

Encourage Your Minister!

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon teaches that God lovingly encourages and sustains His ministers and believers through the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and that Christians are called to encourage one another to remain steadfast and joyful in their faith.

Scripture: Deuteronomy 1:38, John 15:9, Hebrews 4:15, Psalm 103:13, Isaiah 40:28, John 14:16, 1 Corinthians 12:27, Psalm 34:18

Topics: "Encouragement", "Christian Fellowship"

Description

In this devotional sermon, C.H. Spurgeon explores the loving care and encouragement God provides to His ministers and all believers. Using the example of Joshua and Moses, Spurgeon highlights the roles of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in sustaining faith and courage. He also emphasizes the vital role of Christian fellowship in encouraging one another to remain joyful and steadfast amid trials. This message offers practical guidance and spiritual comfort for those serving God and the church.

Transcript

"Encourage him." Deuteronomy 1:38.

MOSES could not conduct the people into the promised land. Nor can the Law bring any man to Heaven. The Law may lead a man out of the Egypt of his sin, and it may bring him into the wilderness of conviction. There it may provide him with food and nourish him with some little comfort, but the Law can never give rest to the spirit into Canaan. Moses can never conduct the Israel of God. This was left for Joshua, whose name, you know, is but another form of the name, Jesus. As Joshua, alone, could drive the Canaanites out of the land, and give a portion to all the seed of Israel, so Jesus, alone, can give rest unto the heirs of Heaven.

Moses cannot do it. He may see the promised land, but he can never enter it. Legal convictions may be accompanied with some desires towards Divine things, yes, and some apprehensions of their sweetness, too. But the ultimate enjoyment, the rest which remains for the people of God, can only come to the Believer through Jesus Christ. See here the weakness of the Law. It is not able to bring us to our rest. "By the works of the Law shall no flesh living be justified." Fly then, to Jesus. For He is the Captain of our salvation, by whom our foes shall be subdued and our everlasting inheritance secured.

It is not, however, my purpose to explore the mystic truth which is couched beneath. I confine myself this morning to the moral on the surface. Joshua was a young man in comparison with Moses. He was about to undertake the onerous task of commanding a great people. He had, moreover, the difficult enterprise of leading them into the promised land, and chasing out the nations which possessed it. The Lord commanded Moses, therefore, to encourage Joshua, that in the prospect of great labor he might not be dismayed. This teaches us, I think, that GOD, EVEN OUR GOD, IS GRACIOUSLY CONSIDERATE OF HIS SERVANTS and would have them well fitted for high enterprise with good courage.

He does not send them as a tyrant would send a soldier upon an errand for which he is not capable. Nor does He afterward withhold His succor, forgetful of the straits to which they may be reduced. But He is very careful of His servants and will not let one of them perish. He counts them as the apple of His eye, keeps them at all hours and defends them from all dangers. Why is this? The Lord our God has strong reasons for being thus considerate of His servants. Are they not His children? Is He not their Father? Does He not love them? If all human loves could be put together, they would scarcely make a drop in a bucket compared with the oceans of love which God the Father has towards His children.

All mothers' loves, all the loves of friends, of brothers and of sisters, of husbands and of wives—if all piled together, would be a molehill, compared with the towering mountain of the Divine love which God the Father has towards His chosen. We are—and there is no other figure which sets forth the whole length and breadth of that love—we are as dear to God as His Only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ—

"So dear, so very dear, to God I cannot dearer be; The love wherewith He loves His Son, such is His love for me."

"As the Father has loved Me, even so have I loved you," said Christ.

Now, none of us would send a child of ours upon a difficult enterprise without being anxious for his welfare. We would not put him upon a trial beyond his strength, without, at the same time, guaranteeing to stand at his side and make his strength equal to his day. Moreover, the Father Himself is concerned as to His honor in all that they do. If any servant of God shall fall, then God's name is despised. The daughters of Philistia would rejoice and the inhabitants of Ekron triumph. "Aha! Aha," they would say, "so we would have it! God's servants are put to the rout. Jehovah was not able to give them victory. They trusted in Him and they were confounded. They rested upon Him and they fell to the ground."

Think not that the heavenly Father will ever permit this to be said. Will He ever send forth His servants to let them fall by the hand of the Adversary? He is too jealous of His great name. His honor is too much concerned ever to permit this. You feeble ones, to whom God has given to do or to suffer for His name's sake, rest assured that He has His eyes upon you now. He cannot leave you, unless He can cease to be "God over all, blessed forever." He cannot forget you, for His heart of love can never change, and the relationship which He has towards you can never be dissolved.

Beloved, God the Father cares for His children because they are His children and because His honor is concerned in them. How sweet the thought—if I fail, God fails—if I succeed, being God's sent servant, God has all the honor. Could I lean on Him and fail, then to that degree God's purpose is not fulfilled, God's promise is not kept, God's Nature is not glorified. Oh, when you can fall back on the name, the renown, the very Character of God. When you can say, as Moses said upon the Mount, "What will You do for Your great name?" When you can plead as Luther did, "Lord, this is no quarrel of mine, it is Yours! You know You did put me to speak against Your foes and now if You leave me, where is Your Truth?" When

you can plead with God in this way, surely He will rescue you. You cannot fail when your cause is God's cause.

Nor is the Divine Father, alone, concerned. Is not the Son of God concerned in the welfare of His Brothers and Sisters? He has bought them with His blood. That which a man dearly purchases he will highly prize. If he did not, it would be as much as to confess that he had paid too costly a sum for what he bought. You are bought with a price. A price tremendous enough. The King of Glory gave His heart's blood to redeem poor worms like ourselves, but He will never confess that He gave too much for us. In love He will esteem the purchase equal to the price He paid. The love and the price are both infinite.

As He looks upon any one of His people, He says, "There is My purchase," and He values you not so much for what you are intrinsically worth as because He sees the drops of His own blood upon you. "There," says He, "is the travail of My soul. There is the Divine satisfaction My Father gives Me for the sufferings I endured." Do you think that when He thus values His servants He will leave them without His help? It cannot be. Moreover our blessed Lord has passed through precisely those very troubles to which He calls His people. "We have not a High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." "He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

The thorn in your foot pierced His heel before it touched you. The sorrow which sends the tears gushing from your eyes have first of all swollen His heart—

"In every pang that rends the heart, The Man of Sorrows had a part." "In all their affliction He was afflicted and the angel of His Presence saved them." If you have been widowed, you feel a compassion for those who are brought into the like state, to which others who have never passed through it are strangers. Were you ever a fatherless child? I know you will love orphans. Now our Lord and Master was forsaken of His Father. "My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?" He says. He has gone all the length of human grief, and therefore it is not possible that He should be inconsiderate concerning any one of His Beloved.

Do you not know, to crown this point, that every Believer is actually a part of Christ? We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. Were the poor servants of God at Damascus persecuted? Christ suffered. "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?" To this very day our Head is in sympathy with us—

"He feels at His heart all our sighs and our groans, For we are most near Him, His flesh and His bones." Do you think the Head will not care for the members? Shall I let my finger fester uncared for, until it needs to be cut away from mortification? Not while my brain can think, or my tongue can speak. And Jesus, so long as He can see His people and His tongue can make any intercession, will not let even the meanest member of His Mystical Body suffer for lack of supplies. Even as God cared for Joshua, so does Christ care for you this morning, beloved Member of the Body of Christ.

Is not this sufficient argument—the Father's interest and the Son's? If not, remember the most blessed Spirit. He dwells in all the people of God. How can He dwell in them and not be mindful of them? We forget the sick and the poor because they live in a back street and we do not pass there. But you could not have poverty pining in your own house, methinks, without readiness to relieve it. You would not have sickness lying in your own chamber without showing sympathy. Now our body is the house of the Holy Spirit. He dwells in the body as in a temple, and do you think that He will see His people languish for lack of Divine Grace while He is present with them?

Can it be that He will walk in them and see them famish, perceive their lack and destitution and not supply their wants? Dream not so harshly of the tender and blessed Spirit, whose name is "the Comforter." Be it never forgotten that it is His office to supply the wants of God's people. It is the Holy Spirit's business to see after the saints. "If I go away," said Jesus, "I will send the Comforter unto you." So long as they had the personal Presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, the disciples could want for nothing. As long as He had a crust of bread, they had half.

If He had a place where to lay His head at any time given Him by charity, they could rest with Him. "Where I am there shall also My servant be," was Christ's loving rule. When He went away, then they were left like orphans until the Spirit of God came as another Comforter, "who should abide with them forever." Do you think that the Holy Spirit will neglect His office? O you weak and trembling Believer, do you imagine that God the Holy Spirit will be negligent of His sacred trust? Can you suppose that He has undertaken what He cannot, or will not, perform?

Now if it is His business to work in you, to strengthen you, to illuminate you, to comfort you, do you suppose He has forgotten you? Why say you, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, "My way is hid from the Lord and my judgment is passed over by my God? Have you not known, have you not heard, that the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth, faints not, neither is weary." You are near to Him. Now His eyes are upon you. Like as a father pities His children, even so the Lord pities you. And like as a mother tenderly fondles her suckling, even so the Lord loves you. The heart of His love is yearning over you, pitying your sufferings, ready to help you in your distresses. Trust in Him and He will surely encourage you, and with your fears exchanged for faith, you shall triumph over every foe, and realize every promise.

Observe well how far the tender consideration of God for His servants extends! He not only considers their outward state and the absolute interests of their condition, but He remembers their spirits and loves to see them of good courage. Some people think it a small thing for a Believer to be full of doubts and fears, but I do not think so. I perceive from this text that my Master would not have you entangled with fears. He would have you without carefulness, without doubt, without sorrow. He says, "Encourage him"—as much as if He had told Moses that it was an important thing for His servant Joshua to have his courage duly sustained.

My Master does not think so lightly of your unbelief as you do. You are desponding this morning. Well, this is a grievous matter. My Lord loves not to see your countenance sad. It was a law, you remember, of Ahasuerus, that no one should come into the king's court dressed in mourning. But it is not the law of my Master, for you may come mourning as you are. But still He would have you put off those rags and that sackcloth, for surely there is much reason to rejoice. Rejoice in the Lord always! Be of good courage! Wait on the Lord, for He will renew your strength.

The Christian man must have his spirits sustained in order that he may glorify the Lord. If his spirits are kept up, he will be able to endure trial upon trial. He comes to the fire, but it will never kindle upon him when his faith is firm. He walks through the rivers, but the floods never overflow him while he can look to his God. The sweetest songs Believers ever have are those they sing at night. God's people are like the nightingale—their music is best heard when the sun is gone down. Oh, how much depends on your spirit being supported! Let the spirit sink and a little trouble lays like a dead weight upon the soul.

On the other hand, if faith is firm, tons of trouble become light as a feather. Unless the spirits of God's people are sustained, they will dishonor their God. They will think harsh things of Him, and perhaps they

will speak harsh things against Him, and so the holy name of God will not be had in good repute. What a bad example it is! This disease of doubt and discouragement is an epidemic that soon spreads among the Lord's flock. One downcast Believer makes twenty sad. This phobia is a contagious species of madness as soon as men are bitten with it. If there is one doubt of the promise of God, straightway a whole congregation will begin to foam with like doubts.

When Paul was in the ship and took bread and ate it in the midst of the storm, then all the crew were encouraged. But if Paul had been downcast, then, from the captain to the smallest cabin boy, there would have been great distress. Oh, be of good courage for the sake of your Brothers and sisters in Christ. When you would say a hard or bitter thing, keep it back as David did, lest he should offend against the generation of God's people. "When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me." Unless your courage is kept up, Satan will be too much for you.

My experience teaches me that the cowardly old Tempter always comes upon us when we are in our worst state. If he would but meet me sometimes, I could drive him as chaff before the wind. But he will always meet me when an attack of bile, or some domestic trouble, or ill tidings in the camp hinder my cheerfulness. Then, sure enough, in some dark, narrow lane stands the arch-enemy, with his sword drawn and he swears he will spill the blood of my soul. But just let the heart be right, let the spirit be joyful in God my Savior and the joy of the Lord shall be your strength and no fiend of Hell shall make headway against you.

Besides, labor is light to a man of cheerful spirit! You can work all day and almost all night when the spirits are right—but once let the heart sink and your soul lack encouragement—and then you grow weary and cry, "Would God it were evening and the shadows were drawn out, that we might rest from our toil." Success waits upon cheerfulness. The man who toils rejoicing in his God, believing with all his heart, has success guaranteed. He who sows in hope shall reap in joy. He who trusts in the Lord and laughs at impossibilities, shall soon find that there are no impossibilities to laugh at! To the man who is confident in Jehovah, all things are possible. It is thus of paramount importance that the spirits of the Christian should be constantly kept up. God so considers it. Thus says the Lord, "Encourage him." Make the good man's heart glad. Make the Believer sing with joy. "Encourage him."

II. Secondly, we remark that GOD USES HIS OWN PEOPLE TO ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER. He did not say to the angel, "Gabriel, there is My servant Joshua, about to take the people into Canaan—fly down and encourage him." God never works needless miracles. If His purposes can be accomplished by ordinary means, He will certainly accomplish them without using miraculous energy. Gabriel would have not been half so well fitted for the work as Moses. A Brother's sympathy is more precious than an angel's embassy.

The angel, swift of wing, had better known the Master's bidding than the people's temper. An angel had never experienced the hardness of the road, nor seen the fiery serpents. Nor had he led the stiff-necked multitude in the wilderness. Moses felt it all. For my part, I am glad to think that God does His work by man. It gives us such a bond of brotherhood. We must be dependent on one another. We need condolence in our grief. And we invite companionship in our joys. So, being mutually dependent on one another's countenance and counsel, we are fused more completely into one mass and made more thoroughly one family.

To whom, then, should this work of encouraging the people be committed? Surely the elders should do it. Those of riper years than their fellows. I know some aged persons, who whenever they see a young Christian, make it a point to inform him of all the difficulties and perils of the road. Like Mistrust and Timorous, they have always a doleful story to tell about the way to Heaven. This was the old style of Christian in many of our Churches.

For my part, I think that the aged Christian is better employed in looking after the lambs of the flock and trying to carry them in their bosoms. Talk cheerily to the young and anxious enquirer. Lovingly try to remove stumbling blocks out of his way. When you find a spark of Divine Grace in the heart, kneel down and blow it into a flame. Leave the young Believer to discover the roughness of the road by degrees. Tell him of the strength which dwells in God, of the sureness of the promise, of the delightfulness of fellowship with Jesus, of the charms of communion with Christ. Entice the young Christian on as good mothers teach their children to walk by holding out here a sweet, and there some tempting thing, that they may put their trembling feet one after the other and at last know how to walk.

I would that every Church had many of these aged Brothers and Sisters, fathers and mothers in Israel, who take this for their motto whenever they see a young Christian,—“Encourage him.” I know of nothing more inspiriting than to hear the experience of a gray-headed saint. I have found much spiritual comfort in sitting at the feet of my venerable grandfather, more than eighty years of age. The last time I saw him, I said to him, “I suppose you have had many trials, Grandfather?” He said, “I have not had too many and the most of what I have had, I have made myself.”

“And do you think that God will ever leave His people?” I asked. “No,” he said, “for if He would leave one of them, He would have left me. But He is a faithful God, and I have proved Him, for I have known His love more than seventy years, and yet He has been faithful to me. Not one good thing has failed of all that the Lord God has promised.” Why, it comes home to the hearts of us young people and makes us feel that we have found something which it is safe to depend upon when those who have gone through the valley can bear such a word of testimony as this!

Do not let a word of peevishness come out of your mouth, my aged Brothers and Sisters. Let no syllable of complaining ever escape you. Let your mouth be filled with your Lord's praises and with His honor all the day and so you will encourage others.

Not the aged only, but the wise in the family should be comforters. All Believers are not equal in knowledge. Some are quick of apprehension in the ways of the Lord. They rapidly acquire doctrinal knowledge. And experimental knowledge comes to them with a brighter light than it does to duller intellects. There are in all our Churches those who never will be doctors of divinity. Though they know right well that they are sinners and that Christ saves them, and so their acceptance is secured, if you talk to them about the mysteries of the Gospel they will soon get into depths where they lose their footing, for they have not learned to swim.

Perhaps they will never be able to understand, or at least to appreciate, the doctrine of election. Now, wiser men should not keep their knowledge to themselves. Above all they should not use it to criticize. I could tell of men who carry knowledge like a sword. They listen to the sermon and when they meet some friend who gained a little good from it, they will cavil. They say, “Oh, the first or the third point I did not think quite sound.” They will be sure to have something to say that will knock the bread from the mouths of those who are willing to eat. They are more knowing than wise.

Moses was wise in doctrinal knowledge. With what consummate wisdom he addressed Joshua. "Be strong and of a good courage—for you must go with this people unto the land which the Lord has sworn unto their fathers to give them. And you shall cause them to inherit it. And the Lord, He it is that does go before you. He will be with you. He will not fail you, neither forsake you—fear not, neither be dismayed." Oh you that have searched the Scriptures through and know its promises—you that have been among these beds of spices and whose garments smell of frankincense, be sure to quote the promises of God to trembling hearts, and especially to those engaged in arduous labor for the Master.

Comfort them. Repeat the doctrine of God's faithfulness. Say to them, "He will be with you. He will not fail you, neither forsake you—fear not, neither be dismayed." Oh that the wise-hearted in the Lord's family would be thus employed at all times!

Nor can I doubt that the happier sort of Christians ought always to be engaged in comforting the mournful and sorrowing. You know whom I mean. Their eyes always sparkle! Wherever they go they carry lamps bright with animation. Sunshine gleams in their faces. They live in the light of God's Countenance. We have some of a more somber countenance, good people, too. They always see the black side of affairs. Now, you who are happy, try to encourage those that are downcast. Oh, dear Friends, I am afraid we neglect this duty, many of us.

You will say, "How can I perform it?" Speak a kind word always. Find out those who are weary and give them a word of consolation. Even a smile from your face may do them good. Do not avoid them because they are melancholy, but rather pursue them. Hunt them out. Do not let them be quiet in their nest of thorns. If the Lord has given it to you to soar aloft into the clear blue ether, try to carry your friend with you and lift him above the clouds. Suppose your house is on a hill and he lives down in the marsh, ask him to climb the hill and stay with you.

Perhaps you have the keys of the promise. Use the key and open the door for him. It is just possible that you may live in the upper story where you can see further and behold more of the blessed land. Ask him to come up from his cellar and walk on the roof of your palace and scan the prospect through your telescope, "Encourage him."

Let the Brother of low degree be likewise encouraged by these who are rich among you. You may frequently breathe comfort into a desponding spirit by seasonable help. The destitute will think himself rich upon your leavings. Perhaps your poor Brother thinks you look down upon him because you are better off than he is—try to prevent his thinking so. If God has blessed you with a good position in Providence, be ready to encourage those that are poor and needy. Oh, if all these things I have been counseling should be put in practice, what a vast amount of happiness, by God's Grace, would be created! Our Churches would be more like families.

I do not like people to come into a place of worship like so many icebergs floating out to sea and wishing to avoid each other. I like to see all distinctions broken down, except the distinctions of superior Grace and those only observed because one Brother has cast in more to the common treasury of the Church of spiritual riches than another can do. I like those who fear the Lord to speak often to one another. We are getting into a bad state when they who fear the Lord speak often against one another. I believe that this one practice of encouraging each other might restore to the Churches that holy fraternity and blessed love which once distinguished them.

I am sure this would enrich you all. It is by commerce that countries grow rich. France sends her exports to England and England repays her with abundance. The labor of the humble and the skill and enterprise of the lofty contribute to the great commonwealth. An exchange of thought tends to help. A stream of holy wealth would flow through our Churches if each one would seek the other out with this aim of holy encouragement. How many a good thing is strangled in birth! How many a good enterprise is dashed to pieces on the shoals before it gets out to sea.

Encourage that loving-hearted Sister who thinks that she might at least take an infant-class in the Sunday school. Encourage that aged woman who has but little talent, but who yet might go from house to house to attend the sick. Encourage that poor struggling tradesman who would do something for the Master if he could by any means be delivered from the constant cares which harass him. Encourage every soul that has a spark of Divine Grace in it. Labor to help others and you shall find a most gracious return in your own soul. God encourages you. Christ encourages you as He points to the Heaven He has won for you. The Spirit encourages you as He works in you to will and to do of His own will and pleasure. Do you then act the Divine part and go forth to encourage others, according to the motto, "Encourage him."

III. I advance to THE OBJECT that is uppermost in my mind. It struck me some six weeks ago that I might say a few things to my Brother's congregation which he might not like to say himself. And that as his was a new enterprise—and I am sure all our hearts anxiously desire it the very richest success—I might possibly take the liberty of saying a few things to you, the congregation clustering around this pulpit, which may be useful in the future of the Church. I shall speak of him as a stranger, as I should speak of any other young man anxious to build up a Church and glorify his Master.

I believe there is a special occasion for the exercise of this duty of encouraging one another in the case of the minister and Church in this place. It is a fresh enterprise surrounded with peculiar difficulties and demanding special labor. "Why," you say, "should a minister need encouraging? We have plenty of troubles all the week long with our losses here and crosses there. We want encouragements, but surely ministers do not." Ah, if you want to have a refutation of that idea you had better come into this pulpit and occupy it a little time. If you would like to exchange, I would truly say that so far as the pleasure of my voice is concerned, apart from the spiritual joy my Lord gives me, I would change places with a crossing-sweeper, or a man who breaks stones on the road.

Let a man carry out the office of a Christian minister aright and he will never have any rest. "God help," says Richard Baxter, "the man who thinks the minister has an easy life." Why, he works not only all day, but in his sleep you will find him weeping for his congregation—starting in his sleep with his eyes filled with tears, as if he had the weight of his congregation's sins resting on his heart and could not bear the load. I would not be that man in the ministry who does not feel himself so fearfully responsible that if he could escape from the ministry by going with Jonah into the depths of the sea, he would cheerfully do it.

For if a minister is what he should be, there is such a weight of solemn concern, such a sound of trembling in his ears that he would choose any profession or any work, however arduous, sooner than the preacher's post. "If the watchman warn them not they shall perish, but their blood will I require at the watchman's hands." To sit down and ponder over the question—"Am I free of his blood?" is terrible. I have sometimes thought I must have a day or two of rest, but I frankly confess that rest is very little rest to me, for I think I hear the cries of perishing souls, the wailings of spirits going down to Hell, who chide me thus—"Preacher, can you rest? Minister, can you be silent? Ambassador of Jesus, can you cast aside the robes of your office? Up! And to your work again."

As Mr. Whitfield said, when he thought of the ministry and what was concerned in it, he wanted to stand on the top of every hackney coach in London and preach the Gospel as he rode along. It is a work so solemn that if you do not encourage your minister, your minister will probably sink down in despair. Remember that the man, himself, needs encouragement, because he is weak. Who is sufficient for these things? To serve in any part of the spiritual army is dangerous, but to be a captain is to be doubly exposed. The most of the shots are aimed at the officers. If Satan can find a flaw in our character, then it will be, "Publish it, publish it, publish it!" If he can lend us to keep back a doctrine or go amiss in practice, or wander in experience, he is glad enough.

How delighted is the devil to break the vessels of mercy. Pray for the poor minister, whom you expose to perish, if you do not preserve him by supplication. If there were a ship at sea stranded and broken on the rocks and someone volunteered to carry a rope to the sinking crew, you, standing on the shore, could do no more—methinks you could not do less—than cry, "O God! Help him to bear the rope to that wrecked ship." Pray for the minister and encourage him, for there are plenty to discourage him. There are always carping spirits abroad who will remind him of any fault. He will be afflicted by those cowards who will not dare to sign their names to a letter, but send it to him anonymously.

And then there is the devil, who, the moment the man has got out of the pulpit, will say, "There is a poor sermon! You will never dare to preach it again." After he has been preaching for weeks there will come a suggestion, "You are not in your proper sphere of labor." There are all sorts of discouragements to be met with. Professing Christians will backslide. Those who do remain will often be inconsistent, and he will be sighing and crying in his closet, while you, perhaps, are thanking God that your souls have been fed under him.

Encourage your minister, I pray you, wherever you attend—encourage him for your own sakes. A discouraged minister is a serious burden upon the congregation. When the fountain gets out of order, you cannot expect to find water at any of the taps. And if the minister is not right, it is something like a steam engine in a great factory—everybody's loom is idle when the power is out of order.

See that he is resting upon God and receiving His Divine power and you will all know, each Sunday, the benefit of it. This is the least thing you can do. There are many other things which may cause you expense, effort, time—but to encourage your minister is so easy, so simple a matter, that I may well press upon you to do it.

Perhaps you will say, "Well, if it is so simple and easy, tell us, who are expecting to settle down in this place, how we can encourage the minister here." Well, you can do it in several ways. You can encourage him by very constant attendance. By the way, looking round here, I think I know some of the persons present who belong to neighboring Chapels.

What business have you here? Why did you leave your own minister? If I see one come into my place from the congregation of another Brother in the ministry, I would like just to give him a flea in his ear such as he may never forget. What business have you to leave your minister? If everyone were to do so, how discouraged the poor man would be! Just because somebody happens to come into this neighborhood, you will be leaving your seats?

A compliment to me, you say. I thank you for it. But now, in return, let me give you this advice—these who are going from place to place are of no use to anybody. But those are the truly useful men who, when the servants of God are in their places, keep to theirs and let everybody see that whoever discourages the

minister, they will not, for they appreciate his ministry.

Again, let me say by often being present at the Prayer Meetings you can encourage the minister. You can always tell how a Church is getting on by the Prayer Meetings. I will almost prophecy the kind of sermon on the Sunday from the sort of Prayer Meeting on the Monday. If many come up to the House of God and they are earnest, the pastor will get a blessing from on High. It cannot but be, for God opens the windows of Heaven to believing prayer. Never fail to plead for your pastor in your closet.

Oh, dear Friends, when you mention a father's name and a child's name, let the minister's name come forth, too. Give him a large share in your heart, and both in private and public prayer, encourage him. Encourage him, again, by letting him know if you have received any good. Oh, if there should come into this House of Prayer a sinner needing a Savior and not knowing the way, and my Brother's words shall point him to the Savior's Cross. If he should be the means of showing you what faith means and of leading you to believe in Him who has reconciled us unto God by His death, do not conceal the good news—come and tell it!

The best way to do it will be by proposing to be united with the Church in fellowship. Our Church Meeting nights, when we receive fresh candidates into fellowship, are the harvest nights in the Christian ministry. Then we see how God's cause prospers in our hand. But if many in the Church who have been converted fail to let the minister know it and hold back, how is the poor man to be comforted?

I know I address some here—God's people—who have never made a profession. Suppose all God's people did as you do? And they have as much right to do it as you have. How, I ask you, would the ministry itself be maintained? How could ministers' hearts be kept from breaking, if they never knew of any conversions? Make haste! Do not put it off! Delay not to keep God's commandments, but come forward at once and be baptized, and acknowledge what God has done for your soul.

Again, you can all encourage the minister by the consistency of your lives. I do not know when I ever felt more gratified than on one occasion, when sitting at a Church Meeting, having to report the death of a young Brother who was in the service of an eminent employer, a little note came from him to say, "My servant, Edward_, is dead. I send you word at once, that you may send me another young man. For if your members are such as he was, I never wish to have better servants around me."

I read the letter at the Church Meeting and another was soon found. It is a cheering thing for the Christian minister to know that his converts are held in repute. Of another member of my Church an ungodly employer said, "I do not think anything of him. He is of no use to anybody. He cannot tell a lie!" Oh, that is the honor which a Christian minister longs and pants after, to have consistent followers, to have those listening to him who will adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.

Gather round my Brother, all of you, and encourage him, by earnestly aiding and abetting him in every good word and work. There is a neighborhood here, I am told, requiring evangelization. Here we have, side-by-side, poverty and riches. Shall not yonder wretched potteries be the better for the building of this House of Prayer? I am sure my friend, Sir Morton Peto, would think he had wasted his money if it were merely for the gathering of a congregation and not for improving the neighborhood.

We build our Houses of Prayer always with a view to the people round about. We believe it is like opening a well in the wilderness, or an oasis in the desert, or placing a drinking fountain where thirsty souls may drink. It is introducing a new physician into the neighborhood to attend to the diseases and sickness of

souls. Oh, how my heart yearns after the success of this house—not only because the minister is my blood brother, and also my Brother in Christ, but because he is a valiant soldier of Christ.

To preach the Truth of God he has not hesitated to make himself a multitude of enemies elsewhere and will not be ashamed to do the same here, if the same case should occur. I honor him because he has honored my Master. And I expect that you will get from him the Truth, the whole Truth and nothing but the Truth—so far as God has taught it to him. I know he is ready to lay down his own neck for the conversion of souls. I know his earnestness to do anything for the conversion of sinners.

And if you do not encourage him, you will bring down upon your head every curse of those who reject the Prophet of God. But encouraging him, you will see a Church flocking around him which shall last long after our time. It shall be a perennial stream of benediction to ages yet unborn, until Christ Himself shall come and consummate the kingdom, by reigning Himself in Person among the sons of men. May the Lord grant His blessing!

Some of you cannot encourage the minister. You can encourage no one, for you are not born again yourselves. Oh, if you have not passed from death unto life, the first thing that can encourage him is to begin to think about your own state. Where are you? What are you? Out of God, out of Christ, out of safety? You will be out of life and out of Heaven—shut in the pit forever, except you repent. Oh, you will encourage the preacher, if the Lord leads you, to consider your ways and turn from sin and from self-righteousness, too. Look to the Almighty Savior, able to save unto the uttermost all among you who shall trust Him. May the Lord add a blessing, for Christ's sake. Amen.

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