

there never was a time when there was so much preaching of sound doctrine—so much precious gospel truth proclaimed—as there is at the present time throughout this land of ours: but is the result, in the conversion of souls, at all proportionate? I believe the reaping is not what we expect from this abundant sowing. Many souls have been saved by “the precious blood of Christ,” but the great majority of those who have been listening from week to week to the fullest exhibitions of “the Gospel of Christ” are still unsaved, trusting to their own righteousness, in one form or another, notwithstanding God has held up every piece of it to loathing and ridicule as *filthy rags!*

Such a state of things ought deeply to affect our hearts and make us lie down in the dust before “the throne of grace” and cry “to the Lord of the harvest” to send His Holy Spirit to breathe upon us, and fill our souls with faith, life, love, strength and zeal. Ministers need much of the Holy Ghost’s breathing in their souls: God’s people all need more of the Divine Spirit as “the Spirit of grace and of supplications:” and the missionaries of the Cross, at home as well as abroad, are all in need of a fresh “anointing” from “the Holy One.” Ah, brethren, how much we all need the life-imparting power of the Holy Ghost!

And when men and women have sacrificed home, ease, prospects, and life itself, to save souls among the heathen nations, why not pray fervently for the power of the Holy Ghost to come upon the Lord’s labourers in this country, that they may become so full of zeal and devotedness, that through their instrumentality multitudes of sinners shall be won to Christ?

I fear that many of you are in a very luke-warm state with regard to the service of Jesus Christ and the conversion of sinners: and this condition has been got into, as I have already said, by allowing “the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches” to overrun your souls.

When you, who are now the mother of a family, were a young lady, you were much occupied in the Lord’s work, and you never tired of visiting and giving tracts, speaking to the little children about Jesus, and you were delighted to be working for

Jesus as opportunity offered. But you have married an unconverted husband—(a communicant, it is true, but still a world-loving man); your attention has become absorbed in household duties and family cares; your husband does not urge you to labour for Christ, but rather discourages your efforts, and says you have other duties now to attend to; and you lay the blame of your lukewarmness in Jesus’ service on your less favourable circumstances.

“My husband thought there was no use continuing to be so zealous, and I was constrained to give it up. He led me into society, and I could not help myself. He brings people to the house—his friends, his companions, his ungodly relatives—and, of course, I must entertain them.—My time is so taken up that I have hardly a moment to get a few verses of the Bible or two sentences of prayer in a day for myself; and as for attending to the souls of others, it is entirely beyond my power.”

But what does God say to all that? “*Thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.*”—Why blame God for your fall when it was *thine iniquity* in marrying an unconverted man that has caused it? It is not God’s fault, but thine. “*Thou has fallen by thine iniquity; but in Me,*” says the very God against whom you have sinned, “is thine help.”

If there is a poor backslider who is now listening to me, and who feels very uncomfortable and unhappy,—God does not give thee up, dear brother or sister; but He says, lovingly, “*In Me is thine help.*”—That Jesus who was betrayed by one and forsaken by all His disciples, shewed a special love to poor backsliding Peter, who denied him with oaths and curses. He looked upon him, and that look of love melted the cursing one, and “he went out and wept bitterly.” And after His resurrection, He sent a special message of love to Peter, and he spoke to him in such a way as deeply to humble him and attach him to His person for evermore:—“*Lovest thou me?*”

Jesus comes to thee, dear backsliding one, and He speaks, and looking on thee with unutterable love, He asks, “*Lovest thou me.*” Have you altogether forgotten Jesus? Surely not. He loved thee, and