

So far as they go it is well. Their lamps are burning; but, on scrutiny, it will be found that they *come short*, and sin by reason of defect: they have no oil in their vessels. They have no individuality of Christian character, and only form part of the general Church membership. Members, but not persons, they appear only as part of the army in aggregated array; and while not unwilling to go with the crowd to battle for God they yet sadly lack individual prowess, and never, or seldom engage in single combat, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. From such persons the Sabbath-school, or prayer-meeting, or district visitation, gets little or no aid. Their standard of Christian life does not contemplate *personal* Christian effort for the salvation of sinners.

These are grievous defects in christian character, and greatly mar the living beauty of the Church of Christ. When they prevail to any extent, as they too often do, they make the Church lethargic; they contract its spiritual life into a narrow circle, instead of expanding it to the circumference of the world. How different from this is the character of the Apostles! or of the converted at Pentecost! or of the Reformers whose names are written among the faithful! Whitfield and Wesley, Wilberforce, Clarkson and Howard, were men of a different stamp from this. Their inward life was powerful enough to manifest itself outwardly. They nobly displayed the virtues of the new nature which God by His Spirit had given them, by a life of *personal* christian activity. They were not absorbed in the general aggregate of the christian community, but stood out in bold relief as *features* in the christian Church. Such also are our devoted Sabbath-school teachers, and other zealous labourers in the Lord's vineyard in these days. Why should it be otherwise? If you, my reader, have knowledge of divine things, can you give any reason why you should not make it known to others? If you have saving faith, is there any reason why you should not strive to make others partakers of the like precious gift? If you have the graces of holiness are you faithful to the trust committed to you if you do not urge them upon the acceptance of others? If, in short, your own soul is saved, how can you without sin be personally and individually indifferent to the salvation of others? Say, for example, that you have unconverted children, will you be guiltless of their blood if you do not make *personal* efforts for their salvation? If you have unconverted friends, are you not unfaithful to them as well as to God if you do not press upon them the interests of their souls? Every one whom your voice or example can reach has claims upon you. You are debtor to the Jew and the Greek, to the barbarian, the bond and free, the young and old. Whatever of christian life you possess, it is given you that you may impart it also to others. Your light is to shine, that others, seeing it, may be attracted to the crucified Saviour.

Some may be disposed to say, "Oh! you wish us all to become ministers of the Gospel: that which you describe is the work of the pastor. We appoint and pay him for that purpose. He has been specially educated and trained for that particular work, and it is no part of our duty to attend to those matters of which you speak."