

UNTO YOU, YOUNG MEN

NO. 811

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON WEDNESDAY EVENING, MAY 13, 1868
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AT WESTMINSTER CHAPEL

**Being the Annual Sermon to Young Men
in connection with the London Missionary Society**

*“I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong,
and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.”*
1 John 2:14

JOHN abounded in charity, but with the utmost stretch of it he could not have written to all young men in this style, for, alas! all young men are not strong, nor does the Word of God abide in them all, nor have they all overcome the wicked one. Strong in muscle they may be, like Samson, but like Samson they are weak in moral principle, and ere long are found in the lap of a sinful Delilah, to their own destruction.

What multitudes of young men there are in London who, instead of being spiritually strong, are weakness itself—bending like the willow in every gale, drifting down the stream like dead fish, having neither the wish nor the ability to stem the torrent of temptation! These weak young men, who are entrapped in every snare, taken with every bait, are the objects of our earnest anxiety. But to them we can address no epistles entreating their aid in holy work, or cheering them with sacred consolations.

It is painful to reflect that in the vast mass of ripening manhood the Word of God does *not* abide. Tens of thousands of them do not even hear it. They look upon the Sabbath as a day of amusement, and to religious exercises as a slavery.

Thousands more attend to the Word only after the fashion of the old proverb, “In at one ear and out at the other.” They see their natural face in the glass of the Word, but they go their way and straightaway forget what manner of men they are. They are young men of good judgment, too, in worldly things, and yet so foolish as to esteem eternal things as mere trifles, to play with immortality, and value the joys of an hour at a higher price than bliss unending.

Assuredly in this land there are multitudes of young men who have not overcome the wicked one. Nay, they never thought of so doing, for they are hand in glove with him—they are among his best allies.

Shame that it should be so, that when the devil seeks recruits for his army, he should straightway send his recruiting sergeant for these fine young fellows, who ought to serve a better master, but who are all too willing to give up at once the strength of their youth and the force of their characters to the service of a deceiver—overcome the wicked one, indeed!

In many young men he reigns supreme, and they are led captive by him at his will. Wickedly insinuating all the while that they are the milksops and the fools who dare to do the right and scorn to fling away their souls for the sake of temporary pleasures.

Now, there may be in this place tonight some of these young men who are not strong, in whom the Word of God does not abide, and who have not overcome the wicked one. Let conscience seek out such, and when they are fully revealed and discovered to themselves, let them deliberately take stock of their position in the light of death and judgment, and may they by God’s grace be made to pause awhile, and then to decide that it will be a wiser course of action to repent before God, to believe in Jesus, and to

give themselves up to Him who can make them strong, and put the living seed of His Word into their hearts, and enable them to overcome the wicked one.

But I address myself to many, I trust, this evening, who are such as John described, and who can give praise to distinguishing grace that they are such, for they feel that had they been left to themselves they would have possessed no strength, and would not have held the living truth within their hearts.

O for a shout of sacred joy from every one who has been redeemed from his estate of bondage, brought up out of the wilderness, and led into the Canaan of salvation! O for something better than shouts of praise, namely, holy lives, devoted actions, constant consecration from those who thus have been strengthened and quickened, and made victors over sin.

Two or three things we shall speak about tonight. First, *our text describes the model young man*. Secondly, we infer from it *that such model men have within them qualifications for usefulness*. John wrote to these young men because they were so-and-so, and so-and-so. I shall ask some here to serve God for the selfsame reason, because those parts which make the model man are just such as will qualify them to serve God. And in the third and last place, *I shall try to urge the conscription upon many here*, hoping that many will be written down as God's warriors from this good hour.

I. First then, we have before us THE PHOTOGRAPH OF THE MODEL YOUNG MAN.

Nothing is said about his learning—he may be a model of everything that is spiritually good though his education may have been neglected. Nothing is said about his wealth, his position in society, or his personal appearance, without anything to boast of in relation to any of these things he may yet be in the advance guard of Christ's soldiers.

1. What is spoken in the text has to do only with spiritual qualifications, and it deals with three points. First, *this young man is strong*. The strength here meant is not that which is the *result* of his being in his youth—not a mere natural vigor, but a spiritual strength, a strength which comes of the Lord of hosts, a strength which is the result of the indwelling of the Spirit within the man, a strength which brings out and consecrates the natural energy, and makes the young man with his vigor to be vigorous in the right direction. "I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong."

Now, the spiritually strong man may be described in this way—*he is one who is very decided for Christ*. He is not half-hearted, halting between two opinions. There is nothing about him now, as there once might have been, of questioning or hesitation. He is for Christ.

Whoever may be for the false, he is for the true. Whoever may side with the unjust, he is for the honest. Whoever may adopt crooked policy, he is for straightforward principle. He has made up his mind to it that he is Christ's, and henceforth he does not tolerate within his soul anything like a question on that matter. He is decided, not only in his service for Christ, but in his opinions. He knows what he knows. He holds firmly what he does hold.

He is a strong man in the truth. You cannot pull him by the ear this way today and that way tomorrow. He does not depend upon his religious teacher for his religious thought. He does his own thinking with his Bible before him, by the grace of God he has grown strong by feeding on heavenly diet. He is a man with his feet firmly planted on a rock.

You may meet with weak professors almost everywhere, and you may by specious arguments entice them to almost everything, but the young man who is strong will listen to what you have to say, and weigh it in the scales of judgment, but when once weighed and found wanting, he will reject it without hesitation. He at once rejects the wrong, and cleaves to that which is right, for God has made him strong in integrity of heart.

While thus strong in decision, *he is also strong in the matter of establishment*. He once believed truths because he was so taught, but now he begins to search to the roots of them, and to find out the arguments which support them. He has proved, if not all things, yet enough to hold fast that which is good. He has become established by some little experience, for though a young man, experience may come to him, and indeed, it does come to some young men without the lapse of many years.

The experience of a single night has taught a man more than the experience of years, and the experience of a single day, a bitter sorrow, or ardent labor, has been more valuable than the mere lapse of a score of ordinary years of prosperity and joy.

What little experience the man has had, and what little observation he has been able to make, have joined together to confirm him in what he believes. And now, though he does not care to be always arguing—in fact, he has passed beyond that stage, though he does not care to be always testing and trying things—he has advanced farther than that—yet he is prepared, when objections are advanced, to meet them in a spirit of meekness, and he is prepared to instruct the ignorant, and those who are out of the way. He is strong in establishment, as well as in decision.

Nor is this all. He has become strong, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, *in a vigor diffused throughout his whole spiritual constitution*. A very large proportion of the members of our churches are, I trust, alive, but you have to try them by various experiments to know whether there is any life in them.

They are like persons just fished up from the water, and in order to discover whether they are alive, you place the looking glass before their mouth and watch for a little damp upon it. You kneel down and try to detect the faint sound of breathing.

*“Tis a point I long to know,
Oft it causes anxious thought.”*

This is the miserable cry of many. There may be life in them, but it is life in a fainting fit or sound sleep. But the vigorous Christian is far different from this. He does not ask whether he is alive or not, he knows he is by that which he is enabled to do, by the strength of his life, by that which he feels palpitating within, by the aspirations that glow within his soul, ay, and even by the griefs and pains which make him bow his head. He *knows* that he lives.

Others in our churches do something for Christ, and know that they are alive, but their whole spiritual system is relaxed. If they take up the hammer and work for God, they strike such feeble blows that the nails do not know it. If they take the spade in their hand to dig in the Master’s vineyard, the weeds laugh them to scorn. They are so exceedingly feeble, and generally so changeable, so fond of new work, and of running after this and that, that they are of little or no real service to the church.

But the strong man in Christ Jesus is one who, if he fights, dashes to pieces the helmet of his foe. And if he wields the sling and the stone, takes care that the stone shall be sent with force enough to go through Goliath’s skull. He is a man who, if he prays, makes the gates of heaven shake and the vaults of heaven to ring.

He is a man who, when he pleads with sinners, pleads all over—hands and face, and every muscle revealing his earnestness. He cannot drag on a dead-and-alive life. He feels that if religion be worth anything it is worth everything, and he throws his whole being into it—body, soul, and spirit, ardently and to the utmost pitch of energy, being given up to the Master’s cause.

Meanwhile he is not only strong in actual service, but *he is strong in what he cannot do*. Some of the most acceptable things which are recorded in heaven are the things which are in our hearts, but which cannot come to our hands for want of power. It is a great thing, brethren, to always have some work before you which makes you stand on tiptoe to reach it, and to be continually reaching up till at last you attain it, and then reach to something still beyond you.

I like the thought of David sitting down before the Lord, and meditating about that house of cedar which he was not permitted to build. The strong young man will have many schemes crossing his brain, and while he is in his youth he will not be able to realize them, but they will flit before him so often, that at last he will pluck up courage and as he grows in years and possibilities, he will at last make real that which once was but a dream.

Do not be ashamed, my dear young friend, you who have scarcely left your father’s roof, do not be ashamed sometimes to have a few right thorough daydreams, do not be ashamed to indulge in thoughts

of what you would do if you could. I say this provided that you are now doing all you can, and this day consecrating to God all you have. Go to Him and ask Him to enable you to do more in your future life, and plan and purpose for that future life. Have a strength of purpose, and it may be, God will give you strength of opportunity, and if He does not, yet it shall be well that it was in your heart.

I may say too, even in the presence of the honored fathers who surround the pulpit, we sadly want a generation of stronger men in our churches. We will not decry the blessings which God has given us already. I do not believe that any age was better than this, all things considered, but this is the time when we shall want our young men to be strong to all the intents of strength. Battles are coming in which they will need to stand with firm foot. There will be strifes in which they will not be of the slightest value if they cannot brave the conflict in the very van, or fight where fly whole showers of fiery arrows and hot bolts of hell.

Rest assured these are not silken days, nor times to make us dream that we have won the victory. Our fathers, where are they? They are looking down upon us from their thrones, but what do they see? Do they see us wearing the crown and waving the palm branch? If so, they see us lunatics indeed, for that were a madman's sport, but rather they see us sharpening our swords afresh and buckling on our panoply anew, to fight the same fight which they fought under other circumstances.

The young blood of the church, under God, is our great hope in the conflict for King Jesus. The young men of the church must be in the next twenty years the very soul and vigor of it, and therefore, may God raise up among us a goodly seed, a race of heroes, swifter than eagles for zeal, and stronger than lions for faith.

2. The text gives a further description of the model Christian young man in the words, "*And the word of God abideth in you.*" Her Majesty was on the south side of the water today, but she does not abide there. All the pomp and sunshine of her presence have vanished, and Westminster Bridge and Stangate are as they were before.

The Word of God sometimes comes with right royal pomp into the minds of young men. They are affected by it for a time, and they rejoice therein, but alas! that blessed Word soon departs, and they are none the better for that which they have heard. Multitudes still are stony ground hearers. They receive the Word with joy, but they have no root, and by and by they all wither away.

The model young man in the text is not of this kind. The Word of God abideth in him, by which I understand that *he is one who understands the Word*, for it must get into him before it can abide in him, and it can only enter by the door of the understanding, he understands the Word, and then by having an affection for the Word he shuts that door and entertains the truth.

Men who understand the Gospel are not quite so common as we sometimes suppose. I am not certain whether the giving up of the use of the *Westminster Assembly's Catechism* was a very wise thing. That grand old epitome of doctrine conveys to those who are taught it intelligently a most solid basis upon which afterwards the truth may be built.

A considerable number of our church members do not understand the truth which they profess to have received. I believe this is more or less true of all denominations, and that the pastors need to adopt measures, by classes or otherwise, which, under the Holy Spirit's blessing, might build up our youth in our most holy faith. The model young man is thus taught, he understands the truth so far as it is a matter of intellect. He grapples it to himself as with hooks of steel by intense affection, and then he lives it out with all his soul, while he holds the Word of God as a doctrine, it holds him as a living indwelling force.

The Word of God abides in him, that is, *he is constantly feeling its effects*. It abides in him, "a well of water springing up unto everlasting life"—a sacred fire consuming his sins, and comforting his spirit. It abides in him, a heavenly messenger revealing to him the freshness of celestial truth, uplifting him from earthly desires, and preparing him for the mansions in the skies. The Gospel permeates his nature. It is intertwined into his very self. You would more readily destroy him than make him apostatize.

"The cords that bind around his heart"

*Tortures and riches might tear off;
But they could never, never part
The hold he has on Christ his Lord.”*

The Word of God has become God’s resident lieutenant, dwelling in his spirit, reigning like a sovereign over his entire soul. It abides within him as an incorruptible seed, which death itself cannot kill. This is the blessed young man indeed, God has blessed him, and who shall reverse the benediction?

3. Thirdly, the text adds, “*And ye have overcome the wicked one.*” This is said of the young man. He is but a young man in grace, he has not reached the point of fatherhood in Christ, but for all that he has overcome the wicked one.

It strikes me that Christianity used aforesaid to be spoken of as a more effective thing than it is now. When people pray they seldom speak positively about what religion has done for them. I have often heard a brother say, “The Lord has done great things for us, whereof *we desire* to be glad.” Why, dear brother, if the Lord has done great things for you, you *are* glad.

I have known that text, “The love of Christ constraineth us,” preached from as if it said that the love of Christ *ought* to constrain us—which is very true, but it is not the truth of the text. It *does* constrain us, it *does* rule in the soul.

We often speak of wrestling with Satan, struggling and striving to overcome, but the text speaks of a victory already achieved, and too, by young men. We dishonor God, and make people think little of the Gospel, when we put in those pretendedly humbling terms, which are only used to let people see how exceedingly humble we are. We are so mock modest as to refuse to acknowledge the power of divine grace in our own souls.

As a man, I would speak diffidently about anything that I do myself, but of anything that God has done in me, or for me, or by me, I shall not speak with bated breath, but affirm it and rejoice in it, that God may be glorified thereby.

There are men here who have overcome the devil, and they have overcome him in many shapes. There are many pictures of the devil about, but I am afraid there are none of them accurate, for he assumes different shapes in different places. He is a chameleon, always affected by the light in which he happens to be, a Proteus, assuming every shape, so that it may but subserve his purpose.

Some young men have overcome that blue devil which keeps men despairing, doubting, trembling, and fearing. You once were subject to him. You could not, you said, believe in Christ. You were afraid you never should be saved. You wrote bitter things against yourself. Ah! but you have cast him out now by a simple faith in Jesus, for you know whom you have believed, and you are persuaded that He is able to keep that which you have committed unto Him.

You have overcome that devil, and though he does try to come back, and when your business is a little troublesome, or the liver may not be acting properly, he endeavors to insinuate himself, yet by God’s grace, he shall never fasten on the old chains again.

Then there is that dust-eating devil, of whom we can never speak too badly—the yellow devil of the mammon of unrighteousness, the love of gold and silver, the dread god of London, rolling over this city as if it were all his own.

I think I see him as a dragon on the top of the church steeple, chuckling at the inscription over the Royal Exchange—“The earth is the LORD’s, and the fullness thereof,” and laughing because he knows better, for he reckons it all belongs to him. Even as of old he said to Christ, “All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.”

What tricks are done nowadays in business for the love of gold! In fact, we know, some of us who are not business men, but who, nevertheless, are not blind, that dishonest marks and dishonest measures have become so systematic that their effect is lost, and the thing itself is almost as honest as if it were honest. It is the fact that men have become so accustomed to say that twice three make seven that their

neighbors all say, “Exactly so, and we will pay you for the goods after the same reckoning,” so that the thing has to square itself.

But the genuine Christian, the man who is strong, and has the Word of God abiding in him, scorns all this. He hears others say, “We must live,” but he replies, “Yes, but we must die.” He determines that he will not throw away his soul in order to grasp wealth, and that if it be not possible to become a merchant prince without the violation of the code of honor and of Christ’s law, then he will be content to be poor. O young man, if you have come to this you have overcome a wicked one indeed! I am afraid there are some here with gray heads who have hardly ventured on the fight. Alas! for them.

Another form of the wicked one we must speak of but softly, but oh! how hard to be overcome by the young man, I mean Madam Wanton, that fair but foul, that smiling but murderous fiend of hell by whom so many are deluded. Solomon spoke, “of the strange woman,” but the strong Christian in whom the Word of God abides, passes by her door and shuts his ear to her siren song. He flees youthful lusts which war against the soul, he reserves both his body and his soul for his Lord who has redeemed him by His precious blood.

Young Man, if you are strong, and have overcome the wicked one, you have overcome, I trust, *that Lucifer of pride*, and it is your endeavor to walk humbly with your God! You have given up all idea of merit. You cannot boast nor exalt yourself, but you bow humbly at the foot of the cross, adoring Him who has saved you from the wrath to come.

You have given up also, I trust, young man, all subjection to the great red dragon of *fashion*, who draws with his tail even the very stars of heaven. There are some who would think it far worse to be considered unfashionable than to be thought unchristian. To be unchristian would be but such a common accusation that they might submit to it, but to be *unfashionable* would be horrible indeed!

Young men in London get to be affected by this. If the young men in the house are going to such and such an entertainment—they all read a certain class of books—if they are dissipated and skeptical, then the temptation is to chime in with them, and only the man who is strong, and hath the Word of God abiding in him, will overcome the wicked one by doing the right alone—

“Faithful among the faithless found.”

II. Thus I have described a model Christian young man. Let us further observe that THESE THINGS WHICH CONSTITUTE HIM WHAT HE IS ARE HIS QUALIFICATIONS FOR USEFULNESS.

Of course certain talents are necessary for certain positions, but it is a rule without exception that every child of God may be useful in the divine family. God has not one single servant for whom He has not appointed a service.

Now, observe, my friends, to whom I am now addressing myself—you are strong, granted that, then this very strength which you now have will enable you to do mission work for God, and the graces which have been wrought in you, through Christ Jesus, faith, love, courage, patience, are your fitness for sacred labor.

If you are to be a minister, you may need to acquire a measure of learning. If you are to be a missionary, you will need a peculiar training, but you can get these. God will give you strength to obtain them, and the spiritual strength will go very far to help you. Meanwhile, for other work, all the strength you require is that which you already possess.

There are persons in the world who will not let us speak a word to the unconverted, because they say, and say very truly, that unconverted men are dead in sin, and therefore we are not to tell them to live, because they have no power to live. They forget that we have the power in the quickening Word and Spirit of God, and that as we speak the Word for God, power goes with it. Now, there is among us too much of this forgetfulness of the fact, that we actually have power from on high.

In prayer we are always praying for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which is very proper, but remember, we have the Holy Spirit—the Spirit *is* here. He is not always manifest, but He is given to His

church to abide in every one of His people, and if we would but believe in His presence we should feel it more. They who preach most successfully will tell you that one cause of it is that they *expect* to be successful. They do not preach hoping that perhaps one or two may be saved, but *knowing* that they will be, because the Word of God is the power of God unto salvation.

They believe in the Holy Ghost, and they who do so see the Holy Ghost, but they who only waveringly hope in the Holy Ghost, discern Him not, according to their faith so is it unto them. Believe, my brother, that you have within you, as a believer, the power which is necessary for reforming that house of business of yours, which is now so godless, into a house of prayer. Believe it, and begin to work like those who do believe it.

Believe that those who pass you in the morning, my young artisan friend, may be and shall be converted by you and by God if you speak to them out of your heart. Go up to them as one who knows that God is working with him. They will be awed by your manner, and if they reject your message they will feel it go hard with their consciences.

“I write unto you, young men, for ye are strong.” We beg you to use that strength in winning souls for Christ. Remember that this very strength which brings a blessing to yourself will benefit another. That very faith which brought you to Christ is all you want to bring others to Christ. “He seeing *their* faith, said unto the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee.”

You shall find that wherein you are weak spiritually within, you will be powerless spiritually without for Christian service, and in as far as you are strong within for your personal communion with the Lord Jesus, to that extent shall you be strong without for the work of your Lord.

Arise, ye strong young men, ye who saw the face of Christ this morning in your closets. Ye who have waited upon Him in prayer during the day. Ye that delight in His Word, arise, and shake yourselves from the dust! Be active in the might which God has given you to serve Him while yet you may. As the angel said to Gideon, so say I to you, young man, “The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valor,” and yet, again, “Go in this thy strength.”

If the young man inquires for tools and weapons with which to serve his Master, we refer him to the next point in the text, “*The word of God abideth in you.*” Now, my dear brother, if you desire to teach others, you have not to ask what the lesson shall be, for it abides in you.

Do you want a text that will impress the careless? What impressed you? You cannot have a better. You desire to speak a word in season from the Word of God which shall be likely to comfort the disconsolate? What has comforted your own soul? You cannot have a better guide. You have within your own experience a tutor which cannot fail you, and you have also an encouragement that cannot be taken from you. The Word of God within you will well up like a spring, and truth and grace will pour forth from you in rivers.

I have heard our Lord likened to a man carrying a water pot, and as He carried it upon His shoulder, the water fell dropping, dropping, dropping, so that every one could track the water-bearer. So should all His people be, carrying such a fullness of grace that every one should know where they have been by that which they have left behind. He who hath lain in the beds of spices will perfume the air through which he walks. One who, like Asher, has dipped his foot in oil, will leave his footprints behind him.

When the living and incorruptible seed remains within, the divine instincts of the new nature will guide you to the wisest methods of activity. You will do the right thing under the inward impulse rather than the written law, and your personal salvation will be your prime qualification for seeking out others of your Master’s flock.

Once again, “*you have overcome the wicked one.*” The man who has once given Satan a slap in the face need not be afraid of men. If you have often stood foot to foot with a violent temptation, and after wrestling have overcome it, you can laugh to scorn all the puny adversaries who assail you. It will breed manliness within the young man, and make him a truly muscular Christian to have been practiced in inward conflicts.

You have overcome Satan by the power of grace—you, why, then there is hope that in the Sunday school class which you have to teach, in the hearts of those boys and girls, Satan may again be conquered. There is hope for that drunken man you have been talking with lately, why should not he overcome the wicked one? You were once weak enough, but grace has made you strong, what grace has done for you it can do for another. “After I was saved myself,” said one, “I never despaired of any other.”

So should the fact that you have been enabled to achieve a conquest in a very terrible strife, comfort you with regard to all other cases. Go into the back slums—they are not far off. Penetrate the dark lanes and alleys. You have overcome the wicked one, you cannot meet with anything worse than him whom you have already vanquished. Let the majesty of grace in your souls be to you a solace and a stimulus, and never say anything is too hard for you to do who have already met Apollyon face to face and put him to the rout.

III. The wording of the text suggested to me, TO FORCE THE CONSCRIPTION. “*I have written unto you, young men.*”

In the French wars, certain young men, unhappily, found their names written down in the conscription, and were marched to the wars. Now, in a war from which none of us desire to escape, I hope there are young men here tonight whose names are written down—heavenly conscripts—who are summoned tonight, more fully than ever before in their lives, to go forth to the battle of the Lord of hosts.

I invite every young man here who is already converted to God, to dedicate himself to the Lord Jesus Christ tonight. It is not a matter that I can talk you into, nor indeed would I try it, but I would ask you to sit still a moment, and consider with yourselves this, “I am a believer in Christ. I have been lately to the sacramental table. I profess to have been chosen of God, to have been redeemed with precious blood, to have been separated from the rest of mankind, to be destined for an immortality most brilliant, am I living as becomes a redeemed one?”

Passing your hand over your brow thoughtfully, you will come to the conclusion, probably, “I am not. I am serving God, I trust, in a way, but not with all my heart, and soul, and strength, as I should. How about my time? Do I devote as much of that as I can to sacred work? How about my talent? Does that display itself most in the Literary Association or in the Sabbath school? Are my oratorical abilities most developed in the debating room or in preaching at the street corner? Am I giving to Christ the prime, and choice, and vigor of my life? If I am not, I ought to do so. I ought, I feel I ought, to be altogether Christ’s. Not that I should leave my business, but I must make my business Christ’s business, and so conduct it, and so to distribute of its results, as to prove that I am Christ’s steward, working in the world for Him, and not for self.”

Dear friends, if this night you shall not so much vow as pray that from this time there shall not be a drop of blood in your body, nor a hair on your head, nor a penny in your purse, nor a word on your tongue, nor a thought in your heart, but what shall be altogether the Lord’s, I shall be glad enough.

It will be well if you take a step further as conscripts. You “holy work-folk”—as they used to call those who dwelt around the cathedral at Durham, and were exempt from all service to the baron because they served the church—I want you now *to think of some particular walk and department in which as young men and young women you can devote yourselves wholly to Christ.*

Generalities in religion are always to be avoided, more especially generalities in service. If a man waits upon you for a situation, and you say to him, “What are you?” if he replies, “I am a painter, or a carpenter,” you can find him work perhaps, but if he says, “Oh! I can do anything,” you understand that he can do nothing. So it is with a sort of spiritual jobbers who professes to be able to do anything in the church, but who really do nothing.

I want my conscript brethren tonight to consider what they are henceforth going to do, and I beg them to consider it with such deliberation that when once they have come to a conclusion, that they will

not need to change it, for changes involve losses. What can you do? What is your calling? Ragged schools? Sunday schools? Street preaching? Tract distribution?

Here is a choice for you, which do you select? Waste no time, but say, “This is my calling, and by God’s grace I will give myself up to it, meaning to do it as well as any man ever did do it—if possible, better. Meaning if I take to the ragged school to be a thoroughly good teacher of those little Arabs, if I take to the Sunday school intending to make myself as efficient in the class as ever teacher could be.” It shall be no small blessing to the churches whom you represent if such a resolve be made, and if the conscripts be found tonight of such a sort.

I would inquire next, *whether there may not be young men here who can give themselves up to the Christian ministry*, which is a step farther. There are many men who ought to be employed in the Christian ministry who stand back. You need not expect that you will gain earthly wealth by it. If you have any notion of that sort, I pray you keep to your breaking of stones, that will pay you better.

If you have any idea that you will find the ministry an easy life, I entreat you to try the treadmill, for that would be an amusement compared with the life of the genuine Christian minister—in London, at least. But if you feel an intense earnestness to win souls, and if you have succeeded in speaking on other subjects and can get some attention, think whether you cannot devote yourself to the work.

Ah! young man, if I cast an ambitious thought into your mind I mean it only for my Master’s glory. If the Lord should say tonight, “Separate me Saul and Barnabas to this work,” if He should call out some fine, noble young fellow, who might have given himself up, perhaps, to the pursuits of commerce, but who now will dedicate himself to the service of the Christian ministry, it would be well. Take care you keep not back whom God would have.

Then, further, I have to say, *may there not be here some young man who will become a conscript for missionary service abroad?* “I write unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.” *You* are the men we want. Dr. Mullens and Mr. Robinson will be glad to hear of you.

I might tonight read a sort of proclamation such as I see sometimes issued by Her Majesty—“Wanted, young men.” We give no description about the inches, either in girth or the height, but we do give this description—“Wanted, young men who are strong, in whom the Word of God abideth, and who have overcome the wicked one.”

You who are weak had better stop at home in the Christian nursery a little while. You, in whom the Word of God does not as yet abide, had need to stay till you be taught what be the elements of the faith. You, who have not overcome the wicked one, had better flesh your maiden swords in home fields of conflict. You are not the men who are wanted.

But you who are strong enough to do and to dare for Jesus—you who are spiritually-minded enough to have overcome the monster of evil within yourselves—you are the men to fight Satan abroad, in his strongholds of heathendom, and Popery, and Mohammedanism. You, the choice men of the church, you are the men whom the Missionary Society requires. Think of it tonight before you go to sleep, and if the Lord incline you, come forward and say, “Here am I; send me.”

Once again. If this is impossible, and I suppose it may be to the most of us, then *may we not get up a conscription tonight of young men who will resolve to help at home those who have the courage to go abroad?* You have nobly done, as young men, in endeavoring to raise a large sum for the work. You are an example to every Christian denomination in that respect. But do not let the project fall short of its full completion, and when it is completed take care that you do it again, for it is good to be zealous *always* in a good thing.

We should forget the things that are behind, and press forward to that which is before. It will be a great thing when all Christian merchants do what some are doing, namely, give of their substance to the cause of Christ in due proportion.

It is a blessed thing for a young man to begin business with the rule that he will give the Lord at least his tenth. That habit of weekly storing for Christ, and then giving to Christ out of his own bag instead of

giving from your own purse is a most blessed one. Cultivate it, you young tradesmen who have just set up in business for yourselves, and you good wives, help your husbands to do it. You young men who are clerks, and have regular incomes, make that a regular part of your weekly business, and let some share of the consecrated spoil go to the Lord's foreign field.

At the same time, never let your subscriptions to this or that act as an exoneration from personal service. Give yourselves to Christ—your whole selves in the highest state of vigor, your whole selves constantly, intelligently, without admixture of sinister motives.

May God send His blessing, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—1 JOHN 2

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.