

# **“AS THE SMALL RAIN”**

by

Bob Jones. Jr., Litt.D., L.H.D., LL.D.

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## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

### **“BE NOT AFRAID, BUT SPEAK”**

(Acts 18:9)

#### **FAITH AT WORK**

THERE was a sick man who had some fine friends who did more than sympathize with him in his sickness and tell him that they felt sorry for him. They carried him to Jesus to be healed.

When they came to the house in which the Lord was teaching, the crowd was so large that they could not get in, but, not to be discouraged, they climbed on the flat, Oriental roof, lifted several tiles and with ropes lowered the sick man on his bed until he lay at Jesus' feet.

The man was healed by the power of the Son of God, but his friends had a share in the healing. Except for their efforts he would never have been brought to the Saviour. Those men had evidently seen the miracles which He had performed on other sick bodies. They had faith that Christ could heal their friend. They gave evidence of that faith when they brought him to Christ; they gave evidence not only of faith but also of character and determination when they failed to let the crowd deter them in their efforts and defeat them in their purpose.

There are many Christian people who know the power of Christ today. They have felt the manifestation of His power in their own lives in the forgiveness of their sins. They have seen the demonstration of His power in the lives of others. They have friends who need the miraculous touch of Christ, who are living in sin, who are victims of habits which they cannot conquer and of evil which cripples them spiritually and morally; yet they never make an effort to bring these friends to Christ.

Every Christian has a responsibility to make Christ known to men, yet all too many Christians are so busy about business or pleasure or the pursuit of selfish ambition that they neglect to speak for the Lord or to bring those needy ones into His presence.

Others set out to lead men to Christ but become discouraged before the task is done. Christians today need a determination that tears holes in roofs to bring poor, sin-sick men and women to the feet of the Saviour.

Christian soul, the times are calling,  
Altars falling,  
Men's hearts failing them for fear;  
Unto thee their eyes are turning, Spirits yearning,  
For the word of faith and cheer.

Christian soul, great deeds await thee,  
Consecrate thee  
To the task that nearest lies;  
Question not that God will use thee,  
Nor refuse thee  
Blessing on thy sacrifice.

Walk thou not as one benighted,  
Nor affrighted,  
Where the foolish see no God;  
Thine to glimpse the fiery column,  
Thine the solemn Comfort of His staff and rod!

— Louise Belts Edwards

## NO UNION RULES

CHRIST said to Peter, “**Feed my sheep**” (John 21:16).

That was a strange command to give Peter. Peter was not a shepherd. He was a fisherman. He was to follow Jesus and be a soul-winner, an evangelist. Christ's call to Peter had been to follow Him and be a fisher of men (Matthew 4:19), but the Saviour, just before ascending to heaven, gave to Peter this command to feed His sheep—the duty of the pastor, the shepherd.

The inference here is plain indeed. No disciple of the Lord is called to only one task and is completely free from the responsibility of every other. A child of God has the obligation of performing any service which he may find at hand.

The Bible plainly teaches that God has called every Christian to certain specific tasks and has given him the gifts and talents necessary for the successful performance of those tasks, but this does not relieve the Christian from obligations and duties outside his own particular field.

Every Christian should be a soul-winner, though certainly all Christians are not called to be evangelists or pastors or foreign missionaries.

The Christian mother in her home has first of all a responsibility toward her own family and the duty of caring for her own children, but her obligations do not end here. Everywhere she goes she should by her life and actions testify for her Lord.

The Christian businessman has the responsibility of his business and the duty of providing for his family, but he has a responsibility beyond these. He is also obliged to witness and testify to the saving power of Christ. There is the duty of helping to finance the spread of the Gospel, and there is the obligation of the strong to bear the infirmities of the weak.

I have known Christians who were so interested in foreign missions that they neglected the opportunities at their front doors. I have known Christian men, occupied with the effort of earning a living and providing material comforts for their families, who allowed their own boys to grow up virtually as strangers to them, without the companionship which every son has a right to expect of his father.

Modern life is complex. No Christian in this day has only one responsibility. In using the particular gifts with which God has endowed us and in following the path of service to which we have been called, we sometimes forget that we have an obligation to take advantage of every opportunity for service and testimony which God sends our way in whatever field of endeavor it may be.

Go, labor on! spend and be spent;  
Thy joy to do the Father's will:  
It is the way the Master went—  
Should not the servant tread it still?

Go, labor on! 'tis not for nought,  
Thine earthly loss is heavenly gain;  
Men heed thee, love thee, praise thee not;  
The Master praises—what are men?

Toil on, faint not, keep watch and pray;  
Be wise the erring soul to win;  
Go forth into the world's highway,  
Compel the wanderer to come in.

Toil on, and in thy toil rejoice!  
For toil comes rest, for exile home;  
Soon shalt thou hear the Bridegroom's voice,  
The midnight peal, "Behold, I come!"

— Horatius Bonar

## IN STRANGE PLACES

THE Bible opens to the thoughtful reader rich treasure houses of thought with the golden key of a brief phrase. How the imagination is stimulated as one reads what Paul, writing to the Philippians from Rome, said: "**All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household**" (Philippians 4:22).

What were they like—those Christians in Nero’s palace? It seems strange to find saints members of Nero’s official family. Were they poor slaves doing the menial tasks? Were they officers of his guard? Did they plan the meals and spread the banquets? Did one act as a scribe taking down the imperial decrees? Did another supervise the wardrobe of the empress?

We may never know in this life anything specific about these unknown Christians from whom the apostle sent greetings. But this we do know, that even in the house of the inhuman monster Nero dwelt some of God’s own children. In the midst of the corruption and licentiousness of Caesar’s household were some of God’s saints. Surrounded by the wickedness and depravity of as corrupt a court as ever rotted in its sin, there were some who served Christ and whose affections were fixed on heavenly things.

The Christian whose heart is firmly set to be true to God and whose eyes are fixed on Christ can stand true to his Lord no matter in what environment he has to live. God’s children need not become defiled by the filth of the world nor corrupted with its deadly poison.

Meshach, Shadrach, Abednego and Daniel had been taken from their homeland to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. There in his palace they refused to defile themselves with the king’s meat and drink of his wines. The first three were thrown into a fiery furnace rather than bow to the image set up by the king, and Daniel was cast into the den of lions rather than forsake even for a period of thirty days his time of prayer and communion with God.

The Christian who purposes in his heart to serve God has divine resources at his command. His God is a sovereign more powerful than any earthly king or emperor.

Be Thou my Vision, O Lord of my heart;  
Naught be all else to me, save that Thou art—  
Thou my best thought, by day or by night,  
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.

Be Thou my Wisdom, and Thou my true Word;  
I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord;  
Thou my great Father, I Thy true son;  
Thou in me dwelling, and I with Thee one.

Riches I heed not, nor man’s empty praise,  
Thou mine inheritance, now and always;  
Thou and Thou only, first in my heart,  
High King of heaven, my treasure Thou art.

High King of heaven, my victory won,  
May I reach heaven’s joys, O bright heaven’s Sun!  
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,  
Still be my Vision, O Ruler of all.

## IDENTIFICATION TAG

PETER and John were arrested and brought before the Sanhedrin for preaching “**through Jesus the resurrection from the dead**” (Acts 4:2). These two fishermen were not frightened as they stood on trial before the very men who had condemned Jesus to death. Arrested for preaching to the people, they now preached to the Sanhedrin with such boldness and logic that when the council perceived that they were unlearned and “**ignorant**” men, “**they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus**” (Acts 4:13). These men, as His disciples, had followed God’s Son for three years. They had lived in daily, close, personal contact with Him. Into the lives of these ordinary, lowly men had come a likeness to the Son of God.

One always becomes like his associates. A couple whose lives are blended together through years of marriage grow somewhat like each other. A student acquires not only something of the knowledge and the point of view of the teacher whom he admires, but oftentimes assumes something of his manner and peculiarities.

The influence of our associates upon our lives it is impossible to measure, but that there is an influence no man can deny. In habits, in language, in thought itself we reflect those with whom we constantly mingle.

The man who walks with God becomes like God. The Christian who fellowships daily with the Saviour reveals to others in his own life a Christlike personality.

Paul, referring to the scars he had received as a result of persecution for Christ’s sake, said, “**I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus**” (Galatians 6:17). The Christian who is much with Christ will bear in his soul the marks of his Lord. Men, seeing the sweetness and power of his life, will take knowledge of him that he has been with Jesus.

Our God is love; and all His saints  
His image bear below:  
The heart with love to God inspired  
With love to man will glow.

Teach us to love each other, Lord,  
As we are loved by Thee;  
None who are truly born of God  
Can live in enmity.

Heirs of the same immortal bliss,  
Our hopes and fears the same,  
With bonds of love our hearts unite,  
With mutual love inflame.

So may the unbelieving world  
See how true Christians love;  
And glorify our Saviour's grace,  
And seek that grace to prove.

— Thomas Cotterill

## **BUILDING SILENTLY**

THE world has seen few buildings as magnificent as Solomon's Temple, but one of the most amazing things about this structure was the complete silence which attended its building. "**There was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building**" (I Kings 6:7). The stones were dressed in the quarries. The cedar wood brought from Lebanon was prepared before its arrival on the Temple site. The metal work was brought already prepared and installed quietly.

Possibly back of this silence was a feeling of reverence. This was God's house, a place for sacrifice to the Lord and for the worship of the Lord God. It was appropriate that it be built in an atmosphere of quiet reverence. Possibly efficiency and convenience were also reasons for building silently. With stones dressed and smoothed where they were quarried, it was unnecessary to transport surplus material which should be cut away and not used in the building.

The silence with which the huge and beautiful Temple was built is full of spiritual suggestion. It suggests the quiet way in which God works in carrying out His purposes in the world. The coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to reign will be a spectacular coming, but the preparation of His bride in the redemption of men and women throughout the world is quiet in comparison with the noise and tumult which attend less important movements.

The most important events are not always the noisiest and the most spectacular. God does not always speak in the sound of the wind and the fire and the earthquake. His word is sometimes heard in the still small voice.

That which is destructive is generally noisy. The loudest politician is not always the most able statesman. The clamoring voice of the majority is no guarantee of the truth and value of that which they acclaim.

The quiet Christian who lives a life of daily obedience to God is worth more to the world than all its noisy demagogues.

O Sabbath rest by Galilee!  
O calm of hills above,  
Where Jesus knelt to share with thee  
The silence of eternity,  
Interpreted by love!

Drop thy still dews of quietness  
Till all our strivings cease;  
Take from our souls the strain and stress,  
And let our ordered lives confess  
The beauty of thy peace.

Breathe through the heats of our desire  
Thy coolness and thy balm;  
Let sense be dumb, let flesh retire:  
Speak through the earthquake, wind and fire,  
O still small voice of calm.

— John G. Whittier

### AT HIS FEET

How frequently in the Gospels we read of men and women at the feet of Jesus. As He sat at meat one day a woman of the street came and kissed His feet, washing them with her tears and drying them with her hair (Luke 7:38). Coming with tears of remorse for her sins, she found forgiveness at His feet. So does any sinner.

Christ cast a legion of demons out of a poor creature living naked in the tombs (Luke 8:27-35), and when he was next seen by those who knew him, he was clothed, “**sitting at the feet of Jesus.**” Here at His feet no demon can control and here the one who has experienced His miraculous power in his life should desire to remain, looking up into His face.

On another occasion a ruler of the synagogue ran to Jesus and flung himself at His feet, begging Him to come to His house where his little daughter, twelve years old, lay dying (Luke 8:41,42). Here was a man bringing his need to the feet of Christ. Here we may, too, make our desires known; here we can plead our needs with the assurance of having them heard and satisfied.

A leper that Christ had cleansed came back to fall in thanksgiving at His feet (Luke 17:16). This is the position to which gratitude should force us who know His mercy and His love. When we have seen His goodness, how can we fail to kneel in praise at His feet!

John on the isle of Patmos beheld Christ in glory and fell at His feet as dead (Revelation 1:17).

No man can behold the glory of the Son of God without being conscious of his own humility and unworthiness and weakness.

There is a day coming when all things shall be put under His feet. Every knee shall bow to Him. Kings will cast their crowns before Him. Then those who have loved Him here will have the joy of reigning with Him in glory. Now we may in the study of His Word and in communion with Him sit at His feet to be taught by Him.

Master, no offering  
Costly and sweet,  
May we, like Magdalene,  
Lay at Thy feet;  
Yet may love's incense rise,  
Sweeter than sacrifice,  
Dear Lord, to Thee.

Daily our lives would show  
Weakness made strong,  
Toilsome and gloomy ways  
Brightened with song;  
Some deeds of kindness done,  
Some souls by patience won,  
Dear Lord, to Thee.

Some word of hope for hearts  
Burdened with fears,  
Some balm of peace for eyes  
Blinded with tears,  
Some dews of mercy shed,  
Some wayward footsteps led,  
Dear Lord, to Thee.

Thus, in Thy service, Lord,  
Till eventide  
Closes the day of life,  
May we abide;  
And when earth's labors cease,  
Bid us depart in peace,  
Dear Lord, to Thee.

—Edwin P. Parker

~ end of chapter 8 ~

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