

here are days in the year, or devils in hell, or enemies upon the earth. He calls for courage, simplicity, boldness, emphasis, earnestness of tone. Are there not some in this audience who are imagining themselves to be as good as some who make a very loud profession; who are supposing that, therefore, they are tolerably good people upon the whole? Such reasoning is *mean*. The man who fails, as some good men have failed, is a better man than he who, resting in a merely negative condition, sits by the roadside to see how many pilgrims stumble as they pass by. That is a poor call in life. You may have the gratification of seeing a good many pilgrims, sore-footed, stumble on the road; but know ye that nothing good comes of your sitting there and mocking the poor stumbling ones. Others, again, of better mind, but some timidity, it may be, say, "Well, now, may I not be a disciple in a corner—a disciple in secret, following Jesus Christ afar off and letting nobody know anything about it?" I feel some difficulty in answering that, because so many elements ought to be considered in making up one's opinion about it. But speaking broadly, and leaving myself a large margin for exceptions, according to the temperament and training of men, I should say that such reasoning, based on such interrogation, is *false*. What possible reason is there for a man to shut himself up in a corner when he identifies himself with the Son of God? But he is so modest. Is it modesty—sweet, dear, beautiful modesty—or is it meanness? Is it self-distrust and anxiety not to bring reproach upon the good name—fear lest so much as one spot should be thrown upon the holy, beautiful, white linen of the great profession; or is it self-care and self-pride, and is it taking out a secret license to do a thousand little things which could not be done if an open, broad, public profession had been made? Sirs, what is it? A man who loves the Saviour, never speaking about his love! Why, it is a contradiction, not in terms, but in morals. A man born again, and nobody knowing about it! It is a social impossibility. A man of fierce temper becoming as quiet and gentle as a lamb, and nobody having the dimmest notion of the change! Impossible. Crucified with Christ? Then was Jesus Christ crucified in secret? Was He crucified in the night-time, when the world was asleep? If we be crucified with Him, how can the thing be done in a corner? Why, Christian friends, should we be in a corner, and the devil have the great floor to himself, and leave him all the great platforms and the open spaces of the universe? Christianity has written its name most legibly in the history of this country, at any rate. Concerning English civilisation and English progress, Christianity may well say, "This thing was not done in a corner." There are some persons who are hardly aware of what Christianity has done for this land. If you put the thing to them, they will inquire, "Well, now, what has Christianity done?" Then they will limit their survey to theological debates and to ecclesiastical attitudes, and looking at these will say, "What have these done for the country?" As if these things were Christianity! What has Christianity done for England? Take out of English civilisation to-day everything that Christianity has done for it, and you will soon put *England* into a corner, but not Christianity. Where do I see the works of Christianity? I will go with you to every hospital, every asylum, every school, every madhouse, every penitentiary; I will wait there till you count the stones Christianity has laid; and the result will be, that if you take out the stones, there will not be left one stone upon another of all the institutions that make our history the pride and the glory and the queen of the nations. I never go to a great benevolent institution without finding that Christianity laid the foundation-stone, and brought on the topstone, and keeps the whole machinery going. We will make plain work of this, if you please. I will say, while Festus is looking on and Agrippa is listening, "This thing was not done in a corner."

So I go in directions that are not distinctly theological. Christianity has a *practical* as well as a *controversial* side. Men and brethren, take out of your history, out of your families, out of your own individual lives, all that Christianity has done directly and indirectly, and you exhaust civilisation, you exhaust yourselves. Many a man who gets up to speak against Christianity would not have been the man he is if Christianity had not taken him out of the gutter, given him his first washing, cut his first crust for him, and put him on that road which meant honour and success and fame. My young friend, do not be led away by men who ask what Christianity has done. Search English history through and

through, and see for yourself. It always spoke a word for the weak; it always struck the oppressor in the face; it always spoke for justice, and righteousness, and honour, and fairplay, and goodness. Look at all the charities that beautify this land; analyse them, know more of their histories, and you will find at the base of them the Cross of Christ!

The grace that converted Saul is waiting to convert all men. "Was Saul converted?" Yes. "But perhaps no great effort was needed to convert him; he was always almost a Christian." No—as far as the east is from the west, "But he was not as I am." What are you? "Profane." He was a *blasphemer*. "I have been exceedingly unkind and cruel in my family." He was a persecutor, and when men were put to death he gave his voice against them, and when other men were looking on half-heartedly, and almost misgiving themselves, and were about to say, "Don't kill that one," Saul said, "Fools! let him die." He was converted. What are you? "Why self-righteous, self-confident, self-sufficient." He was a Pharisee of the Pharisees—the strictest sect of the Pharisees contained no austere man than he. There is hope for us all then. If a persecutor, a blasphemer, an injurious, self-righteous, self-sufficient man was converted by Jesus Christ's grace and love, who is there that needs despair and say there is no hope for him? The grace which sustained Paul, is waiting to sustain us. If Paul could live upon the grace of God, I imagine that our poor, thin lives may find in that grace enough to support them. He needed great meals from the table of the Lord, did Paul. He came home from doing the hard, rough work of the world—he could eat and drink abundantly. Yet, when he rose from the table, he had made no impression upon the bounteousness of the banquet. Write out a list of what Paul did, and then put on the other side what you have tried to do, and you will burn the paper—not for Paul's sake, but for your own.

Are any of us faint-hearted? Read the history of Paul. Do any of us doubt the sufficiency of Divine grace? Read the history of Paul. Are any of us wondering whether we shall be equal to the occasion? Hear the word: "My grace is sufficient for thee." Then, brethren, if our testimony is not offered in a corner, and if Christianity has written its name legibly upon the history of this country, and if we are continually made a spectacle of by those who are round about us as men who might be doing something, in their estimation, better than we are doing, and if these things are not done in a corner, Jesus Christ will take care that it is part of the business, yet to come, shall not be done in a corner either. He does not call men up from a great broad flaming theatre, and say, "Let me speak to you in a corner, somewhere where nobody can overhear us." When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all His holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory, and openly He shall say to the righteous, "Come ye, blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from before the foundations of the world." "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him will I be ashamed when I come in the glory of my Father and all the holy angels." "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father in heaven."

Then one word before I sit down. A man says, "I cannot speak." You can *act*! A man says, "I am a poor stammering speaker." Let your *light* so shine before men that they, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father which is in Heaven. "I cannot get upon the platform." Never mind the platform. Have in you true life, and without speaking a word you may be witnesses for Jesus Christ. Some can speak. Let them speak, and speak more and more loudly. Some can only *act*. Only *act*! That is preaching. There is an eloquence of behaviour; there is a logic of conduct; there is a high controversy—and men of simple, pure, lustrous character, win the victory.

If one should give me a dish of sand and tell me there were particles of iron in it, I might feel for them with the finger in vain; but let me take a magnet and sweep through it, and how would that draw to itself the most invisible particles by the mere power of attraction! The unthankful heart, like my finger in that sand, discovers no mercies; but let the thankful heart sweep through the day, and as the magnet finds the iron, so it will find, in every hour, some heavenly blessings—only the iron in God's sand is gold.—Holmes.