prevails, carries the yearning heart first of all to God, to the throne of grace, to plead there, prostrate at the mercy seat, for this gift of the Spirit, and next, constrains to an equally earnest activity with perishing

sinner, to bring them under the pressure and power of the truth by the Spirit. A man who feels that he can do nothing without God, but longs to do every thing for him; a man who sees immortal souls around him crowding down to ruin, and longs to save them for Christ's sake, through Christ's atoning sacrifice, can not but earnestly plead for the outpouring of God's Spirit, to accompany God's truth, and at the same time will be employed, as God gives him opportunity, in presenting that truth to the consciences of men, and bringing them under its influence. These are the two great primal forms of Christian duty and effort in and for a revival of religion. A man will not, can not, be faithful in these directions, but by the power of the Spirit of God in his own heart; and wherever any good number of Christians in a church are thus awakened, animated, active, and faithful, the revival of religion is there begun, and will assuredly go forward.

I remark, then, in the second place, that for the gaining and maintaining of this sense of dependence on the Spirit of God, and for the procuring of this gift of the Spirit for others, incessant and fervent prayer, especially secret prayer, is the Christian's first duty. He ought to be weeping and pleading in secret places, with a heart longing for the salvation of perishing sinners. "They shall come with weepings, and with supplications will I lead them;" a text that not only indicates the supremacy of prayer among the means necessary and efficacious for the revival of God's work, but also the kind of prayer, out of a broken heart and a contrite spirit. Indeed,

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whatever we do, in coming to God for dying men, or in seeking to bring them to him, the deepest humility and tenderness are requisite, with an anxious, trembling, weeping heart, because of our own deficiencies and unworthiness. Our insensibility and want of love to Christ, and to the souls of our fellow-sinners, ought to fill our hearts with grief. And we ought to plead, with a broken-hearted earnestness, that God will not, on account of our sins, remove his presence from us. What sluggish, idle, selfish, unprofitable servants have we all been! In what a mist of worldliness have we been enveloped! How have we gone about our own business, and neglected God's? Our very best state of feeling has been half sin, and amidst all God's mercies, commands, entreaties, and warnings, we have been half asleep. We have not deserved to be visited with any thing but judgment, and yet God is loading us with blessings! It is proper, therefore, that we come to the throne of grace with weepings, and with tearful, importunate supplications, out of a broken heart and a contrite spirit, both for ourselves and others. Thus Daniel came and received the blessing.

For this, God will thus be inquired of, and he will be found of those who thus search for him with all the heart. It is they, who thus labor in secret, that labor efficaciously, and labor to the end. God only knows how incalculably the poorest, humblest, most obscure private Christian may help forward the coming of the Redeemer's kingdom, by the devout earnestness of such persevering, humble,

fervent prayer. No promises are withheld, no blessings are too great to be granted, to that holy importunity, which gives God no rest, but, ardent, opens heaven, and brings down the Holy Spirit on the hearts of sinners. Morning, noon, and night, should find us thus beseeching God for his mercy. Doubtless, it is this habitual, earnest, imploring, persevering prayer, that is needed more than all things else, for this is the spring of all other activities, and all failures, and evils, and sins, are found first of all in unfaithfulness here. All religious declension begins in the neglect of secret prayer; all beginnings of reaction and declension in a revival of religion are just there.

But here it is to be noticed, in the third place, that if we pray with earnestness, then with earnestness we shall also act. And we *must* act by direct personal effort for the conversion of those around us. We must no longer live as if men were not dying in their sins, nor keep our lips as silent on the subject of religion, as if it were intended only for the grave. Alas! how many opportunities we constantly pass by and lose, for kind and tender admonitions to our irreligious friends! And what multitudes in a miserable eternity are now, while they bewail their own folly, cursing the coldness and unfaithfulness of Christians, and their neglect to tell them of their danger! There is not a Christian who now hears me, but might speak, from time to time, tenderly and freely to some impenitent sinner; and yet it is to be feared that a great many Christians never trouble themselves in the least concerning this duty.

And if it be so, then, as far as that goes, your intercourse with immortal beings, so far from leading them to imagine that there is any thing important in Eternity, Heaven, Hell, or that you feel any anxiety for their future happiness, would incline them to suppose that you scarcely think of it. And your profession of religion, and whatever you do in consequence of it, perhaps appears an inconsistency, while they often say within themselves, as they meet you on earthly business, but never hear a word on the infinitely important business of eternity: "I wonder that he never speaks to me upon the subject; it surely can not occupy much space in his own thoughts."

Now you ought surely to remove this reproach from your profession, and this sin from your own soul. I know that the habit of silence will be difficult to break through. And it may be still more difficult to form the habit of addressing your companions freely, kindly, and faithfully, in regard to eternal realities. But every important duty is more or less difficult; and this heavenly habit is one which you may acquire, and you may join with it the influence of a holy life and example. If you will, you may be so heavenly minded, and so accustomed on all proper occasions to speak of eternity and heavenly things, that wherever your companions meet you, they shall expect, as a thing of course, whatever be your general theme of conversation, or the business or relaxation on which you meet, a direct arrest of their worldly thoughts for a few moments at least, and an introduction of the one

grand theme of all-absorbing and overwhelming interest, which they know occupies and controls your whole being. In their inmost souls they will respect you ; they will revere the consistency of your Christian character, and will love you for your own anxiety for their good. Wherever you go, you shall go as a being of a higher order, and you shall be expected, before you separate from your acquaintance, to tell them something of that blessed life which you are leading ; something of that holy city of which you hope soon to be an inhabitant ; something, too, of their own melancholy estrangement from God, and of that dark world to which they are fast tending ; and something of the preciousness of your Saviour, and of the worth of that salvation, which it makes you weep to see them reject. You will be able to throw around yourself a heavenly atmosphere, so that all with whom you associate shall experience its power ; and even the careless and the hardened will find their hearts insensibly won by your gentle and affectionate demeanor, through which religion is divested of its stately, formal, and forbidding appearance, and made a part of the business, conversation, and happiness of life. A thousand opportunities of doing good shall spring up around you, of which you could have had no expectation ; and when you stand in eternity, with the white robe upon you, and the palm in your hand, there will be around you a happy throng of redeemed spirits, who, you will be told, are the seals of your benevolent private ministry on earth, and the crowns of your rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus.

Which of my hearers, as a grateful disciple of Christ, does not feel his soul exult with holy animation, in the prospect of a happiness so great? Every individual who now hears me might realize it. But who is there that has engaged in this work with any thing like the persevering heartiness and prayerfulness demanded by the infinite importance of the end? Who is there that has not greatly neglected this work? Has it ever been made, in any measure, as it ought to be, the grand business of life? Surely, there is no excuse for disregarding it—there can be none. If you have been bought with the precious blood of Christ, and have had your own eternal interests secured by him, oh! then, what business is worthy of you or of Him in this world, but to do as much as possible for His cause, and to save as many immortal spirits as possible before you die! Instead of this, perhaps to you comes the reproof of an idle profession. Israel is an empty vine; he bringeth forth fruit unto himself. Alas! how many of your opportunities are thrown away, how great a portion of your thoughts are quite utterly worldly, how few of your careless companions have you affectionately, perseveringly, and earnestly endeavored to lead to a better, more thoughtful, more religious state.

Ah! dear friend, is there *one*, whose thoughts are, by your instrumentality, your heavenly warnings, your fervent prayers, your conversation and example, involuntarily turned towards eternity? Yet you might live so like a heaven-born spirit, that the very sight of your person should call up in the mind of the observer a crowd of holy associations, and

solemn images of scenes in the future world. Is there one, over whose spiritual interests you have so solicitously watched, for whom you have so weepingly prayed, whom you have so tenderly entreated to seek the Lord Jesus, that you have, as it were, inclosed that soul in a moral spell, and endeared it to yourself, and obtained over it a power like that of parental affection? There is no mind so weak as not to possess the ability to influence some other mind. You may say that your opportunities are contracted, and your ability small; but God knows how great they are, and he never asks you to do more than he has given you the means of doing. But he requires you to be the salt of the earth. And now, do your companions, your brothers, your sisters, your parents, your children—do they feel that you are affectionately desirous that they too should become the happy followers of your beloved Lord? Have you daily improved the many delightful avenues which your situation in regard to them opens to their hearts? How many sweet opportunities do you possess, with your dear relatives and friends, of winning them away from sin to holiness, from earth to heaven? But, alas! how many are constantly wasted! When your friends are sick, you daily inquire after their health; and if you should see the plague-spot on the cheek of any one of your acquaintance, you would instantly tell him the greatness of his danger. But how often does he hear you inquire after the health of his soul? You tell him nothing of the moral plague, which you know is spreading over his spiritual being, and fast prepar-

ing him for spiritual death, while he himself is utterly blind to its ravages. Think what a glorious result would follow, were each member of the Church of Christ to perform his duty faithfully, every day, in personal effort for the conversion of souls. A single word is often like a stone thrown into the water, which sets a circle in motion that widens and spreads as far as the tide of existence itself has expanded. Private Christians thus become, oftentimes, the most powerful, though unseen, preachers; the influence is constantly spreading; and it is in this way especially, conjoined with a holy example, that they must be the salt of the earth.

How easily, when your heart is full, can you introduce the subject! How many trifling occurrences you may lay hold upon; how many pleasant expedients you may use! Go to the example of Christ, and hear his affectionate, gentle, and familiar introduction of the subject to the woman of Samaria. Though wearied with his journey, and sitting tired and thirsty on the well, he would neglect no opportunity to invite a single soul to drink the water of life freely. And if we felt in any suitable degree the power of his love; if our spirits were moved with compassion for those who have no interest in him; if we felt how short our time in this world is, and yet how much good we might do by faithfully improving it all with a direct reference to eternity, we should imitate our Saviour's example, and the hearts of multitudes would be blessing us as angels of mercy to their souls.

Unquestionably, the grand reason why the truths

delivered on the Sabbath from the pulpit have so little power, is because Christians do so little succor and sustain them by their own efforts during the week. The serious impression produced on the Lord's day is dissipated by secular cares and conversation. It is the business of Christians to spread, by their own holy conversation and deportment, the religious atmosphere of the Sabbath over the whole week, and thus maintain the hold of divine truth on the minds of the impenitent. They will be thoughtful and anxious when they find every Christian they meet in earnest about eternity, with the face towards heaven, and all the aspect indicating a spirit ripening for a better world, and affectionately desirous to lead others thither. Vivid piety possesses a commanding sympathy; it spreads, it powerfully moves others, it takes the listener and spectator by surprise, and touches the heart, and opens the moral vision, and points to eternal realities. The Sunday's sermon, said Leighton, lasts but an hour or two, but holiness of life is a continual sermon all the week long. In any thing like a revival of religion, the Christian ought to feel that it is a solemn as well as heavenly season to his soul. The Christian household should be pervaded by an air of sanctity; the most cheerful movements should be sacred, and the songs a melody to the Lord; the joy of the family a delightful participation with that of the angels in heaven. Is it a time for levity and trifling; a time to be occupied about ten thousand indifferent things; a time for worldly leisure, when every moment you can gain is precious with a heavenly value, and may

teem with infinite results? If ever you ought to be sober and watchful unto prayer, it is now.

You will say, perhaps, that I have drawn a picture which is rarely realized, and which, to be realized, requires incessant watchfulness unto prayer, incessant effort, constant heavenly-mindedness, the affections in heaven, the world under your feet, a constant sense of eternal realities, an unceasing impression of the value of the soul, a glowing fervor of love to Christ, a great delight in his word, a constant sense of his presence, a constant experience of the joy of his salvation, the constant power of the Holy Spirit in your heart. Well, dear friends, is there any thing in all this impossible, impracticable? And is not this just the kind of life you ought to lead, just the kind of character you ought to form, advancing as you are into the eternal world, where all the beings and things around you will require in you a character that has been patiently wrought into habit out of just such elements, in order to render you happy in the presence of God and the Lamb? And is not such a life a heaven upon earth to those who labor after it, and succeed in attaining, and find themselves habitually under the power of such elevating, transfiguring, triumphant habits and impressions? If it be very different from the life of the majority of professors of religion, so much the worse for them, so much the more melancholy that they should come short of it, but so much the more necessary that you should not measure yourself by their standard, but should rise above it.

Some of the means of doing this are very plain.

You want a realizing apprehension of divine things; you want to feel them near, to feel them pressing upon you, thronging round you, speaking to you, gazing at you, lifting you up, bearing you upon their wings, as angelic messengers. You want the word of Christ abiding in your soul as a fountain of life and strength. You want the Holy Spirit taking of the things that are Christ's, and showing them to you, and Christ himself making your heart burn within you as he walks with you and talks with you by the way. Now, was ever this accomplished but by steady and earnest effort, by time given to the humble study of the word of God with prayer? But did it ever fail of being accomplished by such diligence? Did ever a soul anxiously give itself to prayer and to the word of God without such a blessing? Did ever any one thus wait upon God and go away disappointed? As you look round upon this busy, guilty, worldly city, and the gay, the fashionable, the careless circles in it, you can not but feel that to lead such a life, and to make the salvation of souls your object, will require a real separation from the world, even while in it, a separation by living above it, by surrounding yourself with a charmed atmosphere, the atmosphere of prayer and heaven, and by carrying with you wherever you go, your own heavenly standard and heavenly companions. You can not but feel, and you feel rightly, that it needs decision and a new supply of faith and spiritual strength from the great Comforter every day and every hour.

And is not every event and all discipline good

and blessed, that presses you down every day and every hour at the foot of the cross, that compels you to come with weeping importunity to your Saviour, to the throne of grace, for yourself and for others? Oh! for such a sense of your dependence as will keep you there; for there, in that humble posture and frame of spirit, is your safety, your strength, your happiness, your preparation for usefulness now and glory hereafter. You need a holy industry, which will snatch opportunities for frequent visits to the throne of grace; there you must have your cold and unfeeling heart taken away; there you must get a deep pity for sinners, and prepare yourself to press the subject of their own salvation upon them in personal conversation, with tenderness, simplicity, and in earnest. There you must plead, and weep, and feel as Jacob did, I will not let thee go except thou bless me.

Consider now, once more, in the third place, the reasons for such activity. You ought so to come to the help of the Lord, because God commands it; because Christ died for you; because your insensibility blunts the arrows of divine truth, hardens the hard-hearted, lulls the sinner to sleep, blinds his moral vision, makes him stupid, grieves the Holy Spirit, and discourages the efforts of your Christian brethren; and because, if you do not, you have no reason to think yourself a disciple of Christ. Sure I am that the natural insensibility of sinners is dreadful enough without having it increased by the still more shocking indifference of Christians. To the continuance of that insensibility you must be found

accessory, unless you obey the command of God, and come to his help against the mighty. Besides the commands, and all the encouraging, animating promises of God, you have the love of Christ to constrain you. You belong not to yourself, but to Jesus. Think of his mercy, his dying love, and your immeasurable obligations to him, in redeeming you from sin and death and the wrath to come. Why were you called and made a partaker of his love, when thousands around you have adhered to their wretched, melancholy choice of perdition? If you ever have been made a partaker of Christ's love, must it not kindle to a new flame in any thing like a revival of religion? But if your piety is of such a character that it fails to make you sympathize with your Lord and Master in his compassion for sinners; if it makes you stupid, inactive, without warmth; if it suffers you to be neglectful of the salvation of others, then, dear friend, it is worth lamentably little. No man in his senses but would think it a fearful hazard to take such a piety as his passport to eternal life. If you do not feel anxious for the welfare of other souls, it is high time to look to your own. If in the midst of the work of God you can still sleep, then you had better begin your Christian life over again, and come humbly to the meeting of inquiry with anxious, trembling sinners; for what evidence ought to be looked for of a man's piety and growth in grace, if it be not a heavenly interest in the welfare of perishing immortal souls around him? Every thing is put to hazard by such dreadful insensibility.

It is an insensibility that can be overcome if you choose; indeed, we can contrive to remain insensible, only by interposing the veil of time and sense between our souls and eternal realities. If we knew we had but a day longer to live, or that some one of our dearest friends now impenitent would be called into eternity this week, we should not long be complaining of insensibility. But if in such a case we should be roused up effectually, we ought to be now. If death, the judgment, and the eternal realities of heaven and hell will powerfully agitate us and our friends, when we stand in the midst of them, they ought to do it now, for faith makes these things present to us, and we know that they will be present, when happiness will be as dear and misery as dreadful as they are now.

We need now to act, to pray fervently, and act fervently, and not to be surmising, suspecting, wondering, hesitating. While one man is standing still and speculating about the lions in the way, another, who possesses the warm zeal of the Gospel, will have prayed a dozen sinners into the kingdom of heaven. We need to act fearlessly, committing the result to God. If your neighbor's house were on fire at midnight, would you let the fear of making a great disturbance, or spoiling the night's rest of the people, prevent you from giving the alarm, or make you ceremonious in doing it, or would you think it necessary, in using the fire-engine, to be very careful not to wet any individual or any furniture in the way? If we wait for a perfectly convenient season, we shall wait till the graves are ready

for us. If the farmer should neglect to sow his corn-field because he is afraid there may be some bad ears in the harvest, or to cut his hay in a sunny day because he fears a storm to-morrow, his field would lie fallow forever, and his hay would rot where it grew. And if we do not faithfully perform our duty, leaving the result with God, all our anticipations will be blasted.

It is not the scabbard of conservatism that we need to brandish, as Christian soldiers, but the sword of the Spirit and the weapon of all prayer ; it is not prudence that we need, but earnestness, activity, and zeal. In the heat of the contest, what is the scabbard good for without the sword, or what should you think of a man who should throw away his sword and brandish his scabbard ? It is the part of good sense as well as courage in such cases sometimes to throw away the scabbard, as a proof that you are resolute, and because it is a useless incumbrance ; but who would think of leaving his weapon and wielding its sheath ? Yet Satan sees a great many soldiers doing this, and not only so, but calling upon others to use nothing but the scabbard.

Now do we need to use with more directness and earnestness than ever the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Now do we need to be a thousand times more active and fervent in the service of our Saviour ; we need to feel a thousand fold more for the welfare of perishing sinners, and to change our sluggish Christian character for one of heavenly zeal and energy, one that better adorns our profession ; we need to be more humble, more

penitent, more faithful in Christian effort for the conversion of sinners, more incessant and earnest in prayer. We need to plead with an earnestness that can not be expressed, an importunity of spirit for which there is no language, that God would in mercy continue and increase the work of his grace. Then it will go on ; there will be new repentance on earth and new joy in heaven. Religion never will decline with us if we are truly unwilling it should. But if we ourselves would keep hold on the slightest hope of heaven, we can not do it with any ground of confidence while sluggish in the service of that Saviour who purchased us with his own blood. If we ever hope to be useful, we can not do it, unless we wake from our spiritual slumbers, and so pray, and watch, and strive, that for us to live, it may indeed be Christ.

